

ELMLEY LOVETT
AND
THE MOULES OF SNEADS GREEN.

BY
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CANON OF SOUTHWARK.



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FOREWORD.

THE Prime Minister of to-day has taught us to love England and all that in her is which makes its appeal to our sense of sound, of sight and of smell.* The sound of the hammer on the anvil and of the scythe against the whetstone, the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of the hill and of the last load at night of hay being drawn down a lane as the twilight comes on, the smell of wood smoke coming up in the autumn evening, that smoke that our ancestors must have caught on the air when they were coming home with the results of the day's forage. He has in particular taught us to love Worcestershire; he who came out of the red soil and who will return to it tells us that there is no soil like it in this country. He has made us love the rock from which he was hewn, the pit from which he was digged; and in the hope of inspiring that love in the hearts of my own kith and kin, I offer the story of Worcestershire folk to whom we owe our origin and from whose simple contentment we have much to learn.

HORACE MONROE.

Wimbledon, 1927.

* "On England." Stanley Baldwin.



SNEADS GREEN HOUSE, ELMLEY LOVETT.

From a drawing by Lumb Stocks, R.A.

ELMLEY LOVETT.

AFTER THE CONQUEST.

In the reign of Edward the Confessor, Alwold held Elmley Lovett, then called Aelmelia, of Queen Edith.* After the Conquest the overlordship was granted to the hereditary standard-bearer of Normandy, Ralph de Toeni (de Toden), one of the distinguished companions of William the Conqueror when he invaded England—Toeni is close to Conches, south-west of Evreux in the Department of Eure—and he is sometimes called Ralph de Conches. Aelmelia was granted to him as a reward for his gallantry, with other lands in Worcestershire, and remained in possession of his descendants for three succeeding centuries. At the battle of Hastings Ralph de Toeni declined to take the post of Standard Bearer, “on that day that honour was something from which men shrank as keeping them back from the more active duties of the fight.”† Before the battle the Duke of Normandy called for the gonfalon which had been presented to him by the Pope, and addressed de Toeni in these words: “Bear my gonfalon for I would not but do thee right, by right and by ancestry your line are the standard bearers of Normandy, and very good knights they have been.” “My thanks,” replied Ralph, “for acknowledging our right, but by my faith the gonfalon shall not by me be borne this day. To-day I claim quittance of the service, for I

* Victoria County History of Worcestershire, Vol. III., p. 106.

† Freeman's “History of the Norman Conquest,” Vol. III., p. 465.

would serve you in other guise. I will go with you into battle and will fight the English so long as life will last.”* Ralph would not encumber his hands with anything, not even the banner of the Apostles, if it were to stay his sword from smiting the foe without mercy; his refusal is chronicled in the Roman de Rou.† The history of the foundation of the monastery of Conches goes back to the year 371; de Toeni’s forebears were its benefactors and by him lands in England were granted to the monastery. These lands, tithes and duties are set out in a Papal Bull and Aelmelia is one of the places named in this ancient document.‡ The overlord established a tenant at Aelmelia, designated “Walter” in the Domesday Survey. Ralph de Toeni died in 1102 and was buried with his forefathers in the Abbey of Conches.

He was succeeded by his son Ralph, and by heirs in the direct male line during the days of the Norman and Plantagenet kings. Of his descendants Ralph, who was known as the Crusader, is the most interesting; he died in the Holy Land A.D. 1239, “signed with the sign of the Cross.” A curious story is told of him by the monks of St. Albans; when his brother Roger was dying he sent for Ralph, who arrived too late to see his brother alive. With great lamentation he cried, “My brother, I conjure thee in the name of God that thou speak to me,” adding that he would never eat again unless he could have some discourse with him. Thereupon the dead man sharply rebuked him for thus disquieting his spirit and told him that he was then beholding with his eyes the torments of evil men, the joys of the blessed and the great punishment whereunto he himself

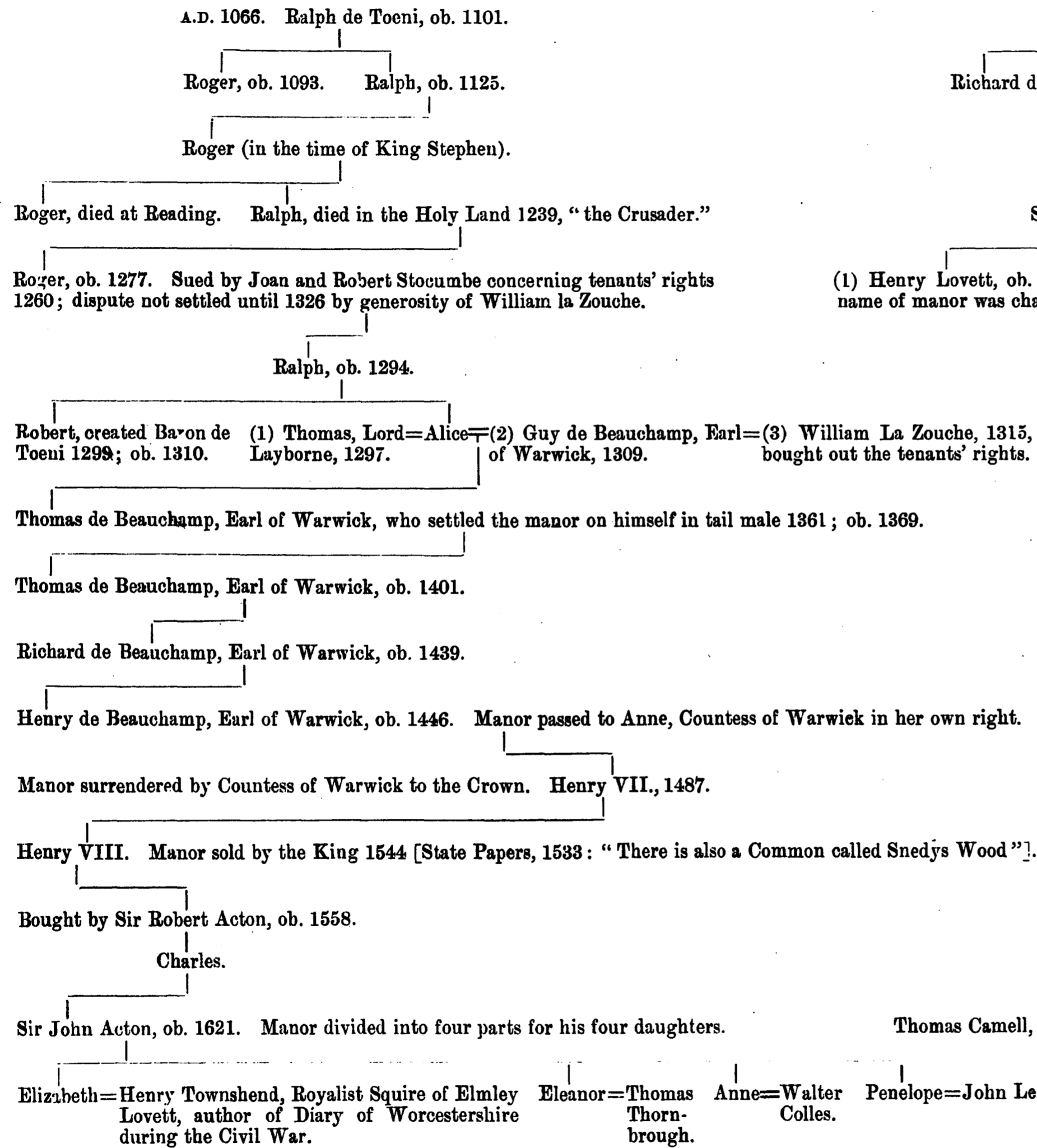
* The Battle Abbey Roll, Duchess of Cleveland, 1889, Vol. III., p. 171.

† Wace’s *Chronicle of the Normans*, circa 1100—1175.

