

THE ANCIENT FAMILY OF WYKE OF NORTH
WYKE, CO. DEVON.

BY THE REV. W. WYKES-FINCH, M.A., J.P.

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In the twenty-ninth volume of the *Transactions* of the Association there appeared a paper entitled "Some Reminiscences of the Wykes of South Tawton." In the preparation of this paper the author informed us that he had consulted the two leading county historians, Pole and Risdon, and other authorities, such as the *Devon Visitations*, by Colonel Vivian, and Worthy's *Devonshire Wills*. He, however, frankly confessed that he was a novice at the work he had undertaken. And so it is to be feared he did not realise the importance of accuracy in such writings, nor the seductive fertility of the soil on which he was working in the production of statements that have much to do with the domain of the imagination. Probably in nothing do men more slip, or allow preconceived ideas to dominate their conclusions, than in the writing of family history. Too often a *pleasing* assumption speedily becomes a *boasted* fact: the imagination is feasted with indulgence, and sentimental adornment imposes on the unwary and sometimes "deceives the very elect." A single-minded devotion to the investigation of truth gradually falls into abeyance; the desire to convert the pride of fiction into unassailable fact grows apace, and the result becomes worse than misleading. But whatever the cause, the paper in question contains many errors. It was, the writer admits, his first effort in his apprenticeship to the profession of the family historian, and so this should arouse no surprise. At the same time it would be unfortunate to allow the paper to be handed down to posterity as historically correct.

On this account, some members of this Association, shortly after its publication, urged on me the duty of reading another paper on the subject, corrective of it, and with wider objects. This is my excuse for obtruding myself on your attention in such a matter.

But, before I proceed with my story, allow me to say that the history of the Wyke family has long occupied my mind and been the object of my researches. And though North Wyke, with all its manors and lands, was lost to the family two hundred years ago, after forty years of litigation, yet from my childhood it cast a spell around my life, and became almost a fascination as time rolled on, so that practically all my days I have felt as if "possessed" with the spirit of my Wyke forefathers. And it thus arose. When about eleven or twelve years old, I well remember a conversation of my old aunt Betty, several years older than my father, who married a Mr. Percy and was born in 1792, and who indelibly impressed on my young mind the burning sense of the wrong she felt from her knowledge of the persistent and indescribable "wickedness", as she called it, whereby her grandfather, William Wykes, and his father before him, had been robbed of the North Wyke estates. She was a woman of strong temperament and great individuality, and so the indignation with which she told me the story of the ruin of the house, left so strong an impression on my mind that ever since I have had a very vivid recollection of the anger and the emphasis with which she denounced the "wickedness" that had brought about the uprooting and downfall of the family. Whether she knew all that is told in the many Chancery and other legal proceedings, I have no recollection, but that she was well acquainted with the distressful story, and had often heard it told both by her mother and grandfather, there can be no doubt, seeing the anger that filled her whole soul and gave life to her every word when she talked to me of the "wickedness" that had ruined them, and which will be described in extracts from Chancery proceedings later on. For her grandfather, William Wykes, was born some years before the death, in 1735, of his grandfather, Nathanael Wykes, who was the next heir male to the estates, after the death of his cousin Roger in December, 1694, and who claimed them by filing Bills in Chancery and bringing actions of ejectment. We have here a remarkable instance of the length of time sometimes covered by the living touch with the dead, in regard to oral tradition and testimony.

The said “wickedness”, it cannot be doubted, was told by Nathanael to his grandson William, was by him told to his eldest grandchild, my aunt Betty, who in turn burnt it, as it were, into my young memory by words of fire, where it remains in all its freshness, though I have now passed my “threescore years and ten.” So that I, so to speak, am placed in touch, through my long-departed aunt, with her grandfather’s grandfather, Nathanael, who was born about 1650, and as heir male to the North Wyke estates, on the death of his cousin Roger, made his claim both by Bills in Chancery and Acts of Ejectment in the King’s Bench. This clearly shows with what accuracy events that happened long ago are handed down by tradition, and what an important factor it is in family and local history. But for it, oftentimes eventful facts would be lost in the mist and darkness and confusion of the long-ago past.

The ever-memorable story told me of the family ruin naturally aroused in my boyhood mind a deep and lasting sense of the cruel wrongs that had been perpetrated, and an earnest desire to see them made right by the restoration of the estates to the old family. And, therefore, it is not to be wondered at that it is as fresh in my memory as the events of yesterday, how, a little time afterwards, I happened to read *The Old English Baron*, a rather “creepy” book, in which the story is graphically told of a young man who had been, by the teacherous murder of his father, robbed of his title and lands, but who recovered all through the revelations made to him by dreams and supernatural appearances. And I wondered whether by some such extraordinary intervention of Providence, I, like that young man, might some day find myself in possession of the ancestral estates. But, alas! Neither by “dream” nor by “vision”, but by “purchase”, did I recover the seat of my forefathers. Still, though this is so, yet a pious mind can trace the same over-rulings of Providence in recovering it thus as in the case of the heir to the Lovel title and estates described in *The Old English Baron*, inasmuch as but for this, the old mansion of my Wyke ancestors would before now have probably passed beyond recognition, by the ruthless demolition of its Gatehouse, together with the fine masonry of the whole of the chapel wing, in order that the would-be purchaser might have no obstruction to his view across the court, but be able, as he described it, to look straight “forrid”. Happily, this destruction of old masonry, as interesting and probably as ancient as any in the county, has been averted by the place coming into my possession.

Thus an old mansion, most unique in character, has been saved from falling into the hands of the destroyer, and will, I hope, be long preserved for posterity, through its careful repair and restoration by the well-known mediæval architect, Mr. George H. Fellowes Prynne, of London.

The cruel uprooting and unhappy downfall of the old and honourable house of North Wyke, brought about by persistent wickedness, so impressed my young mind, as I have said, that when I grew up, the fact still haunted my memory, and aroused within me a strong desire to discover *how* the dissolution and ruin of the family had been brought about, and so, as long ago as 1858, I used, as occasion allowed, to frequent the Reading-room of the British Museum to gather what materials I could towards its elucidation. And later on, I frequented for the same purpose the Record Office, that great National storehouse of the records of the rights and wrongs of families and of things done that concern almost everybody. There, on examining the State Papers publications, I discovered that in 1662 the whole estate had passed into Chancery, owing to a forcible entry into the mansion house by the violence of Richard Weekes, a gentleman pensioner at the Court of Charles II. And on further examination I found that for nearly forty years [1662-1698] the contest was carried on by the heirs in succession, to save, if possible, both the estates and family; and also that “wickedness” did indeed flourish at the beginning of the struggle, and continued with unabated ingenuity until the conspiracy, after a litigation of nearly forty years, was crowned with success, and the posterity of the chief “confederate” remained in possession. How all this came to pass; how it began, continued, and ended; and how correctly my old aunt described it all as “wickedness” will appear in its chronological place and order.

The antiquity of this family is unquestioned. Its origin, however, has been made somewhat difficult of proof through the uncertainty of names and conditions of State during the Norman times and the loss of the family records. Westcote describes it as “a generous family of great age”; Lysons as “an ancient family”; and all the county historians testify to the fact that it flourished in Devon early in the thirteenth century. Pole says that “Anno 27 Hen. III. William de Wray held fourth part of a knight’s fee in Wyke”. This is on the authority of *Testa de Nevill*, the date of which is,

I believe, now fixed at 1227; and Risdon says, "North Wyke was the land of William de Wigornia, *alias* Chamberlain, in the reign of King Henry III." Apparently these two authorities differ; but if we bear in mind that at this period of our national history surnames were uncommon; that a person was known by the estate or office he held, or by the title, office, estate, or occupation of the father, and that the manors of Chevereston in Kenton and Wray in Moretonhampstead were also held by him, we readily see that William de Wray, William de Chevereston, and William de Wigornia [Wig'] are one and the same person. In one place he would be known as William "of Chevereston," in another as William "of Wray," and in another as William "of Wig'" or "Wik". Contemporaneously with this William, we have another "de Wigornia, *alias* Chamberlain," in Devon, named Robert, and mentioned both by Pole and Risdon, who state that he married Joan, daughter and co-heir of Sir Baldwin de Belston. These two, William and Robert, were certainly near blood-relations, most likely brothers, though Robert was probably the younger of the two, and it is rather remarkable that shortly afterwards, one Sir Richard de Wigornia, Kt., held the manor of Wyke in Bishop's Lydiard, county Somerset, who obtained a licence for an oratory in his house in 1263, because he lived far from the church¹. It is also further remarkable that these "de Wigornias," both in Devon and Somerset, held lands of the name of Wyke not mentioned in *Domesday*, which is suggestive of the conclusion that they called these lands "after their own name."

Now no such name as "de Wigornia" is found in the Exeter *Domesday*. Nor does it appear among those who held knights' fees in the West of England, either in *Liber Niger* or *Liber Rubens*, so that till towards the end of the twelfth century, or early in the thirteenth, the name does not appear among owners of land in this county. And yet, early in the thirteenth century, we find *two* of this name here [which emphasises the fact], William and Robert, holding high positions, and Robert certainly marrying a co-heir of a leading family of the county. So that a new name comes abruptly to the front, just as, a few years before, that of Courtenay had done, the possessors of which were favoured by the King and the greatest nobles of the West. The question, then, naturally arises, who was "William de

¹ Eleventh Report Hist MSS. Commission: Wells Cathedral

Wigornia, *alias* Chamberlain,” who was holding North Wyke with other Wykes in or about 1227, and upon whom had been bestowed royal manors, as well as other lands held under the most potent of the great families of Devon and Cornwall, such as the Earls of Devon, Cornwall, and Gloucester; Courtenay, Lord of Okehampton; Valletort, Lord of Hurberton and North Tawton; de Tony, Baron of Flamstead and Lord of South Tawton; Botreaux, Lord of Molland; and Brewer, Lord of Torr? That he had his origin in some well-known family is self-evident, because otherwise it would be well-nigh impossible to account for this favouritism in high quarters, and the distinguished marriage of his near-of-kin² to Joan de Belston. And if we give due weight to all the facts and circumstances that affect our inquiry, no reasonable doubt can remain in our minds that he was either the son, or grandson, of Robert, Earl of Mellent and Worcester [Wigornia]. Let us see. The said Robert had, besides a daughter, five sons by his wife Mabel, one of the daughters of Reginald, Earl of Cornwall, son of Henry I., viz. Waleran, Peter, Henry, William [and Robert?]. These were the near blood-relations of the great earls and lords I have just mentioned, as well as the King’s cousin. For they were the grandsons of the Earl of Cornwall, the King’s uncle, nephews of Richard de Redvers, Earl of Devon, who married their mother’s sister, and brothers-in-law of their cousin William de Vernon, sixth Earl of Devon, who married their sister Mabel. They were uncles of Robert Courtenay, Baron of Okehampton, through his marriage with their niece, Mary, daughter of the Earl of Devon, and of William, Lord Brewer of Torr, who married Joan, another daughter of the said Earl.³ They were also nephews of Roger de Valletort,⁴ Lord of Hurberton, whose son Joel became Lord of North Tawton. They were cousins of the Earl of Gloucester and of the Lords de Tony, through their great-aunt Elizabeth de Bello Monte, the mother of “Strongbow”; and of Botreaux, Lord of Molland, who married a sister of Earl Reginald’s mother.

² His near relation, Sir William de Chevereston, Kt., held Wray in 1284 with many other estates [*Feudal Aids*].

³ Both William Brewer, jun., and Robert Courtenay, sons-in-law of William, Earl of Devon, lately deceased, are mentioned in the Patent Rolls of 2 Henry III., wherein Henry de Ponte Audemar is ordered to take into his custody, without delay, the Castles of Carabroc [Carisbrook], Christchurch, and Plympton.

⁴ Roger de Valletort married Sara, daughter of Reginald, Earl of Cornwall [*Risdon’s Notebook*, p.74].

The said Reginald had been laden with lands, both in Devon and Cornwall, by his father, Henry I., for he bestowed on him all the Moretain estates in those two counties. He had also married a rich wife, daughter and heir of William Fitz-Richard, of Cornwall, and was undoubtedly the greatest magnate of the West, for he had vast possessions amounting to 215½ fees. Hence his influence at Court, as we might expect, was considerable. And this Ralph de Avenel, the third Lord of Okehampton, [ancestor of the Avenells of Loxbeare and Blackpole, and grandson of Baldwin de Brionne, Okehampton's first lord,] found to his cost, after declining the honour of marrying one of his daughters, by taking to wife instead, Joan, daughter of Richard de Redvers, second Earl of Devon. Earl Reginald so resented this offensive slight that "he swore he would make him lose the lordship of Okehampton" [*Risdon's Notebook*]. Accordingly, he told the King, his nephew, that the said Ralph was not in lawful possession of the barony, inasmuch as his uncle Richard, elder brother of his father, William de Avenell, had, during his lifetime, made all his knights swear fealty to his brother-in-law, William de Abrincis, who had married his sister Emma, and that consequently Matilda, daughter and heir of the said William and Emma, was the true heir. "In this way Ralph de Avenell lost the lordship of Okehampton to this day" [*Risdon's Notebook*]. The said, Matilda, or Maud, was at this time the widow of Robert d'Aincourt, by whom she had a daughter, Avis. Earl Reginald persuaded his nephew Henry II to give her in marriage to William, his half-brother, another of the sons of Henry I, and to determine the question in her favour. This he did, and thus she became Lady of Okehampton and wife of William Fitz-Henry, by whom she had another daughter, Matilda. The said Matilda married Reginald Courtenay, whose son Reginald, by a former marriage, took to wife Avis her elder half-sister, and became the mother of Robert Courtenay, who, through her, became heir of the Barony of Okehampton, as her sister died without issue. This Robert, the fortunate son of fortunate parents, married Mary, daughter of William de Vernon, sixth Earl of Devon, by his wife Mabel, daughter of Comte de Mellent and Comes de Wigornia, and by this alliance, the earldom of Devon, [after the death of Isabella de Fortibus, Countess of Devon and de Insula,] and the lordship of Okehampton, with all their knights' fees, became united in the person of Hugh, son of the said Robert and Mary,

towards the end of the thirteenth century.

When we bear in mind the powerful family connections of the Earl of Mellent and Worcester, we at once become aware how probable it is that, if there was occasion for it, his sons would be found holding estates in the West under the King, their cousin, and the great lords who were their near blood-relations. The question is, Did occasion arise which would strongly and naturally appeal on their behalf to their sympathy, and almost compel a generous response? Or, did anything occur to explain how it should come to pass, that sons of the most powerful of all the Norman chieftains should be found occupying lands in Devon and making their homes there, when their father's lordships had been so many in Normandy and France? The answer is simple enough to those who are acquainted with the history of the early years of the reign of King John. For, in the year 1204, Philip Augustus, the King of France, seized the Duchy of Normandy. Earl Robert, the powerful vassal of both kings, found himself ground to death between the upper and nether millstones of France and England. He was, indeed, a cousin of both kings, but between them he not only lost all his immense estates in Normandy and France, but fell into the bad graces of King John, [as so many did,] and, as one of the "Normanni," was at the same time stripped of his English estates, though after a time the King relented and forgave him, but acted very fitfully towards him, at one time restoring, and at another confiscating his English lands, and in the end paid him a small annuity out of the Exchequer.⁵ Such was the fall of this great and distinguished family. At one fell swoop it was hurled from one of the greatest and proudest positions that can be attained by subjects. He and his, thus deprived for ever of their vast Norman and French inheritance, were thrown upon the bounty and generosity of their powerful English relations. Earl Robert survived his terrible downfall only about three years, though his widow Mabel did not die before about 1220. During her widowhood she also received from the King a small yearly payment out of the King's Exchequer.⁶

Such were the circumstances at this time of the family, and if, under them, we had not found some of its sons soon after the terrible crash, living amongst their great territorial relations, and holding lands under them, it would have

⁵ *Rot. Scacc. Normanniæ* [Stapleton], vol. Ii. Pp. Ccii., cciii.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. Ii. P. cciii. She died 1220-1.

been a matter of some surprise. For, in storm and tempest, the instinct of self-preservation arouses us to make every effort to find our way to some safe harbour or friendly port, and in case of shipwreck to use every means that will help us to shore. That Earl Robert had at least four sons we know from the Norman Rolls, viz. Waleran, Peter, Henry, and William. Some other authorities mention a fifth, Robert. But William and Robert were the Christian names, as Pole and Risdon state, of the two “de Wigornias, *alias* Chamberlain,” who were settled in Devon, and flourishing there in the first half of the thirteenth century; that is, within a few years of the ruin and death of the said Earl Robert. Of course, there is the question, if the said William and Robert were sons or grandsons of the powerful Earl of Mellent and Worcester, whose elder sons, Waleran and Peter, were usually called “de Meulan,” or “de Mellent,” how came it to pass that the younger sons are known in the Devon histories as “de Wigornia”? I think the answer is easy and pretty conclusive. Their father, we must remember, was *de jure* “Comes de Wigornia.” In 1204 he was expelled from France and Normandy, his vast estates confiscated, and his honours there lost for ever. His title of “de Mellent” had no longer any meaning, and all that made the name a great power in those countries was escheated to the Crown of France, so that the sons also lost their foothold there. Indeed, their lives there would have been unsafe, seeing that King Philip Augustus refused to grant terms of submission to the said Earl.⁷ Outcasts from both France and Normandy, and driven from all their possessions there, they could no longer be correctly described as “de Meulan,” or “de Mellent.” The name had ceased to have its old territorial meaning in this country, as both title and estates were gone, the whole family outlawed, and the King of France in possession. Good reason, then, had the sons for the abandonment of the titular cognomen of “de Mellent”, and equally good would they have for calling themselves “de Wigornia,” as English residents. They would as naturally give up the one as take the other, seeing that the father was not only Earl of Mellent, which had ceased to be, but also “Comes de Wigornia.” The change only involved the taking of one titular name in place of the other. And there were excellent reasons for it, seeing that their future lives would be passed within the limits of England.

⁷ *Rot. Scacc. Normanniæ*, vol. Ii. Pp. Cci., ccii.

And in their choice of this name, we must bear in mind that at this period, [which is earlier than the general use of surnames,] it was not infrequent for younger sons to be known by the territorial titles of the father. Hence Roger, son of Waleran, Count of Mellent and Comes de Wigornia, who was prebend. of Brondesbury in St. Paul's Cathedral,⁸ is called in the Register both "de Mellent" and "de Wigornia," and both Waleran and Peter, sons of Robert the Earl, are called "de Mellent" in the Norman Rolls. Again, Richard, brother of Henry III., was created "Comes de Cornubia." His son Walter is called "Walter de Cornubia, brother of Edmund the Earl," in the Patent Rolls of 28 Ed. I. M. 23; that is, after the *title* of his father. And as late as temp. Henry VII. this custom still to some extent prevailed, for Katherine, wife of Perkin Warbeck, is called Katherine de Huntly, after her father's title.⁹

It may be observed that at the time of the Conquest the family was called "de Bello Monte," after their chief residence in Normandy. But before the middle of the twelfth century, this name seems to have fallen into disuse, and the sons became generally known by the father's title, usually by that of "de Meulan," or "de Mellent," but sometimes by that of "de Wigornia," or "de Wirecestria," and this continued till the end of its Norman career.

Now if the history, circumstances, and surroundings, at this time of this distinguished family, be placed before us and carefully considered, we shall find it difficult to stop short of the conclusion that, if any sons survived their father, who died in 1207, they would almost certainly be found among their influential territorial relations in the West, and holding lands under them. It has already been seen that he had four, if not five, sons. The eldest, Waleran, who married in 1189 Margaret, daughter of Ralph de Fougères, Lord of Brittany, was killed by a Turk in the Holy Land;¹ and Peter, the second son, was rector of Spettisbury and dean of Wimborne, in Dorset.² We cannot reasonably suppose that the other sons, Henry, William, and, according to some authorities, also Robert, *all* died in their father's lifetime, but may with almost certainty conclude that he did leave one or more sons surviving him, and it may be the three. Of William and Robert I have already spoken.

⁸ Reg. Dec. & Cap., Lond., f. 57.

⁹ Report Deputy Keeper of Records.

¹ *Rot. Scacc. Normannie*

² *Ibid.*

The third son, Henry, was, I venture to suggest, the well-known “Henry de Ponte Audemar,” who was a justiciar an. 9-16 King John. For Pons au de Mer was one of the ancient lordship castles of Earl Robert, and his chief residence in Normandy at the time his estates there were confiscated by the King of France. At that period it was not uncommon to call sons by the names of the places where they were born, and there cannot be much doubt that the said Henry de Ponte Audemar was born at his “place-name”; and consequently we may reasonably conclude that he was Earl Robert’s third son. He flourished just at the time the said Henry must have flourished, if at all, viz. From 1195 to 1220, and onwards. And what adds force to this conclusion is that, after the death, in 1217, of William de Vernon, Earl of Devon, who married Mabel, a daughter of “Comes de Wigornia,” King John gave his lands into the custody of the said Henry³ during the son’s minority, and what more likely than this if he was Mabel’s brother, and the King’s cousin?

