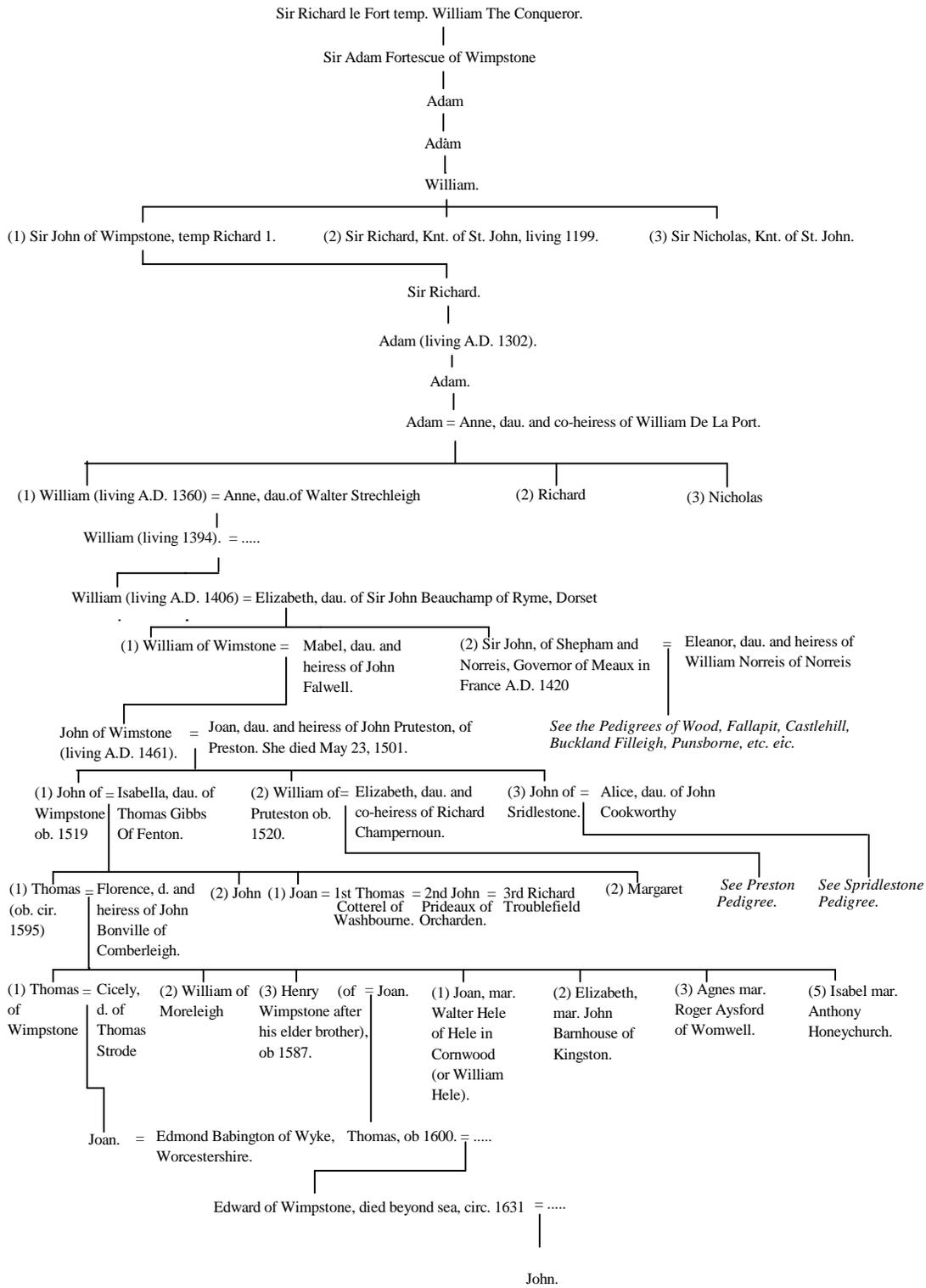


FAMILY OF WIMPSTONE, 1066 to 1631





CHAP. I.

The Fortescues of Wimstone.

SIR RICHARD FORTESCUE is supposed to have returned to Normandy before the division of the conquered lands in England, but his son Sir Adam received, we are told, grants of lands in Devonshire and other counties, and was seated at Wymondestone or Wimston, in the parish of Modbury and hundred of Ermyngham in South Devon, where he was in due time succeeded by his son, also named Adam, who was followed by his son, a third Adam, who was the father of William¹, who had issue three sons, namely, Sir John, the eldest, Sir Richard, and Sir Nicholas, the second and third, which two younger sons were Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and went to the Crusades with Richard Cœur de Lion. Here we begin to leave the period of tradition, and are henceforth assisted by contemporary documents, the earliest being the record of an Assize de Morte d'Ancestre of the year 1199, in which the aforesaid Richard Fortescue, with William Bastard and others, are ordered to be attached for non-appearance².

