

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

JOHN PERSHALL  
Fourth in Ancestry

*Section 1, John Pershall—Section 2, Helena Harcourt.*

### SECTION 1.

\*4. JOHN PERSHALL, son of Humphrey Peshall, Chapter 23, Section 1, married Helena Harcourt, daughter of Thomas Harcourt, Chapter 24, Section 2, and his wife Isabella, daughter of Hugh Egerton of Winehill. He was born in 1485. Children:—

1. \*3 RICHARD PERSHALL, Chapter 25, Section 1.

2. Ralph Peshall, Chapter 25, Section 3.

John Peresall de Chekeley in Cheshyre had a motto, 'Bien venu ce que ad viendra.' His crest is also given:—a wolf's head erased. He came into the estates of Horseley, Peshall, &c. [De Walden Library, vol. ii.]

Keeper and Justice of the Peace; 1509-1547, John Perseal (Pershall of Horsely). [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1912, page 320.]

In 5 Hen. VIII. (1514) feoffment was made by William Cholmondeley, of Norton in Hales, co. Salop, to Richard Sutton, Esq., one of the two founders of Brasenose College, Oxford; John Pesall, of Checkley, John Sutton of Sutton, and Roger Legh, of Ridge, gentlemen, whereby he settled his estates there on the said feoffees, to the use of himself and Margery his wife for their lives, with remainder to Thomasin their daughter and John Sutton her husband, and their heirs for ever. The Sutton and Chalmondeley families were connected with the Malpas family as were the Peshalls, so that most of the parties to this conveyance were cousins. [History of Cheshire, by J. B. Earnwaker, vol. 2, page 445; and Churtons Founders of Brasenose College, page 413.]

Final Concords Staffordshire temp. Henry VIII. No. 6, on the Octaves of the Purification, 26th of Henry VIII. and afterwards recorded on the Quindene of Easter, 26th Henry VIII. Between John Peyssall, armiger, complainant, and John Harecourte, armiger, and Anne his wife, deforciant of a messuage, 4 acres of meadow, 36 acres of pasture and 6 acres of woods in Horsley. John Harecourt and Ann remitted all rights to John Peyssal and his heirs for which John Peyssal granted to John Harecourt and Anne and to the heirs of John Harecourt an annuity of 20s. issuing from the said tenements. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 11, page 274.]

From the Commission of Array of the several counties we may learn who were the leading Staffordshire men of the day. The Commission for Staffs. consisted of:—Walter Lord Ferrers, Henry Lord Stafford, Sir Philip Draycote, Sir George Griffith (200 men), Thos. Gyfford, 200 men, John Piersall, 100 men, Humphrey Swynnerton, 100 men. Elsewhere Sir George Blount of Hopton, and Kinlet.

leads 400 men from Worcester to Dover (176 miles), receiving £231, 13s. 4d. coats and conduct money, and something more for his petty captain and other officers, while Richard Deverox (Lord Ferrer's son and heir and father of the first Earl of Essex) brings 300 men, apparently from Wales, where, as King's servant, he has grants in co. Pembroke. [*Ibid.*, vol. 1912, page 349-350.]

As to the Staffords and the Audleys, all we hear of them is that Sir Humphrey Stafford is dead and is succeeded by his son Humphrey, that a Humphrey Stafford was the husband of Margaret, one of the co-heiresses of Sir Edmund Tame, decd., and that George Stafford was implicated in Henry, Lord Nevill's, attempt to kill his wife and his father, the Earl of Westmoreland, by black magic. It will be remembered that if a man had to be put away, and all other accusations failed, a charge of black magic was the final resource of the State.

Muster Roll. A.D. 1539, for Staffordshire, reads like a census of the county. In 1538, the Emperor Charles V. and Francis, the King of France, had made up their differences and had agreed to a ten years truce.

In the same year the Pope, Paul IV., had published a Bull excommunicating Henry VIII. and deposing him for his heretical opinions and was endeavoring to induce the two sovereigns above named to put it into execution. The King and Privy Council were seriously alarmed and (1539) ordered a muster to be made of the entire armed force of the Kingdom. The levies were never called up, the king by his diplomacy having managed to disconcert the project of the Pope. Among the names of those called appears:

For Shouston, Chesterfield, Overstonhall, Forderly, Swynford, Netherstonhall, Hayton and Lynn:—John Pesall, Jack salet bill without harness.

For Hampstede and Handworth:—John Persall, bow-arrows, Jack. William Persall, a billman.-able.

For Swynnerton:—Richard Persall, a horse and poll axe.

For Horsly:—John Peysall, Esquire hors & harnys for a man. A Richard Peysall Ar. Raulf Peysall; Richard Peersall. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 4, new series, page 228, 242, and 92; vol. 5, new series, page 272, 310, and 34; and vol. 1912, page 51.]

This was the time of the establishment of the church of England. The local Catholic Church surrendered its holdings to the Crown, which lands and hereditaments were sold or given by the King to those whom he wished to honor. It will interest the reader to see of what great wealth the local church in Staffordshire had become possessed.

On the Quindene of Easter. 30 Henry VIII. And afterwards recorded on the Octaves of Holy Trinity, 30 Henry VIII. Between the Lord the King, complainant, and William Taylour, Abbot of the monastery of the Blessed Mary the Virgin, and St. John the Evangelist, of Halesowen, deforciant of 1,000 messuages, 1,000 tofts, 1,000 cottages, 3,000 gardens, 4 dovecots, 3 water-mills, 3 wind-mills, 16,000 acres of land, 6,000 acres of meadow, 12,000 acres of pasture, 1,000 acres of wood, 2,000 acres of furze and heath, 2,000 acres of marsh, 1,000 acres of alders, 1,000 acres of fishery, and £100 of rent, and a rent of 100 quarters of wheat, 100 quarters of barley, 100 quarters of beans, 20 quarters of oats, 20 quarters of peas, 4 quarters of salt, 6 lbs. of pepper and 4 lbs. of cumin in Hales, Halesburg, Hales-

