

John Nichols
Literary anecdotes of the eighteenth century,
volume 3
London
1812

LITERARY ANECDOTES
OF THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY;

...

By JOHN NICHOLS, F. S. A.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
BY NICHOLS, SON, AND BENTLEY, AT CICERO'S HEAD,
RED-LION-PASSAGE, FLEET-STREET.
1812.

...

509

XV. JOHN THORPE, M. D.

derived his descent from an antient family seated
in the county of Kent for several generations *.

Edward Thorpe was of Rolvynden, otherwise
Rownden, in the reign of Henry VII; whose de=
scendants were afterwards of Westerham.

Dr. John Thorpe, eldest son of John Thorpe,
esq. (fifth in descent from the above-named Ed=
ward) by Anne † his wife, was born at Newhouse,
in the parish of Penshurst, March 12, 1681–2; and
was educated at the grammar-school of Westerham
in Kent ‡, under the care of the then master, the
learned and pious Thomas Maningham, afterwards
Bishop of Chichester, who married one of the daugh=
ters of Mr. Ireland, who had succeeded, as master
of that school, Mr. Hoadly, father of the celebrated
Bishop of Winchester.

On the 14th of April 1698, he was matriculated
as a Commoner of University College in Oxford,

* Of this let an epitaph in Westerham Church bear testimony:

“Hic infra situm est corpus

Johannis Thorpe,

	Thomæ				1654.
	Willielmi		Westerham	qui	1615.
Filii	Thomæ	Thorpe	Lamberhurst	obiit	1588.
	Bartholomæi	de	Rolvinden	A. D.	1545.
	Edwardi				1494.

Ex antiqua & honesta olim gente in agris Cantiano et Sussexiensi
oriundorum. Uxorem duxit Annam, Johannis Luck, S. T. B.
de Mayfield in diocesi Cicestrensi, filiam posthumam, et fratrum,
prole tandem deficiente, cohæredem; ex qua septem suscepit
liberos, filios quatuor, filias tres.

Obiit	Ille 30 Junij,	A. D.	1703.	ætat.	84.
	Illæ 25 Martij,		1694.		70.

Posuerunt Johannes et Oliverus, ex Johanne Thorpe de Penshurst,
filio ejus unico, qui connubium inivit nepotes et hæredes.”

† Sister and coheir of Oliver Combridge of Newhouse, otherwise Harts, in the parish of Peshurst. She brought with her in marriage a very considerable landed estate in Peshurst, Speldhurst, Tunbridge, Chiddingstone, &c.

‡ This school was at that time in great reputation; it was situate about a quarter of a mile out of the town, but has since been pulled down.

510

under the tuition of Mr. John Boraston, Fellow of that College; who being soon after obliged to reside, either at his curacy of Peshurst, or on his rectory of Addington, he was committed to the care and instruction of Mr. (afterwards Doctor) Thomas Cockman, then one of the Fellows, and afterwards Master of the said College. In Michaelmas term 1701, he took the degree of B. A. and that of Master on the 27th of June, 1704. On the 16th of May 1707, he was admitted Bachelor of Physick, and in July 1710 took the degree of Doctor.

On Saint Andrew's day 1705, he was elected F. R. S. which at that time consisted of but few members in comparison with the present number.

Soon after this he fixed his residence in Ormond-street, London, near his friend Dr. Mead; and for several years assisted Dr. Sloane, then Secretary of the Royal Society, afterwards Sir Hans Sloane, President of the same Society, in publishing the Philosophical Transactions.

During his continuance in London he contracted an intimate acquaintance with the most eminent Physicians, Naturalists, and Antiquaries of that time.

At the pressing and repeated solicitations of many of his relations and friends, he, in the year 1715, quitted London, and settled at Rochester for the practice of his profession; where, at his leisure hours, he applied himself to his favourite study, the History and Antiquities of his native County, and more particularly those relating to the Ecclesiastical Affairs of the Diocese of Rochester. In this pursuit he employed several amanuenses, to copy and transcribe from the Registers and antient deeds and muniments of that See and Church, and from other public and private repositories of antient learning, whatever appeared pertinent to his purpose. His labour was also indefatigable in taking the sepulchral inscriptions and coat armour on monuments and painted glass within several miles of Rochester (with a copy of which he obliged that

