

DEVONSHIRE.

WILLIAM, duke of Normandy, had no lack of his own retainers when he ventured on the conquest of England; and among the soldiers of fortune, who went safely through the fight at Hastings, and shared in the spoil of the vanquished, was one named Robert, whose family had been enfeoffed for some time of the Manor of Pontecardon, not far from Rouen.

To this Robert de Punchardon, as he was henceforth called, were granted four and a quarter knights' fees, in Devon, under Baldwin the Sheriff. The lands were in Waleston and La Thorne, Hyaunton and Hakinton-cum-Blakewelle, Mothecombe and Charneys; the unlucky Saxons, slain or dispossessed, were Ulf, Brismar, and Alceric.⁶ Robert had also the Manor of Blacheford, in Hampshire; a feoff, under Count Hugo, in Somerset; and two hides of land at Welga in Hertfordshire, under Robert Gernon: altogether upwards of six thousand acres.⁷

Robert's eldest son retained the Devon and Hants feoffs; but those in Herts and Somerset fell to younger brothers, whose varying fortunes will be found under the several counties where they settled.

In the third generation there was a further division of the senior line; Roger, the eldest son of Sir William de Punchardon, after a few transactions with his brothers Reginald and Robert, confined his interest to Devonshire. In 1220 he added Coombe⁸ to his paternal estate, and died in 1243. His nephew Oliver, son to Reginald, was the last of the Hampshire family concerned with Devon; and he was only summoned once, as jurator in the hundred of Haytor.⁹

Sir William, second of that name, the elder son of Roger, succeeded in 1243; and largely increased the estates. In 1254 he was "coronator", with de Briwere and another knight, concerning wreckage;¹⁰ in 1259 a jurator touching the claims of Isabell, Countess of Albemarle, daughter of Baldwin, Earl of Devon.¹¹ His widow Ermegard outlived him twenty years, and married Alexander de Viteri, who tried (though ineffectually) to retain possession of Heanton and Charnies.¹²

Sir John Punchardon was the last of the direct male line; mention of him is frequently made in various documents down to 1296; indeed, as Westcote quaintly says, "There are few ancient evidences in those parts, whereunto the Punchardons have not been witnesses: yea sometimes two or three of them". . . . "Heanton is surnamed Punchardon; the parish reserving charily the old lord's name of long antiquity, and therewithal copious in some ages." Sir John's three daughters, Ermegard, Mabel, and Margery, were co-heiresses. The first married Sir Philip Beaumont, and brought him the Manor of Heanton-Punchardon; the second had Charnies (Charles), and gave that to her husband, Sir Henry Ralegh; the third daughter had West Buckland, and was married twice—first to Sir Richard Beuple, and afterwards to Joel de Buckenton.¹³

Ermegard, Lady Beaumont, had an only son John, who married Alice Scudamore; and, in the second generation, the male issue here also was extinct. But Joan Beaumont, the wife of Sir James Chidleigh, gave Heanton-Punchardon to Richard Beaumont, nephew of the first Sir Philip Beaumont: whose last descendant, also named Joan, married John Basset. This

⁶ See Domesday. Testa de Nevill. Lysons' "Britannia," vol. vi.

⁷ See under those counties, pp. 14, 18, 27.

⁸ Testa de Nevill.

⁹ "Rotuli Hundredorum," vol. i.

¹⁰ "Placitorum in domo Capit; Westmonast: Abbreviatio," p. 137.

¹¹ "Placita de quo Warranto," p. 177.

¹² Feet of Fines, 1277.

¹³ Pole's "Collections," pp. 386, 411, 404, 288, 428, &c.