Foss tells us that he was a “Normannus,” and “custos” of the escheats of the King’s Bailiwick of the Evrin, and in 1198 bailiff of Caux: that shortly after 1216 he got into disgrace, as his lands fell into the King’s hands. This is proved by an entry in the Close Rolls of 2 Hen. III. [1218], whereby it is ordered that they be restored to him [Rot. Claus. 1, 330]. He was reinstated in the royal favour, and entrusted not only with the custody of the lands of the Earl of Devon, but also of Luke Fitz-John Pincerna. This fitful treatment of him by John quite corresponds with that meted out to Earl Robert. He could not transmit his name if a son, as no child could be known as “*of*” Pont Audemar. Hence his posterity would receive some other cognomen, which probably would be “de Wigornia” or “de Wig”; and I would suggest that Luke Fitz-John’s manor of Teign Wyke got its affix from him, as did “Wyke South Teign”⁴ its prefix. If, as I strongly suspect, this was so, then the aforesaid William and Robert de Wigornia, *alias* Chamberlain, would be probably sons of the said Henry, and therefore gandsons of Robert, Comes de Wigornia; and this conclusion of descent and near relationship is strongly supported by other evidence, the careful examination of which, will, I think, leave us without a doubt, that the William de Wigornia, who held North Wyke temp. Henry III., was in direct descent from and near-of-kin to “Comes de Wigornia.”

³Patent Rolls, an 1 & 2 Henry III.

⁴See footnote 5, p12.

1. The lands which William de Wigornia held early in the thirteenth century are those we should naturally expect a son, or grandson, of the Earl of Mellent and Worcester to hold. For Chevereston and Wray were royal sub-manors, and we can well understand King John, when ashamed and pitying, bestowing these upon him. Wyke in South Tawton he held under the powerful Lord de Tony, Baron of Flamstead; Wyke in Chawleigh, the Beers in Sampford Courtenay, and Shilston in Drewsteignton, he held under the Courtenays as lords of Okehampton, and the Wyke homestead in Chagford⁵ under the King, or his brother, the Earl of Cornwall. The lands he held in Throwleigh formed a part probably of the royal manor of South Tawton. The several homesteads named Wyke, with their appurtenances, viz. West Wyke, South Wyke, and East Wyke, etc., situated in the south of the parish of South Tawton, and lying not far from the boundaries of Chagford and Throwleigh, belong to the manor of Ash,⁶ and at that period were probably waste, wherein the red deer from Dartmoor, close to, found shelter and grazing ground before the disafforestation of the county in 1204, when, being included in the sub-manor of Ash, these lands might naturally be expected to be granted to such men as the sons, or grandsons, of the ruined house of Mellent and Wigornia, by their many near relations, the great overlords of them. The same may be said of the lands called Wyke in North Tawton,⁷ where both the Earl of Cornwall and Valletort were lords, and in Winkleigh, which the Earl of Gloucester held. In every parish where William de Wigornia held lands, there the overlords were the near relations of the sons and grandsons of the said Earl Robert. All this is strongly confirmatory of the tradition that the Wyke family was Norman in its origin, and of the conclusion that William de Wigornia, who held North Wyke in 1227, was his son or grandson. To the same conclusion came Mr. Charles Worthy, and its correctness could not well be doubted, even if there was no

⁵From the Lay Subsidies [Chagford] we learn that members of "the Wyke family held in Wyke Suthtegn" early in Edward I.'s time and long afterwards. Indeed, from very early days till its uprooting the North Wyke family held considerable estates in Chagford. In 1 anno Edward III. [Lay Subsidy Roll, Devon, 95-6] Nicholas de Wyke held of "the manor of Kenton cum Suthtegn."

⁶Richard Wyke of North Wyke, by deed dated 4 Edward IV., sold land in the manor of East Ash to Richard Northmore [WORTHY'S *Devonshire Wills*].

⁷This was held by William [de Wyke, *alias*] Chamberlain in the reign of Edward I. [Fœda in Capite].

further proof; but there is much corroborative evidence forthcoming, which, if duly considered and weighed with the rest, will be found to form a chain of circumstances, all pointing to the same conclusion, and making it irresistible.

2. There is the ancient coat-of-arms of the Wyke family. This affords a most striking proof of the identity of William de Wigornia of North Wyke with William, the son or grandson of the Earl of Mellent and Worcester. For what is the coat? It is "*Ermine, 3 Danish battle-axes, sable,*" and, be it observed, that it is the same, with change of tincture, as the ancient coat of the Danish kings [Planché]. There is no coat, nor ever has there been, more eloquent in its allusiveness, and yet, like most of the ancient coats, it is both full of simplicity and expression. It is unmistakable as to the martial deeds it symbolises. They are manifestly in the clash of arms and the close conflict of the bloody battle. And it is equally unmistakable that the heroes of these martial deeds claimed a Danish origin. Now the said Earl Robert, on his succession to his father Waleran's titles and estates in 1166, took also the place of his father as the head of the warrior line of "Bernard the Dane," a Saxon prince, who accompanied his cousin Rollo as second in command, on his invasion of Normandy. The descendants of Bernard, all through to the Wigornias, had a renown in the battlefield and in the council chamber unsurpassed probably by any family that has ever taken part in affairs of State. The Wyke arms are undoubtedly amongst the earliest, and were probably, almost certainly, first used by William de Wigornia, who first held North Wyke, and designed by him to be descriptive of the notable place in history occupied by his forefathers. At all events, the coat is, in all its particulars, exactly that which sets before us the great career of this illustrious family and strongly corroborates the conclusion already arrived at.

3. The field of this coat-of-arms is ermine. Now ermine, in the infancy of armoury, is said to have been allusive to statecraft, and especially to the administration of justice; just as the Danish battle-axes are allusive to a Danish origin, and renown on the battlefield. This allusiveness largely prevailed in the earliest days of English heraldry. Buotell writes: "The greater number of the earliest devices were adopted for the express purpose of their having some allusive association ... with the names and titles of certain persons, dignities, and places ..."

Devices of this kind addressed themselves in very plain and expressive language to the men of their own era. In them they saw the kind of symbolical writing that they could remember, as well as understand. They also liked the quaint style of suggestiveness that was a characteristic of these allusive devices.”⁸ Now, as before observed, “Bernard the Dane” was both a great warrior and statesman, and after his death his son, and his son’s son, down to the Conquest, occupied very much the same position as himself in all that concerned the State. And not long after the Conquest, the then head of this family, Robert, Earl of Mellent and Leicester, was chief minister of William Rufus, and a baron of the Norman Exchequer. His son Robert was Chief Justiciar of England, and both he and his twin brother Waleran, father of Earl Robert II., were also barons of the Norman Exchequer.

If, then, it be correctly assumed that ermine, in the early days of heraldry [1180-1280, when without doubt the Wyke coat-of-arms came into existence, and was most probably first borne by the said William de Wigornia], was allusive to State and judicial administration, we at once recognise its extreme appropriateness on the shield of a son, or grandson, of the Earl of Mellent and Worcester, and see in it a further confirmation and proof of his identity with the William de Wigornia of North Wyke, and especially if “Henry de Ponte au de Mar,” one of the justiciars of King John, was his father.

4. It has already been shown that the sons of Earl Robert were the brothers-in-law of William de Vernon, sixth Earl of Devon, who married their sister Mabel, and also uncles of Robert Courtenay, Lord of Okehampton, who married their niece Mary, daughter of the said Earl, and through whom, later on, the Courtenays became Earls of Devon. Now, if we examine the Exeter Episcopal Registers and other records, we find that the Courtenay and the Wyke families were thrown much together in the affairs of life, and that members of the latter were sought out by the former for church and other preferment, and particularly within their own residential neighbourhood, in a way that is very suggestive of blood-relationship. For instance, in 1352 Sir William Wyke was rector of Woodleigh.⁹ The Earl of

⁸BOUTELL'S *Heraldry*, p. 16.

⁹Woodleigh is near Ithelton, the castellated mansion of his cousin, Sir John Chevereston, Kt., who married Joan, daughter of Hugh Courtenay, Earl of Devon, by his wife Margaret Bohun, daughter of the Earl of Hereford. This Sir John castellated his residence in 1335, and was Seneschal of Gascony in 1362. The Chevereston line of the de Wigornias held a distinguished place among the great families of the county.

Devon, Hugh de Courtenay, had need of his services and presence, and so he is granted a licence of non-residence for a year, at the special request [*insistendo obsequiis*] of the said Earl. It would seem that, like many ecclesiastics of that day, he had been trained to other duties, for in a "Fine" passed in 1361, we discover that he was one of the Earl's feoffees in regard to Powderham and other estates. In this we recognise at once the confidential and trusted position he held in the Earl's family, and are, therefore, prepared to find that in 1356, the same episcopal registers inform us that he was in that year instituted to Kenn, [of which the Earl was patron,] not far from Powderham Castle.

In 1332, another member of the Wyke family, Sir Walter de Wyke, was instituted to Chumleigh, of which rectory the Earl of Devon, as Lord of Okehampton, was patron. He was also both lawyer and ecclesiastic, and was one of the bishop's proctors.

Many are the instances in which members of the Wyke family, during the fourteenth century, received preferment at the hands of the Courtenays. And the same followed them into the fiteenth century. So that it seems difficult to stop short of the conclusion that ties deeper and stronger than those of ordinary friendship existed between the two families. In further illustration of this, it may be observed that Roger Wyke of Bindon, a younger son of William of North Wyke, accompanied the Earl of Devon in the war of Henry V. against France, and fought under his standard at the battle of Agincourt in 1415. And just before that, viz. in 1413, he sat as M.P. for Plympton, as the Earl's nominee for that borough; and his nephew Richard, son of Richard of North Wyke, held the rectory of Sampford Courtenay, which is only three or four miles from Okehampton Castle, where the Courtenays were lords. In all this, and more of a like nature, we cannot but observe marked indications of a relationship existing between the two families, and such as we should naturally look for through intermarriage and common descent. Here, then, we have further support of the conculsion that William de Wigornia of North Wyke, *alias* Chamberlain, was identical with William, the son or grandson of Robert, Count of Mellent and Comes de Wigornia.

5. The sequence of Saxon names among the children of “Warrior Wyke,” by his wife Mary Giffard, is very observable and suggestive. A son born in 1553 was called Launcelot. In 1555 a daughter was christened Edith, and in 1557 another son was named Arkenwald – three children in succession with Saxon names. The conclusion seems to follow that the father intended to give some special meaning to this decided preference. Now if we recall the fact that “Bernard the Dane” was a *Saxon* prince, and that his great-grandson married a daughter of a Launcelot, we may, I think, reasonably conclude that the “Warrior” thereby intended to make known his descent from him, and therefore his descent from “Comes de Wigornia.” It must not be forgotten that in his day the family records were intact, and that he possessed full information of the history of the origin of his family.

6. An old yeoman family, by name Arnold, held a moiety of the barton of North Wyke from 1786 to 1895. In their possession were some MSS., either original or copies, when it passed out of their hands; perhaps discovered hidden behind the panelling. These [so Mrs. Arnold, the widow of the late owner, has informed me] showed that the ancestor of the Wyke family, not only “came over with the Conqueror,” but held high office and command under him. It is unfortunate, that though inquiries have been made, they have not as yet been discovered. They have been probably lost through the carelessness of those who knew not their value. But from the acquaintance of the Arnolds with them, they can, and do, bear testimony to the fact that the Wyke ancestor at the battle of Hastings was high in the favour of William, and of kin to him; and tradition bears the same testimony. There may still exist record evidence of the identity of William de Wigornia with the son or grandson of Comes de Wigornia, [as no doubt the Wyke writings would have shown had they not been lost,] though I have not discovered it. Nor is this surprising, for [1] the younger sons and grandsons of the Earl of Mellent and Comes de Wig[ornia] settled in the county, if at all, in the troublous days of the unworthy King John, when most things were upside down, and soon after their expulsion from, and forfeiture of, their titles, lands, and offices in Normandy and France. And [2] because the charters and records, which contained much of Devon’s history, and had been preserved by the several religious houses in the county, were, at the dissolution of the monasteries, almost entirely destroyed.

¹ DOYLE’S *Official Baronage*.

No county suffered, I believe, more in this respect. Direct evidence, therefore, may well fail in this matter, and all the more because the said William de Wigornia was wholly an under-tenant, and not tenant-in-chief, except of the lands he held in the royal manors, the record of which did not usually appear because free from geld.

7. It is a well-known fact that the de Mellents held offices in the Norman Exchequer,¹ and had much to do with it. It has already been seen that some of them held the office of Baron of that exchequer, and it may be, and probably was, that younger members became its chamberlains, and hence the "*alias* Chamberlain" as descriptive of the office held either by William de Wigornia or his father.

I might go on adding evidence to evidence, all bearing witness to the same conclusion, and clearly demonstrating that the circumstances, and arguments, and facts, I have adduced, are *only compatible* with the deduction that the founder of the Wyke family of North Wyke, "William de Wigornia, *alias* Chamberlain," was either a son or grandson of Robert, Earl of Mellent and Worcester. The conclusion is irresistible, and the proof as complete, I think, as one of the problems of Euclid, and if this be so, "*quod erat demonstrandum*" may well be added.

It can, then, be unhesitatingly affirmed, I believe, that William of North Wyke, called by Pole "de Wray", and by Risdon "de Wigornia," was a son or grandson of Robert, Earl of Worcester, and a near descendant of Reginald, Earl of Cornwall, son of Henry I., and thus could claim a long line of ancestors as great and illustrious as ever served a prince. For his father represented the main male line of that historic chief, "Bernard the Dane," who, for his services as second in command to his cousin Rollo, in the invasion and conquest of Normandy, obtained the lordships of Harcourt, Caileville, and Beaufical. He was also minister to Rolo's son and successor, William, and afterwards to William's son, Richard, Duke of Normandy, as well as Regent of the Norman territories during Richard's minority. He married a daughter of de Sprote, of the royal family of Burgundy. By her he left an only son and heir, Torf, who added Torville, Torcy, Torny, and Potatou to his paternal inheritance. He married Ertemburga, daughter of Launcelot de Briquebec, a nobleman of Danish extraction, and had by her three sons. The eldest, Tourode, was lord of Pont Au de Mar, Torville, Torny, Potatou, and Borrye

¹ DOYLE'S *Official Baronage*.

Tourode, and joint governor and guardian with his brother, Turchitil, to the aforesaid Duke William. He married Wiva, sister of Gunnora, wife of Richard, Duke of Normandy, and by her had five sons, the eldest of whom, Humphrey de Vetulis, was lord of Pont Au de Mar, Preaux, and Beaumont,² and founded two abbeys in France.^{2a} By his wife, Albreda de la Haye, he had two sons, Robert de Bello Monte, who died³ *s.p.*, and Roger, who succeeded to all the possessions of his father and brother, and accompanied Duke William in his expedition to England in 1066. This Roger de Bello Monte, “allied paternally to the Duke of Normandy,”⁴ married Adeline, daughter of Waleran, and sister and heir of Hugh, Earl of Mellent in France, and by her was father of three sons, viz. Robert, Henry, and William.

The said Roger de Bello Monte was one of the eleven great Norman chieftains mentioned by Hume in his *History*, who accompanied Duke William in his invasion of England. He possessed all the martial spirit and fire of his forefathers, and fully took his place amongst them as a race of warriors. For bold, and brave, and confident, he was not only in the forefront and thick of the battle of Hastings, but “distinguished himself early in the day, and broke down by a charge on the right the English palisade.”⁵

Many and great were his deeds of valour, and to him fell much of the honour of that day’s victory. His young sons also on that day, Robert and Henry, did knightly service, and gloriously upheld the fame of their ancestors. Nor was William, their cousin, unmindful of the debt he owed them for their strenuous support in the fight that had won for him the great prize of the English crown, for he bestowed on the father, Roger, many an English manor of the vanquished Saxons, and knighted both sons on the field of battle,⁶ though the elder of them was barely seventeen years old.

Henry, the younger, was made constable of Warwick in 1068, and in 1085 created earl of the county.⁶ He was ancestor of a long and illustrious race, whose prowess, through the Beauchamps and Nevilles, and their powerful guidance in matters of State, are “writ large” in our national history.

The eldest son, Robert, was not only knighted on the field of battle by the Conqueror, but afterwards gratefully rewarded by him with the gift of many Saxon lands.

² COLLINS; *Peerage*.

^{2a} DOYLE’S *Official Baronage*.

³ He was killed by Roger de Clare.

⁴ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ DOYLE’S *Official Baronage*.

In 1077, on the death of his mother, he succeeded to the great French earldom of Mellent.⁷ In 1098 he was chief minister of William Rufus, and also of Henry I. From 1103 to his death in 1118.⁷ In 1107, in consideration of his many and great services to the State – for, like his forefathers, he shone equally on the battlefield and in the council chamber – he was created Earl of Leicester.⁷ His fame was great throughout Europe, and he well sustained the family traditions and renown. Henry of Huntingdon [p. 306] thus describes him: “Fuit scientia clarus: eloquio blandus: astutia perspicax: providentia sagax: ingenio versipellis: prudentia insuperabilis: consilio profundus.” If we have here no flattering picture of his gifts, and powers, and character, it is easy to understand his European repute, and that he stood out conspicuously among the most distinguished of that marvellous epoch-making period. He was blessed also with a pious mind, for he founded three priories in England, viz. Monks Toft Priory in Norfolk, and Spettisbury and Wareham priories in Dorset. He married Isabel, daughter of Hugh the Great, Count of Vermandois and Valois, younger son of Philip I., King of France,⁸ and had by her Waleran and Robert [twins], Hugh, created Earl of Bedford, and other children. He died in 1118, leaving his sons, then under age, to the guardianship of Henry I. They received the highest education of the day, and in company with their guardian visited Normandy in 1119.⁹

Waleran, the elder twin, in accordance with the custom then existing, took the Norman estates and the earldom of Mellent, whilst Robert, the younger twin, succeeded to the English earldom of Leicester, and was, as a warrior and statesman, as renowned as his father had been, and his life was largely interwoven with the history of the country. For six generations onwards, his descendants held the powerful and princely position of Earls of Leicester, and but for the overvaulting ambition of one of them, Simon de Montfort, it is impossible to say how long its glorious career might have continued. Simon, who had married the King's sister, and overleapt the true position of a subject, was the last of the race at Leicester. He was undoubtedly a great patriot, and fell at the battle of Evesham, in 1265, in defence of the liberties of the country against the tyrannical usurpations of the Crown.

⁷ DOYLE'S *Official Baronage*.

⁸ *The Complete Peerage*.

⁹ *Hist. Worc.*, p. 166.

So I must take leave of this branch of the Mellent family, whose greatness thus collapsed in the national struggle for liberty, and return to the elder twin Waleran, with whom the story of the Wykes of North Wyke has to do. He, as already stated, succeeded to the earldom of Mellent and the Norman estates on the death of his father in 1118,¹ and thus became the most powerful of all the Norman chieftains. He was knighted at the age of sixteen, and invested with the earldom before he was nineteen.² He was evidently a man of strong and resolute character, had an indomitable spirit, shrank from no danger or undertaking, and possessed all the martial fire of his race. And being a near relation of the Kings of France and England, his pride of power and position seems to have urged him to a trial of strength with his King before he reached the age of twenty-one; and so, with the reckless, boldness of youth, he rebelled against his Sovereign, and being driven from one Norman stronghold to another, he finally retreated to his castle of Beaumont [Bello Monte]. This he was compelled to surrender, and being made prisoner, was brought to England and remained in close confinement for five years.³ At the end of that time, viz. In 1129, he was pardoned and restored to the earldom and estates. Both he and his twin brother, Robert, were present at the death of Henry I. in 1135. No sooner, however, had Henry breathed his last, than Waleran, forgetful of his obligations to the old King, declined to hold his fiefs under the distaff of the Empress Matilda, and hastening to England, became so warm a partisan of Stephen, that he obtained a promise of his infant daughter, Mary, in marriage,⁴ and they were fianced 22nd March, 1136 [Doyle]. The marriage never took place. History is silent as to the reason, for he was loyal to King Stephen during many years, though a man of turbulent and restless temperament. The King fully recognised the great value of Earl Waleran's friendship, and that he was of the highest importance to him to make use of his services. He was, indeed, Stephen's first favourite. He therefore made him in 1138, joint lieutenant of Normandy, and 1141 commander of his army, and in 1144 created him Comes de Wigornia, as a counterpoise to Matilda's brother Robert, the great Earl of Gloucester. Shortly afterwards, on some cause or other,

¹ The Complete Peerage and Doyle.