511

great collector of antiquities his friend Edward Earl of Oxford); in searching and tracing out the site and ruins or remains of churches, chapels, chantries, cells, hermitages, hospitals, &c. many of which now lie hid in the midst of woods, over-run with bushes and brambles, and known to very few persons. — Having been chosen into several places of trust, and particularly into that of one of the Assistants of Rochester-bridge, of which he was elected one of the Wardens for the year 1733, he set himself to search out and make as complete a collection of materials as he possibly could, not only from antient Historians,

but from patents, statutes, grants, inquisitions, commissions, and other authentic evidences, for illustrating and ascertaining the history and antiquities of that antient and well-constituted incorporated body. He endeavoured to shew that Rochester was the Durobrovis of the Romans; that Duroleum was most probably at or near Newenton; the Vagniacæ at Swanscampe, near the head of the Fleet, which divides that parish from Northfleet; Noviomagum at Crayford; and that the emperor Claudius passed the Thames out of Kent into Essex from Higham to East Tilbury, the same continuing the most frequented place of passage between those two counties till after the dissolution of Higham-abbey; that there was a passage over the river Medway at Rochester, in the time of the Romans; that the first bridge was there built about an hundred years before the Norman Conquest, by king Edgar, Dunstan Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Rochester, and other considerable owners of lands in that part of the county, who settled large estates (commonly called the Contributory Lands) for the perpetual maintenance of the several parts or portions that they had built, which were constantly assessed to the support of those parts as long as that bridge continued, and which are now by Parliament made subject to taxes, applicable to the repairs of the present bridge, whenever the estates, since given to the support of

512

it (commonly called the Lands Proper) shall prove insufficient for such purpose. He likewise drew up an account of the building the present bridge by Sir Robert Knolls and John Lord Cobham, in the reign of King Richard II. and of the benefactions given to it, adding thereunto a great number of original grants, confirmations, licences of mortmain, inquisitions, surveys, decrees, orders, and other authentic instruments and evidences relating to it, and to the chantry there founded by the said Lord Cobham; together with a series of the wardens to the year 1575, and of the wardens and assistants from that to the present time, most of whom were the principal noblemen and gentlemen, owners of contributory lands in that part of the county. By his enquiries, industry, and labour, that Corporation hath been brought into a much more regular and laudable way of acting than formerly; and as he was very instrumental in redressing the many abuses and irregularities that had inadvertently and insensibly crept into the management of the affairs of that Corporation, so he strenuously opposed the corrupt practice of making a private advantage of a public charity: it having been his chief design, in whatever he was concerned, to make himself master as well of the antient as present state of the business, well knowing that the surest way of attaining a true knowledge of any thing is by tracing it up to and seeing its original institution, and to execute the trust reposed in him with justice equal to his judgment. He was very communicative, and always ready to assist and contribute any thing in his power toward the studies and labours of others; as

hath been acknowledged by many of the most learned Antiquaries who were his contemporaries, particularly by Mr. Thomas Hearne the Oxford Antiquary, Browne Willis, esq. and the reverend Mr. Johnson, Editor of the Ecclesiastical Canons.

He practised his profession in the city of Rochester and county of Kent thirty-five years, thinking it as

513

much his duty to relieve out of charity the poor and necessitous in their afflictions, as those of affluent circumstances for a reward. He was void of pride, vanity, luxury, and ambition; having a desire of being a good man rather than to be thought a great one: in a word, he was remarked as a man free from all vices of self-interest, an enemy to fraud and deceit, and for having the strictest regard to truth, justice, and the public good, in all his actions.

He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Woodhouse, of Shobdon, in the county of Hereford, second son of Francis Woodhouse, of Ledicot, in that parish, who was second son of John Woodhouse of the Woodhouse, esq. in the parish of Byton, in that county, the antient seat of the family, where they had lived time out of mind, as appears by very antient deeds and writings, some of which are without date, and are supposed to be older than the reign of King Edward the First.

The works which Dr. Thorpe published are:

1. A letter in the Philosophical Transactions to Sir Hans Sloane, concerning worms in the heads of sheep, &c. dated July 24, 1704; vol. XXIV. p. 1800.
2. An account of a great quantity of Hydatides found in the abdomen, vol. XXXII. p. 17.
3. <OURESIPHOITÈS> Helviticus, sive Itinera Alpina tria; from the MS. of Scheuchzer, a celebrated German Naturalist, with whom he corresponded.
4. A List of Lands contributory to Rochester bridge; one sheet folio.
5. A Collection of Statutes concerning Rochester bridge.
6. Articles of the High Court of Chancery for settling and governing Sir Joseph Williamson's mathematical school at Rochester.