owen, and Hellegraunge, and of the rectories of Warley, Hales, &c. &c., in co. Salop, and of the manors of Horneburne, Smythwyke, Womeburn, Swyndon, Rowley, Weddesbury, Westbromewiche, Walsall, Pessale, and Lichefyld, and of 2,000 messuages, 1,000 tofts, 1,000 cottages, 3,000 gardens, 4 dovecots, 4 water-mills, 4 wind-mills, 20,000 acres of land, 10,000 acres of meadow, 20,000 acres of pasture, 1,000 acres of wood, 2,000 acres of furze and heath, 2,000 acres of moor, 1,000 acres of alderwood, 1,000 acres of fishery, and £60 rent, and of the rent of 100 quarters of wheat, 100 quarters of barley, 100 quarters of beans, 20 quarters of oats, 20 quarters of peas, 4 quarters of salt, 6 lbs. of pepper and 4 lbs. of cumin in Horneburne, Smythewyke, Womeburne, Swyndon, Rowley, Weddesbury, Westbromewyche, Walsall, Pessall, and Lichfyld, and of the rectories of Clent, Woddesbury, Rowley, Walsall, Ludley, and Cradley, and of the advowsons of the churches of Clent, Woddesbury, Rowley, and Walsall, in co. Stafford, and of the manors of Warley, Chirchlenche, Cradley, Dodford, and of the priory of Dodford, &c., in co. Wygorn. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1912, page 348.]

The Abbot acknowledged the right of the King, for which the King gave him £4,000. This was an entirely fictitious sum, a consideration being required under the statute of uses to carry the fee to the complainant.

John Peshall engaged in an altercation with one Richard Allkyn, who appealed him to the court of Star Chamber. The following appears among the records of this court. Temp. Henry VIII. 1509-1547. Fol. 57-66. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 10, part 1, page 84-88.] Interrogatories.....against John....

1. How many times the said John Persall.....e comen yn to the.....Richard Alkyn's Kep without any occasion or errand, but only to the extent.....Richard Alkyn?

2. How many times they have assembled themselves to the intent to go through the said....., but only for displeasure they bear to the said Richard Alkyn and to Sir John Harcourt his.....?

3. How many riots and frays have they made against Alkyn before the last riot?

4. Whether they or any of them have not purposed to slay or at least to hurt the said Richard Alkyn? and how many times have they gone as well through the said park as abo.... in other places with bows and arrows and other unlawful weapons to the intent to have brought to pass that their ungracious purpose?

5. Whether Richard Persall, the elder, Richard Persall, the younger, and William Bager by the procurement of the said John Persall, 20th July last past, any of them having about them bows, arrows, and a sword, came to the pasture of the said Alkyn, adjoining to his house, or not, and to what intent they came thither arrayed in that manner?

6. Whether they assaulted and beat the said John Alkyn, son to the said Richard Alkyn, being in the pasture making hay?

7. Whether, after they had so beaten him, they came to the house of the said Richard Alkyn to murder the said Richard?

8. Whether the said Richard axed them why they had so beaten his son? Whether they or any of them made answer that if they had found the said Richard Alkyn, that they would have beaten him likewise?

9. Whether they at that time assaulted the said Richard Alkyn within his house, "and wold yf they had could have broken open hys dores to have comen apon hym"?

10. Whether they shot arrows in at the windows and other holes in the house?

11. Whether all those misdemeanours were done by the procurement of John Persall or not?

12. How many times the said John Persall and others have been indicted for the said riots?

Item:—whether that upon the noise and saying "kyll hym, kyll hym," the said Persall, the elder, and others, with swords drawn and other weapons, in manner of insurrection assembled, the said Alkyn and Stanley violently drove them out of the churchyard?

Item:—whether they had not been slain if help of gentlemen and other honest persons had not conveyed them to a house?

Item:—whether the persons aforementioned, by the commandment of Persall, accompanied with divers other persons to the number of twelve, having swords and bucklers, bills, staves, and daggers, "then and ther eftsons assembled, the said Alkyn and Stanley beyng in the said house, and riotously and forcibly heved and shoved at the doores entendyng to have broke them open"?

Item:—what they intended to have done if they had broken into them?

Item:—whether the said John Persall and others with their weapons in their hands, in the eventide of the same day, came to Eccleshall and there searched the house of one Swayncote and Rosyngton for the said Alkyn and Stanley?

Item:—what be the names of those who came thither &c.?

Item:—what they intended to have done to Alkyn and Stanley?

Item:—whether they had any minstrel with them?

Item:—how many of the persons aforementioned be indicted hereof at Stafford?

Item:—how many of the persons aforementioned be his household servants?

Item:—whether any of the said persons wear his livery?

Upon the interrogatories on behalf of Alkyn and Stanley, 27th October, John Persall, of Horseley, co. Stafford, esquire, sworn and examined.

To the first, he says that on the same Trinity Sunday this deponent was in the same churchyard of Eccleshall amongst 100 persons who came thither to a game accustomedly kept yearly. Knows not whether all the persons named in this interrogatory were there then, or what weapons they had. He himself had a small sword and a dagger. Remembers that there were there Richard Persall, the elder, Ralph Persall, and Francis Woodnall, and they all had swords, as they be accustomed.

To the second, third, fourth, and fifth, expressly denies that he spake the words mentioned, or any other words like in effect. But says that Alkyn gave vile and unfitting words to this deponent, wherewith this deponent drew forth his dagger in his defence, and so rescue was made by divers persons. Never intended to hurl his dagger at Alkyn, or cried to his servants, "Kyll hym, kyll hym."

To the 6th, he says that he cannot name any other his servants who were there. They all had swords.

To the 7th, 8th, and 9th, he says he did not see or know Raufe Persall took Alkyn by the shoulders, nor that Richard Persall or any other persons came with swords drawn and drove the said Alkyn and Stanley out of the churchyard, but after the rescue Alkyn and Stanley peaceably departed thence and went into a house. To the 10th and 11th, he says that after Alkyn and Stanley entered into the house this deponent went his way, and knows not that any person went to the house to have broken the doors, and says precisely that there was no such assault about the doors to his knowledge.

To the 12th and 13th, he saith that after the evensong was done and the games ended, this deponent with thirty persons and above came to Swayncote's house, being an alehouse, to the intent to drink, and for no other purpose, as all other people who were gathered at the same game at that time did. He never enquired for Alkyn and Stanley there. To the 14th and 15th, he saith that neither he nor the other persons intended any hurt to Alkyn and Stanley when they were in Swayncote's house. They had there a minstrel playing before them to make them merry, and for no other intent.

To the 16th, he saith that there were sixteen persons of this deponent's party indicted, two of whom were not at the assembly.