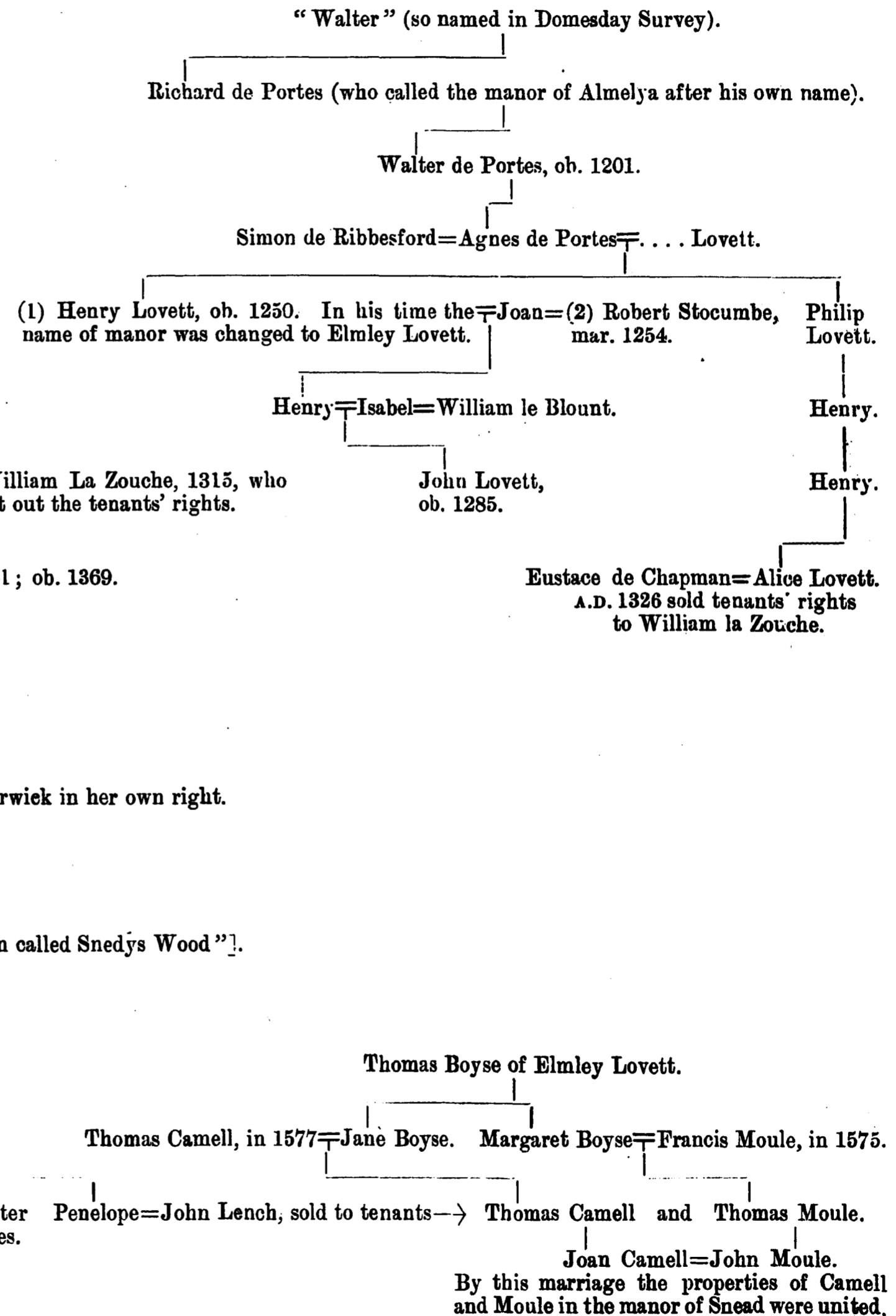
‡ Bull of Pope Gregory IX, 1234. Gallia Christiana, appendix, Vol. XI., p. 144.

THE DESCENT OF THE MANOR OF ELMLEY LOVETT.

OVER LORDS.



UNDER TENANTS.



(miserable wretch) was destined. Ralph then made enquiry, "Canst thou not then be saved?" "Yes," quoth Roger, "for I have done one good work, though but a little one that is to say, a small gift to the honour of the Blessed Virgin, for which through God's mercy I trust for redemption." "But," quoth Ralph, "may not these punishments whereunto thou art designed be mitigated by good works, masses and alms deeds?" "Yes," quoth Roger. "Why then," quoth Ralph, "I do faithfully promise thee that for the health of our souls and the souls of our ancestors I will found a religious house for good men to inhabit who for the health of our souls shall always pray to God."* So was the Church maintained in the days when Elmley Lovett bowed to the rule of the House de Toeni.

* The Battle Abbey Roll, 1889, Vol. III., p. 171.

IN PLANTAGENET TIMES.

Third in descent from the Crusader and last of the line was Robert de Toeni, who did good service in the wars with Scotland and Gascony and was summoned to Parliament as Baron Toeni in 1299. He has sometimes been associated with the fabulous "Knight of the Swan," from whom the Counts of Boulogne were supposed to be lineally descended. Genealogists have attempted to trace the pedigrees of the Beauchamps and Staffords to the same source, whence they derive their crests. The shield on Baron Toeni's seal, affixed to his letter to the Pope A.D. 1301, is surrounded by lions and swans. He died without issue in 1310, and to his only sister and heiress passed the Manor of Aelmelia. This Alice de Toeni was three times married, and the introduction of her three husbands complicates the history of the family property. Her first husband was Thomas, Lord Leybourne, the doughty Kentish Knight who would know nothing of "if" or "but"—"Sans mais et sans si."* Then she married Guy de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and finally after his death she became the wife of William la Zouche of Ashby. Meanwhile "the tenants" almost entered into possession of the de Toeni lands of Aelmelia. "Walter," Ralph's tenant, so named in the Domesday Survey, was succeeded "in the time of King Stephen" by Richard de Portes, after whom the manor was called "Aelmelia Ricardi de Portes."† This branch of the family failed in the male line on the death of Walter de Portes in 1201. In the same year Agnes de Portes claimed inheritance from her brother; she had married Simon de Ribbsford, and it is recorded that "Simon de Ribbsford received seisin of Walter's Worcestershire estates, having married Walter's heir."

* The Battle Abbey Roll, 1889, Vol III., p. 171.

† Victoria County History of Worcestershire, Vol. I., p. 310b.



THE PARISH CHURCH OF S. MICHAEL, ELMLEY LOVETT.

The tower dates from the XIIIth century. The living is in the gift of Christ's College, Cambridge.

This Agnes de Ribbsford afterwards married a member of the Lovett family and became the mother of Henry Lovett, described as "son and heir to Agnes de Portes."

In his time the name of the manor was changed from "Aelmelia Ricardi de Portes" to "Elmley Lovett." Serious disputes seem to have arisen between the Lovett tenants and the de Toeni overlords after Henry Lovett's death in 1250. His widow, Joan, married Robert Stocumbe in 1254, and she and her husband tried to establish a right to the tenancy which almost amounted to ownership. They sued Roger de Toeni for two-thirds of the manor which they claimed as part of Joan's dowry. The defence at the trial in 1260 was that Joan merely held the position of custodian for her son Henry Lovett. The result of the law-suit is not on record, but the younger Henry Lovett bequeathed his interest in the manor to his son John, who appears to be "in possession" at the time of his death in 1285. John Lovett died without issue and his inheritance passed to his kinswoman, Alice Lovett, third in succession from Philip Lovett, younger son, by her second husband, of Agnes de Portes; she married Eustace de Chapman, and in the year 1326 the troubles between overlords and tenants were ended by the generous action of William la Zouche of Ashby. He had married the last of the line of de Toeni, Alice, widow of Guy de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and on behalf of his stepson, Thomas de Beauchamp, the young Earl of Warwick, he bought out the tenants' interests from Alice Lovett, now wife of Eustace de Chapman, and established the house of Warwick in possession of the manor of Elmley Lovett. Thomas de Beauchamp settled the manor on himself in tail-male A.D. 1361.*

* Feet of F., Div. Co., Mich., 35 Edw. III. (Victoria County History.)

WHEN TUDORS REIGNED.