We now proceed with Sir John Fortescue of Wimstone, the eldest son of the last Adam Fortescue.

In the tenth year of King John, A.D. 1209, a charter was obtained by him from that king, granting or confirming in his possession the lands of Wimstone³. This deed was known to Sir William Pole the great antiquarian and genealogist of Devonshire, who in the year 1616, included it in a collection which he calls his "Great Volume of Charters; a vast manuscript volume," says Prince, "as big as a Church Bible." Lord Fortescue of Credan also had a copy of it. It began thus :—" Rex Johannis, per literas suas patentes, anno decimo regni sui concessit Johanni Fortescu Wirnondeston in Com. Devon."⁴ This Sir John Fortescue, who was a commander in the army raised by Lord William de Brewer

¹ See Pedigree in College of Arms

² Palgrave's *Rotuli Curia Regis*, voi. ii. p. 201.

³ Prince, p. 638, and Gregor's MS. Letters

⁴ Prince, p. 383.

against the rebellious Devonshire barons in the eighteenth year of King John is said to have received from that king, in reward of his services, several manors, lands, privileges, and honours.¹

Wimstone, or Wimpstone, the first seat of the Fortescues in England, remained in the family until the time of Queen Elizabeth.² Westcote, in his *View of Devonshire*, writing before 1607, thus treats of it :—“ It were blameworthy to leave Wimpston, alias Wymondsham, which hath bred so many worthy personages, unremembered. Wimpston, the first seat of the clarous name of Fortescue in this kingdom (which name, saith Mr. Hollenshed, is deduced from the strength of their shield, whereof it took name; as if you would say (that I might explain it), ‘forte scutum salus ducum,’ his posy).

“There have been many famous and excellent men of this stirpe, both in arms and seat of justice, and separated into divers places in this county and elsewhere. In most of them they flourish in this age, as Wear-Giffard, Fillegh, Buckland-Fillegh, Fallopit, Wood, Spurleston, Preston, and other. I will enlarge no farther—Wimpston is lately alienated.”

John Fortescue was succeeded by his son, Sir Richard,³ whom we find granting lands called Stoliford to Walter Faber of Modbury, in Devon. To him succeeded Adam, who was alive in the year 1302 ; for it was then stated that he held Wymondston by one knight’s fee of the honor of Tremeton, in Cornwall.⁴ He was followed by his son, also Adam, who in the following deed styles himself the son of Adam Fortescue :—“ Sciant omnes, &c. &c. Ego Adam filius Adæ Fortescue dedi Henrico de Lopperigge septem solidos annui redditus quos Richardus filius Philippi Gretun solvere solebat pro tenemento suo in Wymondston &c. &c. Hiis Testibus Domino Andrea Trelosk, milite, Petro de Prideaux, Thomâ Boys de Hele, et aliis.

“Dat’ die Veneris prox’ post festum Sancti Ambrosii,⁵ anna regni Regis Edwardi Regis Henrici tricesimo.”⁶

To this deed an oval seal is affixed, wherein was the badge of a star, and round the seal “Sigillum Adæ Fortescu.”⁷

To him a third Adam was son and heir, and succeeded his father. This last Adam married Anne, daughter and co-heir to William Delaport of Old Port, in Devonshire (the ancient mansion of which family still exists, though now a farm-house),⁸ by whom he had issue three sons, William, Richard, and Nicholas.

‘William the eldest son succeeded; he married Alice daughter of Walter Strechleigh; and he inherited through his mother, at the death of her father William Delaport above named

¹ Lodge, *Peerage of Ireland*, vol. iii. 341.

² Westcote’s *Devon*, Exeter, 1845, p. 394.

³ *Notitiæ and Pedigrees*.

⁴ Pole, *MS. Charters*, p. 428, in Collins.

⁵ April 4th, St. Ambrose’s Day.

⁶ *Not. and Ped.*

⁷ Collins, iii. 336.

⁸ Collins, iii. 336, and *Notitiæ*.

and who was still alive in 1342, lands in the parish of Holbeton¹ in South Devon. In the nineteenth year of King Edward III., A.D. 1346, at the making that king's eldest son the Black Prince a knight, William de Fortescu paid the usual contribution for one knight's fee in Wymondston, which Adam de Fortescu held of Tremeton.²

In the twenty-eighth of Edward III. (A.D. 1354) he is witness to a deed of Walter de Strechleigh, who thereby enfeoffed his lands in Strechleigh, Forsan, Cokesland, Broke, Dunstan, and Tamerton on his daughter the wife of the said William Fortescu.³

In 1360,⁴ he, with Robert de Henton, has a grant from Richard Mauldit, commonly called Somaister, of lands and tenements in Old Port and Paynston, dated at Old Port on the Monday before the Feast of St. Andrew, 34 Edward III.