² Doyle's Official Baronage

³ He was a prisoner in England from 1124 to 1129 (Doyle's Official Baronage)

⁴ Hist. Worc. p168

⁵ The Complete peerage says that he was created "Comes de Wigornia in 1186 (?) while in Historic Worcestershire the date is given as 1139.

his mind softened towards the Empress Matilda. It is said that this took place under the influence of the Abbot of Tewkesbury, which town he had burnt only a few years before in revenge upon Robert of Gloucester for burning Worcester during his absence from it. Whilst thus hesitating in his allegiance to King Stephen, he determined to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and so in 1145 he took the cross, and became a Crusader in the following year [Doyle]. The state of the country at the time might well invite him to take this step, for Hume thus writes of it:- "The weakness of both sides having produced a tacit cessation of arms in England, many of the nobility enlisted themselves in a new Crusade." In his changing mood, Earl Waleran would readily seize the opportunity afforded him. Probably, in his increasing years, painful recollections of having broken his promise to Henry I. on his death-bed disturbed him, as well they might. But, whatever the cause, it is certain that on his return he took up Matilda's side, and when summoned by King Stephen in 1150 to surrender to him his castle of Worcester, he refused to do so. Whereupon, the King burnt the town, though he failed to take the castle. Not long after this event, Stephen and Matilda entered into a compact, to which both Waleran and his twin brother Robert were witnesses, whereby all further bloodshed was stopped between them, and the succession of Matilda's son Henry assured on the death of King Stephen. Waleran, however, had not finally parted with that fiery, insubordinate spirit which had characterised his previous life, for not long before his death, he rebelled against Henry II., as in his early days he had against Henry I., and with the same bad and good fortune as before, for he was again taken prisoner,⁶ and soon afterwards pardoned. But, martial and turbulent as his life had been, he yet proved himself to be a man of piety, for he liberally founded the Abbey of Bordesley,⁷ in the county of Worcester, and twenty-one days before his death, he entered his Abbey of Preaux, and there died 9th April, 1166. His career was a varied and remarkable one. No subject could boast of a more illustrious birth, or display greater arrogance of self-assertion. He was undoubtedly the most princely subject that ever held official position in the county of Worcester, and in the county of Devon his granddaughter Mary, who

⁶ He was taken prisoner by his nephew, Robert de Montfort, in 1152, and not released till he had restored to him his Fief of Montford [*Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, vol. II. P. cxxxvii., and *Historic Worcestershire*].

⁷ The Empress Matilda was a co-founder of this abbey.

married William de Vernon, sixth Earl of Devon, is the ancestress of all the earls of that county that have been since. He married Agnes de Montfort, heiress of Gournay-sur-Marne, daughter of Amauri, Count of Evreux,⁸ and by her had several sons, some of whom, no doubt, accompanied their first cousin, "Strongbow", to Ireland. That there were "de Wigornias" with him we know.⁹ The eldest of these sons was Robert, who succeeded Waleran as Earl of Mellent and Comes de Wigornia. His estates in Normandy were great, and in France and England considerable. He does not, however, seem to have exercised that control over events which his commanding position entitled him to do, but rather to have yielded to circumstances where his fiery, warlike, and indomitable father, and, indeed, all his predecessors, from Bernard to himself, would have resisted to the death. No wonder, then, that he had a rather inglorious and chequered career in Normandy and France, seeing that he was a vassal of both his cousins, the King of England and the King of France, who were naturally hostile, *so long as* Normandy remained an appanage of the English Crown. On this account, there were fierce quarrels between them towards the end of the twelfth century, and the early years of the next. The result of this strife between the two nations was the conquest of Normandy by France in 1204, and the consequent confiscation of all the lands and lordships held by the Earl of Mellent, both in that duchy and France. Towards him the French King was bitterly hostile, for he refused to offer to him any terms, and probably because he feared his power, owing to his immense territorial possessions. Thus outlawed, he took refuge in England, where, being one of the "Normanni," he was very uncertainly treated by King John, who, as before stated, at one time escheated his English lands, and at another restored them. He died as the King's annuitant in the year 1207, in name only Earl of Mellent, but still "Comes de Wigornia," for of that he had not been deprived. Thus ended the splendour of this great Norman family in the main male line. Its illustrious career from Bernard to the close of the life of Earl Waleran has never been excelled, probably never equalled, by any family, as warriors and statesmen. But for its force of character, its power to govern and administer, we might never have heard of the Norman Conquest, and so

⁸ *The Complete Peerage.*

⁹ Phillip de Wigornia held high office there and large estates in the reign of King John.

never have been blessed with the marvellous blood-mixture of the Norman and Saxon races, which has evolved the most liberty-loving, the most self-reliant, and, therefore, the most imperial and colonising people in the world's history; the greatest, the freest, the noblest in its aspirations of all nations; covering the world with its colonies, and bidding fair to make the English tongue the universal language of mankind. Bernard's descendants seem to have occupied a position in the Norman history somewhat like that held by this county in Queen Elizabeth's day, a position, the historical value and importance of which was so immense and far-reaching that it is impossible of calculation.

With the said Robert, Earl of Mellent and Comes de Wigornia, died the greatness of this the main line of the family. Ever afterwards, its members played a lower part in the world's affairs and high concerns. But still we find that William de Wig[ornia] of North Wyke, temp. 1227, was lord of many lands, and that his successors there were men of considerable position, and married into the chief families of the county.¹

During the thirteenth century, Wigornia is often written Wig' in the charters and records of that period. This is seen in Noake's *Worcester*, and is very general in the Episcopal Register of Bishop Giffard [1263-1303], lately published by the Worcestershire Historical Society. And it can be readily established *as a fact*, that, during this century, Wig' [or Wyg', and Wyk] or Wik, were indiscriminately written and identical. Innumerable are the instances which show this. A few will, however, suffice. In *Testa de Nevill* [p.468] we have Wigeb^{ga}, which just below becomes Wykeb^g. At page 257 there is Wigh'

¹ Sir William de Chevereston, Kt., son of John de Chevereston, and almost certainly a grandson of William de Wigornia [seeing that he held Wray in 1284-86 [*Feudal Aids*] married into the great knightly family of Bozum of Bozum's Hele.

² The Castle of Wodibromwig is also written in a deed dated 1301, Wodebromwic [*Antiquities*, by CHRISTOPHER CHATTOCK].

Old indexes, is identical with Wyk' or Wik', and has been so handed down as a general rule, though in the parish of South Tawton, we have an instance of the survival of both forms in the name of an old property of the Wyke family, viz. that of Wickington or Wiggington. In a Star Chamber Proceeding, temp. Philip and Mary, it is written in both ways, Wyggyngton and Wyckington. We thus learn from *Testa de Nevill* and other authorities that the Latin form Wigornia or Wig' soon gave way to its English form of Wyk or Wik, and therefore how it came to pass that William de Wigornia became William de Wik'.

The lands held by William de Wigornia, that is, de Wik' [who henceforth will be called William de Wik'], were extensive, and though scattered over a considerable area, practically lay in one particular tract of the county: that along which the red deer would travel on their way between the two royal forests of Dartmoor and Exmoor, and which was of high importance to the great families of the county when the pleasures and excitements of the chase were the exclusive privilege of its territorial lords. For, among other lands, the said William held the manor of Wray in Moreton under the King, and Wyke in Chawleigh, under the Baron of Okehampton. Now on the examination of a map of the county, one is struck with the fact that a road [probably the old pack-saddle road] runs in an almost straight line through the district, extending from Moreton to Chawleigh, and that in its course it passes either through, or by, the parishes of Chagford, Drewsteignton, Throwleigh, South Tawton, Spreyton, Sampford Courtenay, North Tawton, Nymet Tracy or Bow, Honeychurch, Broadwoodkelly, Bondleigh, and Winkleigh;³ and, oddly enough, this road for two miles divides North Wyke [which is bounded on the west by the River Taw, and on the east by a small tributary,] into almost exactly two equal parts. And on a further examination of the district, made up of the above and other adjoining parishes, it will be seen that on both sides of the road that thus runs through it, there are many homesteads called Wyke, not one of which is mentioned in *Domesday*, nor earlier than the reign of King John. They are all within the tract of the county described, over the greater part of which there can be no doubt the red deer rambled at their

³ In these parishes the Wyke family held lands in the days of the Tudors and, I believe, consecutively from the time of Henry III.

free will. The River Taw waters a considerable part of this their tramping ground, and as it travels on its way to the sea, it is fed by streamlets passing through many a thicket where they would find abundance of shade and food and water, and where, so long as the forest laws were in existence, they could ramble without fear of disturbance from ordinary mortals. That along this route they of old wandered at pleasure, we are often reminded by the frequency of the name "Nymet" throughout it. After disafforestation, however, in 1204, a great change necessarily came over this part of Devon, and large tracts of waste lands would be brought into cultivation and enclosed. To these would be given names [unless they already had them] as circumstances might suggest. Now, on either side of the road I have indicated, the Wyke homestead, as I have said, prevails, and it seems to me impossible of explanation under ordinary circumstances. It appears in Chagford, in North Tawton, in Winkleigh, in Chawleigh, and several times in the large parish of South Tawton, all of which were, I believe, held by William de Wyk. I dare affirm that this does not exist, nor anything like it, in any other district of the county. Is it, then, of easy explanation? I think it is, and that we shall find no difficulty if we examine the facts. Now, who were the overlords of almost the entire tract covered by the parishes from Moreton to Chawleigh inclusive at that period? They were the near blood-relations of the said William de Wyk, for they were the King, the Earls of Devon, Cornwall, and Gloucester; the Barons of Okehampton and Flamsted [de Tony]; the Lords Valletort, Brewer, and Botreaux. After disafforestation, waste lands of considerable extent would be in the hands of these overlords, and at the same time each of them would feel deeply concerned in the ruin that had lately overtaken the great and historic house of Mellent and Worcester, and the consequent dependence of the family on the sympathy and generous grants of lands from their rich territorial kindred in the West. The conclusion almost necessarily follows, that many of these lands, and others at their disposal, were given to the said William after the expulsion, in 1204, of his family from all their Norman and French estates; and that where these lands had no name, he followed a not uncommon custom of the day of calling them "Wyk", after his own, and where they had, sometimes by adding it as a prefix or affix. Hence the frequency of the Wyke homesteads throughout the said tract. There is also on Dartmoor a

“Wigford”, and formerly, if not still, lands in or near Chagford called “Wygdon,”⁴ names left behind probably by the de Wigornias.

The old mansion of North Wyke lies about midway between Moreton and Chawleigh. It is certain that in the early days of the family in Devon, the Wyke lands lay scattered both north and south of their chief residence; on the south, through South Tawton and Chagford to Moreton, and on the north to Chawleigh through North Tawton and Winkleigh; and down to comparatively modern times [temp. Henry VIII. and Elizabeth] we know from Chancery Proceedings, p.m. Inqs., and other records, that the Wyke family held estates in Chagford, Drewsteignton, Gidley, Throwleigh, Spreyton, Sampford Courtenay, North Tawton, Nymet Tracy, Zeal Monachorum, Winkleigh, Bondleigh, and South Molton, besides a large part of the wide parish of South Tawton, wherein lies North Wyke, the overlords of which parishes were near-of-kin to William de Wyk, as has been shown.

The said William [known also as “de Wray” and “de Chevereston,”⁵ because he held those manors], I think, also held in “South Teign.” It is certain that the Wykes held there in the thirteenth century from Subsidy Rolls, so probably from them it got the prefix of “Wyke”. But as this prefix was added in the time of the said William, or his father, there can be, I think, no reasonable doubt that he held “Wyke South Teign” in Chagford. Now “Wyke South Teign” was a member of the royal manor of South Tawton, but it seems also to have had some connection with the royal manor of Kenton, where William held the manor of Chevereston. He therefore held South Teign, if not under the King or the Earl of Cornwall, his cousin, then under another cousin, Ralph de Tony, Baron of Flamstead, under whom he also held North Wyke, Ash,⁶ and the other Wyke homesteads in South Tawton early in the thirteenth century. Wyke in Chawleigh he held under his nephew or cousin, Robert Courtenay, Baron of Okehampton Castle, but he probably

⁴ *Col. Pat. Rot.* 7 Ed. IV.

⁵ It seems clear that William de Wigornia had [with others] a son John, who took Chevereston and Wray, and that both passed on with this branch, inasmuch as they were held by John’s son, Sir William de Chevereston, in 1284-86 [*Feudal Aids*]. This Sir William was the grandfather of Sir John, who left his estates to his brother-in-law, the Earl of Devon.

⁶ “1596 May 27 John Wykes de Ashe was buried” [South Tawton Register].

Held other lands there under Ralph de Tony, for the name of “Tonifield” still lives in the parish. Anyhow, the lands he held under the great de Tony family were many. This is readily explained by the fact that he was Ralph de Tony’s cousin, and still more readily, if, as I suspect, there had been intermarriage between him and a near relation of the said Ralph, whose mother, Constance de Bello Monte, was sister of Ermengarde,⁷ Queen of Scotland, and great-neice of “Strongbow”; and there is good reason to look for such a marriage, for they were cousins, and the Inq. p.m. would seem to imply it. Let us see. We know that William held largely under de Tony early in the thirteenth century. But we also know that one Roger de Wyke held the manor of Wyke in Sussex under the same de Tony, from Inq. p.m. 2 Ed. I., No. 28. This Inq. p.m. further informs us that the said Roger had a sister called Godhilda, a peculiar and uncommon Christian name, but yet not uncommon in the de Tony family. And the Inq. further informs us that he held lands in Clifford, in Herefordshire, one of the “de Tony” strongholds on the Welsh borders. This being so, we cannot reasonably avoid the conclusion that some progenitor of the said Roger and Godhilda had married into this family, and by that marriage, had obtained considerable grants of land from the de Tonys, and that that progenitor was his father, William de Wyk, for we cannot well doubt that the said Roger was William’s son.

In the Devon Assize Roll for 28 Henry III. we learn that both Roger and Walter de Wyke [the latter is also called “de Wig” in this Roll] held in the “Hundred of South Tawton”; and Roger is mentioned in the de Tony Inq. p.m., 48 Henry III., as holding lands in South Tawton. This being so, we can scarcely doubt that the mother of the said Roger was a “de Tony”, connected with Clifford, and so

⁷ “Anno 32 Henry II., the king gave in marriage unto William King of Scots, his cosen, the Lady Ermengarde, daughter of Richard Viscount Beaumont, and kept a great feast continuing fower days together” [Hollingshed, p.463; and Pole, p.243].

“In the same year [1186] our Lord, the King of England, gave Ermengarde his kinswoman, dau. of Richard de Beaumont, in marriage to William, King of Scotland, and caused them to be married in his Chapel at Woodstock by Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, where he held, in their honour, great nuptial festivities at his palace, for a period of 4 days. Our Lord the King also then presented the King of Scotland with the Castle of Edinburgh, which the said King immediately gave to the before-named, Ermengarde, his wife, as a marriage portion, and, by way of increasing the same, he gave her £100 of yearly revenue, and 40 Knights’ Fees” [*Annals of Roger de Hoveden*. See also EYTON’S *Itinerary of King Henry II.*, pp. 268, 271].

a cousin of "Fair Rosamond," who was herself a de Tony, through her mother, Margaret de Tony, and so near-of-kin to her lover, King Henry II. We may then fairly conclude that it was both by marriage and kinship that William de Wyk obtained his lands within the manor of South Tawton; and Roger, Wyke in Sussex and lands in Clifford. The said Roger died in 1274. His nephew, Walter de Wyk, was his next heir [Inq. p.m. 2 Ed. I., No. 28], and under age at the time. Walter followed William at North Wyke, and was in possession in 1278 [Pole]. He was probably a son of Walter de Wyg' "or Wyk'," mentioned in the Assize Roll of 1263, mm. 31 and 42, as resident in South Tawton. To him succeeded Roger, Walter, and Roger, 19 Ed. III. [Pole]. This Roger had two or more sons, viz. John, of North Wyke, High Sheriff of Devon in 1403, and William, who succeeded his brother on his death without issue. Wyke, in Chawleigh, one of the fees of the aforesaid Roger, was held in 1400 by Joel Wyke, who was certainly either his son or grandson, inasmuch as Roger held it in 1346. The said "Joel and his wife Nichola" had the grant of an "oratory 12th June, 1400, to celebrate divine service in the chapel of St. James within their mansion of Flambard's Wyke in Chawleigh."⁸ William, son of Roger, succeeded to the chief estates, lived at North Wyke,⁹ and is the first of his family in the Wyke pedigree of the Heralds' Visitations, the earliest of which for Devon is dated 1531. In these visitations of family scrutiny as to the right of bearing particular arms, it is uncommon to find the Heralds taking notice of descent earlier than the reign of Richard II., because before that date heraldry had not become a science, nor the use of particular arms regarded as hereditary, and so crystallised into a family *right*. This "right", it was now the Heralds' duty to look into and protect, by obtaining from every family that used arms a proof of their claim and right to use them. And this could only be done by the setting forth of their pedigree, and showing immemorial use, or by proof of some grant of arms since the reign of Richard II. The *use*, indeed, began as early as the end of the twelfth century. Till then seals were the distinguishing mark and right of men of rank and position. But for the next hundred and fifty years,

⁸ *Register of Bishop Stafford*, p.283.

⁹ He is described "of North Wyke" in the abstracts of old family deeds in Ch. Pro., Whittington, i. No. 9, and from a Devon Fine, 14 Henry IV., No. 64, we know that he held his Court there.

[28] picture page. The picture shows the Effigy of Roger Wykes, Armiger. The text poorly copied but appears to be –

'Effigy in the Parish Church of St. Andrew, Trent, Co. Somerset of Roger Wykes, Armiger, younger son of William Wykes of North Wyke in South Tawton, Devon by Katherine, his wife da. And h of John Burnell of Cockatree in the Parish. He obtained Byndon and Axmouth, Devon, 1406 erected there the Lady Chapel 1425. He was the MP for Plympton St. Mary 1413, e.. launce(?) at the Battle of Agincourt 1415. His first w. was Joan wd. of Thomas Kettoway of Cayleway, da. of Thomas Bingham, Lord of Sutton-Bingham, Co. Somerset, ... Cayleway .. da. of Thomas Bingham. Lord of Sutton Bingham, Co. Somerset. By his w. Mary, da. (by Alice his w. da' of Sir William Filliol) of Sir Walter de Romesey and Ramsey who was grandson of Sir John Wharton (a descendant through the Tyrrels Clares and Giffards of Richard 1st. Duke of Normandy) by Ela his w. daur and co-h of John, Lord Biset, who was son (by Philippa his w. da of William Malbane, Baron of Nantwich, of Thomas, Lord Basset a descendant (through the Dunstanvilles and Reginald, Earl of Cornwall) of King Henry 1st. By his first w. Roger had John and probably other children. He entered into possession of her share of Rokebyrne, Hants, Combe Biset, Wilts 1448. He was Patron of the church of All Saints Sutton Bingham – 1422 to 1467. In right of his second w. Joan, h. of Biset he had during her life, Radbours Co. Dorset. His 3rd w. was Joan, da. h. of Thomas Chastelayne, Lord of Donnington and Trent, both in Co. Somerset, by Emma his w., dau and co-h of John de Cantelupe, Lord of Chilton-Cantelo, Co. Somerset.

In right of his third w. Roger held a third of the Manor of Trent. He held lands in Croke Burnell, South Tawton (presumably from his mother) & elsewhere. Relinquishing his paternal coat armour, erm, three Dane-axes sa. He assumed that of his mother's family, arg a chev betw three bernicles sa. Differentiating the chevron, which he bore ermines. Amongst over 70 variations of the name the predominant forms are Wake, Wike, Wyke, Wykes, and Weekes.