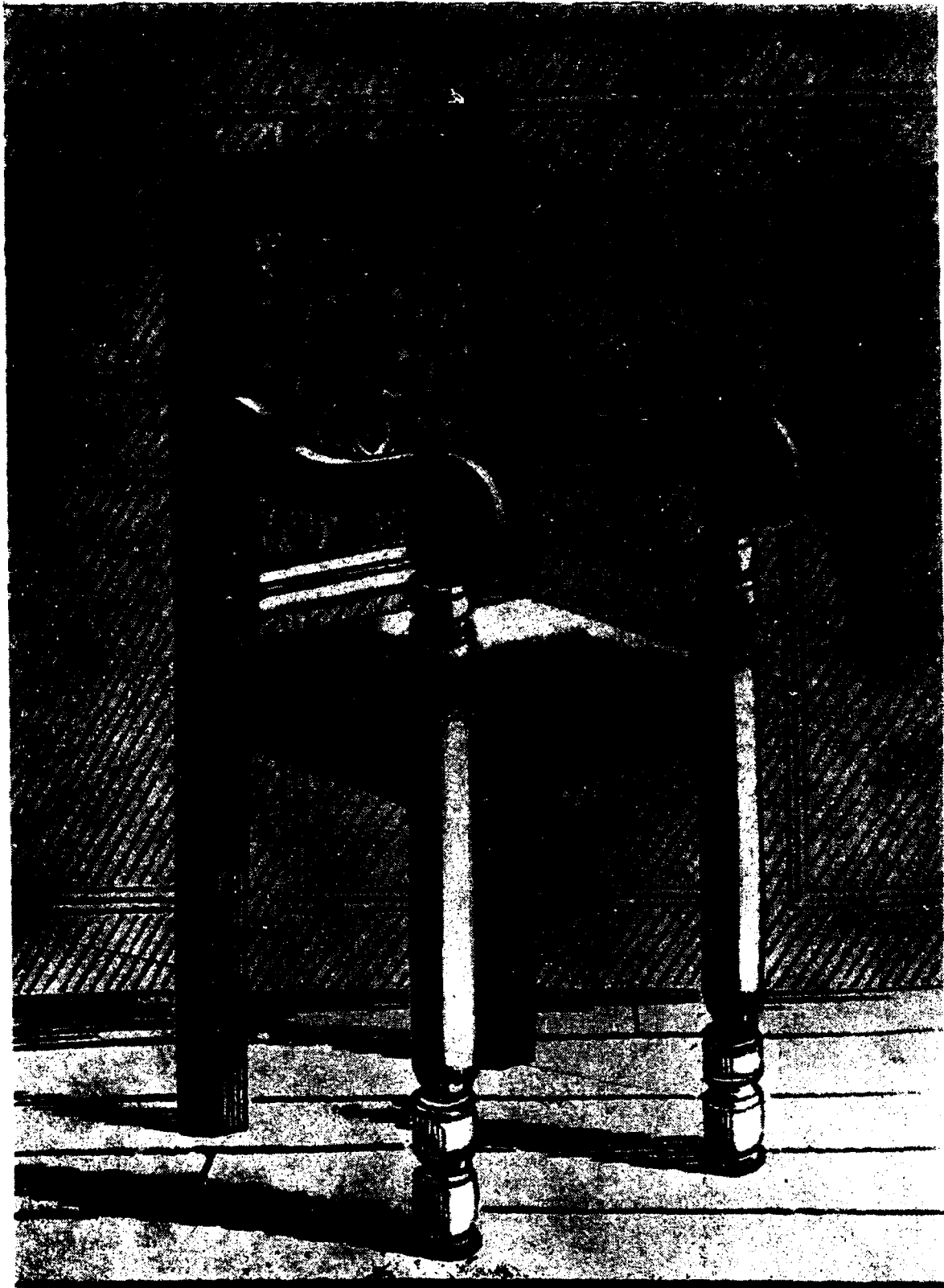
The descent of Elmley Lovett is identical with that of the Earldom of Warwick until A.D. 1487, when Anne, Countess of Warwick, surrendered the manor to King Henry VII. The Royal ownership passed on the death of the first Tudor king to Henry VIII., who sold it in 1544 to Sir Robert Acton. Meanwhile Thomas Cromwell had been appointed as Vicar-General or Vicegerent of Henry VIII. In one of his injunctions to the clergy we find the origin in England of Parish Registers, September 8th, 1538. To this injunction we owe many family records which would otherwise have been lost. The injunction is as follows:—

“That you and every parson, vicar or curate within the Diocese, for every church keep one book or Register, where he shall write the day and year of every wedding, christening and burial made within your parish for your time and so every man succeeding you likewise, and also there insert every person's name that shall be so wedded, christened and buried.”*

In pursuance of the Injunction of 1538 many Registers came into existence, but from various causes not a few of these have perished. Elmley Lovett was one of the parishes in which the injunction was immediately carried out, and the Register begins in 1538. The first entry of the name Moule, or Moyle as it was then written, is as follows: Alis, daughter of John Moyle, baptised November 11th, 1539.† There is no record which connects this John Moyle with those of the same name in succeeding generations, the earliest recorded marriage in the family from which the pedigree is traceable being in the year 1575. It is evident however that members of the family

* Injunction to the Clergy, Vice-General of Henry VIII., 1538.

† Elmley Lovett Parish Register, Sheet I.



SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CHAIR AT SNEADS GREEN HOUSE.

Family tradition dates this chair back to the days when the Moules first came to the Manor of Snead.

lived in the Parish of Elmley Lovett in the time of King Henry VIII. and we know not how long before.

We must now follow the history of Sir Robert Acton, to whom the manor of Elmley Lovett was sold by King Henry VIII. in 1544. Sir Robert was one of the King's Knights, who having bought the property from his royal master, settled it on his son Charles. Sir Robert died in 1558 and after his son Charles, his grandson Sir John Acton succeeded; he died in 1621 without an heir and the manor was divided equally between his four daughters. Meanwhile two marriages had taken place at Elmley Lovett Church which open for us the first chapter of the authentic history of the Moules of Sneads Green. On July 11th, 1575, at Elmley Lovett Church, Francis Moule was married to Margaret Boyse, daughter of Thomas Boyse of Elmley Lovett, and on January 23rd, 1577, Jane Boyse, sister to Margaret, was married to Thomas Camell. A closer union between the families of Camell and Moule, as will be seen in the second generation, placed the Moule family in possession of all that part of the manor of Snead afterwards known as Sneads Green. These domestic events were taking place when the history of England centered in Elizabeth the Virgin Queen. The Armada failed in 1588, Elizabeth had been excommunicated by Pope Pius V. and the hold of the Papacy on England, already weakening, now came to an end. We do not know that Elmley Lovett was seriously disturbed by the religious controversies of Queen Elizabeth's reign, but after the accession of King James I., when the hopes of old adherents to the Church of Rome had been disappointed, one of the movements set on foot to re-establish the power of the Papacy—and that the most notorious—was associated with a village within a few miles of the homes of the Actons, the Camells and the Moules.

UNDER STUART RULE.

The village of Huddington is not far distant from Elmley Lovett ; here in the house of Thomas Winter a plot was hatched to strike one more blow in the cause of Roman Catholicism. The ringleader was Winter's cousin, Robert Catesby, who claimed for the Pope universal authority and determined upon the destruction of King James I. He persuaded his kinsman, Thomas Winter, to engage the services of Guy Fawkes, whose known character for courage and skill was such as to make him a desirable acquisition to the plotters. So is our neighbourhood associated with early plans laid in connection with the Gunpowder Plot. The suppression of Popish recusants naturally followed the discovery of the well-laid plans to destroy the life of the King, and in the years that followed a recusant was discovered in the bosom of the Moule family. Lucy, wife of Francis Moule, had married the youngest son of Francis Moule and Margaret Boyse ; she lived in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. and was the mother of sons born in 1629 and 1634.