To the 17th, he saith Raufe Persall, Richard Persall, the elder, and Francis Wodwall be servants in household with this deponent.

To the last, he says, that the same three persons do wear this deponent's livery, and none others be of this deponent's retinue.

Ralph Persall, son to John Persall, aforementioned, sworn, &c.

To the 1st to the 10th, he saith that his father with this deponent, Richard Persall, the elder, and Francis Wodwall having swords and daggers as they use to go with came to Eccleshall to a game kept there. This deponent espied Alkyn having his hand on his dagger and speaking unfitting words to this deponent's father. Whereupon this deponent came to him and took the said Alkyn by the sleeve and pulled him back. His father did not offer to haul his dagger, nor said "kyll hym, kyll hym." Did not see any sword drawn on the part of his father.

Richard Persall, the elder, servant to John Persall, aforesaid.

To the 1st to the 11th. He saith as Ralph Persall has deposed. When Alkyn had his hand on his dagger Stanley drew forth his sword, whereupon this deponent drew forth his to have defended himself and his master. To the 16th he saith John Persall, Ralph Persall, Richard Persall, the younger, Thomas Persall, and this deponent were indicted thereupon.

Francis Wodwall to all the interrogatories saith as Ralph Persall touching their assembly and the drawing of the daggers. In the defence of his master he drew his sword, but no stroke was given of either party, for rescue was made incontinent.

John Persall saith that he never came into the park for that intent to pick any quarrels. To the third he saith that he never made riot or fray against Alkyn.

To the fifth he saith he never procured any of the persons or any other person to go into the house of the said Alkyn.

Sir John Harcott procured this deponent once to be indicted without any good cause, and also hath caused divers of this deponent's servants to be twice

indicted without any good cause. As to the assault and affray made the other night on James Alkyn, he saith upon his oath that he was not privy to it, and saith he was at the time at Chelsy with Lord Talbot.

Richard Persall saith he never came into the park to pick any such quarrels with Alkyns.

To the fifth he said that as this deponent, Richard Persall, the younger, and William Bayer were coming homeward from Rownton, each of them having bows and arrows to pass the time by the way, this deponent fortun'd to espy nigh to the said Alkyn's house a little boy having a spaniel of this deponent's, and so seeing that, and also seeing there the wife of the said Alkyn, spoke to her in fair manner, and required her to speak to her husband that he would send home his spaniel, and as this deponent was communing with the said wife suddenly there came an arrow towards this deponent and had like to have hurt Richard Persall, the younger, and with that the said Richard Persall, the younger, seeing Alkyn under the pale by his house, shot an arrow at him to put the said Alkyn in fear, that he should not shoot any more. And yet, notwithstanding, Alkyn shot another arrow, and so Richard, the younger, shot another arrow for their defence.

John Peshall was, as we have seen, a Keeper and Justice of the Peace. It may be well therefore to say a few words concerning the history of this office.

The duty of conservation of the peace lay primarily with the holders of certain offices, within the sphere of their office. The justices of the king's bench, for instance, were conservatores or keepers of the peace within the whole kingdom; the sheriff and coroner within their county; the head boroughs in their townships. The keepers of the peace, however, with whom we are concerned are not those who held *virtute officii*, but those specially appointed.

These keepers held by now a position very like that of the sheriff as can be seen from the writ of June 18th, 1314, in which the behavior of the sheriffs and keepers of the peace is to be reported on by William Trussel, William de Mere, and Robert de Rolleston (Sir William de Mere apparently reporting on himself). A similar writ of December 4th, 1314, appoints Peter Corbet, John Hastanges, William Trussel the elder, and Ralph de Rolleston to report on the same officials. They seem to have discovered that Sir William de Mere would not suit.

From keepers of the peace they gradually developed into justices. By the statute of 1344, two or three of the best reputation in the counties shall be assigned keepers of the peace by the king's commission, and, at what time need shall be, the same, with other wise and learned in the law, shall be assigned to hear and determine (*oyer et terminer*) felonies and trespasses done against the peace. The king's justices were associated with them on all judicial commissions to deliver the gaols, to hear and determine, or to administer the statutes of labourers.

By the statutes of 34 Edward III. (1360) they were first called justices of the peace, and their duties and powers were extended. They obtained then, or are popularly supposed to have obtained, that power to bind to the peace which has been so formidable a weapon in their hands. By a statute of 1388 it is provided that there shall be at least six in each county and that they shall sit once a quarter. Two years later the minimum is raised to eight and payment for their services is arranged for.

So the Commission of the Peace came to consist of two elements, the royal justices and the local gentry, and the former were always of the quorum, as being necessary to do real justice. By the end of the sixteenth century it had become the custom for all the justices to be put on the quorum after a year or two of apprenticeship. Thus the local landowners on the commission of the peace in each county superseded the feudal system and became the real rulers of the county.

The rise of the justices went hand in hand with the fall of the sheriffs and of the feudal power. As late as 1410, in Staffordshire, the sheriff was still a large factor, both in his executive and in his judicial capacity, but even then the justices were supplanting him in both functions. The commissioners of array were drawn from the bench, the number on the bench grew larger, and the names upon the commission of the peace more consequential. The duke and bishop found a place; the Prince of Wales was added under Henry VII. The Lord Lieutenant who, under Henry VIII. took the last shred of actual power from the sheriff, was their chief.

## SECTION 2.

Ancestry of HELENA HARCOURT. In the year 1201 William le Harcourt, lord of Stanton Harcourt in Oxfordshire, lord of Stretton, in Leicestershire, son and heir of Robert de Harcourt, lord of Bosworth and of a dozen manors in Leicester and Warwick counties, bought from King John and married, Alice, eldest daughter and coheir of Thomas Noel of Ellenhall and Ranton in Staffordshire. This was the first connection of Harcourt with Staffordshire; and Harcourts, the descendants of this William and Alice, held Ellenhall for over 400 years. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 187-188.]

Sometimes the heads of the house lived at Ellenhall, sometimes at Bosworth, and sometimes at Stanton Harcourt. Even when the Harcourt of the day did not live at Ellenhall, his eldest son is often found residing there. So that we find this family one of the ruling families of Staffordshire—as Justices of the Peace. Commissioners of Array, Sheriffs, Members of Parliament—right down to the time when they became seized with the world-fever, set off buccaneering on the Orinoco, and so had to sell their Staffordshire lands to foot the bill. The present Harcourts of Stanton Harcourt are really, of course, Vernons paternally; and as such are even more Staffordshire in ancestry than are the Harcourts of Ellenhall—being of Harlaston since the time of Henry II.