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armorial devices were changed at will, though their allusiveness to past history was generally kept. There went on, however, during the greater part of this time, a gradual evolution towards the stereotyping of particular arms, and claiming them as family rights. And before the end of the fourteenth century, they were regarded as the lawful possession of the users, to the exclusion of all others. It was doubtless on this account that the Heralds usually confined their attention to proof of pedigree and user from that period. Nor was this the only change that was completed in the reign of Richard II., for it was then that territorial names were generally taken as surnames, when the “name of the house” became the name of the family, and when, therefore, the “de” necessarily disappeared. And Pole states that this was so with the Wyke family, and that, henceforth, too, they were no more called “Wray”. They were, therefore, no longer of Wyke, or of Wray, but “Wyke” only, as a surname. The aforesaid William Wyke, son of Roger, married Katherine, daughter and co-heir of John Burnell, of Cocktree and Cruke Burnell, and who brought with her Cocktree and other lands. By her he had four sons – Richard, Roger, Henry, and John. The second son, Roger, according to Pole and other Devon historians, had Bindon in Axmouth given to him by Nicholas Bache, in 1406. At this time he could hardly have been of age; for he did not marry before 1422, nor die before 1467. His lands seem to have come to him through his mother’s family, for he held a moiety of Cruke Burnell¹ in North Tawton, and I surmise that Bindon became his by gift of some member of the Burnells. Nicholas Bache, it may be, married Katherine’s sister, and died childless. And this would completely explain the fact of his abandonment of his father’s arms and the adoption of his mother’s. He married three times; each wife was called Joan, and a daughter of a great house. His first was Joan, daughter of Thomas Bingham, lord of the manor of Sutton Bingham, county Somerset; his second was Joan, daughter and heir of Bisset; and his third wife was Joan, daughter and heir of Thomas Chasteleyne, of Dennington and Trent, in Somerset, by Emma, daughter and heir of John de Cantelupe, of Chilton Cantelo. The said Roger was M.P. for Plympton in 1413; and in 1415 he accompanied his cousin,

¹ In 1428 he “held ½ fee in Cruke Burnell [North Tawton], which John Burnell [his grandfather] lately held” [*Feudal Aids*].

the Earl of Devon, in the invasion of France by Henry V.,² and took part in the glorious victory of Agincourt. From 1422 to 1467, when he died, he was patron of Sutton Bingham. On 16th July, 1425,³ he obtained from Bishop Lacy a licence for an oratory in his mansion of Bindon. In 1448, on the death of his first wife's cousin, Joan Romesey, he entered into possession of her share of Rokebourne, Hants, and Combe Bisset, Wilts. In right of his second wife, Joan, he had Radbournes, in Dorset, and in the right of his third wife, Joan, he held the manor of Trent, in Somerset, and there, in the church of St. Andrew, is his monumental effigy,⁴ clad in armour, with the head resting on a tilting helm, crested with a barnacle goose, in allusion to his mother's coat-armour, which was "argent, a chevron between three barnacle geese, sable." His eldest son, John, married Joan, daughter and heir of John Camill, of Shapwick and Charborough, in Dorset. From that day to this Charborough has been held by his descendants. He died in 1488 [Inq. p.m. 4 Hen. VII., No. 46]. His son John succeeded him, and married Elizabeth, daughter of ... Lites, of Lites Cary, county Somerset, and by her had two sons, John and Richard. The elder, John, married Anna, daughter of Sir William Hody, of Pillesdon, Dorset, and was father of William, who married Joan, daughter of Thomas Cary, of Tor Mohun, and died without issue 3rd June, 1526 [Inq. p.m. 18 Hen. VIII.]. His next heir was his uncle Richard, "aged sixty" when the Inq. was taken. He married Joan, daughter of Somaster of and by her had four daughters, co-heirs, viz. Dorothy, aged five; Alice, aged four; Mary, aged two; and Elizabeth, aged one at the father's death in 1527 [Inq. p.m. 19 Hen. VIII., No. 112]. Mary married Walter Erle,⁵ of Colyton, county Devon, and took with her Bindon and Charborough. The martial spirit of her race cropped up during the unhappy Civil War, when the whole of the West of England was torn by the rival factions and conscience drew the best of men into opposite camps. Among her descendants who took a prominent place in that unhappy strife were a grandson and a great-grandson of marked ability and capable generalship, both of whom

² Accounts of Exchequer, Army Bundle, 52, No. 2, Muster Roll of the army of Henry V. taken near Southampton, 1417.

³ Exon Episcopal Register – "to have a Chapel within his Manor House of Bindon."

⁴ ROGERS' *Memorials of the West*, wherein is given a brief history of the family and a sketch of the effigy.

⁵ For a pedigree of the Erles, see *Genealogist*, vol. II. P. 300.

obtained great repute as gallant soldiers. There were the Parliamentarian, Sir Walter Erle,⁶ of Charborough Park, who distinguished himself at the siege of Lyme Regis and Corfe Castle, and his cousin, Colonel John Giffard,⁷ head of the House of Brightleigh, the brilliant cavalier, whose praises are sung by Prince in his *Worthies of Devon*. They fought on opposite sides, though no doubt equally honest and patriotic. Fortunately, they did not come into personal conflict nor die during the struggle.

This branch of the House of North Wyke still flourishes at Charborough Park, in Dorset, and has shone throughout with a strong, steady light, holding its estates intact for over four hundred and fifty years, though these have passed through the distaff on no less than six occasions: [1] when Mary Wyke married Walter Erle;⁸ [2] when Elixabeth Erle married Henry Drax, of Ellerton Abbey, M.P. for Lyme Regis and Wareham; [3] when Sarah F. Erle-Drax married Richard Grosvenor, of Eaton Hall; [4] when Jane, his daughter, married John S. W. Sawbridge; [5] when Jane, daughter of Sawbridge Erle-Drax married Captain Burton of the Guards; and [6] when Ernle, daughter of Captain Burton, married the eldest son of Lord Dunsany. But in spite of this, [it may, indeed, be in consequence] from that day the Squire of Bindon married the heir of Charborough [about 1405] to the present time, they have ranked among the great families of Dorset, and the name of "Erle-Drax" is a household word in the county. It is a pity that the name of "Wyke" has disappeared, because they would have had no place there without it. Long, however, may they flourish as a prosperous branch of the old North Wyke tree, and show proof that the blood of an old warrior race still runs strongly in their veins.

Henry, the third son of William and Katherine Burnell, married Julian, daughter of John Lutterell, of _____. The marriage settlement is dated 8 Henry V. [Whittington, i. Weekes v. Weekes]. Richard, the eldest son, succeeded his father after 1420, but before 1426, when the said Richard married Elizabeth,⁹ daughter and co-heir of John Avenell, of

⁶ He was son of Thomas [son of Walter Erle, by his wife Mary Wyke] who married Dorothy, daughter of Pole of Shute.

⁷ His grandmother was Honor Erle, aunt of the Parliamentarian, Sir Walter Erle, of Charborough Park, Dorset.

⁸ Their marriage is entered as follows in the Colyton Register: "22 October 1547, Walter Erle, of Colcomb, gent., was wedded to Mary Wyke, one of the daughters and heirs to Richard Wyke, of Bindon."

⁹ Old Family Deeds [abstracts of] in Ch. Pro., Whittington, i. No. 9.

Blackpool, in South Molton, by Joan, his wife, daughter and heir of Walter Gambon, of Blackpool and Moreston. The said John was a younger son of Robert Avenell, of Loxbeare, who, at that time, represented in the male line, Baldwin de Brionne [great-grandson of Rollo],¹ who married the Conqueror's niece, and was made Baron of Okehampton and Vice Comes of Devon for life. He built the castles of Okehampton and Exeter, and had two sons – Richard, who succeeded his father and died *s.p.*, and William de Avenell [so called because born at Avenell, in Normandy], who died in his brother's lifetime. The said William founded Cowick Priory, and the chapel at Exeter Castle, with its four prebendaries. Ralph, his son, took the barony of Okehampton and the other honours of his grandfather, Baldwin, but was dispossessed, as already stated, through the injured sentiment and consequent resentment of the powerful Reginald, Earl of Cornwall. He married his cousin Joan, daughter of Richard de Redvers, second Earl of Devon, and by her had several sons, who became heads of important houses in different parts of the kingdom. The heir of one of these sons, Isabell, carried Haddon Hall in marriage to the Vernon family. His son Nicholas married a daughter and co-heir of William Fitz-Reginald,² who held Sheepwash [given to him by the Conqueror] in the reign of Henry I. [*Liber Niger*]. Loxbeare was the seat of the Devon line from temp. Henry III., and the aforesaid John was a younger son of that house, and married Walter Gambon's daughter, Joan, about 1400. Their daughter Elizabeth carried the manor of Blackpool and the arms of the barony of Okehampton and the Avenells into the Wyke family. Richard and Elizabeth seem to have lived chiefly at Cocktree, the old home of his mother's family, the Burnells. He is usually described as "of Cocktree" in the eighteen old deeds, abstracts of which are to be found in Ch. Pro., *Weekes v. Weekes* [Whittington, i. 9]. In two of these, dated respectively 1428 and 1433, we have "Richard of Cocktree," and in one dated 1475 we read:-

"John Wykys, of Wyke, did grant and confirm to Thomas Fulford, Kt., John Speake, Esq., Michael Dennis, Gen., Richard Wekys, Clerk, all his lands ... in Spreyton Yatton, Pollesland, ... in Chevereston and Roborough in Parish of Roborough, ...

¹ LYSONS' *Devon*, p. 189.

² *Testa de Nevill*. Battesthorne, given to him by William de Vernon, Comes de Insula and Devon [Cal. Gen., 39 Henry III., No. 12].

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all which lately were of Richard Wykys of Cocktree, father of the said John Wyke”

This seems to indicate that he lived and died at Cocktree. His father William, we know, both from these old deeds and “Fines”, resided at North Wyke, and held Court there. Considerable architectural changes and additions were made during Richard’s tenure. Much of the older part of the house belongs to his time. The chapel wing, though not wholly as it is now, was his work. This seems to be evident from the fact that in 1439 he obtained a general licence to celebrate divine worship wherever he might be in residence. The licence was granted by Bishop Lacy and is as follows:-

“A^o 1439. Licentia Celebrandi. Itm. Sexto die mensi# Octobris anno dni supradco apud Radeway dominus concessi# Licentiam Rico Wyke Elizabeth ux eius & Johannæ Avenell³ ut in quocumq# loco honesto cultui divino disposito infra dioc Exonie# ubitat situat divina possint & utq# eorum posset ?? sentia facere celebrar#. Dumtamen ecctiis poch infra quar limites hujus modi divina cor# tigerint [celebrari] nullum fiat p’indicm [seu] genet ad bn placitum dno tantummodo duratur &c.” [Lacy, fol. Clxxxviiij.].*(Note the hash sign is used here instead of a sign like a stretched 3 which I think is short for -que)*

Translation: “Also on the sixth day of the month of October in the year of our Lord aforesaid at Radeway, the Lord Bishop granted his Licence to Richard Wyke Elizabeth his wife & Joan Avenell, that in any decent place whatsoever properly arranged for Divine worship, situated anywhere within the Diocese of Exeter they may be able, and each of them severally may be able, to cause Divine Service to be celebrated by any duly qualified Priests in the presence of themselves and any one of them; provided that no disadvantage be done, or accrue to the Parish Churches within the limits of which the said Divine Services shall happen [to be celebrated]. The said Licence to hold good during the Lord Bishop’s pleasure only.”

This was a very generous grant, the Bishop being probably moved thereto by the said Richard’s munificence to the Church. He had three residences: his father’s, of North Wyke; his mother’s, of Cocktree; and his wife’s, of Blackpool, in South Molton. The latter was held by Elizabeth’s ancestor, Walter Gambon, in 1303, who [or his son Walter] in 1332 obtained a licence for an oratory there to celebrate divine worship⁴. The general licence to the said Richard gave him chapels at his three residences. That at North

³ Her mother’s name was Joan, and she had a sister so called.

⁴ *Bishop Grandisson’s Register*, vol. II. P. 652.

Wyke would naturally be treated as the most important, because the mansion house of his forefathers for two hundred years. It still exists. In design it is wholly mediæval, and corresponds very closely with the directions of King Henry III. to his servants [who were in charge of certain royal residences] as to the form and structure of chapels for his Queen [Liberate Rolls].⁵ The distinctive features of these chapels were [1] a sacrarium open to roof; [2] a moulded beam across the chapel carrying a gallery, overlooking the sacrarium; [3] a room behind this gallery, with a screen between, and used either for religious, or domestic purposes, as circumstances might require; [4] under this room [3] the chapel proper, for retainers, tenants, and servants. The North Wyke chapel corresponds exactly with this description, and it was no doubt completed before the “licence to celebrate” was granted in 1439. The said Richard had a large estate, a generous disposition, and a religious mind; hence no doubt the episcopal goodwill. He rebuilt the parish church⁶ [probably as lessee of the rectory^{6a}], and left it as a work for the admiration of all ages. The roof is finely timbered, and the bosses throughout beautifully carved with angels and other figures. The church consists of nave, chancel, north and south aisles, and the Wyke chapel. With the exception of the latter, which is of granite, the pillars, capitals, and arches are all of Beer stone, which is unknown elsewhere among the churches bordering on Dartmoor, where excellent granite abounds and is unquestionably *the* building stone of the district. This marked difference in the use of material is explained by the fact, that the Beer quarry adjoined, even if it was not actually a part of, the Bindon estate held by Roger, and that the stone was probably Roger’s gift in aid of his brother’s good work. Towards the end of his life, Richard added the Wyke chapel as a last resting-place for himself and his posterity. He died before 1475, as we have seen. By his wife Elizabeth Avenell he had three sons – William, John, and Richard. John, the second son, was, I suggest, the “John Wykys” whose name so often appears in the Patent and other rolls of Edward IV.’s reign, as holding

⁵ TURNER’S *Domestic Architecture*.

⁶ This is recorded in a MS. Lately in possession of the Arnold family. It is certain the parish church was rebuilt in the time he held North Wyke, and that the general use of Beer stone can only be explained by the fact that it was his brother Roger’s gift.

^{6a} It is stated in Ch. Pro., “Weekes v. Oxenham,” that the Wyke family were lessees some generations before the reign of Henry VIII.

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high and lucrative appointments under the King, and who was in such high favour that the King stood godfather to his son Edward. And it is significant that he appointed him warden of the Stannary Court in Devon and Cornwall, in which office the North Wyke family had been oftejn interested, and also that in one of the eighteen old deeds, dated 1475, we have the name “John Wykys” [a most unusual form] spelt exactly as in King Edward’s Letters Patent. Richard took orders, was rector of the Stannary town of Lydford, and built the beautiful tower there. He was alive in 1475, and died rector of Sampford Courtenay. His will was proved 6th September, 1483, at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, wherein his name is written Richard Wyxe.

William, the eldest son, succeeded his father about 1470. He is described in one of the eighteen old deeds as “William Wyke the elder” [1489]. He had several children, and among them a son William, and two daughters, the elder of whom, Margaret, married Simon Whiddon, and was grandmother to Sir John Whiddon, the judge, of Whiddon Park; and the younger, Alice, married Richard Taverner, lord of the manor of South Zeal, by whom he had an only child, Elizabeth,⁷ who married Richard Burgoyne,^{7a} recorder of Exeter, and was the ancestress of the Burgoyne branch that flourished in Devon.

The eldest son, William, married Jane, daughter of William Prideaux, of Adeston and Theuborough, escheator of Cornwall, by Alice, daughter and co-heir of Stephen Giffard, of Theuborough,⁸ and was the head of his house in 1500. In that year a striking occurrence happened in the parish of South Tawton, which is told in *Notes and Queries*, dated 18th May, 1895, and stated to be taken from the “Records”.⁹ It is as follows:-

“About this time [A.D.1500] the two sacred and Royal Princes, Arthur and Henry, sons of the High and Mighty Sovereign Lord the King [Henry VII.], were sojourning under special care and tutelage in the County of Devon, and as was the custom for the promotion of health and pleasure the before-mentioned most Royal Princes were riding, mounted on Royal horses, in the neighbourhood of the said tenement of the said Thomas Bruteton ... when the Prince’s horse, which was foremost, suddenly, and with exceeding

⁷ Court rolls of Itton Manor. – Miss Lega-Weekes.

^{7a} He was a descendant of the Burgoynes of Sutton, county Bedford [see VIVIAN’S *Devon Visitations*, under Burgoyne].

⁸ Heralds’ Visitations, Devon.

⁹ The correspondent of *Notes and Queries* unfortunately gave no reference to these “Records”.

malice and fury, occasioned by the intervention of some opposing and terrifying object, started aside, and to the imminent danger of the Prince could not be held by the reins, and being actuated by excessive rage would not endure the government of such young and tender hands, whereat several and many noble persons ... much fearing for the safety of their young Prince, came with exceeding swiftness to the spot, and with them the other Prince his brother. But when they all perceived the dreadful rage and fury of the horse, not being able for their great danger to approach nearer, betook themselves to prayer, and the young Prince being still on the animal, went very near to death. Charles Bruteton, son of Thomas Bruteton, was employing himself, for the advantage of his Father, on some ploughed land near the spot, and drawn by the noise and confusion, on beholding the Prince's plight and extreme danger, like a good and most loyal subject, did, to his personal and great peril, advance without fear, and taking the furious horse by the bridle, held it until some other persons could assist the Royal rider to dismount, and did thereby effectually save the life of the said Prince, who most graciously did, upon the spot, return abundant thanks to the said Charles Bruteton, giving at the same time many hopes of reward when the King should have been made known the particulars of the action ... The King was then in London, and on hearing the above news, was pleased to grant in recompense to the said Charles Bruteton for his *arms*, two chevrons, whereunto were added three horseshoes, in commemoration of the above mentioned most worthy action. Whereunto was afterwards added a grant of 300 acres of good arable land of the King's free gift."

The contributor to *Notes and Queries* [the correspondence referred to *grants* of horseshoes for coats-of-arms] added, "the scene of the adventure was at *South Tawton*", and "the arms described are emblazoned in one of the windows of the Guildhall at Exeter, commemorative of the late Charles Brutton, Esq., Mayor in 1845". Now the question arises, Whence came those young princes and whither going? They were the sons of a daughter of Edward IV., and at that time there lived in Devon another daughter, wife of the eldest son^{9a} of the Earl of Devon, who held Okehampton Castle as one of his residences. It may therefore be safely concluded that these young princes were at the time on a visit to their aunt at Okehampton Castle, and were ambitious to try their skill on the backs of horses invigorated by the air of Dartmoor. At no great distance from Okehampton Castle lies North Wyke [seven miles]. The mistress of the house there, Jane Prideaux, daughter of

^{9a} He succeeded his father 28th May, 1509.

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William, escheator of Cornwall, was a descendant of Roger de Mortuo Mari, Earl of March,¹ and therefore of *kin* both to the Countess and to the young princes. Then, too, "John Wykys," so high in favour with Edward IV., and so well known to the Countess and the young princes, was almost certainly her husband's uncle, and it may even be that he was on a visit to the home of his forefathers at the time. There might, therefore, have been very strong reasons for bending their steps thitherward. Indeed, it is difficult to suggest that they could have been where they were except with the object of going to North Wyke, as there was no other family of importance near the spot where Prince Arthur was rescued from his peril. There can be, I think, no reasonable doubt that they were on their way to, and did actually visit, North Wyke at that time, and there is strong confirmation of this conclusion by the fact that over the gatehouse are the royal arms of the *early Tudor period* placed there almost certainly circa 1500, which is about the date of the gatehouse² itself, and so commemorative of the event. Thus, there is attached to the royal arms, which still look down on the spot where the princes must, if at all, have obtained entrance, an intensely interesting story.

Prince Arthur died two years after his eventful visit to Devon, and lies buried in the choir of Worcester Cathedral not far from King John, in an ornate sepulchre. It is highly suggestive of some intangible energy why North Wyke should be so mixed up with Worcestershire. For [1] William de Wigornia, the first of his family at North Wyke, was the grandson of the most potent lord of his time Waleran, Comes de Wigornia. [2] Prince Arthur, not long after his visit there, dies and is buried at Worcester. [3] The writer of this paper is the present head of the Wyke family, one of the oldest in Devon, and in Worcestershire, where he is also resident, he represents [and so far as he knows *alone*] the greatest subject of all time who has taken part in that county's affairs. [4] The rectory of Chaddesley Corbett, in the county of Worcester, was given by Thomas, Earl of Warwick, to the Collegiate Church of Warwick. The same Thomas, the son and heir of Alice de Tony, lady of South Tawton, gave the rectory of South Tawton to the Collegiate Church of Windsor. These coincidences [for the writer's residences are The Monks in Chaddesley Corbett and

¹ COLBY'S *Devon Visitation*.

² An excellent sketch of this appeared in *Trans. Devon. Assoc.*, xxxiii by Mrs. Lega-Weekes.