At length, being worn out with the fatigues of his profession, and having contracted a cold in one of his journeys, it brought on a severe and fixed rheumatism, that terminated in an atrophy, which

514

he bore with admirable patience and resignation to the divine will. He departed this life on St. Andrew's day, 1750, within the precincts of the cathedral church at Rochester; and lies interred in a chapel on the North side of the church of Stockbury in Kent *, which belonged to an house and lands in that parish, called Nettlested, which he some years before had purchased; and was for several generations the mansion of the family of Plott, ancestors of that eminent Naturalist Dr. Robert Plott.

A good portrait of Dr. Thorpe, engraved by Bayley, from a painting by Wollaston, is prefixed to

the "Registrum Roffense."

* On adjoining grave-stones in the chancel of that church are the following inscriptions:

"H. S. E.
Johannes Thorpe,
Med. Doct. Oxon. et Reg. Soc. Lond. Sod.
Johannis Thorpe de Penshurst Filius,
Johannis Thorpe de Westerham nepos,
Natus XII. Mart. MDCLXXXI.
Obijt XXX Nov. MDCCL.
Parenti indulgentissimo
posuit
Johannes Thorpe, A. M. Oxon.
Filius unicus et Hæres."

"Here lieth intombed
the body of
Mrs. Elizabeth Thorpe,
Wife of John Thorpe, of
the City of Rochester,
Med. Doct. Oxon. & Reg. Soc. Lond. Sod.
Daughter of John Woodhouse of
Shobdon, second son of Francis
Woodhouse of the same place,
Second son of John Woodhouse of
The Woodhouse (their ancient seat
that gave name to the family) in
the parish of Byton, in the
County of Hereford.
She died Oct. 26, 1745; leaving issue
John Thorpe, A. M.
her only son.
Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

515

JOHN THORPE, Esq. was brought up at Luds= down in Kent, under the tuition of the Rev. Samuel Thornton, M. A. a person of great knowledge in all branches of philosophy, as well as in classical learning; indeed, so much excellence was seldom known to be buried in a situation of such obscurity. Under the same master was then educated many of the sons of the first families in that county, who have risen to celebrity; particularly Mr. Bryant, whose reputation as an author is fixed on the firmest basis. Mr. Thorpe, with a view to the profession of physick, completed his education by studying several years at University-college, Oxford, where he took the degrees of M. A. July 7, 1738: soon after which period an event took place that threw a damp upon his pursuits in life. Abraham Spencer, of Red-leafe in Penshurst, esq. the surviving son of Gilbert Spencer, esq. (who was master of the robes to Charles II. and King William, and several years receiver-general of the land-tax of this county, and whose ancestors were of St Alban's, Herts) was cousin-german to Mr. Thorpe. He had been lately high-sheriff for the county; and in him vested a landed estate of near £1000 a-year. Many and frequent were the assurances that all Mr. Spen= cer's fortune would be Mr. Thorpe's; and he even knew himself entitled to it, should Mr. Spencer die intestate, his possessions being principally a portion

of the lands of his maternal uncle, Oliver Combrige, who held the same affinity to both. But such is the mutability of human affairs, that, aided by a village lawyer, Mr. Spencer is said to have executed a will near his death, not in favour of Mr. Thorpe, but of a person who had some time before been a very humble dependent on his bounty, his mother and three aunts being the servants who had ruled Mr. Spencer's house, and held his purse. That Mr. Thorpe should not question the legality of this will, was, at the time, a matter of much surprize. It had even the marked indignation of the populace, who had nearly sunk the corpse deep in Lancup-well, in Penshurst-park, ere it reached

516

the chancel of the church. But in the character of Mr. Thorpe, moderation and content were the predominant features. Nursed on the couch of ease and quiet, his unambitious mind would not be ruffled with contention; he therefore let the questionable deed pass by unnoticed, and resolved to pursue his favourite studies in his own way. Inheriting his father's turn for antiquarian research, he was elected F. A. S. 1755; and published, in 1769, the "Registrum Roffense," with the addition of "the Monumental Inscriptions in the several Churches and Chapels within the Diocese." Pursuing the plan, he gave the world, in 1788, the "Custumale Roffense, from the original Manuscripts in the Archives of the Dean and Chapter of Rochester; to which are added, Memorials of that Cathedral Church, and some Account of the Remains of Churches, Chapels, Chantries, &c. whose instruments of Foundation and Endowment are for the most part contained in the Registrum Roffense; with divers curious Pieces of Ecclesiastical Antiquity, hitherto unnoticed, in the said Diocese. The whole intended as a Supplement to that Work. Illustrated with Copper Plates, from accurate Drawings, taken principally under the Editor's Inspection." His own portrait, an excellent likeness, engraved by Cook from a painting by Hardy in the possession of his son-in-law Mr. Potts, accompanies the work. He intended, had he been younger, to have gone through the churches in the diocese of Canterbury, in the same manner as those of Rochester; a plan which has been too much neglected by the Kentish Antiquary.

