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THE DESCENT OF THE MANOR OF LITTLE STAMBRIDGE.**

THE FAMILY OF BOURCHIER.

For my first knowledge of the connection of this family with the Hundred of Rochford, I was indebted, as I have said, to Colonel Chester, who many years since, transmitted to me an abstract of the will of Sir James Bourchier. The importance of the communication was obvious, it was a new fact in Essex History, and, as I at once saw, the clue towards filling a broad hiatus in the descent of the manor of Little Stambridge. With a knowledge of the relationship in which Sir James Bourchier stood to Oliver Cromwell, I at once had recourse to the records of the College of Arms, and by favour of my friend the late Mr. G. H. Rogers-Harrison, Windsor herald, a valued member of our Society, was furnished with a copy of the Bourchier pedigree as recorded by the officers of Arms in the Visitation of Essex in 1634, attested by the autograph of Sir James Bourchier himself and that of his second cousin Thomas Bourchier.* Soon afterwards I discovered the will of Richard Bourchier, third son, and successor of Sir James in the Stambridge estate; and more recently, I have been favoured by Col. Chester with an abstract of the more important will of Thomas Bowcher (or Bourchier) the father of Sir James, with sundry extracts from other records relating to the family. These wills and extracts have supplied the principal additions that I have made to the pedigree as it stands in the Visitation, which additions are distinguished by being printed in italics.

It will be seen on reference to the descent, that the first three generations of the Bourchiers were settled at Poukleston (most probably Bockleton near Tenbury), in Worcestershire. Although these are undated, reckoning from the first authenticated date would certainly place the family there in the reign of Hen VII. Whatever may have been their more ancient descent, no pretence is made in the pedigree to connect them with the family of the

* To G. E. Cockayne, Esq., Lancaster Herald, I have to express my obligation for more recent searches and collation.

** I failed to photocopy the first page of this article, with the author's name on... It must be on a page prior to 202 in Vol II of T.E.A.S. TFPL, 28.4.2000.

Bourchiers, Earls of Essex, and the armorial bearing assigned to them are as distinct as could possibly have been devised.

Thomas Bowcher (as he signs his name) went to London, where, as a Citizen and Haberdasher, he acquired what was then a considerable fortune, and purchased, as we have seen, the manor of Little Stambridge and other lands. It seems almost certain, however, that he never resided there, and dying at his house in Lombard Street, in 1594, within about seven years after he had bought the property, was buried in the church of S. Edmund the King and Martyr, with heraldic honours, his funeral certificate, with escocheon emblazoned, being entered in the records of the College of Arms. Sir James Bourchier, his only son and successor, who, before the year 1607, had attained to sufficient social and public distinction to obtain the honour of knighthood, ultimately did reside at Little Stambridge, but at what date he first occupied the house, I have not, at present, found evidence to show. In Jan., 1607, he had a daughter baptized in the church of S. Mary Aldermary,* and there is not the slightest doubt, from other register extracts furnished by Col. Chester, that from the year 1608 to 1621, he lived in the parish of All Hallows Barking, upon Tower Hill, where six of his children were baptized, and two buried, events which seem rather to denote continuous residence in London between those years, not perhaps, with certainty, but with great probability. And this view is partially sustained by the fact that his pedigree was not entered in the visitation of Essex in 1612, as it almost certainly would have been, had he lived there at that time. Only two years before, though already entitle to bear arms under a grant to his father, Sir James Bourchier received an exemplification changing his armorial bearings, a practice of occasional occurrence to which I have previously referred. On the 23rd September, 1587, Mr Clarenceux Cooke, granted to Thomas Bourchier, son of Richard Bourchier of Poukleston, these arms, Sa. a chevron Erm between

* Thomas, the eldest son, and Elizabeth must have been born prior to this date.

three leopards passant Ppr, Crest, On a mount vert, a greyhound sejeant, Arg. ducally gorged, lined and ringed, the line passing between the fore legs and reflexed over the back, Or.* The arms subsequently assigned to Sir James Bouchier are Sa. three leopards passant in pale Or. Crest, A greyhound, salient, Or. “By Letters patent exemplified to Sir James Bouchier, Knt. by Mr Camden, 8 Jac., 1610.”†