North Wyke in South Tawton] strike one as rather out of the common. Whether they have any psychological or other latent meaning, bordering on the fringe of some hidden law, is beyond the ken of man. The aforesaid William died 31st March, 14 He. VIII., and his Inq. p.m. was taken 7th October, 15 Hen. VIII. [For an abstract of this see *Trans. Devon. Assoc.*, 1902, p.638]. He had several children by his wife, Jane Prideaux – John, Richard, Thomas, and William, and a daughter Joan, who married John Baren. His eldest son John succeeded him, and was on his father's death "aged twenty-seven years". He married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of William, son and heir of Humphrey Pokeswill, of Dorset and Chricheston [or Criston] in Somerset, by his wife Alice, daughter of William Wadham, of Catherston, county Dorset, son of Sir John Wadham, of Merifield, county Somerset, and Wadham, county Devon. The marriage settlement of William Pokeswill³ and Alice Wadham, dated tenth year of Henry VII., is in my hands, and well preserved. As it is more than four hundred years old, it may be interesting to the members of this Association. It is as follows:-

"This Indenture made xvijth day of August the xth yere of the reigne of Kyng Henry the VII. between Humphrey Pokeswill and William Pokeswill sonne and heire apparent of the seide Humphrey of the one p'tie and William Wadhm of Catherston⁴ withyn the Counte of Dorset of that other p'tie bereth witnesse that it was agreid and fully concluded betweene the seide p'ties that the seide William Pokeswill shall by the grace of goode before the fest of all hallowen next insuing take to wife Alis Wadham sister to the seide William Wadhm and to hure to be maried and solempnysed in matrimonye after the lawe and custome of Holy Church, and the seide Alis shall by the gce of godde before the seide ffest of all hallowen take to husband the seide William Pokeswill, and to him be maried and solempnysed in matrimonye after the lawe of Holy Church, and the seide Humphrey Pokeswill shall make, or cause to be made a sufficient astate in the lawe of all his manōs landes. Tenēt. And rents &c. ... withall their appurtennces to Robert Stawell John Payne and to the seide William Waddam esquyers to their heires and assignes forevmore to thentent use and behoof [?] hereafter insuing, that is to say, that the seide Robert Stawell John Payne and William Wadhm shall immediately after

³ It was found among the papers of a descendant of Richard Weekes, who, as we know from Ch. Pro., violently broke open the deed-chest and carried off the contents, among which was this settlement [see p.48].

⁴ In *Memorials of the West*, by ROGERS, will be found an interesting account of his descendants.

[#] picture

the seide astate by the seide Humphrey to them made stonde ffeffees to the use and behoof [?] of the seid William Pokeswill and Alis and to the heirs of the body of the seide William Pokeswill lawfull begottyn and for defaute of such Issue to the right heires of the seide Humphrey, that is to sei of the Manō of Christon with all thappurtenñices and of certain landes and ten'tes in Churchill and Lynkcombe ... within the Countee of Soms^t. Provided always that if the seide William Pokeswill decease lyvyng the seide Alys and the seide Humphrey fader to the seide William and Elizabeth wife to the seide Humphrey that then the seide ffeffees shall be and stande ffeffees of the seide Manor of Christon ... to the use of the seide Humphrey and Elizabeth his wife and to the heires of the seide Humphrey forevmore at the election and will of the seide Humphrey and Elizabeth his wife and if the seide Humphrey and Elizabeth after the death of the seide William chose and elect that the seide ffeffees shall stonde ffeffees to their use of the Manor of Christon aforesaide that then the seide ffeffees shall be and stonde ffeffees of all the londes and ten'ts ... in Uphill Churchyll and Lynkecombe with ther appurten'tees withyn the seide Countee of Soms^t which the seide ffeffees have of the [?] and ffeffement of the seide Humphrey Pokeswill to the use and behonyth of the seide Alis for the term of hur life, and after the decease of the seide Alys to the use of the right heir of the seide Humphrey aforesaid. Provided alway that if the seide William Pokeswill overlife the seide Humphrey his fader and Elizabeth his moder that then the forseid ffeffees shall stonde ffeffees of the forseide manor of Christon with thappurtenñices of the forseide londes and ten'tes in Churchill and Lynkecombe to the use and behonyth before rehersed, and ... that it is covnanted and agreed of the ptie of the seide Humphry that is to say that he shall apparell the seide William his sonne ayenst the day of his maridge conveniently after his desire at his cost and charges and ... to gefe to the seide Robert Stawell xx^s sterling for a hoggeshedde of Wyne for the dener the seide day of maridge. And the seide William Wadhm shall pay or cause to be paid at the seide day of maridge to the seide Humphrey^{4a} 20^{li} sterling and vi^{li} vi^s viii^{dr} sterling to the seide William Pokeswill, and at the ffest of Seynt Michell the archangell that shall be in the yere of our Lord mccccclxxxvi or within a moneth after the seide ffest of Seynt Michell the seide William Wadhm shall pay or cause to be paid to the seide Humphrey or to his certeyne attorney xiii^{li} vi^s viii^d of lawful money of ynglond. And the seide William Wadhm shall apparell the seide Alis sister accordyng to hur desire at his ppris cost and charges and over that shall bere or cause to be borne all other charges ... that shall be hadde and expended at

^{4a} We here see that the bridegroom's father received a considerable part of the bride's fortune. This was always the case when she married the heir to a landed estate. She received a *quid pro quo* by having a portion of these estates settled on her in case she survived her husband. We see the same thing proposed in the Southcote negotiations later on.

the seide day of maridge to the which covenant afore rehersed of the p'te of the said Humphrey Pokeswill and William his sonne or by one of them to be well and truly pformed ... byndeth them ... their heirs and their executors to the seid Robert Stawell and William Wadhme or to their certeigne attorney immediately after any [?] afore rehersed by them or one of them broken. In witness whereof to this Indenture remaynyng with the seide William Wadhme the said Humphrey Pokeswill and William his sonne putt ther seales yeven the day and yere afore rehersed.”

Elizabeth, the daughter and heir of the said William and Alice, and wife of the aforesaid John Wyke, died before 1540,⁵ for in that year he made a settlement on, and took to wife, Joan Wray, of Wray, in Thrushelton, by whom he had no issue. By his first wife he had a son, John, who, on his death, 10th August, 1545, was found to be “twenty years and upwards” [Inq. p.m. 37 Hen. VIII.; see Report for 1902, p.639]. He married, soon after coming of age, Mary, one of the daughters of Sir Roger Giffard, of Brightleigh, by his wife Margaret, only child of John Cobleigh, and heir to the large estates in North Devon of the Fitz-Warin family. Her eldest brother, John, married Mary, daughter of the celebrated Sir Richard Grenville, who, in his ship called the *Revenge*, fought the whole of the Spanish fleet of fifty-two sail for twelve hours, sank four ships, and killed a thousand men before he surrendered.

The said John lies in effigy in the Wyke chapel of the parish church. In the Report for 1901 of the Devonshire Association there is an excellent sketch⁶ of this fine old tomb. He was born in 1524 and buried 1st November, 1591, and obtained in his day considerable repute as a soldier; and the popular voice still catches the echoes of the long-ago past, which marked him out as “Warrior” Wykes, for to this day he is known by no other name to all the local inhabitants. He was a captain in the Devon Militia, [the standing army of that time], and as he not only lies in armour, but is represented with spurs, it is evident that he held command in a horse regiment. It is supposed that he saw foreign service, and fought at Havre de Grace, and that he was the “Captain Wykes” who was wounded there. Whether this be so or not, it is certain that he deeply impressed the multitude of the neighbourhood with a lasting sense of his bravery as a soldier, and that he had done deeds worthy of his country

⁵ She was buried 1536-7 [South Tawton Parish Accounts]. – Miss Lega-Weekes.

⁶ By Mrs. Lega-Weekes.

[#] picture

[#] picture

and the honour of his house. It is probable that the one warlike spirit stirred him to lend a hand against the Spaniards in 1588, for he was certainly from home⁷ at the time. As a warrior he must have been brave to obtain his repute, and we know from Chancery Depositions that he was a man of strict integrity, and would not suffer anyone belonging to him to act oppressively or do a thing which was not strictly righteous.

By his wife Mary Giffard he had a large family of eight sons, viz. Roger, Mark, William, John, Launcelot, Erkenwald, Walter, and Christopher, and three daughters, of whom Edith and Gartred died young, and Honor married Arthur Harris, brother of Sir Thomas Harris, and was buried at Cornworth 25th October, 1601 [*vide Trans. Devon. Assoc.*, 1893, p.477].

Mark, the second son, married Elizabeth, daughter of Knapman, and by her [who died in 1577] had a son, John [of whom hereafter]. William, the third son, married Agnes, daughter of _____ Gough, rector of Drewsteignton and had a son, Simon. John the fourth son, was vicar of South Tawton, and afterwards rector of Drewsteignton, and married [1] Isabella Glandfield,⁸ and [2] Alice Harris of Dartington, widow. Launcelot died young. Erkenwald married Elizabeth, daughter of _____ Probyn, of North Tawton; and the youngest, Christopher, married Mary, daughter of John Prouz, of Gidley Castle and Chagford.

The said John died in October, 1591. In 1592 his widow dutifully and with pride erected the beautiful monumental effigy-tomb in the Wyke chapel, as an everlasting memorial of *his* worth and *her* devotion. She survived till (after) 1592 and held North Wyke till her death. Roger, the eldest son, then succeeded. He married Jane, daughter of William Parker,¹ merchant, of London, by Joan, daughter of _____ Grindal, which Joan afterwards married Richard Duke, of Otterton, and later, Roger Giffard –[a younger son of Sir Roger], of Tiverton Castle. He was clearly no favourite with his parents. His selfishness came too transparently before them to secure their confidence. He did not however, long survive to enjoy the property, for he died in 1603-4, when he was succeeded by his son John, aged seventeen. Two of his daughters married sons of the House of Fursdon: the eldest, Mary, Nicholas, son and heir

⁷ In the Lay Subsidy for 1588 the name of Mrs. Mary Wyke is entered in place of her husband, which shows he was away from home at the time [*vide Trans. Devon. Assoc.*, xxxiii.].

⁸ Marriage licence dated 1580.

⁹ Marriage licence dated 13th January, 1612.

¹ Ch. Pro., 2nd series, bundle 172.

of George Fursdon, from whom descend the Fursdons of Fursdon to the present day. Another of his daughters, Frances, married John Berry, of Croscombe and Berry Narbor. The young son and heir, John, before he had reached the early age of eighteen, married Grace, daughter of Arthur Arscott, of Tetcot. Thoughtlessness and uncared-for expenditure ran all through his life, and when he died, in May, 1650, he had much encumbered the estates, and was so much in debt that his only surviving son, John, escorted his body to the church for burial, with about twenty retainers, as he feared its arrest for debt on the way.² By his wife Grace he had two sons, Roger and John, and five daughters – Grace, Mary, Elizabeth, Jane, and Frances. Elizabeth married Daubeny; Jane, Roger, second son of Sir John Whiddon; and Frances, Thomas Mainwaring, Clericus. John married³ Priscilla, widow of Richard Hole, of Blackhall, and daughter of _____ Kingwell, of Crediton. Roger, the eldest son and heir, was born at Tetcot,⁴ and baptised 7th March, 1603-4. He married twice, first, Mary,⁵ daughter of Robert Burgoyne, lord of South Zeal Manor. She was buried 4th August, 1634.⁶ He married secondly, in 1635 or 1636, Mary, second daughter of Thomas Southcott, of Mohun's Ottery,^{6a} by whom he had two children – Katherine, born in 1636, and John in 1638. It is curious that in both cases he married unknown to parents, and whilst the deeds of settlement were in preparation, and afterwards invoked the aid of Chancery, to compel the wife's father to pay the marriage portion which had been agreed on between the parents: and afterwards, his own father, to settle his estates as he had promised. This recklessness and contention presaged mischief to the family. The Bills he filed in Chancery against his two fathers-in-law are interesting, and so a few extracts from them may be acceptable.

1. "Weekes v. Burgoyne.".... Roger son and heir of John Weekes of Weeke a treaty of marriage between him and Robert Burgoyne of South Zeal Esq. for his daughter Mary After the said Robert Burgoyne saw there was good liking between your orator an the said Mary, and their affections settled, that he thought it would hardly break off for want of portion, the said

² Whittington, i. No. 9 [Weekes v. Weekes].

³ "1644, May 4. John Weekes & Priscilla Hole married" [St Edmund's, Exeter]. Marriage licence dated 4th May, 1644.

⁴ S.Tawton Register.

⁵ Marriage licence dated February 8th, 1629.

⁶ S.Tawton Register.

^{6a} The Southcotes obtained Mohun's Ottery by marriage with the Carew heiress; the Carews, by marriage with the heiress of Mohun, son of the Lord of Dunster; and Mohun, by marriage with the heiress of Fleming.

Robert Burgoine in thrift and policy pretended some backwardness and offered to give but only 1000 marks in marriage with the said Mary, although he did well know that your Orator might have had double that portion if he would estrange his affection from the said Mary and match elsewhere. But he, perceiving that the said Orator and the said Mary had settled their affections, did in further favour of his own purse pretend that he disliked the said marriage, though in truth he did secretly much desire it He protracted and delayed it in hope they would marry without consent of Parents Robert Burgoyne died, and the mother consented to give £500 as a portion, and said this would maintain them Your Orator's Father had agreed to settle, &c but his thigh being broken he could not go to his Counsel, &c &c. In the meantime your Orator's wife died, &c. May it, therefore, please your lordship, &c. [This Ch. Pro. Is dated 30th January, 1635].

2. "Weekes v. Southcote." Your Orator Roger Weekes of North Wyke Gent. Son and heir apparent of John Weekes of North Wyke Esq. sheweth that whereas in the 10th year of his Majesty that now is, a portion for a marriage [by God's permission] to be had and solemnized between your orator and Mary Southcote, second daughter of Thomas Southcote, of Mohun Ottery Esq. and a treaty that was then, and shortly thereafter had between them the said John Weekes and Thomas Southcote touching the settlement of the lands and estates of the said John Weekes upon your Orator, and for providing a competent and convenient jointure for the said Mary &c. And a meeting being appointed by and between the said John Weekes and Thomas Southcote at Larkbeare There then met, the said John Weekes and Thomas Southcote and his wife, with some friends on either side and it was then and there agreed upon, by and between the said John Weekes and Thomas Southcote to this effect, [1] that the said daughter Mary, unto the said John Weekes, your Orator's Father the sum of £1,400 And that the said John Weekes was then make a jointure unto the said Mary of some lands &c. during the life of the said Mary, in case she should happen to survive your Orator, of the yearly value of £160 &c. And the said John Weekes was by the said agreement to settle upon your orator and *heir-male* of the body all the manors lands &c. of the said John Weekes And at the said meeting at Larkbeare Richard Duck Esq. Counsellor at Law being brought thither by the said Thomas Southcote, Katherine Southcote the wife of the said Thomas, desired your Orator's Father and the said Thomas Southcote, that your Orator and the said Mary might be married and that then afterwards the said £1,400 should be paid &c. and the lands settled as aforesaid, and your Orator's said Father then agreed that if the said Thomas Southcote would perform his promise

your Orator's Father would do the like, and therefore your Orator being at Mohun's Ottery the dwelling House of Thomas Southcote aforesaid, he, trusting on the promise of your Orator's Father, and of the said Thomas Southcote, took to wife the said Mary Southcote about two years since &c. &c. Your Orator hath also since the marriage gotten your Orator's said Father, and Thomas Southcote, your orator's Father in law, to meet at Collumpton to reconcile and end their differences between them, but the said John Weekes, coming thither with a lawyer on his part, the said Thomas Southcote met them bringing only Edmund Fortescue Esq. his son in law with him seemed unwilling to treat about the performance of the former agreement, but proposed a new treaty &c. the said meeting took no effect, by reason whereof your Orator and his wife and one child have received great damage and loss. Now forasmuch as your Orator has no power to compel the said Thomas Southcote to pay the said £1400 to the said John Weekes, nor yet to compel the said John Weekes to settle &c. &c. but by petition to the Honourable Court &c. May it therefore &c. &c." [Dated 27th January, 1638].

3. "Weekes v. Weekes". This Bill is dated 21st May, 1642, in which Roger makes like statements to these in his claim against Thomas Southcote, and adds, "Your orator is at present a prisoner for want of means and by disagreement with your Orator's said Father and the said Thomas Southcote" and "thus your Orator's said wife and children are utterly ruined...."

The said "Orator", Roger, who had "married in haste" and thus "repented at leisure," died in his father's lifetime, so that on his father's death in 1650⁷ his young son John, at the age of twelve years,⁸ succeeded to the estates. His minority would help to free them from the heavy encumbrance incurred by his grandfather. But he did not long enjoy his manhood, and the possession of a considerable estate, for soon after coming of age in 1659, he developed the deadly disease of consumption. Thus afflicted, and in its last stages, feeble, therefore, in body and mind, he is sent off to Plymouth, by his strong-willed and designing mother, to be a patient in the house of one William Durston, a "doctor of physic," to be "cured of his disease." This happened in August, 1661, and not long after his arrival there, he was told by the doctor there was no hope. It was evident that his young life was fast ebbing away, and with it the opportunity of initiating and accomplishing the plot against the next heir. And so without delay, Dr. Durston said to his patient, "Have you settled your estates?" To this,

⁷ He died intestate. His daughter-in-law, Mary, adm. To his estate [P.C.C.].

⁸ Whittington, i. No. 9.

the dying man answered, "No." Whereupon one Mr. William Yeo, a barrister, was called in, and was soon ready with a deed purporting to convey all the North Wyke estates to Richard Weekes, son of Francis, of Broadwoodkelly and Honeychurch, and so quite away from the family. The said Richard was a cousin of both Durston and Yeo, and a great friend of the mother. Young John, rapidly sinking, was necessarily as plastic clay in their hands. If, however, the inheritance of "blood" could have saved him from such unnatural conduct against his own kith and kin, few men had a better chance. For to say nothing of his paternal ancestors, he inherited, through his mother, the blood of the Mohuns, the Carews, the Courtenays, the Seymours, the Poles, and the Southcotes. But he miserably failed in his duty, and this is not surprising under the circumstances. There can be, moreover, no doubt, that his mind was poisoned against his heir, his uncle John, who had much offended his widowed mother by carrying off the deeds and writings from North Wyke, after the death of his grandfather in 1650.⁹ There was, therefore, hostility to his succession on account of this family grievance. And the mother had other powerful motives against his lawful claim. For she had married, as the Chancery Proceedings tell us, unknown to parents; consequently the settlements were never completed, and so she had no "jointure". The estates were held in tail by her husband's father, under the entail of his grandfather, ["Warrior" John,] and he, we know, re-entailed them on his *heirs male*. This deed of entail was in the deed-chest at North Wyke. How then could she obtain an annuity out of the estates, and a marriage portion for her daughter Katherine? In one way only – by suppressing or destroying the said deed of entail, and contriving means whereby this wickedness could be safely accomplished. The hope of gain was great, and ready instruments were, therefore, forthcoming. Richard Weekes, of Broadwoodkelly and Hatherleigh¹ was a welcome visitor at North Wyke, and no doubt, made himself attractive both to young John and his mother, by the arousing stories he could tell as a gentleman pensioner at the Court of Charles II. Dr Durston and William Yeo, of Plymouth, were his cousins, and the dying young man naturally wished to do what he could for his mother and sister, and so became a willing tool in their

⁹ Whittington, i. No. 9.

¹ The Hatherleigh property was obtained by marriage with the heir of Yeo.

hands. How the designing and treacherous Richard Weekes endeavoured to work out his nefarious purposes; how the mother [“till the evening after the funeral, being Sunday”] certainly aided and abetted him; and how the young and dying heir, the son, yielded to act a part which ultimately involved the ruin of his honourable house, cannot be better told than in the words of the Chancery Proceedings, which extended over a period of forty years, and would, if printed *in extenso*, fill several folio volumes. Portions of some of these I will now endeavour to embody in this paper, so far as space allows, and my story requires. My difficulty is to select from such a mass of material and keep within the necessary limits. I will begin with “Weekes v. Weekes,” Bridges, iv., No. 425, and dated 7th February, 1662, that is, four months after the death of young John. It is a Bill of the sister, Katherine, against the arch-conspirator Richard, wherein she relates what took place at North Wyke on the eventful evening of the 29th September, 1661, and with some omissions, runs as follows:-

“Humbly sheweth that your Oratrix Katherine Wykes of Zeal Monachorum² in County of Devon sister and next heir of John Wykes late of North Wyke Esq. dec^d. that whereas the said John Wykes was in his lifetime lawfully seized was in consumption, and doubting he should marry But so it is, may it please your Lordship, one Richard Weekes who pretended himself a near kinsman to the said John Wykes, did, a little before his death, labour and endeavour by several friends of his to persuade the said John Wykes to settle the lands and premises upon him, the said Richard Weekes But perceiving that the said John Wykes did dayly much decline and decay by the said sickness, he, the said Richard Weekes, for the better accomplishing of his said purposes, did persuade and prevail with the said John Wykes to ride to the town of Plymouth, about 30 miles distant from his House, and there take physic of one William Durston a Physician in that town. And the said John Wykes being there in that town in a course of physic, and very weak, and not likely to recover, he, the said Richard Weekes and the said William Durston, and one Anthony Salter, a Doctor of Physic, and Father in law to the said William Durston to benefit themselves and disinherit your said Oratrix were, or some one of them was, very earnest with, and did incline the said John Wykes to make some Settlement of his Estates. And thereupon, the said Richard Weekes and William

² The mother Mary and sister Katherine lived at Zeal Monachorum after their expulsion from North Wyke. The mother was buried there in 1681. The manor of Bourdevileston [Bourston] in this parish formed a part of the North Wyke estate.