The days of the Long Parliament dawned before she died and this Parliament interested itself chiefly in raising money, and taking action against recusants. Heavy taxation was followed by severe levies upon Roman Catholics, and the most detailed account of this taxation in the County of Worcester is preserved by Henry Townshend, Lord of the Manor of Elmley Lovett. In his diary, which covers the years of the Long Parliament and gives information, otherwise unknown, in regard to the Civil War in Worcestershire, Townshend has preserved peculiar details and particularly concerning his own parish. All persons who could spend £100 a year paid £5, a widow paid one-third



ELMLEY LOVETT CHURCHYARD.

Stem and base of xvth century cross, the cross itself is a modern restoration.
Buried beneath these stones lies the dust of ten generations of the Moules of Sneads Green.

of what her husband should have paid had he been alive, and popish recusants paid double.* In 1641 subsidies, which Parliament had voted, were levied, and one list gives separately the sums which popish recusants had to pay. In this list Elmley Lovett is assessed at four shillings; of this sum part at least must have been paid by Lucy Moule. Poor woman, the State made it difficult for her to live and the Church made it difficult for her to die, she was outlawed by the one authority and excommunicated by the other. At last, in this very year when Elmley Lovett appeared in the list of parishes assessed for recusants, circumstances seem to have proved too much for her and Lucy died. Her short story is told in the pathetic record made in the Parish Register: "Lucy wife of Francis Moule buried 1641 the second day of June being a Recusant excō[mmunicate] we know not by whom."† The entry gives a mysterious setting to the life of an unhappy woman; the secret of that life lies buried in her grave. The diary of Henry Townshend begins in the year 1640; in it is recorded that nineteen landowners in Elmley Lovett were assessed for taxation. In the assessment dated March 24th, 1640, the three names appear—

Henry Townshend	£4. 0.0
Thomas Moule	£1.10.0
Thomas Camell	£1. 0.0‡

In 1642 money was ordered to be raised by Act of Parliament for the defence of the Realm. A warrant was issued to the Constable of the parish of Elmley Lovett in which Thomas Camell is named as sub-collector. He and his cousin Thomas Moule appear in the tax roll of 1642 and 1644. In the latter year

* Henry Townshend's Diary. Introduction, p. xi.

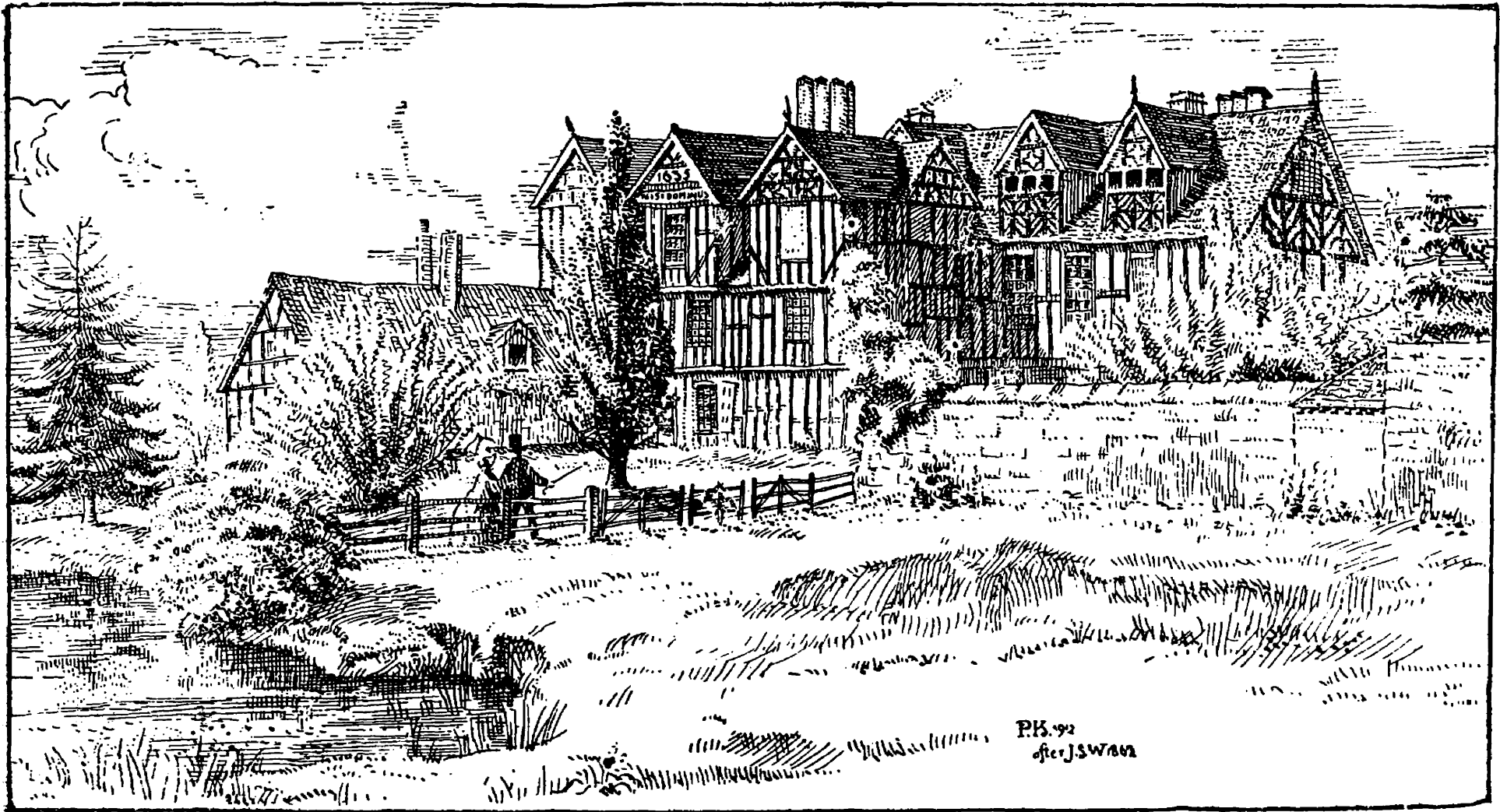
† Elmley Lovett Parish Register.

‡ Henry Townshend's Diary, Vol. II., p. 31.

the words "for his free land" are added after the name of Thomas Moule. Why this addition is made it is difficult to understand, as only owners of land were taxed at this time.* The direction reads as follows: "You are to tax every landlord for his land, not the under-tenant, and the tenant neither for his goods unless he hath a surplusage of personal estate beside."† These tax rolls prove conclusively that sometime after Sir John Acton's estate was broken up in 1621, part of his property which fell to his daughter Penelope Lench was sold to various tenants, and that before the Civil War began Thomas Camell and Thomas Moule had become possessed of the lands which had been tenanted by their parents in the days when Queen Elizabeth sat upon the throne of England.

* He may have held other land in copyhold.

† Henry Townshend's Diary, Vol. II., p. 101.



THE LODGE, ELMLEY LOVETT. BUILT IN 1635. PULLED DOWN IN 1890.

IN THE DAYS OF CIVIL WAR.