This William,⁵ with his brother Nicholas Fortescu, and Sir Walter Bluet, granted, by deed dated at Orcheston, in the forty-third Edward III. (A.D. 1369), to Sir John Prideaux all their rights in the manors of Orcheston, North Allington, some in Tenhed, &c.

William de Fortescu was succeeded by William, his son by Alice Strechleigh, and he, in his mother's right, received in the year 1375 from William Coffin, a grant in reversion after the death of his grandfather Walter de Strechleigh, of all William Coffin's lands in Strechleigh, Forsan, Cokesland, Brooke, Brinton, Tamerton, and Donstan, &c. &c.⁶

In the next year (1376),⁷ he, with Thomas Champernoun and Walter Strechleigh, grant to William Yurle Vicar of Yalkhampton a yearly rent of 40*l.*, to be paid out of their lands. To this deed the seal of the Fortescue family is annexed.

In January, 1378,⁸ the first year of Richard II., William Fortescu grants to Sir Philip Courtenay and Sir Peter Courtenay all his lands and tenements in Old Port and Paynston, and in the next year⁹ he, jointly with the two knights just named, had a grant from Richard Mauldit, or Somaister, of lands in Smytheston, Wimpell, and Thurveton.

This William was alive in the end of the year 1394. He was succeeded by his son William, who had married, during his father's lifetime, Elizabeth Beauchamp daughter of Sir John Beauchamp of Ryme in Dorsetshire, great-grandson of Robert de Bello Campo or Beauchamp Baron of Hatch in Somerset.¹⁰ She afterwards became a co-heiress with her sister Joan, wife of Sir Robert Chalons, to her brother Thomas Beauchamp of Ryme, who died without issue.

She was the widow, without children, of Richard Branscomb.¹¹ There was an assignment of dower dated the Tuesday after the Feast of St. Martin, 18 Richard II., A.D. 1394, by John Martyn, probably a trustee, to William Fortescue the younger, and Elizabeth his

¹ Notitiæ and Pedigrees.

⁴ Notitiæ and Ped.

⁷ Not, and Ped.

¹⁰ Ped. in Stemm. Fort.

² Collins, vol. iii. 336.

⁵ Not, and Ped.

⁸ Not, and Ped.

¹¹ Not, and Ped., and Collins, iii. 337

³ *Ib.*, from Pole, p. 215.

⁶ Not, and Ped.

⁹ Collins, iii. 337

wife, over all the lands in Over-Aller which were the property of the aforesaid Richard Branscomb. This assignment was sealed with the Fortescue arms, with a crescent for difference.

In the year 1406, being the eighth year of King Henry IV., William Fortescue and Elizabeth his wife left their manor of Estecot, "juxta Otery beatæ Mariæ," to John Ashe and his wife for their lives.¹

I find in Hutchins' History of Dorsetshire the following particulars of the inheritance of Elizabeth and Joan Beauchamp:-

"Ryme Intrinseca.—This little Vill is situated on the borders of the co. of Somerset It was the seat of Sir Humphrey Beauchamp, second son of Robert de Bello Campo, Baron of Hatch in Somersetshire, whose son Sir John, by the daughter and heir of Sir Roger Novant, had issue Sir John Beauchamp of Ryme, father of Thomas, who died issueless, leaving for his heirs his sisters, wedded to Sir Robert Chalons and John (William) Fortescue. The Fortescues do not seem to have possessed this manor long. William Fortescue was Lord Wimpstone, in Devon."²

The children by this marriage were two sons, William and John.

The family estates appear by this time to have grown to a considerable extent, increased from time to time by several marriages with heiresses. From the foregoing account grants and portions it may be gathered that this William of Wypmston, or Wimstone possessed, besides that estate, lands in Holberton, Strechleigh, Forsan, Cokesland, Broke Donstan, Tamerton, Smytheston, Wimpell, Thurveton, and Estecot, all of them, I believe in South Devon; besides the manor of Ryme in Dorsetshire inherited from the Beauchamps. Upon his death the first offset from the main trunk of the tree of descent occurs; the eldest son William succeeding at Wimstone, and, as we shall presently see, becoming the origin of several branches of Fortescues; while the second son, John, although he inherited but small portion of the paternal estates, was, through his three sons, the source whence at least as many considerable houses sprang.

We proceed with the descent of the elder line of Wimstone.