For the reasons above assigned, it is most probable that Sir James Bouchier did not live at Little Stambridge Hall till after 1621. I have found no mention of him there in contemporary records of the Hundred. In an undated list of Justices, Freeholders, &c. of the County of Essex, *temp Car. I.*, in the Harleian Library, which from internal evidence is earlier than 1632, his name occurs under Rochford, as Knight and Justice, and he was certainly living at Little Stambridge Hall at the date of the Heraldic Visitation in 1634, and till his death in the succeeding year. Cromwell, his son-in-law, was at this period in Parliament, having been first returned in 1631. My duty and desire, in the interest of archæology and history, is to lay before the reader only facts, and rational deductions from them; to his imagination it must be left to assume, or not, from the premises, the probability of the future Lord Protector and his wife, having been occasional or frequent visitors at Little Stambridge Hall, or present at the funeral of the Knight, if he were buried in the village church. He gave no particular directions for his funeral or place of interment, simply desiring “to be buried in christian burial” but I think the natural conviction will be, that he lies in Little Stambridge church, though neither gravestone nor register exists to verify it. The registration of his burial has not been found elsewhere. He was 63 years of age, and left sons who were minors to the

* Cooke’s Docquest, Coll. of Arms. In the arms as tricked in the Visitation of Essex, 1634, the leopards are marked Or, but being apparently spotted Sa. that may be considered Ppr. The crest however differs materially, A greyhound sejeant Arg. collared Sa.

† An exemplification, distinguished from a grant, denotes that the person was previously entitled to bear arms, but that some addition or alteration was then made.

guardianship of his friend James Nuttall, of Rochford, Gentleman.*

Contemporary with Thomas Bouchier, father of Sir James, was his cousin John Bouchier, of Loutdowne, in Essex, which I conjecture is Lovedowne, in the parish of Hockley. He was appointed overseer of Thomas Bouchier's will, and his son, a Gentleman Pensioner, subscribes the pedigree for his own line of descent. That which I have appended covering the entire period of the connection of the family with Essex, I have not pursued the investigation further, except that some of the extracts contribute by Col Chester are so clearly applicable to James Bouchier, the second son of Sir James, who appears to have settled in Whepstead in Suffolk, that I have incorporated them, placing some others at the foot.

Soon amid the countless examples of the rise and fall of families, and the strange vicissitudes of fortune, so familiar to historic genealogists, the Bouchiers seem to have fallen into decay.

NOTES.

It seems to me desirable that the following extracts from MSS. &c., contributed by Col. Chester, and some other particulars which could not with certainty be applied to the pedigrees should be appended.

In Tanner MS. 180 Bodleian Library, (being a volume of Suffolk Pedigrees, by Philip Candler a minister at Ipswich), on p. 183 is a pedigree of Young from which it appears that

Thomas Young, D.D.	=
Master of Jesus Coll.,	
Camb	

Henry Young (5th son) "he married Susan daughter of Bouchier, brother to the wife of Oliver Cromwell called Protector"—and had issue Susan, (Mary, Susan and others died infants).

No dates are given but Candler wrote about 1650—1659.

In Tanner MS. 324, also by Candler, giving brief accounts of the Suffolk parishes and Suffolk gentry in them he says, "In Whepsted

* Richard Bouchier and James Nuthall, Gent., allege the marriage between the said Richard and Frances Nuthall in 1635. The Nuttalls, as more frequently spelt, were a rather numerous family in Rochford in the early part of that century, but of the yeomen class.

this yeare, 1655, lives Bouchier, Esq., and Bouchier, gent. his brother, sonnes of S^r James Bouchier, Kn^t. A daughter of this Sir James is wife to Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector.” In Tanner MS. 266, in an alphabetical list of Suffolk gentry, “in my time, viz, from the beginning of the reign of King James to this yeare 1659, whose coates either were not set up by Robert Riece, Esq., in the church of Preston, or had been broken down or were overlooked.” Candler says: “BOURCHIER. Bouchier sonne of S^r James Bouchier, Kn^t. & brother to the wife of Oliver Cromwell, protector, lived in Whepsted in the yeare 1657, his estate decayed.”

The Rev. Mark Noble gives from the register of Whepsted. “Married, 1656, Mr Henry Young and Mrs Susan Bouchier.” Buried, 1656, March 15, Mr James Bouchier.

Thomas Bowcher, mentions in his will (1593) “my cousin Paule Bowcher,“ but too indefinitely to be applied to the Pedigree, and independently of this, cousin was commonly used for nephew. He names also his “brothers in law, Thomas, Bartholomew and Isaack Morley.”

The spelling, Bouchier, has been retained throughout as that of the Visitation, and the later use of the Family.