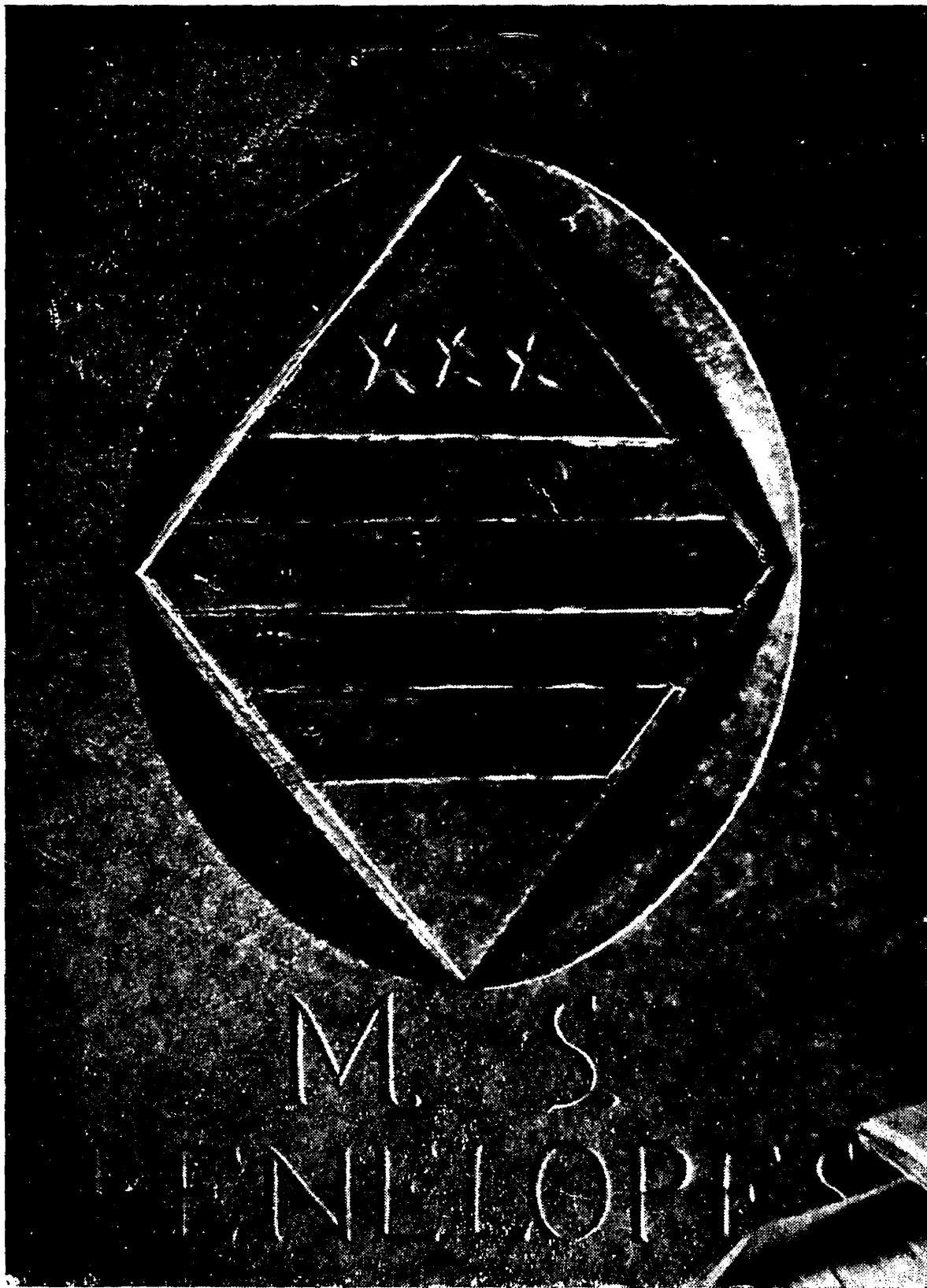
The story of these days in Worcestershire is told by Henry Townshend, whose connection with Elmley Lovett begins from the time of his marriage with Elizabeth Acton, one of the four daughters of Sir John Acton, by whose will the manor was divided into four equal parts. Elizabeth Townshend inherited one-fourth and her husband bought from her sisters, Eleanor Thornborough and Anne Colles, the fourth parts of their father's estate inherited by them. Thus Townshend became possessed of three-fourths of the Manor of Elmley Lovett, which was afterwards held by his family until the year 1742. Part of this property, with the Manor House, passed to Colonel Forester and later to Captain Foster, who sold the estate and pulled down the house in 1890 because of its ruinous condition, the local tradition being that the house was haunted. The last fourth part of the original manor inherited by Penelope, wife of John Lench, has a history of its own from the date of Sir John Acton's death in 1621. Penelope Lench inherited that part of the Elmley Lovett estate which included "the Manor of Snead," and from this time begins the separate story of Sneads Green. The name "Snedys" occurs at an earlier date in State papers of King Henry VIII., a passage from these documents, March 12th, 1533, is quoted in the Parish Register of Elmley Lovett, and reads as follows: "There is also a common called Snedys Wood containing 100 acres as estimated by three honest persons." In a deed* still in possession of the family bearing date the nineteenth year of King James I. concerning the marriage settlement of Mary Moyle of Hartlebury to

* Deed, 1621, at Sneads Green House.

Thomas Camell he is described as "of Sneads Green." The year of this deed, 1621, is the same as that of the death of Sir John Acton, proving that Thomas Camell had tenanted that part of Elmley Lovett which afterwards became his own, before it was inherited by Penelope Acton, wife of John Lench.

The date of the sale of lands of Penelope Lench to Thomas Camell or to Thomas Moule cannot now be proved, but we have shown from Townshend's diary that they were both landowners in the parish before the days of the Long Parliament, and were assessed as such to help to meet the expenses of the Civil War. It will be remembered that Thomas Moule was the son of the Moule and Boyse marriage of the year 1575, and that Thomas Camell was the son of the Camell and Boyse marriage of the year 1577. These sisters' sons lived in the manor of Snead, when at the house of Thomas Camell an incident occurred, and is recorded in the Parish Register, which suggests the declaration of hostilities at Sneads Green in the first year of the Civil War: "At his house in 1642, Robert Lucas' wife was shot by a souldier."* Worcestershire from this time became the centre of much fighting, and the first clash of arms in the County took place in September at Powick Bridge. Elmley Lovett was from time to time the scene of military operations. King Charles himself was at Droitwich on May 11th, 1645, and along these roads troops were constantly marching. Townshend tells us that occupiers of lands were compelled to billet soldiers in their houses and to send men and oxen to bear their share in the work of transport. The Lord of the Manor of Elmley Lovett was an ardent Royalist, and the support of the people was given in full measure to the King's cause.

* Note in Parish Register, Elmley Lovett.



THE ORIGIN OF THE STARS AND STRIPES,

THE SIEGE OF WORCESTER.

Henry Townshend of Elmley Lovett was in the City of Worcester throughout the siege from March 26th until July 26th, 1646, and the daily events of this period are carefully recorded in his diary. The governor of the city was Colonel Henry Washington, interesting to the world as the great uncle of George Washington, first President of the United States. The family arms may be seen over the grave of the Colonel's daughter Penelope in Wickhamford Church, Worcestershire, and show the origin of the Stars and Stripes.* This Colonel Washington was a magnanimous foe, as proved by the story of his going out himself from the city during the siege to accompany the bearers of the dead body of one of the enemy officers who had lost his life within the walls. On this occasion the governor and bearers were attended by Dr. Warmstry, the Dean of Worcester. During the impromptu armistice, the Dean entered into a discussion with the Chaplain of the dead officer's regiment concerning the sanctity of sacred buildings, the Dean no doubt having the safety of the Cathedral in mind in the event of the fall of the city. This Parliamentarian Chaplain was the famous Richard Baxter of Kidderminster, of whom our story will have more to tell.

Baxter insisted that there was no difference to be made between a church and any other common place. The Dean defended the holiness of temples consecrated to God and declared them to be exempted from all profane uses. "Why then, if churches be so holy" came the reply, "do you pull them down?"

* See accompanying illustration, and pedigree page 18.