I do not propose, says the Harcourt genealogist, to go into the first 300 years of the Harcourts before they came to Staffordshire. It is enough to mention that they had 300 years of history before King John; and the great French History of the Harcourts of the French line tells it all—possibly more than all. Those of us who have been well brought up know that the first Harcourt lords it in Charlotte Yonge's Little Duke. He matched at Rouen the position and the power of the first Capet, his contemporary at Paris. This Norman house does, in fact, surpass in antiquity all the Royal houses of Europe except that of Capet. Montmorenci, the proudest house in Christendom, Courtenay that wore the

purple of three emperors, even Ferrers and the first Stafford race of Toeni are juniors and new men beside the Harcourts.

The Harcourt genealogy is the work of a very eminent English genealogist, Josiah Wedgewood, M.P. Nevertheless it must be allowed that he exceeded the facts in his comparisons. Our ancestry through Ormunda de Stafford goes back beyond 250 and through Gilbert de Corbeil to Rognvald, 875. The ancestry of the Harcourts in Normandy is as follows: Bernard the Dane of Senlac came to Normandy in 912; Regent of Normandy 945; died 955.

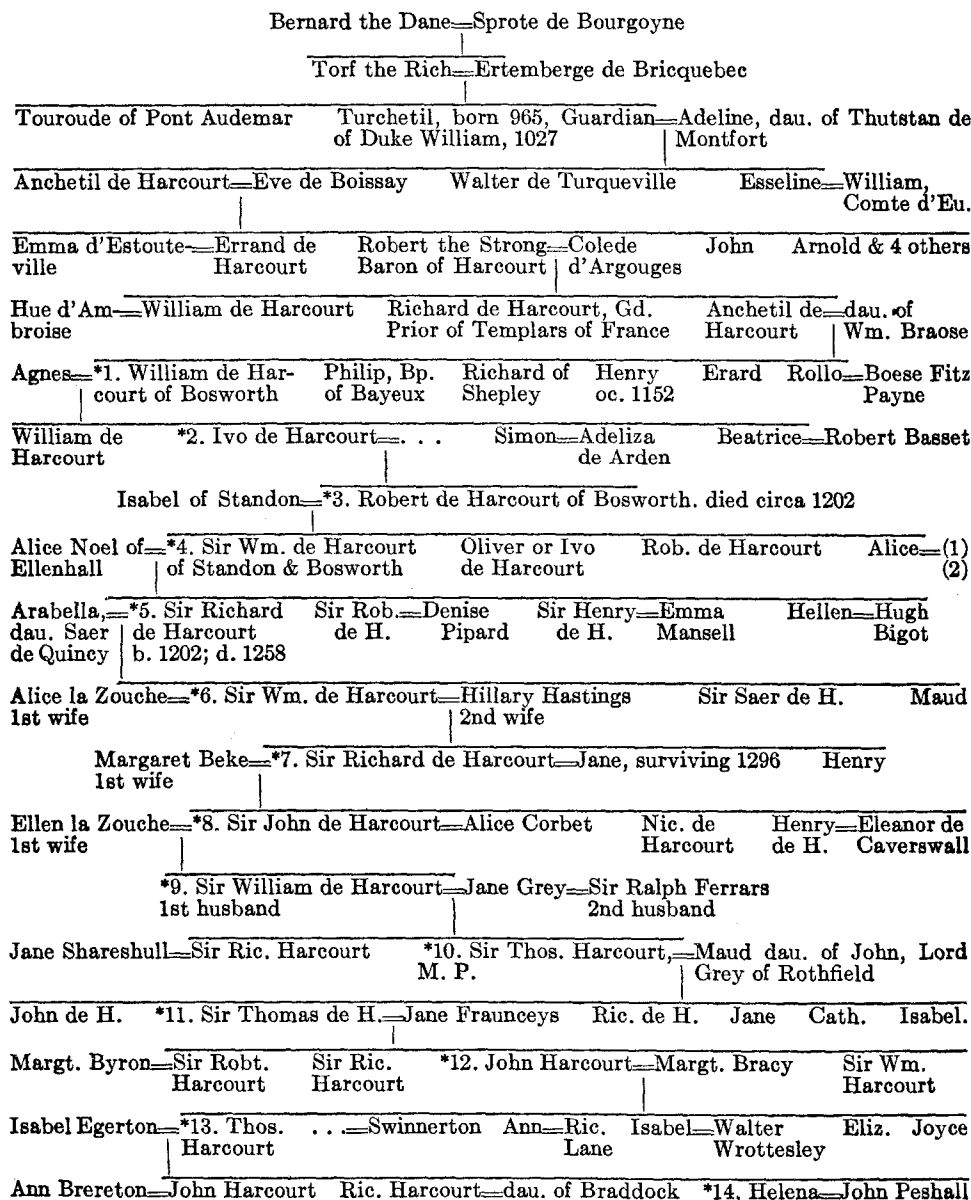
This Bernard comes into our history as the brother-in-law of William Longsword, Duke of Normandy, the latter having married the sister of Bernard of Senlac. All this is told in the 4th chapter of this genealogy. He comes into history in the Danish revolt of 932, when William Longsword was ready to flee his kingdom. He is recalled to a better mood by his veteran counsellor Bernard the Dane. He then wins an almost ridiculous victory over the rebels and for the time at least crushed all signs of revolt. Bernard was one of those who were desirous of making the Duchy a part of the general French commonwealth, French in religion, language and civilization.

Later we find him as one of the Regents of Normandy during the minority of Richard, won over by the craft of the French King to allow him to take the young Duke Richard to Laon to bring him up with his own children; but really to mutilate and probably to kill him, from which fate we have seen he was rescued by Osman the Dane, also our ancestor; this King then threatening to deprive Bernard of his wife and to give her to one of his own followers. If we take into consideration all the events in which he figured, then we must accord Bernard the Dane a pre-eminent place, not only in Norman history, but in the history of the Peshall family. It seems remarkable that his blood did not mingle with ours until nearly six centuries after his time.