Durston or one of them to execute a Conveyance of all the said lands &c. to be engrossed and tendered to the said John Wykes to be sealed, by which Conveyance, as the said Richard Weekes now pretends, all the said lands of the said John Wykes were conveyed unto the said Anthony Salter and William Durston &c. and for default of such issue, to the right heirs of the said John Wykes. But the said John Wykes, upon hearing the contents of the said Conveyance, utterly disliked it. And thereupon the said Richard Weekes, or some other of the said Confederates, told the said John Wykes that there should be a clause added upon the back of the Conveyance by which the said John Wykes should have power to revoke and make void the said Conveyance at any time by writing, or by word of mouth, at his free will, and thereupon some such clause of revocation was endorsed, and he, the said John Wykes, being informed by the said Confederates, or some of them, that the said John Wykes had full power, by virtue of the said clause endorsed, to revoke &c. he the said John Wykes, being in great agony by reason of the extremity of his sickness, and in that respect unable to read or understand the scope of the said Conveyance, did, on or about the 30th day of August last past, upon the importunity of the said confederates, or some of them, seal the Conveyance. Howbeit, the same, as your Oratrix is informed, was never legally executed, neither would he, the said John Wykes, permit the said Richard Weekes to keep the said Conveyance, but kept the same in his own custody, and shortly after the sealing thereof, although he was very weak and unfit to travel, yet he hasted to his own home, and at his return expressed much discontent and grief that he had sealed the said Conveyance. And conceiving that he had power to make void the same by word of mouth, did then solemnly declare in the presence of several witnesses that the said Conveyance should from thenceforth be utterly void, and that the said Richard Weekes should never have any part of the said lands. But about three days after his return to his House, and before he had made any writing of revocation, that is to say, on or about the 1st day of September last, the said John Wykes being of all and singular the Premises so seized, died thereof so seized. By force whereof, all the said lands descended as they ought to your Oratrix, and heir to the said John Wykes. By virtue whereof, your said Oratrix entered into the said lands, and was thereof seized in fee, or fee tail, until the 29th Sept^r. last up[on which said day being Sunday, and the very next day after the Funeral of the said John Weekes, he, the said Richard Weekes, although he had formerly promised to give until your Oratrix £500 more than was due unto her by the said Conveyance, yet did declare that he was at that time to act "the Divell's part and his own," and shortly after on that same Sunday towards the evening, he, the said Richard Weekes, drew his sword and held it to the breast of the said Oratrix [being then in the said

House of North Wyke], and threatened to kill her and her mother and others in their company, unless they forthwith departed the said House, and thereupon your said Oratrix, hasting towards her chamber in the said House, was stopped by the said richard Weekes, and by him violently thrown down to the ground on her head, whereby your said Oratrix, for preservation of her life, was enforced to quit the possession of the said House, and the said Oratrix' mother was, by the said Richard Weekes, dragged into the Hall of the said House and there, with others in her company, locked up all that night by the said Richard Weekes, and kept without fire or candle light. And moreover on the same Sunday night about midnight, he, the said Richard Weekes, David Child, Symon Soper, Peter Austin, and others unknown to your Oratrix, did, with hatchet and iron bar, break open the door of your Oratrix' chamber, and the door of the chamber or room where were all the Deeds, Evidences, and Writings, concerning the said lands &c. and a *certain Deed of entail* of the Premises, all which the said Richard Weekes, or one of them, did then carry away. And the said Richard Weekes, or some other with his privity hath ever since and doth still keep the same, together with other things belonging to the said Oratrix And moreover the said Richard Weekes doth threaten to do waste and to cut down all the timber trees growing on the said Premises, and to make sale of all the said lands &c., and other outrages committed by the said Richard Weekes your Oratrix without the power of your Hon^{ble}. Court is likely to be disinherited and defeated.”

To this Bill of Complaint by Katherine, the defendant, Richard Weekes, answers that

“The Complainant is the only sister of the said John Weekes dec^d. and that John Weekes was in his lifetime lawfully seized and being so seized thereof, in or about the month of August last did settle and assure the said Manors &c. in the Bill mentioned unto &c. to the use of this Deft. and the heirs male of his body lawfully begotten which this Deft. had no reason to refuse saith that John Weekes well understood the scope of the Deed would have no other keep the Deed, but kept the same under his pillow bedshead, while he lived, fearing cancel or burn the same, and so frustrate his intention The Deft. being in possession of the said House and lands of North Wyke, after the Funeral of the said John Weekes, and this Deft. had been at about £400 charges in performing the Funeral and providing blacks and mourning habit for the said Complainant, her Mother and Grandmother and other her relations, the said Complainant about the time in the Bill mentioned, did, with a company of 15 or 16 persons, enter into the said House of North

Wyke³ and endeavoured to put this Deft. out of his quiet possession, to resist which, and to protect his person, this Deft. was enforced to draw his sword, and thereby to defend himself until the Constable of the Parish came and brought Simon Soper &c. to keep the peace. And the Complainant, trying to get into the Deed Room, was hindered by the Constable The Defendant had no key, and so did break open the Door in presence of the said Constable Defendant denieth that he dragged the Mother or locked her up in the Hall. They might have left without hindrance had both fire and candle, and several bottles of Sack⁴ during their abode there”

The following extracts are from “Weekes v. Weekes”, Whittington Depositions, No. 910, and dated 11th September, 1688. The Depositions run to immense length, were taken at Okehampton, and narrate many of the events that took place on “Sunday evening, the day after the funeral”.

“1. Richard Parker of Zeal Monachorum Gent., saith that Edmund Parker⁵ this Dept.’s brother, did intermarry with Katherine Weekes

“To the 8th Interrogatory this Dept. saith that upon the day next after the burial of John Weekes aforesaid, being Sunday, the Dept. being at the Mansion House called North Wyke, from whence the said John Weekes was buried, the Deft’s. father, Richard Weekes, came to this Dept. in the said House, with his sword drawn, and putting the point of his sword to this Depts breast, said that as God was his judge if the Deponent did not presently depart the said House, he would run this Deponent through. Whereupon, the aforesaid Katherine Weekes, sister of the said John Weekes, coming into the room where the Deft. was, heard the said Richard Weekes, the Father, with his sword still drawn, threatened the other persons then present if they did not depart the said House. Whereupon this Dept., perceiving that the said Richard Weekes designed by violence to take possession of the said Mansion House, persuaded the said Katherine Weekes and some other gentlewomen there with her, to go with, or follow, the Dept. to the said Katherine’s Chamber, which was in that part of the said house where this Dept. apprehended the writings &c were, with intent to preserve the same from being seized by the said Richard Weekes, [this Dept. being a Trustee for the said Katherine Weekes], but the said Katherine and her Mother,

³ These were evidently the members of the family who had been present at the funeral the day before, chiefly women. Clearly Richard Weekes had a lively imagination.

⁴ It may be safely concluded that he did give these ladies “the sack” from what took place.

⁵ Ancestor of the Earls of Morley. Katherine was cousin of his first wife. They were married on 25th August, 1667 [Ch. Pro., Hamilton, iii., No. 5].

and the said other gentlewomen with her were hindered from coming up stairs by some persons set on purpose by the said Richard Weekes. And after this Dept. had been sometime in the chamber, he understood that there was a Justice of the Peace come to the said House. Whereupon, this Dept. came downstairs from the said Chamber, and informed the said Justice of the behaviour of the said Richard Weekes, and then the said Katherine Weekes endeavouring to go upstairs and to pass by the persons set to hinder her, the said Richard Weekes laid violent hands on her, and threw her to the ground in the presence of the Justice, which, this Dept. seeing, and apprehending that the said Justice favoured the said Richard Weekes, this Dept. went forthwith out of the said House to get another Justice of the Peace, and stepping out in his pantables⁶ to get his horse in readiness, and returning back to the door

⁶ "Pantable" is a kind of slipper.

the said Katherine Weekes ought to have restitution of possession but the said Sessions being then adjourned, no order was then made for such restitution, and some few days after, upon an adjourned Meeting of the said Sessions, the debate of the said forcible entry being resumed, a Certiorari was brought and exhibited to the Court on the behalf of the said Richard Weekes which hindered the further proceedings of that Court, &c., &c.

“Interrogatory 9. Saith that Richard Weekes did cut down timber to a considerable value &c. and much defaced the Sea at North Wyke by cutting edown the timber trees of the walk at the House there.

“Interrogatory 10. Saith he knows of two trials [i] between Mary the Mother and the Deft.’s Father, and [ii] between Katerine sister of John Weekes, for the goods and personal estate of John Weekes, and both the said Mary and Katherine had verdicts and judgments for £900 in both actions. But the said Richard Weekes never paid, but died in Prison charged at the suit of the said Mary and Katherine.”⁷

THE DEPOSITION OF ANN SPARKE.

“Ann Sparke [wife of Degory Sparke of Exon, locksmith, aged 50 years saith that upon the next day after the Funeral of John Weekes, being Sunday, this Dept. being of North Wyke aforesaid, and being in the Chamber there, with Mrs. Mary Weekes, Mother of John Weekes, who was indisposed, this Dept. heard some noise below stairs in the said House, and thereupon the Mrs. Mary Weekes and this Dept. came down stairs into the Hall of the said House, and then and there saw some dispute arise between the said Deft.’s said Father, and the said Mrs. Mary Weekes and some other relations of the said John Weekes, and the said Mrs. Mary Weekes endeavouring to return again to the Chamber, the said Richard Weekes drew his sword and went and stood in the Door or entrance into the Parlour of the said House [from whence the stairs lead to the Chameber aforesaid], and that with his drawn sword in his hand, protested saying that as God was his Judge, he would suffer no person to go up the said stairs and did refuse to permit any person to go up the said stairs, inasmuch that the said Mrs. Mary Weekes and Mrs. Southcote, grandmother of the said John Weekes, and others, did from want of lodging, sit up in the said Hall all that night, and others that were in the said House went and lodged, some at neighbours houses and some in hay lofts. And this Dept. saith that in that part of the said House to which the said stairs lead, was a Chest of writings which this Dept. believeth were &c. of the Estate. And afterwards when the said Mother &c. and his sister Katherine demanded their clothes that were in the said House, the said Richard Weekes searched their Trunks, Boxes, and Clothes, before he would deliver the same

⁷ Whittington’s Depositions, No. 910.

and finding no writings delivered the said clothes to this Dept. for the owners thereof.”⁸

THE DEPOSITION OF HUMPHREY FURSDON

“Humphrey Fursdon of North Bovey in Co. Devon Gent. Aged 80 years. Saith that he being at the Funeral of John Weekes Esq. this Dept. was with divers other persons of quality, relations of the said deceased, [who were at the said Funeral,] invited by the Defendant’s Father, Richard Weekes, to sup together at North Wyke that evening after the said Funeral was over, and accordingly this Deponent and divers others of the relations did there in the Hall sup together. And presently after supper, the said R^d. Weekes drew his sword and required this Dept. and the said other relations to depart the said house, and particularly Mrs. Mary Weekes, Mother of John Weekes [who had been sick and kept her bed that day,] and after Mrs. Katherine Weekes sister and Mistress Southcote, Grandmother of dec^d., and several other uncles and aunts and near relations &c. were by the said R^d. Weekes [with his sword drawn as aforesaid] required and commanded to depart the said House, and thereupon this Dept. and the said mother and sister and grandmother, and other relations departed the said House though it was then late in the evening and near night, and though this Dept. and divers others of the said relations had many miles to travel to their homes. And the said mother and sister had then no other home to go to, so that they and this Dept. and all or most of the said other relations were forced to go that night to mean houses of the neighbourhood, and many of them to sit up by the fire all that night, and the said Richard Weekes kept possession of the said House. In answer to the 12th Interrogatory this Dept. saith that the defendant hath no other estate besides the lands in question, and never knew or heard that the deft. was any relation or kin to the said John Weekes, save that they did call cosens”⁹

“The Deposition of Edmund Parker Esq. aged 76 years. This Dept. saith that he did, about twenty years since, intermarry with Katherine Weekes, the only sister and heir of John Weekes hath not been paid any part of the said £1,500, nor any part of the additional £500, nor any part of the mother’s annuity This Dept. bought the mother’s annuity of £100 a year and also a judgment for £920 and did pay the annuity for several years and is about £2,000 out of pocket thereby. Also he bought a judgment from one Widow Fursdon of Cadbury for £300; also from Widow Strawbridge for £200, &c. &c. This Dept. is £3,000 out of pocket.”

“William Knapman of Throwleigh Gent. Aged 62 years saith that Richard Weekes and John Weekes last of North Wyke did

⁸ Whittington’s Depositions, No. 910.

⁹ *Ibid.*

call cosins, and as this Dept. believeth were of kin, but how near this Dept. knoweth not.”¹

“Alexander Wood of South Tawton Gent. hath heard that Richard Weekes is related to John Weekes late of North Wyke by intermarriage of one of the ancestors of the said Dept. with a daughter of one of the ancestors of John Weekes. Knew of no other relation between them married the Deft’s. sister *who sets up Release of Compt. to debar the payment of £1,500 to Mr. Parker.*”²

WEEKES V. OXENHAM.

Edmund and Katherine Parker say that “one Richard Weekes, though he was no relation or kin unto the said John Weekes, as he hath lately boasted, nor was of any estate or sufficiency to pay any of the debt, etc”

Mitford, iv. 527, No. 27. Dated 13th June, 1689:-

Roger Weekes, Arthur Bury, sen., and Arthur Bury, jun., defendants to the Bill of Complaint of Richard Weekes, Esq.

Arthur Bury, D.D., Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, states that Roger Weekes did seal a deed conveying the lands in question to his son Arthur Bury in consideration of a marriage settlement on his only child Grace That this deed was in his house at Oxford, that he had been absent from it for several months with all his family Dr. Bury also states that he had taken Grace, Roger’s daughter, “*to his own house to breed her as his child*”

The foregoing extracts from voluminous Chancery Proceedings will, I think, be sufficient, *inter alia*, fully establish the fact that till the “Sunday evening after the funeral,” Richard, and young John’s mother, had been working towards a common object. This may not be seen evident, but a little consideration will make it clear. As there were powerful influences at work to unite them in wicked combination. The mother saw clearly enough that no earthly power could arrest the progress of her only son’s disease. And he dead, poverty stared her in the face as *nothing was done*. And Richard had not a penny wherewith to bless himself.³ Necessity bound them together to secure a common object. Hence they sought for and obtained willing confederates in Dr. Durston and Mr. Yeo. Young John is sent to Plymouth, and the plot soon develops apace.

¹ Whittington’s Depositions, No. 910.

² *Ibid.*

³ Ch. Pro., Bridges, vi., Dep. No. 480 [Weekes v. Parker].

And evidently with the cordial concurrence of both the mother and sister, for as the Deed of Conveyance to Richard contained a power of revocation, and John with them at home, helplessly weak and dying, it could not otherwise have survived his death. They had the fullest opportunity for many days after his return to North Wyke in a "horse litter"⁴ for its revocation and destruction. He clearly had a strong affection for his mother and sister, and was no doubt absolutely swayed by their wishes. The deed, therefore, was preserved, because it embodied the purpose which had been arranged between them. The mother knew that her son had no power over the estates: that her husband's father had re-entailed them on heirs male, and that this Deed of Entail was actually in the deed-chest.

If her son had had power to resettle, nothing is more certain than this, that she should not have been satisfied with an annuity of £100 for herself, and £1,500 for her only surviving child, Katherine. Under such circumstances John would naturally have settled his estates on his sister, and made proper provision for his mother. And this would have been a righteous course. The Deed of Entail on heirs male stood as a barrier in her path. How could she break it down? She had not strength enough to do it unaided, but required a willing, and artful, and experienced confederate. She found all she wanted in her intimate friend Richard Weekes, the gentleman pensioner at Charles' Court. His purse was empty, and his principles nefarious. He had nothing to lose, and *if things went well*, much to gain. The possession of a large estate was in the balance. The price to be paid was the careful concealment, or destruction, of the Deed of Entail on heirs male, a small annuity to the mother, and a marriage portion of £1,500 to the sister. He had been "a soldier of fortune," was daring and unprincipled, and so gladly accepted the position and *the risk*. The object aimed at by the two arch-confederates had been successfully initiated at

⁴ "Shortly after the Deed was sealed [29th August, 1661], John Wykes was brought home in a horse litter by reason of his weakness. Durston and complainant came hither with him, when Durston told this Deft. [Katharine] that John Wykes was past hope of recovery, and that Richard Weekes should have a care that their designs were not frustrated should stand on his valor, and having been a soldier in the field, not fear a few women which were there in the house" [Ch. Pro., Weekes v. Parker].

house, and clearly with the approval of his mother and sister. This is evident enough from the Chancery Proceedings, in which it is stated that he paid £400 for “blacks” for them and Mrs. Southcote, and for other funeral expenses; provided the meals of the house, and took the head of the table. This was the happy position of things between them till the eventful day following the funeral, which was Sunday, when a change suddenly came over the scene. Richard had evidently come with a deep-paid scheme, well thought out and arranged, but so far carefully concealed, whereby he might deprive the rightful heir and escape payment out of the estate to both mother and sister. He knew that the two deeds, [1] the Deed of Entail on heirs male, and [2] the Deed of Conveyance to himself, were in the deed-chest. He concluded that in the possession of these he might be “master of the situation.” He would reason much in this way: “If these deeds are once in my hands, I shall be tolerably safe from attack. It is true that John Weekes, the grandfather being tenant in tail, did, after his son Roger’s death, re-entail on his heirs male, so that his father’s brother, John is next heir under that entail. This being so, neither the mother nor sister can establish any claim in the courts under the Deed of Conveyance to me, because that deed is *ultra vires*, and so void *ab initio*. If they go into court on this deed, I defeat them by setting up the entail on heirs male. On the other hand, if the heir under the entail claims, I can declare there is no such deed; that young John held the estates in fee, and had full power to settle, and used it in my favour by sealing and signing the deed he did. Thus, if I get hold of these two deeds, I can successfully manoeuvre against all claimants.” Such thoughts as these would probably pass through the brain of this calculating “courtier”, and become crystallised before the eventful evening of 29th September, 1661. The deliberately planned violence [for he had taken care to provide that a sufficient number of his myrmidons, with a partisan magistrate, Mr. Thomas Wood,⁵ should be there, or near at hand, to enable him to succeed in his evil purpose] on that Sunday night, as told by John’s sister Katherine, and many years after by Richard Parker, Humphrey Fursdon, Anne Sparke, the maid, and others, can only be explained by some such mental exercise, and this was indeed the line he took afterwards in the law courts. John Weekes, the uncle,

⁵ His son Alexander married a daughter of the said Richard.

claimed the estates as heir male, but as the deeds were in the hands of the enemy, he failed to prove the entail by his father against the validity of the Deed of Conveyance to the said Richard, which was set up by him in defence. Katherine, his sister, also claimed them as the next-of-kin, and therefore her brother's heir. But to this the defendant successfully pleaded that the estates were settled on "heirs male," and that consequently she could have no possible right to them. Thus she also failed, and so neither mother nor sister ever received a penny,⁶ either from the said Richard, or his son Richard, under the Deed of Conveyance, because young John had no power to make any such disposition. This was the line of defence, so long as the said Richard lived, and for many years afterwards, but after Roger's signature had been obtained to a Deed of Release, under the disgraceful circumstances narrated in the Chancery Proceedings, Richard, the son, no longer met the claim by pleading the Deed of Conveyance to his father, but admitted that the estates were under entail, till the date of Roger's release for "valuable consideration." Thus did Richard, sen., effectually "do the devil's work and his own", and Richard, his son, proved himself to be a "chip of the old block." But it did not long prosper. For Richard "of Hatherleigh" was speedily swept along by the hurricane he had let loose. In 1662 he was sent to the Fleet Prison for a debt of £920, which were the damages against him for having taken forcible possession of the personal estate of young John, and there he died in 1671.⁷ Thus he was "hoisted with his own petard," and his son Richard had nothing but litigation, though on his own confession he was resourceful in "creeks, and turnings, and tricks." He died at the early age of forty years.⁸

It is impossible for any careful reader of the Chancery Proceedings to pass from them without a strong conviction that *the* "wickedness" was indeed persistent which ultimately brought about the ruin of the Wyke family. But it was not the Deed of Conveyance to Richard, that did it, though it was effectually wielded for many years with the aid of Elizabeth Whiddon, who was in possession of North

⁶ Whittington's Depositions, No. 910 [Weekes v. Weekes].

⁷ Miss Lega-Weekes informs me that Richard Weekes left the Fleet Prison in 1670, incurred fresh debt to one Jolly, was again arrested, and this time sent to King's Bench Prison, where he died, and that he was buried 5th February, 1670-1, in southwark Churchyard, St George's in the Borough.