To which the Dean made answer, "There are two sorts of temples, one made by man for the worship of God, and one made by God himself, as are the bodies of His people. The temples made by man may be destroyed to preserve the temples made by God."*

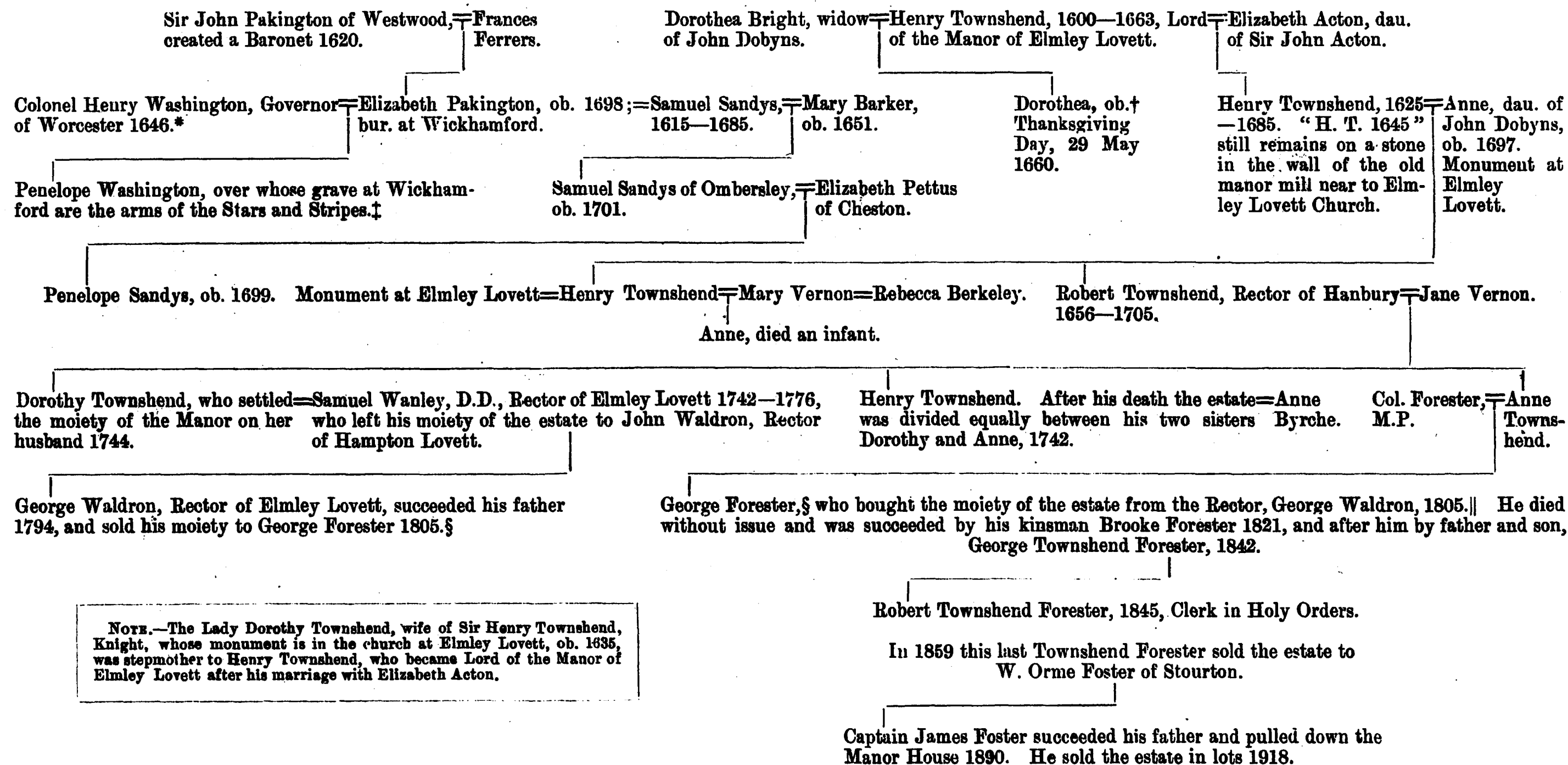
How soon after this gentlemanly armistice did the besiegers desecrate the Temple of Worcester and leave the marks of their sacrilege for ever upon her consecrated stones! With the fall of Worcester the King's cause was lost, and it was not many years after that the fatal blow severed his head from his body. Worcester transferred her allegiance to his son, who from the very day of his father's execution became to her people King Charles II.

All the family documents at Sneads Green concerning events of this time bear date as though the Protectorate had never been, and begin the reign of Charles II. in the year of his father's martyrdom.

In 1651 the neighbourhood was once more thrilled by the news of young Charles's coronation as King of Scotland at Scone, and of his intended march into England to make the faithful city his headquarters before proceeding to London. There followed on September 3rd of that year the battle of Worcester and Charles's flight by Barborne bridge through Ombersley on to Stourbridge. If, as in all probability, he avoided the open road he too, like his father before him, may have found his way through Elmley Lovett and the fields and lanes of Sneads Green. Meanwhile the parish registers were neglected and many family events of which we should otherwise have had the records were never registered. After the entry of the marriage of Thomas Camell and Mary Moyle in 1621 there follow the entries of the baptisms of

* Henry Townshend's Diary, Vol. I., pp. 122--124.

THE DESCENT OF THE MANOR AS DIVIDED 1621, AFTER THE DEATH OF SIR JOHN ACTON.



NOTE.—The Lady Dorothy Townshend, wife of Sir Henry Townshend, Knight, whose monument is in the church at Elmley Lovett, ob. 1635, was stepmother to Henry Townshend, who became Lord of the Manor of Elmley Lovett after his marriage with Elizabeth Acton.

* Page 17.

† Page 20.

‡ Illustration facing page 17.

§ He assumed by Royal licence the name of Townshend.

|| Quarrel over this transaction, page 24.

their elder children, but not of those born later than 1637. It is a matter of strange and singular interest that the last entry until the Restoration is the domestic record of the beginning of the Civil War, the burial in 1642 of Robert Lucas's wife who was shot by a soldier at Sneads Green House.

AFTER THE RESTORATION.

Worcester celebrated the great day of thanksgiving, the King's birthday, on May 29, 1660, but Henry Townshend could take little part in the rejoicing because upon that very day his daughter Dorothea died. Townshend records that at her funeral in the Cathedral "was the first prayer for the dead since the rendering up of Worcester to the pretended Parliament, 24 July, 1646."* The neglected parish registers of Elmley Lovett at once begin to record the family events after the Protectorate came to an end. The death of one of the elder children of Thomas and Mary Camell is recorded in 1660, and other entries show that one son, Thomas, and three daughters survived their parents. Thomas died unmarried in 1704. By deed bearing date 1666 he, the last of the male line, left his property to his three sisters, Mary, wife of John Skeiler, Elizabeth, wife of John Hemming, and Joan, wife of John Moule.† This John Moule was already connected with the Camell family, his father being first cousin to his father-in-law, Thomas Camell. He was churchwarden of Elmley Lovett in the year of the Great Plague 1665,‡ and his marriage to Joan Camell in 1672 has a peculiar interest to students of the family history. This marriage connected the families for the second time and supplied the final link by which the two properties held by Thomas Camell and Thomas Moule in 1640 were united and afterwards known as the Moules' estate of Sneads Green. The manorial rights had been purchased by Thomas Foley and were sold by one of his

* Henry Townshend's Diary, Vol. I., p. 44.

† Deed at Sneads Green House, Elmley Lovett.

‡ Elmley Lovett Parish Register.



JOHN WATKINS

Of Woodfield, Ombersley, whose daughter
Anne married Francis Moule, 1791.

From a portrait at Sneads Green House.

successors, Lord Foley of Witley Court, to Francis Moule in 1805. This Thomas Foley, who held the manorial rights of Snead, is described as "Master Foley who hath been promoted first to be High Sheriff of the County and Knight of the Shire in Oliver the Usurper's time."* He was the devoted friend of Richard Baxter who was Sheriff's Chaplain in 1658, and whose holy life must ever be associated with the history of Kidderminster.

One of Queen Anne's greatest statesmen, Robert Harley, married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Foley, Lord of the Manor of Snead. Harley had been brought into close connection with Richard Baxter and so with Thomas Foley. There is a record of Robert Harley's letter to his father dated November 24th, 1691, in which he writes, "this morning Holy Baxter went to his everlasting rest."† Not many days after, Elizabeth, wife of Robert Harley, died of small-pox. The close relationship, formed by this marriage, between Harley and Foley continued to the end. When in 1711 Harley, then Lord Treasurer, advised the Crown to create a sufficient number of peers to secure a majority for peace in the House of Lords, his "Father Foley's" son was one of those supporters of his policy who was then raised to the peerage, as Baron Foley of Kidderminster.