Bernard the Dane married Sprotta de Bourjouyne. Their son was Torg the Rich, who married Ertemberge de Bricquebec; their son being Turchetic who married Adeline de Mortfort. He was guardian of Duke William in 1027. One of their sons was Anchetie de Harcourt who married Eve de Boussay; one of their sons being Robert the Strong, Baron of Harcourt, who married Colede d'Argonges. They are believed to be the parents of Anchetie de Harcourt who settled in Sussex and Leicester 1124-9. Mr. Wedgewood says:—Who was the cadet of the family that first came to England is not known. We are told that Errand and Robert, the two eldest of seven brothers, fought at Hastings; and that the man with the rare and refreshing name of Errand commanded the archer guard. He was probably mentioned in despatches also, but these have been mislaid. Probably no Harcourt came to England with the Conqueror; if one did, then he was surely slain at Hastings. For not one inch of English land is in Harcourt hands in Domesday, and this family was not in the habit of concealing its identity under entries such as Robert of This or That, or Everard Paunchface.



The following chart gives the ancestry of Helena Harcourt.



The numbers indicate the divisions of the text which follows.

The son of Anchetil and Colide is \*1. WILLIAM DE HARCOURT of Bosworth 1141-8, who was the father of

\*2. IVO DE HARCOURT of Leicester and Warwick 1166, decd. 1180, who was the father of

\*3. ROBERT DE HARCOURT, who married Isabel of Stanton, and they were the parents of

\*4. SIR WILLIAM DE HARCOURT of Stanton and Bosworth, from which the pedigree really begins. The earlier statement as above made may be fairly considered as open to further investigation. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 189-199; and Monasticon II, page 117.]

But under Henry I. the Harcourts are in Sussex, with their relations of Braose (Pipe Roll, 1130), and they are holding land in Leicestershire, too, of other relations, the Beaumonts, earls of Warwick. The English pedigree runs rightly down from that William or Richard or Anskell de Harcourt who married, about 1100 A.D., an unknown daughter of William de Braose. It was their great-great-grandson who married the heiress of Ellenhall, and went on Crusade with Randle, earl of Chester, in 1218-20.

William de Harcourt, born circa 1175, died 1223, was the eldest son of Robert de Harcourt of Bosworth, by Isabel, daughter and heiress of Richard de Camvill. Robert de Harcourt had been Sheriff of Warwick and Leicester, 1188-92 and 1201-2, and did not go on Crusade. He was alive in 1202 (Pipe Rolls), and probably died soon after. This Robert must not be confused with the Norman Baron of the same name who was so prominent in King John's wars. William first occurs as a witness with his father to a grant by Henry de Clinton. In 1196, his father Robert is excused his scutage on the express ground that his son William was beyond the sea in the service of the King. He got his wife in 1201, and got rid of his debt for her, 100 marcs, in 1205. For he was a trusted servant of King John's. Described as steward, we find him one of the collectors of the scutage in 1210. He is often found with John de Lascy, the constable of Chester, during these stormy years. He is met with standing bail for his friends, 1208-17. By 1213 he is custodian of the honor of Pontefract.

Under the year 1212 Mat. Paris related that the King handed over to William de Harcourt, one Peter the hermit of Yorkshire who had been making inconvenient prophecies concerning him, and Harcourt imprisoned him, heavily chained and fettered, in Corf Castle.

For the next three years we find him constantly in his famous rôle of Governor of Corf Castle. This prison he held for the King. The King had as many hostages as he had magnates, says Matthew Paris, and these, mostly children, he kept in the Corf fortress. Here were delivered to him the Countesses of Somerset and Dorset, and here, in January, 1214, he received the children of William de Braose, who are said to have been starved to death.

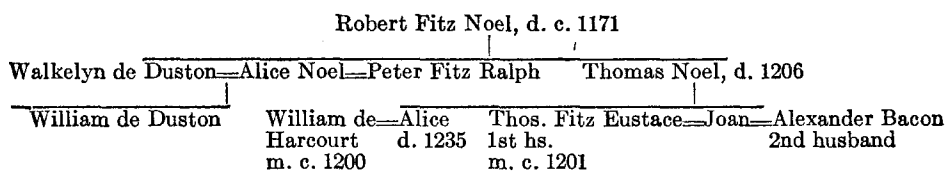
Is it any wonder that for these services, in 1214, John grants to William, who has always been devoted to us, the widow of Guy de Dive for his brother Robert, in marriage; that in 1216 our steward has the land which was Ive de Harcourt's, his brother, of the gift of John de Lascy, the constable of Chester, at Linham, Oxon, and again Eustace de Vescy's lands and many others, Sept., 1216.

In May, 1215, he seems to have left Corf, for he was sent to Rockingham and Mt. Sorrel Castles and also to Nottingham Castle to fetch five or six balistarii who are knights. At the end of that month he and John de Lascy are sent out to receive people back to the King's allegiance; in June, he is to hand over the castle of Mt. Sorrel to Saher, earl of Winchester; in August, he is described as constable of Winchester, and is directed to hand over Winchester and to come at once with

his men to Clarendon. He came and was promptly made Custos of Yorkshire. This office and the castles of Yorkshire he held well into the following year. He was still employed when Henry III. succeeded John, for in 1217 he is sent with Fulk de Breaute and William de Cantelupe to Rye; and in May, 1218, he is Custor of Tamworth Castle, to hand it over to the heir, Robert Marmion, junior. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 189-199; *Historia Majora*, iii, page 41.]

Immediately after he must have sailed for the east. Paris says, September, 1218, there arrived at Damietta.....Randle, earl of Chester, with the earl Saer of Winchester, and William of Arundel, and barons Robert Fitz Walter, John (Lascy) the Constable of Chester, William de Harecourt with a great following, and Oliver, the son of the King of England. The Crusaders captured Damietta in 1219, and here it was that William's cousin, John de Harcourt of the Norman house, was slain. Our baron, William de Harcourt, was still in Egypt in October, 1220, but he was back in England before June, 1222, when he and his wife succeeded to her mother's lands at Granboro, co. Warwick; and on January 2, 1222-3, he presented to the church of Alveley, Salop. He was dead by April 6th, 1223, when the sheriff of Leicester was directed to impound the crops of the deceased William till the executors had made satisfaction for the debt which he had owed for money he had borrowed of King John when the King was in Ireland, i.e. some 30 years before. The Harcourt papers say he was buried in Worcester Cathedral. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 189-199; Final Concords, 1209; Eyton's Ant. of Salop, vol. 2, page 41.]