⁸ He was born in 1656 [Hatherleigh Register], and was buried 1696 [South Tawton Register].

Wyke as mortgagee from 1662 to 1670,⁹ when she transferred her interest to her kinsman, William Knapman of Throwleigh, whose daughter had married John Northman, the Wykes' family solicitor, and in whose office there was a copy of the Deed of Entail, made by young John's grandfather, on heirs male, as the said William Knapman closed in 1688, through Interrogatories administered to them by the Court of Chancery. But this was years after the heir Roger "sold his birthright for a mess of pottage," so, too late to save the estates.

William Knapman's deposition is as follows:

"To the 12th Interrogatory he further saith, that a P... writing purporting a Copy of the Entail of the estate and land in question, made by John Weekes the Grandfather of John Weekes last of North Wyke, unto one Mr. Giffard of Brightlea and Arscott of Tetcott, to the best of this Deponent's remembrance in trust for the heirs of the said John Weekes, the Grandfather was found amongst the writings of the said John Northmore, at his death. And this Dept. further saith, that he believeth that he, this Dept., paid the charges for the said Copy. And the Dept. further saith, the said Copy now is, or late was, in custody of the said Defendant, Richard Weekes this Dept. did himself find the said Paper writing purporting a Copy of the said Entail, amongst the writings of the said John Northman shortly after his death, and did deliver the same to the said Dept. Richard Weekes, and hath since seen the same in his custody. This Dept. did assign to his son in law, Northmore, his Mortgage on North Wyke Estate, who assigned it to Richard Weekes, son in law, who in consequence kept possession of the Prem. who before enjoyed the House and Gardens of North Wyke with this Deponent's permission."¹

This extract throws a flood of light on the *legal* position of things between the death of young John, and the entitlement of the heir Roger, to North Wyke and his surrendering all his title to the estates for the consideration of £40, whilst in a state of intoxication! It proves that the estates were under entail, that young John had no power over them, and that they passed finally into the hands of Richard Weekes by most disreputable means. The opportunity for a practice of those means was almost unique, for Richard, the only son of the Fleet prisoner, married in 1681 Elizabeth Northmore, daughter of the said family solicitor, and grand

⁹ South Tawton Parish Accounts and Chancery Proceedings.

¹ Whittington's Depositions, No. 910. Dated 11th September, 1681?

daughter of the said William Knapman, who was mortgagee of North Wyke. This mortgage, as we have seen, he, for family purposes, transferred to his son-in-law, a sharp attorney, who, by its means, was able to establish Richard and his wife in the premises of North Wyke, who were already in the mansion house by permission of the grandfather, William Knapman.

The next heir to young John was his uncle John, who died in 1680. Upon his death his son Roger became heir, who, as we have seen, was a man of self-indulgence, and certainly his position was one of considerable indebtedness. The bills which, under such circumstances, he had given, were bought up by the Northmore family. They also got the mortgages on the different estates to be transferred to them.² Thus were they able to tighten the screw unmercifully on such a man, and almost by brute force compel him to yield to the pressure brought to bear upon him. The following extracts will show how unscrupulously they worked:-

1. "Francis Fursdon, of the parish of Sourton Yeoman aged 50 years, saith that about ten years since, the Deft. Richard Weekes desired the Deponent to go with him to the then dwelling house of the Complainant [Roger Weekes] in South Tawton. When they came, the said Deft., Richard Weekes, tendered to the said Compt. To seal the same," [that is the Deed of Release,] "which the said Compt. Refused to do, but what the contents were this Dept. doth not now remember."³
2. "Robert Hole of South Tawton aged 50 years, a witness on behalf of Complainant [Roger Weekes] in answer to Interrogatory 18, saith that the Complainant's father was a man of very slender understanding as to business of law. And this Dept. saith that the said Complainant's father did employ and depend upon the Defendant's wife's father, Mr. John Northmore dec^d., as his attorney at law, for the recovery of the said lands in question, and in all other his affairs, relating to law. He doth know that 5 or 6 years since, the Compt., Roger Weekes, was arrested at the suit of the Deft., Richard Weekes, and the said Compt. was carried by the Bailiffs that arrested him to a house about 3 miles from his dwelling. Whereupon the said Compt. sent for this Dept. [being his brother in law] to come to him to the said house, where this Dept. went accordingly. And was then desired by the said Compt. to Bail him, which dept. offered to do, and to pay the money for which he was arrested, but the said Deft. Richard Weekes, [who came there likewise], then told this Dept. that if he were free from that arrest, the Bailiffs had another warrant in

² Whittington's Depositions, No. 910 [Weekes v. Weekes].

³ *Ibid.* Dated 11th September, 4 James II.

readiness to arrest him again at the suit of Mr. John Northmore of Okehampton, the said Deft.'s brother-in-law. Whereupon the Dept. desired to know what the said John Northmore's debt was and being told the same was about £20, this Dept. offered to pay the same for the said compt., but was then further told by the said Deft. that if the said Compt. were free from that also, the said Bailiff had another warrant in readiness to arrest him at the suit of Mr. William Northmore, another brother in law of the said Deft. After which the said Deft., Richard Weekes, took this Dept. aside into the garden belonging to the said house, and acquainted this Dept. that he had in his pocket a Deed redrawn, for him, the said compt., to seal, and that if he would seal the same he should forthwith be freed from the arrest he was then under, and also from the demands of John Northmore and William Northmore. Whereupon this Dept. replied that if it were a Deed fit for the said Compt. to seal, and he the said Compt. he promised to do it, it was fit he should seal it, but that this Dept. would not have to do therewith. And some short time after, the Dept. departed from the said house, leaving the said Compt. There, [in custody of the said Bailiffs], who did not seal any such Deed while this Dept. was there, but the said Compt. was on the same day carried thence towards the Prison, and was carried to prison upon that arrest."⁴

3. "The deposition of Nicholas Fursdon of South Tawton Gent. Aged 33 years who saith that Richard Weekes did cut down timber worth £450 sets up against Edmund Parker, Roger Weekes 'Release' This Dept. was arrested and carried to Prison at the suit of Mr. Thomas Northmore. Whilst in Prison, the Deft., Richard Weekes, came to this Dept. in Prison, [situated in Stoke Canon,] for his examination in the cause, and then saith he supposed this Dept. had heard that the Compt. Had said that Richard Weekes, had no right to the lands in question Endeavoured to get him to take his side that they would be neighbours when Dr. Bury was gone declared that the said Roger Weekes should never set foot on the lands in question that he, the said Deft., would have *creeks and turnings and tricks* enough to keep him out This Dept. was arrested by? the Deft. and threatened to send him to Prison, and would not release him till he had given a Bond for £500 not to appear as a witness against him."⁵

The said Roger, thus weighed down by the burden of his debts, harried and persecuted, was enticed to North Wyke by Richard Weekes, who was then living there, as we learnt from the deposition of William Knapman.⁶ Whilst there he

⁴ Whittington's Depositions, No. 910. Dated 1688.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ He was the grandfather of Elizabeth Northmore, who married, in 1687, Richard Weekes, jun.

was made drunk by his host, the Deed of Release was again put before him, and he was told that if he would seal the same he would be freed from all his debts and receive £40 to put in his pocket. Drunk, and therefore without definite knowledge of what he was invited to do, he sealed the fatal deed. As soon as he realised what he had done, he straightway files a Bill in Chancery, declares that he never sealed any such deed, but that if he did, it was after he had been made drunk, and so prayed the Honourable Court to free him from the consequences. At that time Knapman had not disclosed the existence of the Deed of Entail, under which he was “tenant in tail,” and so the said Roger was probably not fully assured of his legal rights when he “sold his birthright.” After 1688, he, of course, had full knowledge, and in 1691 states it as a fact that “he was heir by virtue of a Deed of Entail” [Weekes v. Weekes, Whittington, No. 314. Dated 30th Jan., 1691]. And being thus the lawful heir, he saith, “It is true that on 11th Sept., 1687, he did seal and execute a conveyance of the premises in the Bill named to Arthur Bury Junr.⁷ in consideration of a marriage to be had between the said Arthur Bury and this Dept.’s only daughter” He seems to have had some hope that, by this attempted conveyance, he might somehow defeat the machinations of the enemy and escape from their toils. But their work was too well done for that.

The deed, wherein he had sold his birthright for £40, *stood*. Thus was the grave dug, and, eventually, the Wyke family buried therein. He died at sea in 1694, and with him the male descent of Warrior John’s eldest son came to an end. The next heir male was Nathanael Weekes, who had settled at Swansea. He was the eldest son of John, the eldest son of John, the eldest son of Mark, Warrior John’s second son.⁸ The said Nathanael now came forward, as heir under the Deed of Entail of Warrior John, to claim the North Wyke estates, and invoked the aid of Chancery, and also of King’s Bench, in prosecuting the said claim. His first Bill was filed 8th December, 1696 [Weekes v. Weekes, Hamilton, i. Jno. 366]. In her reply to it the defendant, Elizabeth Weekes, saith that “she never heard of the Deed of Entail till she had been married about seven years”;

⁷ He was the eldest son of Dr. Arthur Bury [son of John Bury, D.D., Canon of Exeter and Vicar of Heavitree], Rector of Exeter College, Oxford. He wrote a book called *The Naked Gospel*, which in the eyes of the Visitor, Bishop Trelawny, was so unorthodox that he deprived him of the rectorship.

⁸ Hamilton, i., Nos. 361 and 366.

But the Bill itself is so like that dated 20th December, 1697 [Weekes v. Northmore and Weekes, Hamilton, i. 361], that my extracts will be from the latter only. It begins thus:-

“Your Orator, Nathanael Weekes of Swanzev in the Co. of Glamorgan Gent. Sheweth that John Weekes the elder, heretofore of North Wyke Esq., being in his lifetime lawfully sized in his demesne as of fee, of and in the Manors of Nickolls Nymet and Bourdevileston &c. &c. in the Parishes of North Tawton, South Tawton, Spreyton, Sampford Courtenay, Drewsteignton, South Molton, Zeal Monachorum and other places in Devon, and the said John Weekes, being so seized, and minding and intending to settle &c. upon his issue male, did, in or about 26 Queen Elizabeth, acknowledge one Fine &c. to John Giffard Esq. John Fortescue of Buckland Filleigh Esq. and others of the said Manors &c. in the Parishes aforesaid or elsewhere in the Co. of Devon. And your Orator further sheweth that John Weekes, having several sons living at that time, he, the said John Weekes by Deed indented, bearing date in or about the month of October in the 26th year of Queen Elizabeth, or at some other time, did settle and declare the uses of the said ‘Fine’ to himself for life, and after his decease, to the use and behalf of Roger Weekes, his eldest son, for, &c.; and after his decease, to the use &c. of his eldest son, &c. and to the heirs male of the body of such first son &c., and for default of such issue, then to the use and behalf of the second begotten son of the said Roger &c. And for default of such issue, then to the use and behalf of Mark Weekes, second son of the said John Weekes, and to the heirs male of his body lawfully begotten &c. and for default &c. then to the right heirs of John Weekes for ever. And your Orator further sheweth that after the death of the said John Weekes, the said Roger Weekes, his son and heir, entered into the said Manors &c., and after his decease John Weekes, son and heir of Roger Weekes during his life, and that since his death several other persons enjoyed the same by virtue of the Deed of Entail. And your Orator further sheweth that one Richard Weekes lately deceased about 30 years since got into possession of the said entailed Premises &c. by colour and pretence of some title from one John Weekes Esq. who was then heir male of John Weekes, who made the said Deed of Entail, and claimed and enjoyed the said Premises under the Deed of Entail. And that Richard Weekes, son of the said Richard Weekes, after his Father’s death, took possession of the said Entailed Estates and the heirs male of the said John Weekes who made the said Deed of Entail, have several times since the marriage of the said Richard Weekes, the son, and the said Elizabeth,⁹ laid claim to the said Premises, and made entries, and brought ejectments for the

⁹ They were married 11th April, 1681 [South Tawton Registers].

recovery of the possession of the same, and particularly one Roger Weekes, who last died, who as heir male of the said Roger Weekes, eldest son of John Weekes who made the said Deed of Entail, brought an ejectment for the recovery &c., and the same came to trial, and the said Roger Weekes who last died, then made out his title to the said Premises under the said Deed of Entail, but the said Richard Weekes who last died, husband of the said Elizabeth, having sometime before the said trial by some undue and indirect means and without consideration given or paid to the said Roger Weekes, he being a very poor man and easily imposed upon, obtained and got from the said Roger Weekes a *Release* of all his right and title to the said entailed Premises, which Release was then produced and given in evidence at the said time. Whereupon the said Roger Weekes was *non suited* And your Orator further sheweth that soon after the said trial the said Roger Weekes died in His Majesty's Service on board one of H.M. Ships, in or about the month of Dec^r, 1694, upon whose death all the issue male of Roger Weekes, eldest son of John Weekes, the elder, are *extinct*. Whereupon the said Manors &c. descended, and of right ought to come to your Orator, as next heir male, by virtue of the said Deed of entail, vidett. As son and heir of one John Weekes, late of S. Tawton, who was the son and heir of John Weekes, late of S. Tawton, who was the son and heir of the said Mark Weekes, second son of John Weekes the elder, &c. And your Orator being now heir male did well hope and expect to have the said Deed of Entail &c. with an account of profits &c. since the death of the said Roger Weekes, your Orator having in a friendly manner¹ &c But so it is, &c. &c. &c.”

“All his witnesses who know and can proved his heirship to the lands are old and infirm”; and so he “wishes them to be examined for fear they should die before trial,” etc.

Joint answers of John Northmore and William Northmore, gent., two of the defendants to the Bill of Complaint of Nathanael Weekes, complainant:-

“John Northmore says he never saw the Deed of Entail, nor had any notice or knowledge thereof” and “William Northmore knows no more is his sister's solicitor in a Suit of Ejectment now depending against the said Defendant Elizabeth Weekes

“The Deft. Elizabeth Weekes admits nothing to be true in the said Bill of Nathanael Weekes &c. John Weekes the younger died about a month after the Execution of the Deed dated 29

¹ This is a common complaint in these bills of claim. The deeds were in the hands of the enemy, and had been from the day the deed-chest was violently broken open “with hatchet and iron bar” [see p.48], the day following John's funeral in 1661.

Aug. 1661.” “The said Richard bought mourning, and died in or about, the month of February 1670-71 seized &c.” “There have been one or more tedious and long suits carried on in the name of the said Roger Weekes, after the death of his said Father, &c.” And this Deft. further saith that the said Roger Weekes by his Indenture of Release, and for the consideration of £40, did &c. &c. Deft. hath often heard her late husband Richard Weekes, say, and she believeth, that Richard Weekes gave the said Roger Weekes [*who was then heir male* in tail under the said old Deed of Settlement by which the Compt. Now claims] the said sum of £40 for his pretended right, in, and to the Premises &c.”

The said Nathanael failed in his claim, just as Roger had done before, by force of the fatal Deed of Release sealed by Roger, and for which he had received the “valuable consideration” of £40! And thus, by the means already described, “wickedness” became triumphant. But not for long, for the said Richard died at the early age of forty and his wife Elizabeth ten years afterwards. Their son John led a rollicking and dissipated life. To find means for this he sold the estates to his two brothers-in-law for an annuity.² Towards

² Ch. Pro., Hole and others v. Hunt and others, 1750. The marriage licence runs thus: “1742 April 5th. John Weekes of St. Lawrence Exeter Esq. and Elizabeth Kendall, widow of the same place.” They were married at Poltimore 26th April, 1742.

³ “That he did go to church may be inferred from a story which is so told of him at Lezant [in which parish Landue is situated], that being on Sunday, in attendance at Divine Service, a female domestic had the curiosity to go into his library and examine its contents. Whilst reading in a Book she suddenly found a certain Black Gentleman at her elbow, who would not quit until her Master returned to dismiss the unwelcome visitor, and all the affrighted domestic’s fear.” [From MSS. Belonging to the late Mr Lawrence, of Launceston, a descendant of the said Dr. Kendall].

South Wales to take part in the world's commerce. He, like his cousin, Katherine, wife of Edmund Parker, of Boringdon and North Molton, returned to the ancient spelling of their name [Wykes].⁴ This was probably done as a protest against the statement of a relationship between them and the said Richard in possession, whose family "usually wrote themselves Weekes" [Ch. Pro.]. Accordingly, when a son was born to Edmund Parker and his wife Katherine, he was baptised "Wykes Parker," and in the Adm. Of the said Katherine's goods 1693 [P.C.C.] she is described as "Katherine Parker, *alias* Wykes of Boringdon." And in the Parish Registers of Swansea, as well as in the wills of the said Nathanael and his sons, the name is always spelt "Wykes". But though they thus repudiated the kinship, there is no doubt they were distantly related, inasmuch as the first at Honeychurch was one Sir Richard Wyke, who used the North Wyke arms with a crescent for difference.

As shown in the *Devon Visitations*, by Colonel Vivian [which see for particulars], the said Nathanael had several sons, John, Mark, William, and Nathanael, and one daughter, Katherine – all family names. Mark and William died without issue. Nathanael had a son, William, who is mentioned in the wills of his uncles, Mark and William, and married Mary Crosse in 1762 [S.Tawton Reg.], by whom he was father of one only surviving daughter, Mary, who married Charles, grandson of William Finch. The said William married Agnes, daughter of John Lambert, and Agnes, his wife ["buried in linen"^{4a} in 1703], of South Tawton, and had by

⁴ Anciently it was written Wic, or Wik, or Wyk. As time went on, the "e", as in many other cases, got affixed. This form [Wyke, or Wike] prevailed generally [though such variants as Weke, Wyxe, and Wykys, as in the old deed, dated 1476 [see *Trans. Devon. Assoc.*, 1902], sometimes cropped up] till towards the end of the sixteenth century, when the final "s" was often added, and about 1600 the name was usually written wykes, or Wikes. This change is well shown in the parish accounts and registers. In the former [and it is just the same with the latter], between the years 1555 and 1585, the "Warrior's" name is written John Wyke [or Wike], ar., twenty times, John Wykes, ar., seven times [this first appears in 1575], and ar. Wickes twice. Before 1650 the name had become Weekes, and it was usually so written. But after the catastrophe at North Wyke, the family went back to the ancient spelling of their name by way of protest against kinship to the arch-conspirator, Richard Weekes. This is seen in the will of Edmund Parker, and the administrations of his wife, Katherine, and their son, Wykes Parker, and in all public documents where the name appears, and in the wills of Nathanael and his sons.

^{4a} In 30 Charles II. an Act was passed [for the encouragement of the woollen trade] imposing a penalty of £5 upon burials where any material was used but wool. In the present case, therefore, this penalty had to be paid, so that only the comparatively rich indulged in the luxury of being "buried in linen."

her several sons. He left a record of his life and descent, but this unfortunately has been lost for many years, though it was seen by my nephew, the Rev. W. R. Finch, M.A., of King's College, Cambridge, Hon. Canon of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Vicar of Chatton, Northumberland, when about thirteen years old, who shortly afterwards informed me that he was a son or grandson of one Heneage Finch: that he could not be mistaken in this, as he had been reading the *Trial of the Seven Bishops*, by Macaulay, in which Sir Heneage Finch was their leading counsel, and so the name "Heneage" was familiar to him. If this be so, it necessarily follows that he was a member of either the Winchilsea main line, or Nottingham and Aylesford branch. There is little doubt it was the former because from my youth I have been familiar with the tradition that he passed some of his early days both at Warminster and Crediton. Now about twenty years ago Collins' *Peerage* fell into my hands. There I discovered that Leopold William Finch, Warden of All Souls, Oxford married Lucy, daughter of John Davy, of Ruxford, near Crediton [Sandford], and that Lesley Finch, who married Barbara Scrope, lived and died in the parish of Warminster in the county of Wilts. Now the said William Leopold and Lesley Finch were younger sons of the Earl of Winchilsea by his wife Mary, daughter of the Marquis of Hertford in whose person was revived the dukedom of Somerset. They had other brothers who married, the eldest of whom Heneage, succeeded to the title, and died without issue. If the facts be carefully considered, the conclusion seems almost irresistible, that the said William Finch, who married Agnes Lambert, was a son of one of the many sons of Lord Winchilsea, and hence his visits to Crediton and Warminster. But the question remains, What was his business in Devon, and why did he marry under an assumed name? Tradition says that he was a strong partisan of the Pretender, had taken an active part in the Rebellion of 1715, and fled to the borders of Dartmoor for concealment and protection among the many secret sympathisers with the cause, in that wild and remote part of the county, and also that he came not alone but accompanied Sir William Wyndham into Devon. To escape discovery and a speedy exit from this world, he would naturally try to conceal himself under some other name than his own, and it was not before 1726 that he resumed (the?) patronymic. If his position in the "Heneage" Finch family was, as thus indicated, then almost without doubt, he was heir

to the Winchilsea *title* in 1726, when Heneage Finch died; but *not* to the *estates*, for on his [Heneage's] death these passed by settlement to his distant cousin, Lord Nottingham, through the unnatural act of his nephew and predecessor in the title, Charles [son of Lord Maidstone, killed in a sea-fight against the Dutch], in alienating them to his cousin, through some strong dislike he had taken to his uncles. So that Eastwell Park, with all the other large estates, became the property of the Earl of Nottingham in 1726. The bare title therefore remained, and the said William was not likely to leave his place of refuge in pursuit of such an object, certainly dangerous, and necessarily unprofitable. His grandson Charles married, as I have said, Mary, the only child of William Wykes [whose descent in the *male line* from "Bernard the Dane" is *without a break*], by whom he had a daughter Betty and an only son Charles, the father of the writer of this paper, William Wykes-Finch, M.A., of the University of Cambridge, head of the house of North Wyke, Justice of the Peace, and County Councillor for Worcestershire.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Page 4, line 39. “A generous family of great age.” So wrote Westcote nearly three hundred years ago.