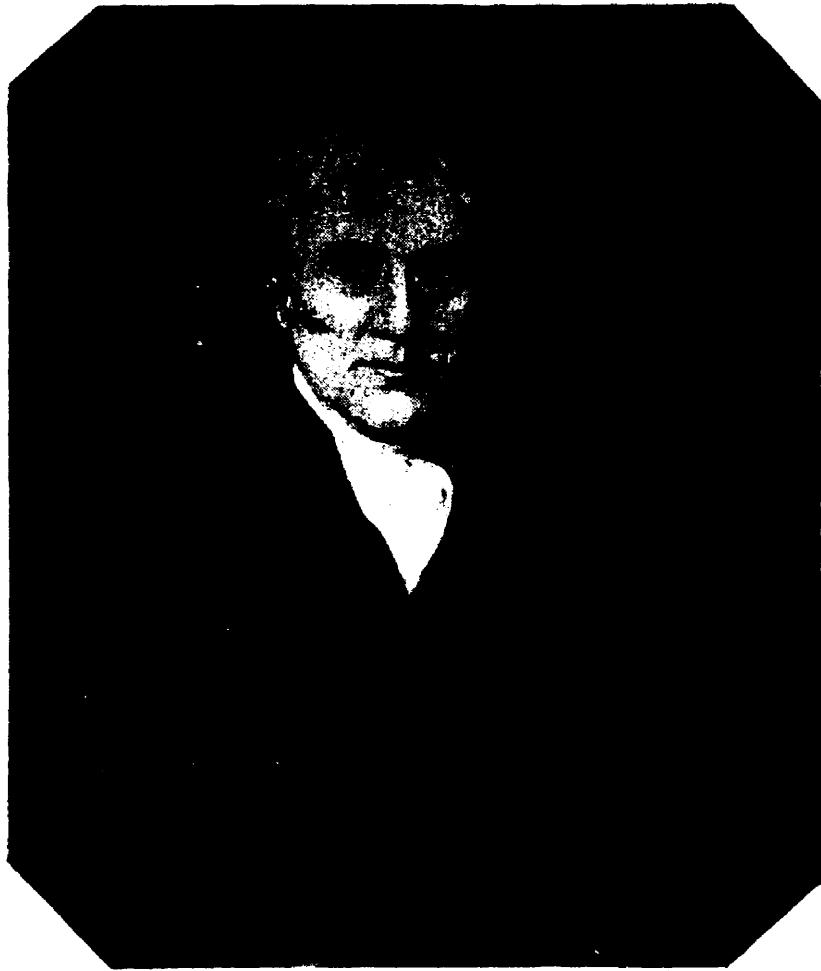
Changes meanwhile were taking place in the inheritance of the property at Sneads Green. The last of the Camells died in 1704, his sisters had all died before him, and his property descended to their children. Of these, Mary Skeiler and John Hemming sold their shares to the third, John Moule, son of John Moule and Joan Camell. This arrangement placed John Moule in possession of the entire property—his father's and mother's portions

* Old Manuscript, cited in Heraldry of Worcester, Penn MS.

† Portland Papers. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, Vol. XLVII., p. 384.

by inheritance, and his cousins' by purchase. An elaborate deed of this date preserved at Sneads Green gives every detail of the events that united the properties into one estate, which has ever since then been held by members of the family in successive generations. This John Moule had served as churchwarden of Elmley Lovett in 1699;* he lived through the years of Queen Anne and the coming of the Elector of Hanover, the impeachment of Robert Harley and his final acquittal. He was succeeded by his son John, who married Olive Pardoe in 1721, having established his family in the manor of Snead and greatly increased the value of the property.

* Elmley Lovett Parish Register.



FRANCIS MOULE
Of Sneads Green.



ANNE WATKINS
Of Woodfield.

Married at Ombersley Parish Church, 1791.

Portraits at Sneads Green House.

THE GEORGIAN ERA.

Notwithstanding the continued attempts of the Jacobites to seize the crown, the death-blow was dealt to the Stuart Ascendency when the House of Hanover was securely seated upon the throne. The Church however in the time of the Georges was at its lowest ebb as a spiritual influence in the country, and consequently the movement set on foot by John Wesley was destined to play an important part in the religious life of the English people. *A curious story connected with Elmley Lovett is told which contrasts the cold formalism of the Church of that day with the new spiritual revival. A poor girl who had "stooped to folly, and found too late that men betray,"† was condemned by Church authority to the following peculiar form of penitential discipline. On a given Sunday she was forced to envelop herself in a sheet and to proceed up the aisle to the seat of her betrayer so that he should share in her public shame. The penance was duly performed in all its cruelty, the traitor, who had been secretly informed of what was to take place, remained away and the unfortunate girl suffered her open shame alone. When the day of true repentance came and she felt the deep need of forgiveness and spiritual consolation it was to the followers of Wesley she turned, the heart of her own church having grown cold.

John Moule and his wife Olive were succeeded by their son Francis, who had married Anne Reynolds in the year 1766. His son, also Francis, married Anne Watkins of Woodfield, Ombersley, in the days of the French Revolution, April 1791. Not long after these events the parish of Elmley Lovett was rent asunder by a serious domestic quarrel between the Squire and the Parson which might have driven the Moules from their home had they not been pos-

* Noakes, "Rambles in Worcestershire," p. 274.

† Oliver Goldsmith, "Vicar of Wakefield."

sessors of their own land. Few of the tenant farmers or of their dependants escaped the general ruin brought about by this disgraceful dispute between George Waldron, Rector of the Parish, and the Squire, George Forester, of the Manor House, known as the Lodge, Elmley Lovett. The Rector had inherited the moiety of the Manor from his father, John Waldron, to whom it had passed by will from the last representatives of the Townshend family. In 1805 George Waldron sold the moiety to George Forester, a man of deplorable reputation who was "charged of the most horrible crimes."* From that time until their deaths they made the parish infamous by their ruinous squabbles and law-suits about the estate. The Squire had purchased the Parson's moiety at too high a price, and finding that he had made a foolish bargain attempted to make it void. Then followed a war of litigation; fifteen causes were tried at the county assizes, two suits in chancery followed, then one in the court of exchequer, two in the King's Bench, and one in the Ecclesiastical Courts. Both litigants suffered imprisonment, both eventually died unsatisfied, condemned by all and regretted by none.

A century and more has passed since then, and other men and women live in the houses from whence yeomen and tenantry had once been driven as the result of that disgraceful quarrel. The Church is in holier keeping and has become once more the spiritual home of the people, but the Manor House has gone for ever. This house, once of singular beauty and historic interest, was the pride of all the country round; and now a dilapidated dove-cot, a few broken walls and a stagnant pool, hemmed in by a ring of nettles, mark the site of that Squire's home, as if to suggest the ruin that is destined to follow such wickedness as once was witnessed here.†

* Noakes, "Guide to Worcestershire," p. 145.

† Amongst the ruins lay the oak beam on which was engraved the words of the Psalmist, *Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum.*



JOHN WATKINS MOULE AND HIS WIFE JANE HARVIE.

Portraits in the possession of their grandson, the Honourable Walter Monroe of Newfoundland.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER.

It was in the year 1791 that the Ombersley marriage took place between Francis Moule and Ann Watkins. They lived at Sneads Green during the days of Nelson's naval battles and the Napoleonic wars, while their domestic life was disturbed by the parochial troubles which have already been recorded.* In 1805 Francis Moule bought the manorial rights of the Manor of Snead from Lord Foley of Witley Court. By his will dated 1851 this Francis Moule left his property to his eldest son Francis, and in the event of his death without issue, to his three daughters Anne, Elizabeth and Olive. The second son of this marriage was John Watkins Moule who, though born at Sneads Green, never inherited the property, which was left as a home for his unmarried sisters, and by them after his death to two of his daughters. He married Jane Harvie in 1828, and was the father of three sons, who died without issue, and six daughters; having lived, together with his wife Jane, to old age in London, he was buried with his forefathers in the churchyard at Elmley Lovett, where the body of his wife had been laid not long before.