Eyton gives the following family connections for his wife:—



Thomas Noel must have been dead in 1200, not 1206; perhaps it is a misprint. The mother of the coheiresses was Margery l'Estrange, heiress of Grenboro, Warwick, and Alveley, and Weston-under-Redcastle, Salop, and Bradnop and Mixne, Staffs. and she did not die till 1222, being then the widow or wife of Thomas of Oswestry. Bradnop and Mixne and Weston-under-Redcastle, they sold before 1223, to Henry de Audley and Alveley, Alice de Harcourt, the widow, gave to her younger son, Sir Henry de Harcourt. The Staffordshire estates on which, while wife and widow, Alice lived, consisted of Ellenhall, Seighford, Podmore, Mill Meece, and half Chatcull, all of which were held of the Bishop. As to these lands there were lawsuits with William de Duston in 1208-9, and Duston had some difficulty in getting any justice by reason of Harcourt's continuous absence, probably with King John in France. And long after William's death, the widow, Alice, was having trouble with Giles de Erdington over the boundaries of Seighford and Ranton. Eyton says she died this year, but she comes into the Testa de Nevil in 1243, though possibly this is an anachronistic entry. She had her own seal and was a great personage. The eldest son Richard lived at Stanton Harcourt. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 189-199; Plea Rolls; Pat. Rolls, 1234.]

\*5. RICHARD DE HARCOURT, born circa 1202, died 1258, was of full age when his father died, and had a grant of a weekly market at Bosworth the following year. He married before 1227 Arabella, daughter of Saer de Quincey, earl of Winchester, and had with her in frankmarriage the manors of Market Bosworth, Shenton and Aylestone, co. Leicester. Even the Treasury officials often confused him with his cousin, Richard de Harcourt the Norman, on the frequent occasions when the English estates of that Baron were taken into the King's hands by reason of war with France. With this Norman cousin he had also a law-suit as to Braunston, Leices., in 1228. He lived at Bosworth, for in 1234, 1235 and 1237 he had grants of does from the King's parks to stock his park at Bosworth; and in 1242, when his brother had been sent with the King to Gascony, he was appointed one of the two Conservatores Pacis for Leicestershire. But he was also Justice of Assize or of Gaol Delivery in Co. Oxon. in 1237, in Co. Notts. in 1236, in Co. Gloster in 1241, and Justice of the Forest in Co. Bucks in 1240. His only connection with Staffordshire seems to have been a suit against the Bishop of Coventry in 1250, respecting common of fishery in Cockesmere.

He held himself, in chief, 8 knights fees,—4 of the Earl of Warwick and 4 of the Earl of Winchester. They are set forth in the 1243 Testa de Nevil for Warwick and Leicester; and the Inquisition after the death gives his estates as follows:—Leicester, Stretton,  $\frac{1}{4}$  fee, of the King; Bosworth, 1; Nailstone, 1; Husbands Bosworth, 1, of the Earl of Winchester; Knebworth Harecourt, 1; Newton Harcourt and Shenton, 1; Morton, 1, of the Earl of Warwick; Braunston,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of William Burdett; Sheepy, 1, of Richard de Camvill; Oxford,—Stanton Harcourt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the King by services in Woodstock Forest; Stafford,—Ellenhall,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the Bishop, Ranton, 1, of the Baron of Stafford which he had subinfeudated. Aylestone, Leices., had by this time been given to his eldest son, William, on his marriage; and his tenures in Warwickshire had also been converted into mesne tenures. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 189-199; Cottonian Chronicles V, page 65.]

His wife seems to have predeceased him, and he himself must have died just before April 2nd, 1258, when the writ of diem clausit issued out of the Treasury. He left a son, William, his heir and another son Saer, both of full age, and a daughter, Maud, married to Giles de Peneston. His seal with the two bars is to be seen attached to a deed in the British Museum.

\*6. SIR WILLIAM DE HARCOURT, born circa 1227; died 1271; he and his brother, Saer de Harcourt, were followers of Simon de Montfort. Saer, who is described as knight of Simon de Montfort was, according to the Harcourt Papers, taken at Evesham, 6 Aug. 1266 and died in prison 1266. This is obvious nonsense, for prisoners were not taken at Evesham in 1266 or 1265, and Saer was still alive and lord of Kibworth-Harcourt, though heavily in debt, in 1278. An impression of his seal with the two bars is in the British Museum. Sir William was summoned for the Welsh expedition of 1263, but never filled any of the usual judicial positions. Writ after writ issued from outside Kenilworth and from Westminster directing him to surrender and come and take his trial, while he lay, one of the disinherited, in the Isle of Ely. Ultimately he was pardoned and allowed to redeem his lands under the Dictum of Kenilworth, and in this he was

assisted by his father-in-law, Alan la Zouche, who obtained from the Crown, Aug. 27th, 1266, a grant to Harcourt's own daughters of the redemption money for the manors of Tong and Aylestone.

Sir William's first wife—married circa 1250—was Alice, daughter of Alan la Zouche. With her he had in frankmarriage the manors of Tong, Salop, and Aylestone, Leicester; and by her he had two daughters, Arabella, who married Sir Henry de Pembridge, and died in 1279; and Margery, who married Sir John Cantelupe, and was dead by 1278, leaving Fulk Pembridge, aged 8, the heir of both manors. Sir William married secondly, about 1256, Hillary, sister of Henry, Lord Hastings, (died 1269) and by her he had his son and heir, Richard, and with her he had 35 yardlands in Nailstone, Leices. The Harcourt Papers say that Sir William died in 1278. Here again they are wrong. He was dead before April 10th, 1271, probably just dead; he certainly was alive in 1270. Hillary survived him, was suing for dower in 1272, and had before 1281 married Robert de Frankeville. Her dower was Ellenhall, and there they lived. In 1295 Frankeville was dead, and we find her suing her Frankeville step-sons. In 1293, before the Quo Warranto courts, she and Frankeville were claiming the usual franchise in Ellenhall. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 189-199.]