Mr. Thorpe's letter to Dr. Ducarel on chesnut-trees, Nov. 26, 1770, is printed in the Philosophical Transactions vol. LXI. p. 152. — He communicated to the Editor of the "Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica" "Illustrations of several Antiquities in Kent, which have hitherto remained undescribed," making No. VI. of that useful collection; and several smaller articles. And to the Gentleman's

517

Magazine he was an old and a valuable contributor; even the month in which his death is recorded *, bearing testimony of his inclination to be useful †.

* See Gent. Mag. vol. IV. p. 216.

† One specimen out of a large number which I possess of this

worthy and benevolent Antiquary's Letters shall here be given. It is addressed to Dr. Ducarel.

"Dear Doctor, Bexley, Aug. 31, 1776.

Agreeable to your request, I here send the following account of the New Testament in my possession. – The title-page is ornamented with a wooden cut, at the top of which is the figure of an antient man, with a long-forked beard, and crown on his head; and habited in a gown or mantle with long sleeves. He is drawn as far as the breast, and leaning over the top of the compartment which contains the title, with his hands and arms extended as giving his benediction to it. The Title is as follows: "*The Newe Testament, diligently translated by Myles Couerdale, and conferred with the translation of Willyam Tyndale, with the necessary concordances truly alleged. An. M. D. L.*"

Where I have drawn a stroke under, the words are in rubrick letters [here printed in *Italick*].

At the bottom of the Title, in a shield, is a serpent wreathing round a pole standing on a globe, the shield supported by a Fox and Wolf. Over the Fox's back, in capitals, is the word REIN: and over the back of the wolf, the word WOLF; being the printer's sign and name.

In the next page follows an almanake for nine years, in red and black text letters, with its explanation. After that, in the same letters, is a curious calendar, and over each month is a neat small wooden cut expressing the sign of the Zodiack the month is in, and the different kinds of husbandry, &c. peculiar to each. The cuts, notwithstanding their smallness, are very expressive. Then follows – 'For to knowe what signe the sonne is – to find the newe moone – notes,' &c.

Then follow the Gospels, beginning with 'the fyrste chapiter of Saynct Mathewe;' and at the beginning of the first chapters, are the figures of the respective Evangelists with books in their hands; and beside them, are their proper symbols. At the 27th chapter of St. Matthew, is a small print of the Crucifixion. In the first chapter of Luke, is another of the Annunciation; and in the 23d, another of taking our Saviour down from the Cross, putting him into the Sepulchre. In the 20th chapter of St. John, is another of the Resurrection of our Saviour from the Sepulchre, and the guards, or soldiers, asleep. At the end of St. John's Gospel is the following: – 'Here foloweth a description or table of the journeye or peregrination of the moste cristen and diligent preacher St. Paul, of the whiche he hym selfe in his Epistles, and also Saynt Luke in the Actes of the Apostles, maketh mencion.'

518

Mr. Thorpe married the only daughter of Laurence Hulker, M. D. Cantab. a physician of extensive

Then follows a curious map, with the scale and compass; and at the bottom, is the following:

'In this table, by the distance of the myles, thou maiest easily perceue whate paynfull trauayle Saynt Paule toke in preachyng the word of God through the regions of Asia, Affrica, and Europa, and the names also of the citees, wherin and unto the whiche he wrote his Epistles, &c.'

Then begins the seconde boke of Saynt Luke, called the Actes of the Apostes; and at the head of the first chapter, is a print of the Holy Ghost in the similitude of a Dove descending on the Apostles, with cloven tongues.

At the end of the last chapter is the following:

'The ende of the Actes of the Apostles, written by S. Luke, which was present at the doyinges of them.'

Beneath the above paragraph, follows: – 'In as much as certayn

leaves being here vacant, and in fillinge the same wolde with some convenient thinge profite the reader, I have therfore thought good to adde hereunto a table describing thorder and tymes of things touched by Saint Luke in thacts of the Apostles, as ensueth.' Then comes 'The Order of Tymes;' which is a short kind of Chronological Table, containing some of the principal matters treated of in the Acts.