In the year of Queen Victoria's accession Lord Foley sold the Manor of Witley to William, Lord Ward, at whose invitation, some years later, the widowed Queen Adelaide came to make her home at Witley Court. The Manor of Witley was held with Aelmelia as far back as 1066, when Ralph de Toeni became lord of both manors after the battle of Hastings. Again in the days of the Foleys, Lord Foley held the manorial rights of Witley and of Snead until the

* Noakes, "Guide to Worcestershire," p. 144.

year 1805, when he sold the manorial rights of Snead to Francis Moule. By a sequence of events a new connection was made between Witley and Elmley Lovett on the appointment to the living of Witley of a grandson of John Watkins Moule.

Two of his daughters, Elizabeth and Olivia, had married Irish barristers, John Monroe and Hugh Holmes, both of whom became law officers of the Crown, Judges of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, and members of Her Majesty's Privy Council. Elizabeth's third son, the compiler of this record, was Dean's Vicar of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and Chaplain to the Viceroy when the son of Lord Ward, afterwards Earl of Dudley, became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

During his viceroyalty in 1904, Lord Dudley offered the living of Witley to his Chaplain, whose coming to Worcestershire taught him to love the red soil in which the dust of his ancestors is laid, the rock from which he was hewn, the pit from which he was digged. After the death of John Watkins Moule the property descended in the female line. His sisters were succeeded by his daughters Anne and Caroline. Anne, who died unmarried in 1898, bequeathed her share of the estate to her co-heiress Caroline, wife of Frederick Stocks, son of Lumb Stocks, R.A., whose drawing of Sneads Green is reproduced as our frontispiece. Caroline, widow of Frederick Stocks, died in 1925, when Sneads Green, which had been the home of the family since the days of Queen Elizabeth, passed by her mother's will to its present owner Laura, only daughter of the youngest child of John Watkins Moule.

His name passes but his line remains, his children's children preserve the traditions of his family and honour the memory of their dead.



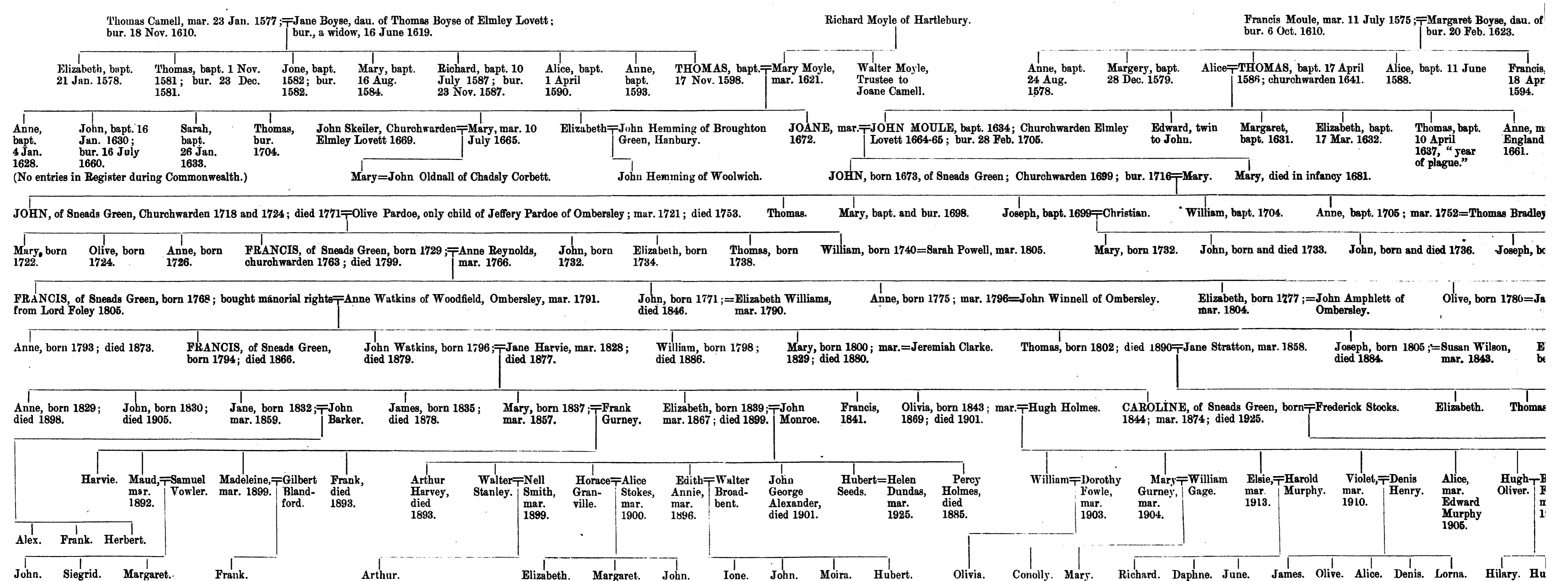
JOHN WATKINS MOULE.

1796—1879.

The last, in the male line, of the Moules of Sneads Green.

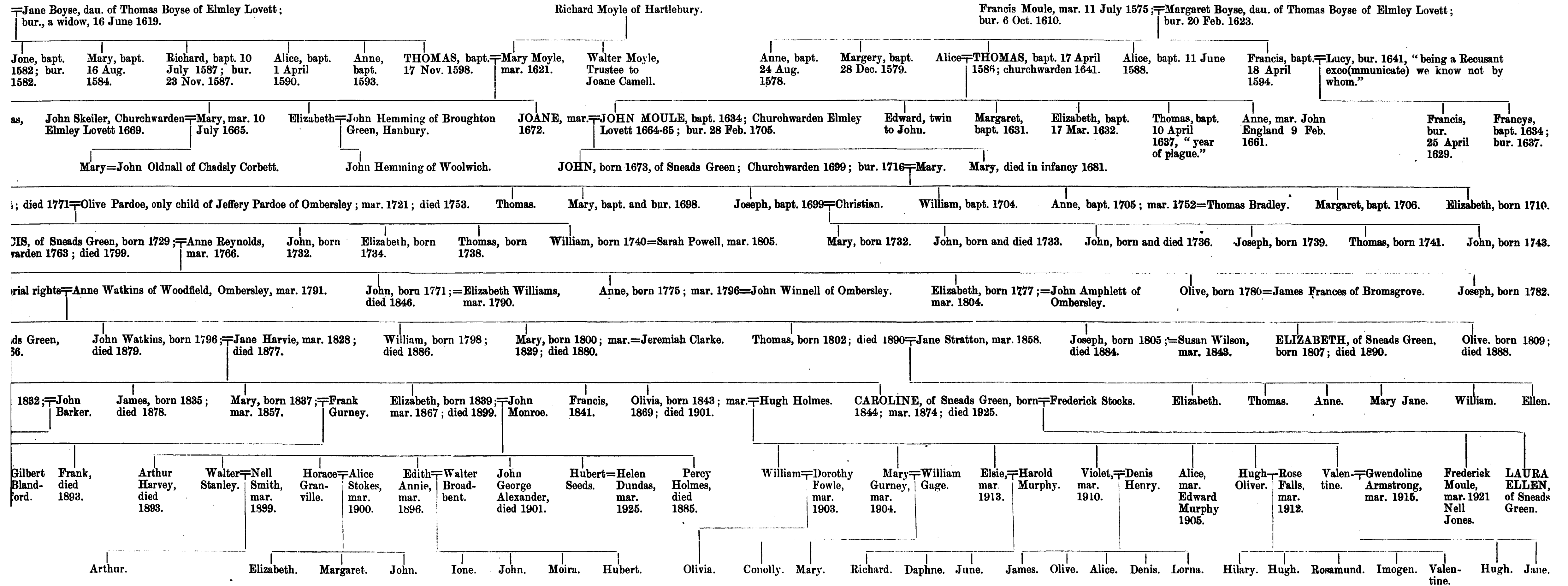
Portrait at Sneads Green House.

FAMILY TREE OF THE MOULES OF SNEADS GREEN.



The succession of the two properties of Camell and Moule, united by the marriage of 1672, is shown by capital letters and the designation "of Sneads Green" after the name of the inheritor in each generation.

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