William Fortescue, the eldest son of his father William by Elizabeth Beauchamp, who married, about the year 1394, to Mabel daughter and heir of John Falwell, or Fowell, and was succeeded by his son John,³ who appears to have been returned to Parliament as a burgess for the borough of Tavistock in the 2nd of Henry VI., and again in the following year, and in the 4th of Henry VI. he sat for Totness in the Parliament held at Leicester, and for Plymton in that held by the same king at Westminster in the eighth year of his reign. He married, before the year 1450, Joan, daughter and heir to John Prutston, Pruteston, or Preston, of Pruteston, in the parish of Newton Ferrers, a few miles south of Plymton. He

¹ Not. and Ped.

² Hutchins' Dorset, iv. 295.

³ Willis, Not. Par.

was the sixth in descent from William de Pruteston, who was seated there in the time of Edward I.

John Fortescue, of Wimston, was living in the year 1461, in which year we find him witness to a deed. He died before his wife. At the death of the latter on the 23rd of May, 1501, an inquisition post mortem was held at Ermyngton, from which it appears that at her death Joan (de Pruteston) was seized of lands in Ermyngton, Werthele, Burraton, and Hefford, to which her eldest son John Fortescue of Wimstone, aged, at his mother's death, more than fifty years, was heir; and that her second son William was then alive. This second son inherited the Pruteston estate.

There was a third son of John Fortescue by Joan de Pruteston, named, like his elder brother, John, according to a practice not uncommon at that period, but which must have been most inconvenient. He inherited an estate at Spridleston, or Spirlston, in the parish of Brixton in South Devon, which remained with his posterity until the beginning of the present century.

John, the eldest son of John and Joan, succeeded at Wimstone. He married Isabella, daughter of Thomas Gibbs, of Ferriton, or Fenton; and died in 1519, aged sixty-nine years, seized of the manor of Fortescue, alias Wimstone, and of lands in Stancomb, Higher Falewyll, Lower Falewyll, Staverton, Derlington, Harberton, Tateton, Ottery St. Mary, Ermyngton, Plympton, &c., leaving issue two sons, Thomas his heir, and John; and two daughters; Elizabeth, (married three times, 1st, to Thomas Cotterell of Washbourne; 2ndly, to John Prideaux of Orchard; and, 3rdly, to Richard Troublefield); and a second daughter, Margaret. The eldest son, Thomas, was born A.D. 1490, being twenty-nine years old at his father's death. He married Florence, daughter and heir of John Bountle of Combraleigh, and one of the heirs of — Denys, by whom he obtained the manors of Alston and Sutton, in Somersetshire. Thomas Fortescue died 1554, leaving three sons and four daughters; 1st, Thomas, his heir; 2nd, William, styled of Moreleigh, who married Catherine, daughter of John Walsh; 3rd, Henry, who died December 1, 1587, leaving a son, Thomas, aged twenty-two at his father's death. The four daughters were, 1st, Aquila, married to Robert Ashford, of Wonnell; 2nd, Elizabeth, to John Barnhouse, of Kingston; 3rd, Isabella, to Anthony Honichurch; 4th, Joanna, to William Hele of Cornwood.¹

Thomas the eldest son succeeded at Wimstone on the death of his father, in 1554; he married Cicely, daughter of Richard Strode, of Newnham in Devon, by whom he had issue an only daughter, Joan, married to Edmond Babington, of Wyke in Worcestershire. His successor at Wimstone was his third brother Henry, who died December 1, 1587. He, by his will, dated 4th August, 1585, desires to be buried with his ancestors within the

¹The authorities for the statements on this page are various Inquisitiones Post Mortem, the Stemmata Fortescuana, and Pole's Collections.

parish of Modbury, and directs that his “wife Joan may dwell at Wimstone or at my house at Kingston.” Henry was succeeded by his son Thomas, who was aged twenty-two at his father’s death, and had the manor of “Wymondeiham,” alias Fortescue. He died, aged thirty-five years, on the 9th of March, 1600, at his seat at Wimstone, and was by his son Edmond, born in 1582; of whom we learn from the probate of his will, that he died in parts beyond the sea. He is styled in that document, Edward Fortescue, of Wimstone. He left a son John, to whom administration was granted. Beyond this John there is no record of any male descendant of the Fortescues of Wympston. The manor was probably sold by him, if not by his father—most likely by the latter, judging from the language of Pole and Westcote. This last, writing about 1630, says: “Wimpston is totally alienated; “and Sir William Pole, who died in 1635, writes: “This auncient lynage contynewed from the raigne of King John unto these late tymes at Wymonston (out which all the Fortescues of England are issued), is now utterly wasted, and the land Wymston occupied by Mr. Arthur Strobridge, who now dwelleth at Wymston.”¹

Wimstone passed to the family of Champernoun; thence to that of Ouray, which took the name of Treby; and in Lysons’ time (1822), it belonged to W. L. Prettyjohn, Esq., who had built a house on the estate.²

There is no trace of the descent of any of the numerous denominations of landed estates which were found to belong to John Fortescue of Wimstone in 1519. Some were sold, and possibly, others went, on the failure of male heirs, to daughters. Of this, however, I have not found any notice.