✓ \*7. RICHARD DE HARCOURT, born 1256, died 1293, and proved his age and had seisin in 1278. During his minority he was in the custody of John, Lord Beke of Eresby, Lincs. He married him to his daughter and ultimate co-heiress, Margaret, who divided the Eresby estate with her sister, wife of William Willoughby, when the Lord Beke died in 1303-4. Richard seems to have lived at Stanton, and he enfeoffed his younger son Henry, while still an infant, at Bosworth. He was summoned on the Welsh expedition of 1282, and on that of 1287 when he accompanied the Earl of Cornwall. His writ of diem clausit extremum is dated March 1st, 1293, and the following Inquisition gives his son's age, quite incorrectly, 3 or 4 years too old. His first wife must have died some time before, for he left a widow, Jane, who had dower in Ellenhall and elsewhere, and obtained license to re-marry in 1206. This wife Jane does not occur in The Harcourt Papers; but we see from the Staff. Hist. Colls., VII, that she was the widow of John, grandson of Robert Fitz Walkelyn, who had died under age, and in whose estates in Needwood she enjoyed dower.

\*8. SIR JOHN DE HARCOURT, born 1277, died 1330, though called 18 in his father's Inquisition, yet was still a minor in 1297, and indeed did not receive seisin of his estates till January 31st, 1301. He was born at Stanton Harcourt, and his marriage was granted to his grandfather, John, Lord Beke, to whom he became co-heir in 1304, in Eresby, Lincs., and Plesley, Derby. In 1301 he went to Scotland in the train of that redoubtable knight, Ralph de Monthemers. He was summoned to Westminster in 1306 to be knighted with the Prince of Wales. He was at Bannockburn and survived to go north again in 1317 and 1319. In 1322 he was returned, the first of a family that has sent over fifty representatives to Westminster, Member of Parliament for Oxfordshire; and two years later he was one of those summoned to Westminster to treat with the King. He did not live in Staffordshire, for after his death his executors are found suing his bailiff, John Alot, for waste and misappropriation there. Had his grandfather not been a

rebel, had his father lived two years longer, or had he been born ten years earlier, there is little doubt that a writ of summons to the Parliament of 1295 would have given him as good (or as bad) a title to an hereditary peerage as that of his grandfather, Lord Beke.

He married first, about 1300, Ellen, daughter of Eudes la Zouche of Melles-entre, mother of his heir Sir William; and second, Alice, daughter of Sir Peter Corbet of Caus, who survived him and lived at Plesley, Derby. His Inquisition post mortem shows that he died in 1330.

\*9. SIR WILLIAM DE HARCOURT, born circa 1300, died 1349, is called of Bosworth and he probably lived there during his father's lifetime; but in 1325-6 he acquired the manor of Bingley, Yorks. This man played no part in the history of the country. As to him the Rolls are silent. To judge by the Papal Petitions he had married Jane, daughter of John, Lord Grey, of Codnor, by 1336. But this seems impossible, and all other evidence goes to show that she was the daughter of Richard, Lord Grey, of Codnor, (born 1278, died 1335). He died early in 1349, and his widow Jane re-married in 1350, Sir Ralph Ferrers, Captain of Calais, and they had Ellenhall as her dower, where they seem to have lived. Jane died in 1369, and thenceforth for many years Ellenhall was in dispute between the junior line of Harcourt and the heirs general of Sir William, the Astleys.

\*10. SIR THOMAS DE HARCOURT, born circa 1330; died 1417. Owing to a settlement, Sir Thomas succeeded his brother in most of the Harcourt estates, and we must suppose that he was then of age for there is no evidence of any proof of age or delivery of seisin. He went to Ireland in 1361 in the retinue of his stepfather Ralph Ferrers, the Captain of Calais, and in 1366 The Harcourt Papers tell us he was knighted. For many years he was engaged with the Astleys in litigation over Ellenhall, and in 1371 we learn that he had bribed the jurors with the lordly sum of five marcs and a pair of spurs each. He sat for Oxfordshire in the Good Parliament of 1376, and in the preceding one. It must have been his son, another Sir Thomas, who was on the Staffordshire Commission of the Peace in 1413, and 1415, and was instructed to suppress the Lollards in counties Bucks and Oxon in 1414. He died on April 12th, 1417, and was buried at Ranton Abbey, and the Inquisition gives Thomas his son and heir, aged 40 and more. Now he was married in 1370 to Maud, daughter of John, 2nd Lord Grey of Rotherfield, by his second wife, Avise, daughter and co-heiress of John, Lord Marmion. Maud had previously married in 1359, John, son of John, Lord Botetourt, of Weoley, who had died v.p. in 1369. This lady was buried at Stanton Harcourt in 1391, and was undoubtedly the mother of his heir Thomas. It is possible that he had married before and had an elder son John de Harcourt, who went to Spain with John of Gaunt in 1386. Certainly a John de Harcourt was enfeoffed at Bosworth and seems to have died in 1406, after which time Thomas, till then the second son, married the daughter of Sir Robert Fraunceys. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 189-199; *Ibid.*, vol. 13; and vol. 16.]

The Inquest after his death on his Staffordshire lands is as follows:—7 May, 5 Hen. V. at Eccleshall, before Thos. Gyfford escheator, by oath of Ric. Jordan, Reginald Bodok, John Starky, Ric. Colclogh, Ric. Nowell of Hullcote, Will.

Suyneshed, Thomas Banastar, John de Wotton, Will. Wolrych, Roger de Olton, Rob. Bryd, Ric. Charnes, who say that Thomas Harcourt, sen. chiv. held Elnhale of the Bishop, worth £10; that he died 12 Apr. last and that Thos. Harcourt jun. chiv. is his son and heir aged 40 and more.

\*11. SIR THOMAS HARCOURT, born 1377, was aged 40 at his father's death in 1417; and he was then resident at Ellenhall, and a J. P. for Staffordshire. It was at Stanton, however, that he died three years later, July 6th, 1420. The Inquisition post mortem on his death is as follows:—No. 64.

At Stafford, 6 Sept. 8 Hen. V. before Will. Lee of Knyghtley, escheator, by Rob. de Suynerton, Richard Nowell of Hulcote, Will. Wolrych, John Warde, Will. Halfhyde, John Peshale, Thomas Wodewale, Richard Wateresson, Rob. Bryd, John Chambre, John de Ruggeley and Thomas Gervays; who say that Thomas Harecourt chiv. held Elnhale of the Bishop; worth £11 6s. 8d.; that he died 6 July last and that Robert Harcourt is his son and heir aged 10 years and more.