After which follow the Epistles; and at the beginning of each, is a small cut with the initial letter, representing St. Paul either in the stocks, prison, &c.; and delivering his Epistles to the Messengers. Likewise, at the beginning of the Epistles of St. James, Peter, John, and Jude, are their respective figures.

Then follows the Apocalypse, or Revelation of St, John, with several curious cuts representing the different visions, &c.

After the Apocalypse, follows a Table of nine pages, with the following preamble: 'By this table, shall ye fynde the Epistles and Gospels, for the sondaies, and other feastivall dayes. For to fynde them the sooner, shall ye seke for these capital letters, A. B. C. D. whiche sta'de by the syde of this boke alwaies. On or under the letter shall you finde a crosse —|—, where the Epistle or the Gospell begynneth; and where the end is, there shal ye find and halfe cross |—. And the fyrst lyne in this table is alway the Epistle, and the seconde lyne is alway the Gospell.'

In the last page of the book, is the serpent twining round the pole held by two hands issuing from clouds; and on the side of the pole is NVM. XXI. and beneath, is the following: — 'Imprinted in London, at the signe of the Brasen Serpent, in Paules church-yarde, by Reynolde Wolfe; Anno. 1550. in June.'

In Lewis's edition of Wiclif, p. 46, is the following: — "The same year was printed in 8vo, a book, of which Maunsell, in his catalogue, p. 113, gives the following account: "Myles Coverdale conferred with the Translation of Will. Tindal." Printed by Reginald Wolfe, 1550, 8vo. But this I have not seen."

519

sive practice at Milton, near Gravesend, by Katharine, daughter of Stephen Allen, esq. * Having

Mr. Ames once told me, this edition was so scarce, that he could never get sight of it. It is in the black-letter, and was presented to my father by Mrs. Lawrence, a widow lady; and in the margin of one of the leaves, she has wrote as follows: — 'Jane Lawrence, her book, found in the hay-loft when she lived in St. Margaret's, in Canterbury, October ye 10, 1713. Jane Lawrence.'

It is evident this book was concealed in the time of Queen Mary, to escape the rigid articles of enquiry, exhibited to the church-wardens, by Cardinal Pole, who began his visitation at Canterbury in May 1556; when probably this new edition was, for the most part, lost and destroyed.

In a blank page before the 1st chapter of St. Matthew, is wrote with a pen, in an old character as usual to that age, the following: 'This is good Mysters Hester's boke; and if any good body fynd it, bring it home a gaine to good Mysters Hester dweling at Saint Mary-axe.' — I think I have now given you a full account of this edition; and am, dear Doctor,

Your faithful humble servant, J. Thorpe."

* A mural monument in Bexley church is thus inscribed:

"Near this place
are deposited the remains
of
Katharine Harris, widow, who departed
this life,

18th Nov. 1787, aged 87 years:
 By her first husband, Laurence Holker,
 of Gravesend, M. D.
 (deceased 21st June, 1738, aged 46.)
 she has left issue, one son, Laurence,
 and a daughter, Catharina, wife of John Thorpe, Esq. F.S.A.
 She was afterwards married to Thomas Harris, A. M.
 Rector of Gravesend, and Vicar of Northfleet;
 who died 27th Dec. 1762, aged 67.
 By her good sense, right principles,
 kind disposition, and discreet conduct,
 in every relation of her long extended life,
 she deserved and acquired constant regard;
 and to the last hour was loved and honoured by her family
 with unabated affection and reverence.”

In the above monumental character no notice is taken of the family of this truly good old lady. Katharine Allen was the granddaughter of Thomas Penyston, esq. of Rochester, lineally descended from Sir Thomas Penyston, bart. 1611, seated at Halsted-place, Kent; mentioned in Guillim's Heraldry, p. 427. Camden also, in his "Remains," p. 403, goes further back with his family, where he gives an Epitaph, in Rochester cathedral, "upon Master Thomas Penyston, one of the clerks of the council to Queen Elizabeth," where he is styled "a gentleman of an antient family, and allied to many more."

520

made the tour of Europe, it was this polite and finished gentleman who had the honour to entertain the Prince and Princess of Orange, and their suite, for three days, in April 1734, after their nuptials, when they were detained by contrary winds at Gravesend, in their way to Holland.