¹ Pole would not admit anything less formal than a “charter” as evidence of possession. He ignored tradition, and consequently that which gave Wimstone to the Fortescues at the Conquest.

² For the foregoing particulars, see the Inquisitiones Post Mortem, and Wills.

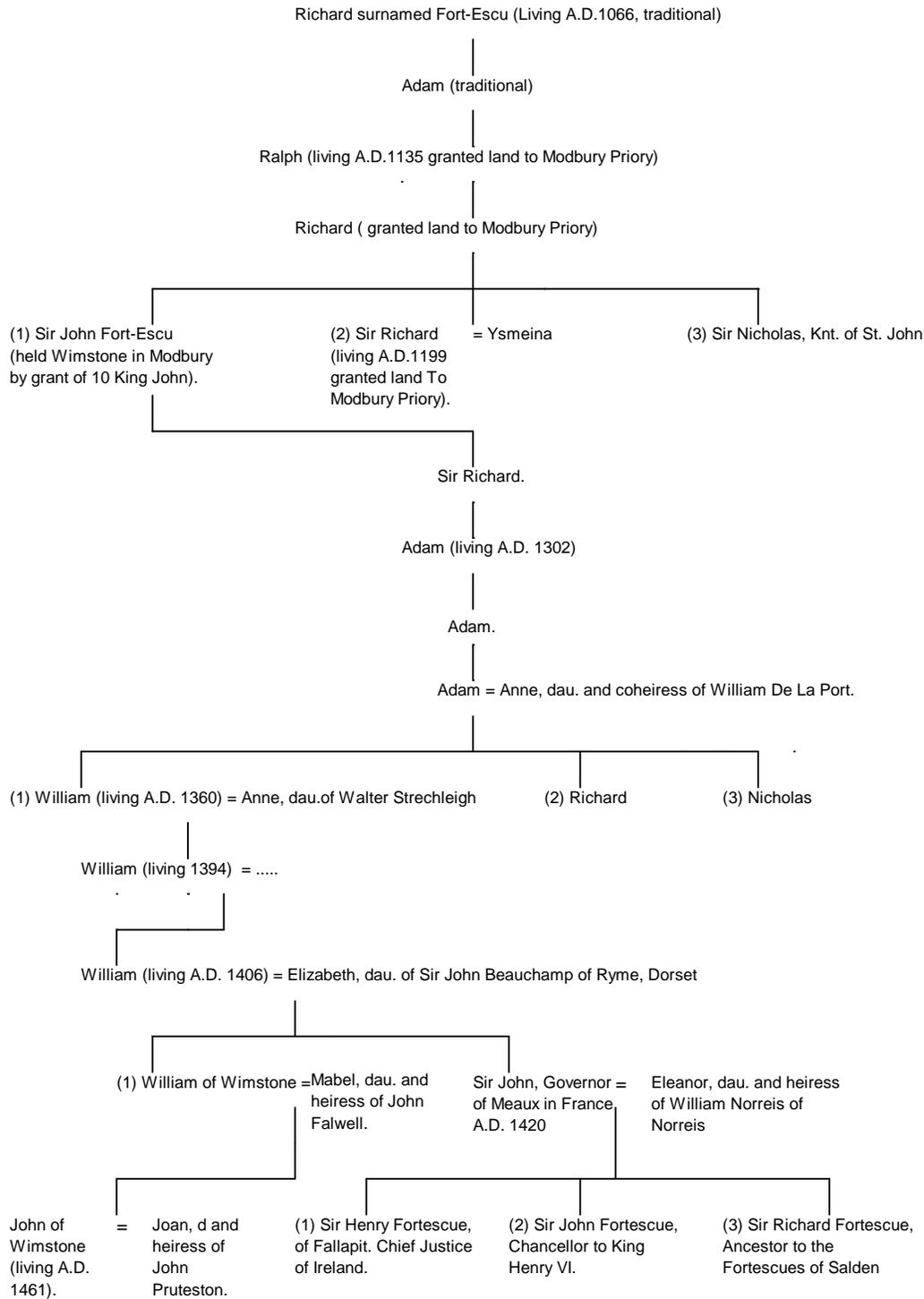
SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER I. OF THE FORTESCUE FAMILY
FAMILY HISTORY.