He married, on his elder brother's death in 1406 Jane, daughter of Sir Robert Faunceys of Formark, Derby; and this Jane survived him and remarried before 1424 Sir Robert Strelley of Oxton, Notts. Him, too, she survived, and, known then as Dame Jane Harcourt of Bosworth, it was she who in 1450 is cited as procuring the attacks on the Staffords of Grafton,—murders, which like some Kentucky feud, slew off the Staffords and Harcourts between 1448 and 1471. Canon Bridgeman and Collins thought that this Sir Thomas had a second wife, Eleanor Lewknor, by whom he was ancestor of the Harcourts of Ranton. This is not so; the Harcourt Papers are right so far—Jane Faunceys was his only wife.

Another difficult point is raised by Sir Thomas' brother, Richard Harcourt of Saredon, Staffs. and Patshull, Shareshill; the Saredons and Coven were the lands of Sir William Shareshull, C. J., and of his son and grandson, also named Sir William. The last Sir William died in 1400-1 and William Lee and Jane his wife were the heirs at law. In some way the Astleys, afterwards of Patshull, had a claim through Jane, daughter of the first Sir William Shareshull; for Jane's daughter and heiress Elizabeth Harcourt, had married Thomas Astley. But by Final Concords Sir William Shareshull and Margaret his wife, in 1390, and William Lee and Jane his wife, in 1406, passed these manors, after Sir William's death, to Richard Harcourt and Margaret his wife, with remainder to Isabel, daughter of Richard Harcourt. Now Margaret, Richard's wife, was daughter of John Lutley, of Lutley, Staffs., and she died on May 5th, 1400. Shortly after we find one Eleanor, wife of this Richard Harcourt of Saredon. Here we have Eleanor Lewknor. It will be observed that he could have been about only 20 years old when his first wife died; and he is found occurring throughout the first half of the century till 1451. In 1424 we are told that he and Eleanor held the Hyde and Coppenhall for the life of Eleanor; and in 1456 the executors of the will of Eleanor, widow of Richard Harcourt, armiger, are sued respecting Coven, while in the following year the Saredons, &c., seem to be in the possession of Sir Robert Harcourt of the main line. After interminable lawsuits between the Astleys and the Harcourts, the Astleys took Patshull and the Harcourts the rest of

the Shareshull estates, giving Jane Lee's favorite (and possibly uncle), Richard Harcourt, a life interest in the Harcourt part. This Richard Harcourt of Sardon died without leaving issue by either of his wives, and the Lewknors are not the ancestors of the Harcourts of Ranton.

It has hitherto been assumed by Collins, in his Peerage, by Canon Bridgeman, and by The Harcourt Papers, that this John Harcourt of Ranton was a son of a Harcourt by Eleanor Lewknor of Ranton, though they differ as to which head of the house should marry his mother. The Plea Rolls and Final Concords published by the Wm. Salt Society make it quite clear now that the first Harcourt of Ranton was this John, 3rd son of Sir Thomas Harcourt by Jane Fraunceys, born about 1415; and that it was an uncle, Richard of Sardon, who married Eleanor Lewknor and had no children at all by her. His holding at Ellenhall or Ranton was under his elder brother, Sir Robert Harcourt, K.G. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 208-210.]

\*12. JOHN HARCOURT of Ellenhall or of Eccleshall, Gent, of the household of the Bishop of Lichfield, is pardoned in 1440 for the murder of Thomas London of Lichfield at Penkridge. In 1450, as John Harcourt of Ellenhall, he is one of the sureties for his outlawed brother, Sir Robert. He is now described as armiger, and in 1457 he and his brother William are carrying on the family feud with the Astleys, for the Astleys had broken into their close at Bushbury. From 1458 onwards he is called of Ranton, but both he and his younger brother William are associated with Ellenhall, and I doubt not that these two managed the Harcourt estates in Staffordshire. William, afterwards Sir William Harcourt was of Maxstoke, Warwick, and M.P. for that country. John and Sir William and others of Eccleshall are appealed for the murder of John Fernyhough in 1466, and in the same year the two brothers were sued by John Delves of Cold Norton (adjoining Ranton), for carrying off 400 of his sheep. Delves was a noted Lancastrian. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 308-310; vol. 4, new series; vol. 11, page 239; and vol. 6, new series.]

At least as early as 1458, when he settled at Ranton, John had married Margaret, daughter and coheiress of William Burley of Bromscroft, Salop, widow of William Bracy of Lembridge, Hereford. This lady is spoken of in 1468 as kinswoman and coheiress of John Brown of Lichfield. He served as sheriff of Staffordshire in 1461-3 and 1466-7—important years for the house of York to have the right men in power.

The Final Concord of 1473 settles Ranton. By it Sir Roger Lewknor conveys to John Harcourt for 500 marcs the reversion of the manor of Ranton which John son of Edward Doyli, held for life. In the previous year Harcourt is said to hold Worston and Little Bridgeford of his brother, Sir Robert. All his interests were in fact round Ellenhall. In 1475 he is sued by his brother's widow, Dame Margaret, respecting Ellenhall, being styled of Haughton; and the same year he is suing the exors. of Hugh Erdeswick for debt, and Ralph Boughey of Chatculn for breaking in. Perhaps he had family troubles, for his daughters had married Erdeswicks and Bougheys. He was building at Seighford in 1478, for he sued the builders for building so negligently that it fell down. His brother, Sir William, was dead in 1483, leaving a widow Ann, then remarried to Sir John Stanley. But



John Harcourt was alive as late as 1495 when he was a party to a Final Concord respecting land at Horsley. He died soon after, succeeded by his eldest son Thomas. He left, too, five or six daughters who married into Staffordshire families; Elizabeth married Hugh Erdeswick of Sandon, Joyce married Humphrey Boughey of Whitmore, Anne married that Richard Lane of Bentley who came of age in 1494; Isabel married Walter Wrottesley; Margaret married Humphrey Peshale of Knightley, being his second wife.

\*13. THOMAS HARCOURT was escheator of Staffs. in 1509-10. He married Isabel, daughter of Hugh Egerton of Wrinehill, by whom he had two sons, John of Ranton and Richard of Church Eaton, as well as a daughter

\*14. HELENA HARCOURT who married John Peashall of Horsley, and a daughter Margery who married John Persal of Hawn als Halesowen, Chapter 18, Section 8.

The Harcourts seem to have been originally a family that sided with the house of York, but in the preceding generation its maidens certainly married leading followers of the house of Lancaster; hence it was only natural that there should follow a match with the house of Peshall.