

arranged, and certain obvious errors in register extracts, clearly indicated the work of a mere tyro, faults which of course time and experience were likely to cure.

Towards the end of 1896 Colonel Shipway told me that "Dr." Davies had discovered a twelfth century grant of his arms in an old will at Gloucester, and, as I was somewhat incredulous, he promised that later he would give me a copy of the will. In due course he presented me with a facsimile photograph of the will of John Shipway, dated 1547.

On reading it, I at once saw that it was not a genuine document, and I hinted to Colonel Shipway that there must be some mistake about it, as I knew that no Shipway will existed at Gloucester before the year 1628. However, he assured me that it was quite correct as he had obtained a certified copy from the Probate Court. Further perusal of the document confirmed my original opinion, but I decided to say no more until I had had an opportunity of inspecting the original. A few days later Colonel Shipway told me that another "ancient" will had been discovered at Hereford—that of James Shipway, of Whidborne, Hereford, Beverston and Mangotsfield, dated 1524. Somewhat surprised, I told Colonel Shipway that I should have expected early Gloucestershire wills to be at Worcester. A little while after I was informed that yet another ancient will had been found at Worcester, this time of a gentleman bearing *two* Christian names and with *four* residences, and Colonel Shipway showed me copies of both the Hereford will, and also that of John James Shipway, of Whidborne, Hereford, Beverston and Mangotsfield, bearing date 1490. The phraseology, the spelling and the extraordinary contents of each of these documents satisfied me that they were one and all clumsy forgeries. Colonel Shipway also showed me photographs of the now famous inscriptions at Mangotsfield, the belfry carving, the medieval effigy with I.S. on the breastplate, and the lead coffin of John Shipway buried in 1628. It was clearly evident to me that these were no more authentic than the wills, and, as the fraud was growing at a rapid rate, I decided to lose no more time but at once to pay a visit to Gloucester and Worcester and to inspect the original documents.

Accordingly early in February, 1897, I visited the Probate Registry at Gloucester, and showing Mr. Wallis, the chief