Until the discovery by Mr. Maxwell Lyte, of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, of a deed at Eton College, executed late in the twelfth century, by which Richard Fort-Escu granted lands to Modbury Priory, the earliest documentary evidence of the existence of the Fortescue Family was a record of the summons of the same Richard Fort-Escu to an Assize de Morte d'Ancestre in A.D. 1199. In the grant above named, he recites that his father Richard, and his grandfather Ralph, had each granted parts of the same lands to the same Priory, thus affording proof that two generations of his predecessors held lands in Modbury Parish. Taking the year A.D. 1185 as the probable date of the deed above mentioned, and assuming that Richard, the grantor, was, when he executed it, not less than thirty years old, he having already married his wife Ysmeina, we have A. D. 1155 as the date of Richard's birth. Thirty-three years being the average length of a generation, two such periods for his father Richard, and his grandfather Ralph, give A.D. 1089 for the birth of the latter, who in, or not long after A.D. 1135, gave land to the Priory, which was founded early in the reign of King Stephen. It may, therefore, be assumed as certain, that Ralph Fort-Escu held lands near Modbury about that year, being seventy-five years earlier than the grant of Wimstone to John Fortescue in A.D. 1210. The legendary portion of the Family Tree is thus reduced to seventy years, counting from the Battle of Hastings in A.D.1066; and the existence of Richard, surnamed Fort-Escu, from the strength of his shield, and that of Adam his son, alone remain unproven.

The following diagram will explain the changes in the pedigree which the foregoing new information requires.

Family of Wimstone

B



A second deed, at Eton College, relating to the same Priory is also of interest. Both Deeds are hereby printed. The Priory of Modbury was a branch or cell of the great Benedictine House of St. Pierre sur Dive in Normandy. It was dissolved with the other alien monasteries in the reign of Henry VI., when its revenues were granted to Eton College, to which they still belong. The Assize of morte d'ancestre to which Richard Fort-Escu was summoned in A.D. 1199, was between Johannes de Reini and Willelmus filius Baldwini.

The Manor of Modbury appears in Domesday as “Mortberie,” held by the Earl of Mortain as Tenant-in-Chief. The Under-Tenant is given as “Ricardus,” and is not otherwise described. The Saxon owner in the time of King Edward was “Wado.” It is a curious coincidence that the traditional Fort-Escu of the year of the Conquest is also Richard, and that the denomination in the deed “Wudelanda,” which probably means woodland, should in one place be written “Wadelanda,” which may be read as “The Land of Wado.”

I fear, however, that these are chance coincidences, and nothing more, and that Sir Richard Fort-Escu must be left unproven. It is shewn by the deeds now printed, that Wimstone was not the first possession of the Fortescues in England.

DEED FROM ETON LIBRARY B. 6. LATE 12TH CENTURY

Sciant presentes et futuri quod ego Ricardus Fort escu, consensu et asensu Ysmeine, sponse mee, et heredum meorum, concessi et dedi et confirmavi deo et Sancte Marie et Sancto Georgio et monachis, deo et sanctis ejus apud Moberiam servientibus, in perpetuum, totam terram quam Radulfus avus meus et Ricardus filius ejus, pater meus, ante dederunt, et illam terram quam Ego ipse illis donavi, fecilicet, de incremento, pro salute anime mee et antecessorum meorum, et uxoris mee et heredum meorum. Similiter donavi et confirmavi eisdem, illud pratum quod fuit antea illis donatum in elemosinam, ad tenendum et habendum semper, in puram et liberam et perpetuam et puram elemosinam, et quietam ab omni seculari exactione, que ad dominum Regem vel ad ballivos ejus, sive ad dominum fundi pertinuerit. Ethe sunt divise predictae terre, scilicet, de Wudelanda usque ad magnum sossatum quod pertinet ad terram de Cobbelanda, quam Hugo tenuit, et ab illo sossato, prout illa terra extenditur, usque ad fontem qui est ad caput ejusdem Elemosine, et ab illo fonte sursum, sicut rivus labitur, usque ad terram de la Wudelanda, et si cafu aliquo, aliquis predictos monachos inde molestraverit sive vexaverit, Ego et heredes mei dedemus eis predicta warentizare contra omnes homines, ad sumptum monachorum. Et pro hac donacione et concessione mea, Laurencius, tunc prior Moberie, dedit mihi et sponse mee, et heredibus meis, duo bifantia in recognitionem. Et ut ratum et inconcussum permaneat in perpetuum, presentis carte et sigilli mei inpressione confirmavi. Hiis *testibus*, Radulfo filio Ricardi, Ada, tunc capellano Moberie, Johanne de Shilvestane, Philippo do Orchertune, Willelmo de Cumba, Willelmo de Sheppeham, Gerardo de Moberia, et filiis ejus Willelmo, et Philippo, Gilberto de Hugeburga, Roberto le Ghest, Magistro Philippo, capellano, qui hoc scripsit, et multis aliis.