Page 5, line 12. Pole, Risdon, and Westcote are all silent as to the common origin of the Cheverestons with the Wrays and Wykes. It is however, readily obvious – indeed, a self-evident fact, to every impartial inquirer. One of the many proofs of this is, that in diverse parts of the county, where the de Cheverestons held lands, there also did the Wrays and Wykes. This is seen in Chawleigh, in Roborough, in Frithelstoke and other parishes. Then, too, Sir William de Chevereston held Wray 1284 [*Feudal Aids*]. His father was John de Chevereston, who flourished 52 Henry III. [Pole], and who was certainly a brother or son of William Wigornia of North Wyke. His portion of the paternal estates evidently included Chevereston and Wray, seeing that his son, Sir William, inherited both [*Feudal Aids*]. He also held in Thrushelton, where was the old house of the Bouchier Wray forefathers, and called “Wray”, there can be little doubt from one of his near “de Wray” descendants. Richard Wyke of North Wyke held Chevereston in Roborough.

Page 5, line 22. Sir Richard de Wigornia is also called “de Wyke” of Risdon in his *Notebook*.

Page 6, line 7. The “de Tonys” were standard-bearers of Normandy before the Conquest, and one of them so acted at Hastings. They are near-of-kin to the ducal family.

Page 6, line 31. William Lord Brewer of Torr. He was the only son of William Lord Brewer, a man of immense influence in the reigns of Richard and John, and sheriff of several counties. The said William died without issue, and his large estates were divided between his five sisters: [1] Mary who married Fernac, and had a daughter, who married Pagan Chaworth who had a son Patrick de Chaworth, or Cadurcis; [2] Grace, who married Reginald de Braose, and had a son William, who had four daughters [3] Isabella, who married de Dover, and had a son Hugh; [4] Alice married Roger de Mohun, and had a son John; [5] Joan, who married Percy [OLIVER'S *Monasticon*, p. 170].

Page 7, line 1. Reginald was a son of Henry I. by Sibel, daughter of Sir Robert Corbet, Lord of Alcester. He died 1175.

Page 7, line 35. Reginald Courtenay, jun. He is called William Risdon and some others, but it is made clear by the editors of *Risdon's Notebook* that his name was Reginald.

Page 8, line 1. The earldom of Devon was in abeyance for sometime after the death of Countess Isabella de Fortibus. Disputes arose over succession, and the King's decision was not given before 1335, when peremptorily ordered their conclusion and stopped all contention by creating the heir of the Courtenay family “Earl of Devonshire.” This was the great-grandson of Robert by his wife Mary, daughter of the sixth earl

of Devon, and it was undoubtedly facilitated by the marriage of his eldest son, Hugh [who was afterwards the second Courtenay Earl of Devon], with Margaret Bohun, daughter of the Earl of Hereford, by his wife the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King Edward I. Their daughter Joan married Sir John de Chevereston.

Page 9, line 7. Waleran, son of Earl Robert, who married Margaret, daughter of Ralph de Fougeres in 1189, must have been young, seeing that his grandfather, Earl Waleran, did not marry before 1141.

Page 11, line 28. The Earl was under age at the time, being born in 1216 or 1217 [DOYLE'S *Official Baronage*].

Page 12, line 22. The manor of Ash was not held in chief by the Wykes. They were subtenants of it.

Page 13, line 10. The Wray coat-armour, with slight differences, is the same. Now, the Wrays and the Wykes branched temp. Henry III. It seems, therefore, evident that the arms in question must have been in use early in that reign.

Page 13, line 25. "Bernard the Dane." So called because born in Denmark.

Page 15, line 7. The Powderham estate was the dowry of Margaret Bohun, so that Sir William de Wyke was a trustee under the marriage settlement.

Page 17, line 8. The Rolls of the Norman Exchequer have been almost entirely lost, those only for the years 1180, 1195 and 1198 and the early part of 1199 being in existence; and though they are of great value, yet the information they give is so limited in time that we ought not to expect from them definite evidence of the names of its chief officials, nor the names of the sons of the Earl of Mellent and Wigornia, if holding the office of Chamberlain to this Exchequer, because of their youth, even at the latest of the aforesaid dates.

Page 18, line 4. Humphrey de Vetulis had a sister Josseline, who married Hugh de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewbury and Arundel [COLLINS' *Peerage*].

Page 20, line 16. In proof of the hot temperament of Earl Waleran in his youth, the Norman Rolls describe him in 1123 [that is, just before his rebellion in 1124 at the age of twenty], as "Comes furibundus et spumans aper" [*Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, vol. I. p. clvi.].

Page 21, line 32. In 1160 he was one of the witnesses to a treaty between the King of England and Louis of France. In the following year the King seized his estates for a time. A daughter of his is said to have married William de Bello Campo [*Hist. Worcestershire*].

Page 21, line 35. He endowed the Abbey of Bordesley with the manors of Bordesley, Teneshall, and Tardebigge, with their appurtenances. Also he gave it all the easements of the

Page 26, line 1. In a P.M. Inq. 6 Hen. VII. of Thomas Fulford, Knt of Fulford, we find that on his death he held the manor of "Wigdon," Devon.

Page 26, line 27. "Wyke South Teign." This manor is constantly joined in the Rolls with the manor of Kenton. In the Close Rolls of 1278 we have "the manors of Kenton, Lifton, and Wyke'." In the Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1 Ed. III. we read, "the manor of Kenton with Suthteng'." In Abb. Rot. Orig. we have [29 Ed. I.] "the manor of Kenton with Heavitree, manors of Wyk and Southteng"; [32 Ed. I.], "manors of Kenton, Wyke', and Suthteng'" [12 Ed. II.], "manor of Wyk Suthteng', Co. Devon"; in the Patent Rolls [10 Ed. II.], "the manor of Wyke Suthteng'" ; and in the Close Rolls of 1329 we have "Lydford with Wyk' Suthteng'". I might refer to many more instances in which they go together in the several Rolls, and in each the Lay Subsidies show us the Wyke family held lands.

Page 27, line 29. The manor of South Tawton was a "hundred" in itself, and possessed the power of "life and death," and the assize of beer and bread.

Page 29, line 5. In the reign of Richard II. a dispute arose between Sir Richard le Scrope and Sir Robert le Grosvenor, as to which had the right to bear the arms "Azure, one Bend, d'Or." The suit was tried before the High Constable of England and others; it lasted three years and was decided, in 1389, in Sir Richard de Scrope's favour. At this time it is clear that particular arms "had become a family possession, and their use an exclusive right."

Page 29, line 20 –

In 1227 [*Testa de Nevill*], Robert Burnel held in Cruk one fee.

In 1278 Rad's Burnel held 1 fee in Cruk] Inq. p.m.

In 1278 John Burnel held ½ fee in Koketry] 7 Ed I., No. 13.

[*Foeda in Cap.*] Robert Burnel held in Cruk Burnel Reginald de Mohun.

Page 30, line 19. His will was proved in 1504 [P.C.C.].

Page 30, line 29. Dorothy married Mark Hayes. Alice married Hugo Barry of Winscot. Elizabeth married Anthony Giffard of the House of Halsbury.

Page 31, line 4. "This John Giffard was son of Arthur ... son of John by Honora, daughter of Walter Erle of Charborough, in Dorset, son of John, by Mary, daughter of Sir Richard Grenvil, who was son of Sir Roger Giffard, by Margaret, daughter and heir of John Cobliegh of Brightley, who had it by match with the daughter and heir of Thomas Brightley of Brightley, whose original name was Fitz Warren. William, son of Fulk(?) Fitz Warren, received this land from his father in King Henry II.'s time and took to himself, as his posterity from him, the name of the place, who under that denomination, flourished there in good repute for about nine descents" [PRINCE'S *Worthies*, under "Giffard, Collonel John," p. 411].

Page 31, line 25. The eldest son of John Wyke [son of Roger], of Bindon by his wife Joan of Charborough, was "aged 46 and more" on 20th March 1488, when his father died [Inq. p.m.], and therefore born before 1442.

Page 32, line 9. The Avenells held Loxbeare from temp. Henry II. to Henry VI., and represented the main male line in Devon of Baldwin of Brionne, Baron of Okehampton. But, in opposition to this, it has been stated that William de Avenell was not a son, but a son-in-law, of the said Baldwin, and married his daughter Emma. But in a charter, quoted by

Oliver in *Monasticon Exoniensis*, we find that his grandson William, in confirming his father Ralph's gifts to the church of Plympton, uses these words: "Ranulphus pater meus et Adeliza ejus amita" [Ralph my father and Adeliza his aunt *on his father's side*]. If, then, this charter be not a forgery, it is evident that Adeliza was William's sister. At one time he filled the office of sheriff in Devon. This is shown by a deed, temp. William Rufus, addressed to "William, the Sheriff, son of Baldwin, and to all his Barons, Servants, etc., in Devenescire" [Worthy's *Suburbs of Exeter*]; and his gift to the Norman Abbey of Bec of his manors of Cowick and Exwick is proved by the confirmation of it to them by Henry II. in these words: "In England Cuwic and Exewic, by gift of William *Fitz Baldwin*" [Worthy]. We know the said William died in the lifetime of Richard, who succeeded his father, Baldwin. The argument against his being a brother of Richard is that Adeliza became Lady of the barony of Okehampton and Vice Comitessa of Devon. But this may have arisen through her nephew Ralph's youth in 1135, when Richard died, when the times were so full of strife, and when the male succession in royal and semi-royal positions was not always recognised. Worthy gets over the question of Adeliza's succession by suggesting that her father married twice, that William de Avenell was a son of this second wife, and that William the Conqueror, the uncle of his first wife, limited the succession to her descendants. There is no authority for this, as he admits. The whole difficulty is solved, if, as was probably the case, Ralph was under age at the death of his uncle Richard, and too young to undertake the duties of the barony involved in the 92½ knight's fees which belonged to it in the troubled times of King Stephen, and that under these circumstances his experienced and capable aunt, Adeliza, took into her own hands the responsibilities of government in Devon as its Vice Comitessa, and only surrendered to Ralph, the heir, the burden of such duties when he was capable of bearing it, or on her death. How he lost the barony is told both by Pole and Risdon, and has been set forth in this paper.

Page 32, line 13. The chapel of Our Lady in the Castle of Exeter, with the four prebends, and the churches of Kenn and Alphington, previously granted by Ralph Avenel, were confirmed to the Priory of Plympton by William his son.

Page 34, line 38. In the Inq. p.m. of Roger Wyke's son John the name is spelt "Wykys" throughout. These were first cousins of "John Wykys" of North Wyke, mentioned in the old deed dated 1476, and the spelling, so far as it goes [for the form is unusual], supports the conclusion that "John Wykys", the favourite of Edward IV., was a member of the Wykes of North Wyke.

Page 38, line 13. The Pokeswill family also held Pokeswill, in Dorsetshire.

Page 38, line 15. Catherston came to William Wadham by marriage with the heiress of Payne. It had been held by them for many generations.

Page 40, line 18. Sir Roger Giffard, Knt., second son of Thomas Giffard of Halsbury, married Margaret Cobligh of Brightleigh, the great heiress of the Devon Fitz-Warins. From them is descended the present Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Halsbury.

Page 40, line 21. The said Mary was a daughter of Sir Richard Grenville, of Stowe, grandfather of the famous Sir Richard, and consequently his aunt.

Page 41, line 26. The wills of "Warrior" John Wyke, who died in 1591, and of his son Roger, who died early in 1604, are "missing". This is the case of most of the Exon. Wills between these two dates. Where are they?

Page 42, line 6. The heiress of the Arscott branch of Tetcot married Molesworth of Pencarrow, Cornwall, ancestor of the late Sir William Molesworth, whose widow sold much of the outlying estates, and with them the manor of Halwell.

Page 44, line 37. The author of the *Worthies of Devon* married a daughter of Dr. Anthony Salter, and so a sister of Dr. Durston's wife, but yet had never alluded to what was the talk of the county for forty years, though he spoke of the family when writing the life of John Weekes, D.D., rector of Horwell, and chaplain to the notorious Duke of Buckingham.

Page 46, line 15. John Wykes died on the 20th September, 1661 [Ch. Pro., "Weekes v. Oxenham"].

Page 46, line 38. "There were antiently two distinct families of the name in Devon, one of which inhabited at Wiké Amidas, in the parish of Tavistock, which was so denominated from Sir Amidas de Wyke, who had his dwelling there in the days of King Henry III. And the other was settled at North Wyke in South Tawton. That at Wike Amidas flourished there for several generations ... The family of North Wyke continued in worshipful rank much longer, even down to the present time [PRINCE'S *worthies*, vol. II., now in MS.].

Page 49, line 19. Marriage licence, 1665, Sept. 27th. "Edmund Parker of Burrington, Co. Devon, Esq., Wid^r, ab^t 50, and Catherine Weekes of Zeal Monachorum, s^d Co., Sp^r, ab^t 28, and at own disposal: at Burrington aforesaid or" [*blank*]. [Register of Vicar-General of the Archbishop of Canterbury.].

Page 52, line 4. Humphrey Fursdon was a son of William [brother of Nicholas Fursdon of Fursdon], by his wife Catherine, daughter of Roger Wykes of North Wyke.

Page 52, line 16. Mistress Southcote, the grandmother, was a daughter of Sir William Pole of Colcomb.

Page 52, line 43. Edmund Parker, "£3,000 out of pocket." It would appear that this arose from his having bought several "judgments", in order to have a *locus standi* in protecting the supposed interests of his wife Katherine. But the "other side" played a more wily and astute game. He was outmanoeuvred, and ultimately lost everything he had ventured in the case.

Page 54, line 27. "His principles nefarious." One would have expected a better result from the blend of the blood of his ancestors. For his mother was a Coffin of Portledge, his grandmother a daughter of Sir Hugh Stukely, and his great-grandmother a daughter of the Bideford house of Grenville. So that in his veins ran some of Devon's best blood.

Page 56, line 28. He died in 1671 in the Fleet Prison [Ch. Pro.] but Miss Lega-Weekes states otherwise, as is seen in the footnote at page 56 and, I think, there is no doubt she is right.

Page 56, line 39. Elizabeth Whiddon was a sister of Roger, second son of Sir John Whiddon of Whiddon Park, who married Elizabeth, one of the daughters of John Weekes of North Wyke. The debt she claimed against the estate was largely made up of a marriage portion which, it would appear, her father had promised to give her.

Page 58, line 19. Both Francis Fursdon and Nicholas [p.59] were grandsons of Nicholas Fursdon and Mary Wyke his wife.

Page 61, line 15. John Fortescue of Buckland Filleigh married a sister of Mary Wyke, daughter of Sir Roger Giffard.

Page 62, line 16. Roger's widow, Elizabeth, administered to his goods [P.C.C.].

Page 64, line 16. Miss Lega-Weekes has kindly placed at my service extracts from early Tudor deeds now in possession of J. D. Prickman, Esq., of Okehampton. They are dated respectively the eighth and seventeenth years of King Henry VII. In each of the two bearing the later date we have: "Ric. Wyke fil. Et hered. Henrici Wyke nup. De Honeychurch"; and in one we are informed that both Henry and Richard were dead [17 Hen. VII.].

The coat-of-arms of Wyke of Honeychurch is the same as the arms of Wyke of North Wyke, with crescent for difference. This shows descent from a younger son. The right to use these arms was admitted by the Heralds, of which they necessarily had proofs.

The first name given by the Heralds in the Honeychurch Pedigree is Sir Richard Wyke. There can be no doubt he was the aforesaid Richard, son of Henry, who married Julian Lutterel in 1422. This, I think, clears up the doubt which existed in 1662 and onwards.

Page 65, line 3. He married, in 1881, Frances Christiana, daughter of the Rev. John. W. Edwards, Rector of Baddiley.

Page 65, line 10. The "Heneage" Finch family is well defined, and consists only of the descendants of Sir Moyle Finch of Eastwell, in Kent, and his wife Elizabeth, only daughter and heir of Sir Thomas Heneage, Knt., who held high offices in the household of Queen Elizabeth. Sir Moyle died in 1614. In 1623 his widow was created Viscountess of Maidstone by James I., as an acknowledgement of the great services done to the State both by her husband and father, and in 1628 Countess of Winchilsea by Charles I. Their eldest son, Sir Thomas, became Earl of Winchilsea, and had [with others], a son Heneage, who succeeded his father in the earldom, and married Mary, daughter of William Seymour, Duke of Somerset. They had seven sons: William [whose son Charles succeeded his grandfather], Heneage, Thomas, Charles, Leopold William, Lesley and Henry. Sir Moyle Finch's second son was Sir Heneage Finch, who became Recorder of London, Speaker of the House of Commons, and was father of the brilliant Lord Chancellor, Heneage Finch, created Earl of Nottingham. He was father of the great Secretary of State, Daniel [second Earl of Nottingham], and Heneage who was also a great lawyer, and created Earl of Aylesford. Thus, within a hundred years, the Heneage line of the Finch family won three earldoms in acknowledgement of their great services to the State. Besides this, John, a nephew of Sir Moyle, held the Great Seal, as Lord Keeper, and was created, in 1640, Lord Finch of Fordwich. Such promotion in one family, won by distinguished ability and profound legal learning, is probably unique.

Page 65, line 19. The said Leopold William was so called after his two godfathers – Leopold, Emperor of Germany, and William, Prince of Orange. A double surname at that time was very rare. There are only a few instances on record earlier than the middle of the seventeenth century.

Page 65, line 22. Both Captain Lesley Finch and his wife Barbara Scrope were buried in the Longleat vault of Lord Weymouth [whose wife was Frances, a sister of the said Lesley], in the parish of Longbridge Deverill.

Page 66, line 7. In the Eastwell Parish Register is the entry of the burial of one "Richard Plantagenet." He assisted in the rebuilding of Eastwell House by Sir Moyle Finch, and as he kept aloof from the other workmen he attracted the attention of Sir Moyle, who, judging from his appearance and reserve that he had seen better days, invited him to give

him his confidence, when he told him that his name was Richard Plantagenet, that his father was Richard III., and that on the evening before the battle of Bosworth Field he was with his father, who told him that on the morrow it would be decided who should be king; that if the battle went against him he must immediately flee, and remain in obscurity, in order to save his life; that thereupon, after the death of his father on the field of battle, he assumed a lowly condition, and learnt the art of a mason, in which capacity he had been working at Eastwell. Sir Moyle was so interested in the old man and his declared history, that he gave him a pension and a residence in the Park. [See the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the whole story.]

Page 66, line 9. When at Eastwell, a few years ago, the rector told me an interesting story of Mr. Barham, the author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*. He was a keen and popular sportsman in Kent, and had almost a general *carte blanche* to sport where he pleased, but this did not extend to Eastwell, though, apparently unknown to himself, he was found trespassing on that property. At the time this occurred, Colonel Finch-Hatton [so called through marriage of his ancestor Daniel, second Earl of Nottingham, with a daughter of Lord Hatton] was residing at Eastwell, and hearing the sound of a gun in an unexpected quarter, he made his way towards the spot. On his arrival there he found Mr. Barham, with a friend. Angry and indignant that gentlemen should be found thus trespassing, he at once accosted them, and demanded by what *right* they were sporting on that land. This sharp demand aroused Mr. Barham, who at once retorted, "What right, sir, have you to ask!" To which the Colonel replied, "This is Eastwell property, and I am Colonel Finch-Hatton." With wonderful quickness of wit Barham immediately replied, "I beg your pardon, sir; I am" [suiting the action to the word] "Mr. Hat-off." This so pleased the Colonel, that on learning who he was, he at once requested him to go on with his sport and enjoyment.

Page 66, line 17. Married, in 1862, Emily Dudley, daughter and co-heir of Josiah Perrin, of