A seal of white wax, coated with brown, remains attached. Legend; + SIGILL', RIC, FORT ESCV.

Translation

Know all present and to come, that I Richard Fort escu, with the consent and assent of Ysmeine, my wife, and my heirs, have conceded, and granted and confirmed, to God and St. Mary and St. George, and to the monks serving God and St. Mary and St. George, and to the monks serving God and the Monks at Modbury, for ever, all the land which Ralph my grandfather, and Richard, his son, my father, had previously given them, and that land which I, myself, gave them, namely, of increase, for the safety of my soul, and of my ancestors, and my

wife, and of my heirs. In like manner I have given and confirmed to them that meadow which had been previously given to them as alms. To have and to hold, always, as a pure, free and perpetual alms, and quit of alls secular exaction which might belong to our lord the king, or to his bailiffs, or to the lord of the see. And these are the divisions of the land, namely, from Wadelanda as far as the great ditch which belongs to the land of Cobbelanda, which Hugh held, and from that ditch, like as the land extends, as far as the fountain which is at the head of the laid alms, and, from that fountain, upwards as the river flows, as far as the land of la Wudelanda. And if by any chance the said monks shall be molested or vexed in such possession, I and my heirs ought to warrant the to the land of aforesaid to them against all men, at the cost of the monks. And for this my grant and confirmation, Laurence, at that time Prior of Modbury, gave to me and my spouse, and to my heirs, two besants, in acknowledgment. And in order that the same may remain, for ever, firm and unshaken, I have confirmed this present charter by the impression of my seal. These being witnesses, Ralph, son of Richard, Adam, then chaplain of Modbury, John de Shilvestane, Philip de Orchertune, William de Cumba, William de Sheppeham, Gerard de Modbury, and his sons William and Philip, Gilbert de Hugelburga, Robert le Ghest, master Philip the chaplain, who wrote this, and many others.

DEED FROM ETON LIBRARY B. 6. CIRCA 1250

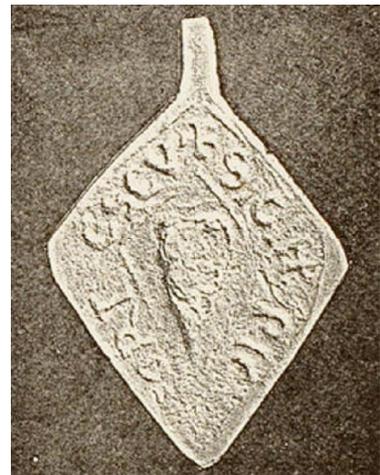
Universis Christi fidelibus presens scriptum visuris vel audituris, Ricardus Fortesch' salutem in domino. Noverit universitas vestra me dedisse, concessisse, quietum clamavisse, et hac presenti carta mea confirmasse, pro me et heredibus meis, Willelmo de Curceyo, Priori Mobir' et succesoribus fuis, In puram et perpetuam Elemosinam, totam partem meam Rivuli qui currit inter terram meam et terram Jordani de Cumba, quam de diao Priore aliquando tenuit. Infuper volo et concedo pro me et heredibus meis dicto Priori et successoribus fuis quod firmant exclusam fuam in terra mea, ubi melius fibi viderint expedire fine contradiccione mei vel heredum meorum, et quod molendinum dicti Prioris de Mobir' per me vel per aliquem meorum, nullo modo impediatur, quod non possit molere, unde Ego et heredes mei predictam partem Rivuli cum exclusa in terra inca fixa, cum omnimodis comodis uuis, dicto Priori et successoribus fuis, contra omnes homines et feminas tenemur inperpetuum Warantizare, defendere et acquietare. Et ne hoc aliquibus vertatur in dubium, hanc cartam meam sigilli mei inpressione, duxi roborandam. Hiis testibus, domino Willelmo de Bikebir', domino Johanne de Alba Mara, militibus, Johanne de Orcherton, Johanne de la Porte, Alfredo de Ponte, Wilielmo de Arboribus, Johanne de Edmeristone, et aliis.

A small seal of dark green wax is attached. Legend; + s'. RICACARDI. FORTACV.

Translation

To all the faithful in Christ who may see or hear this present writing, Richard Fortesch' greeting in the Lord. Know all, that I have given, conceded, quitted-claim, and by this my present charter have confirmed, for me and my heirs, to William de Curceyo, Prior of Modbury, and his successors, in pure and perpetual alms, all my part of the river which runs between my land and the land of Jordan de Cumba, which he sometime held of the said Prior. Moreover, I will and concede, for me and my heirs, to the said Prior and his successors, permission to close their dam next my land, when it shall seem fit to them to do so, without contradiction of me or

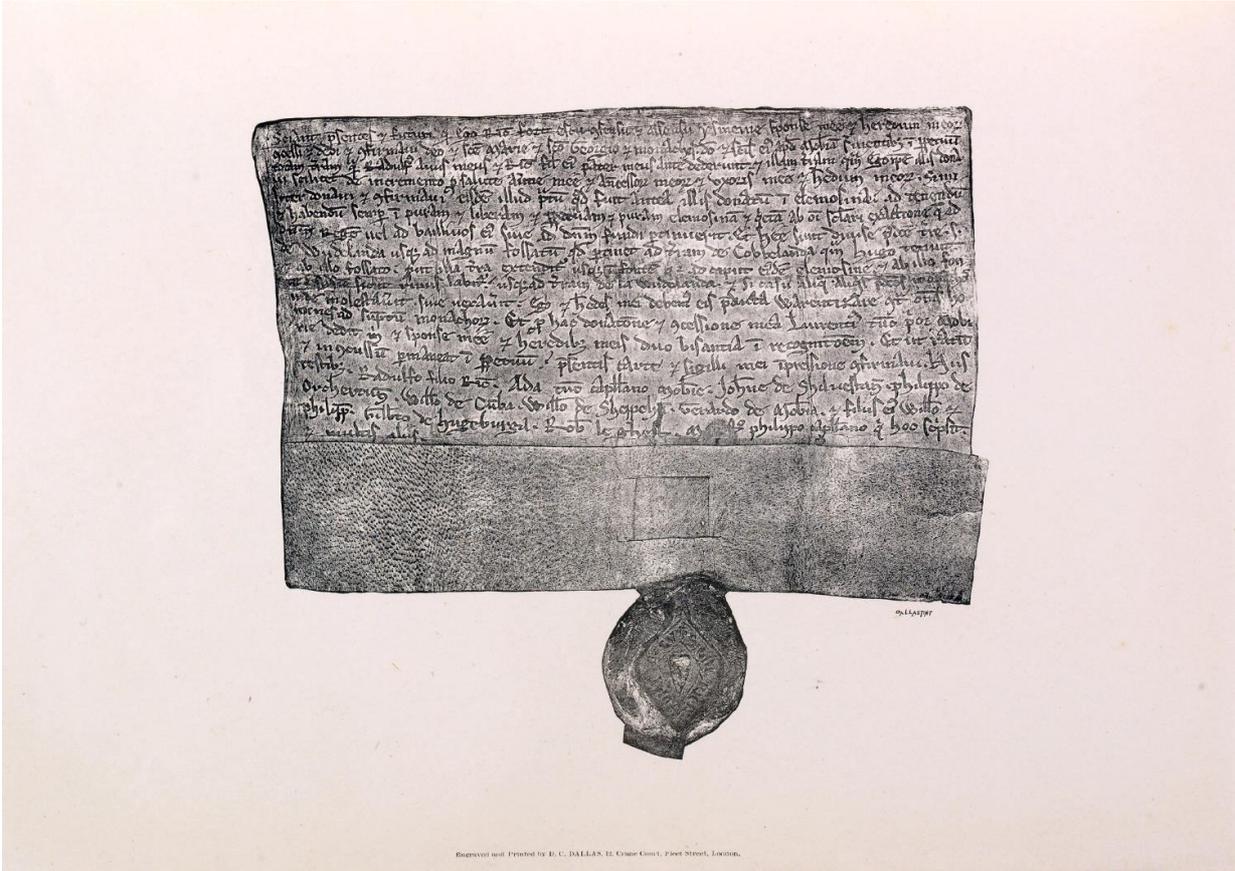
my heirs, and that the mill of the said Prior of Modbury may be in no way interfered with, neither by me nor by any of my people, so that he cannot grind. Whence, I and my heirs are bound to warrant, defend and acquit the aforesaid part of the river with dam fixed upon my land, with all manner their conveniences, to the said Prior and his successors, against all men and women, for ever. And lest this should be doubted by any persons, I have thought fit to strengthen this my charter with the impression of my seal. These being witnesses, Sir William de Bikebir', Sir John de Alba Mara, Knights, John de Orcherton, John de la Porte, Alfred de Ponte, Willelmo de Arboribus, John de Edmeristone, and others.



*N.B. –This Supplement ought to be inserted in the Family History immediately after Chap. 1.
Clermont April, 1885*



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