Soon after, Mr. Thorpe purchased High-street-house in Bexley, a seat formerly of the family of Goldwell, latterly of the heirs of Edward Austin, fourth son of Sir Edward Austin, of Hall-place, bart. This house and grounds are highly enriched by the lively Cray passing through them, and, at the extremity of the garden, forming, with an elegant simplicity, a natural island. On the death of Mrs. Thorpe, Jan. 10, 1789, to whom he had been married 42 years *, he let High-street-house, and retired to Richmond-green, Surrey, that he might dissipate the gloom of his mind by a new scene. On the 6th of July, 1790, he married to his second wife Mrs. Holland, a lady who lived with him as housekeeper, and the widow of an old collegiate acquaintance. Removing afterwards to Chippenham, Wilts, he there died Aug. 2, 1792, in his 78th year, and, by his will, desired to be buried in the church-yard of Harden Huish, Wilts. Two daughters, Catharine and Ethelinda, survive him; and are both married; the former to Thomas Meggison, esq. a very eminent solicitor in Hatton Garden; the latter to Cuthbert Potts, esq. sometime a surgeon in Pall-mall, now of Sittingbourne, Kent.

Mr. Thorpe had the honour to be appointed one of the trustees under the charity of John Styleman, esq.

* See Gent. Mag. vol. LIX. p. 89. — There was an humble tribute to the memory of Mrs. Thorpe intended for the Gentleman's Magazine, her favourite Miscellany; but, from some lit-

tle, unknown, or private reasons, was then prevented. To those who were happy enough to know her, suffice it to say, that there was a degree of magnitude in her mind, of solidity in her judgment, and of beneficence in her heart, which were very far above praise. In her lingering death, occasioned by a painful disease in her toe, she shewed the virtuous fortitude of a Stoick, and the firmness of a Saint.

521

See "Registrum Roffense," p. 923; and also the Customale." He was happy in a retentive memory, and could quote whole pages of his favourite Pope with the utmost facility. He was courteous, but not courtly, in his manners; hospitable, but not extravagant, at his table; skilful and curious in his garden; intelligent and communicative in his library; social, elegant, and informing in his general conversation, and on antiquarian topics almost an enthusiast. These facts are stated from an intimate acquaintance and attentive observation of many years; and the writer of this article is well warranted in asserting that Mr. Thorpe, who lived in the genuine style of our old English gentry, was truly venerated by his family, and respected by a numerous circle of friends, beyond the common rank.

The preceding account of Mr. Thorpe and his family produced the following letter: — "The late Mrs. Thorpe, whose death you have mentioned with a merited eulogy on the deceased, was buried in a vault in Bexley churchyard, contiguous to a wall, which is a boundary of the premises of Highstreet-house, built by Mr. Thorpe; and on a tablet of black marble, fixed to the wall, is the following inscription:

"D. O. M.
The Fossil-stone beneath
covers the remains of CATHARINA,
wife of JOHN THORPE, M. A. F. S. A.
Pray disturb not her ashes."

This fossil-stone was brought from Cockleshell bank, near Green-street Green, or from some bank of a similar kind in Bexley parish, whose strata are minutely described in "Antiquities within the Diocese of Rochester," subjoined to Customale Roffense, pp. 254, 5. As Mr. Thorpe died at Chippenham, it cannot be matter of surprize that he should be averse to giving his friends the trouble of conveying his remains more than an hundred miles. But why did not the tree lie where it fell, instead of being drawn a few miles to Harden Huish? Considering the short

522

residence of my worthy friend in Wilts, Harden Huish must have been to him a novel parish. But, perhaps, some information he had acquired respecting its antient history, or some vestiges he had traced of a testaceous soil, might occasion his chusing this spot for a place of interment. He was, as you have truly observed, on Antiquarian topicks, almost an enthusiast; and, in this instance, he might be willing to shew

"He felt his ruling passion strong in death."

When, by his direction, a fossil of marine exuviæ was made the key-stone of the sepulchral vault in Bexley church-yard, it doubtless was his intention that it should cover, and keep undisturbed, the dust of John Thorpe, as well as the ashes of Catharina.

W. & D." *

XVI. EDWARD HASTED, ESQ. †
was the only son of Edward Hasted, of Hawley, Kent, esq. barrister at law; descended paternally from the noble family of Clifford, as he was maternally from the antient and knightly family of the Dingleys of Woolverton, in the Isle of Wight. His laborious History of Kent took him up more than 40 years, during the whole series of which he spared neither pains nor expence to bring it to maturity; and the reputation which it still maintains in the judgment of the publick, is the best proof of its merits. Notwithstanding his attention to this his favourite object during the whole of the above time, he acted as a magistrate and a deputy lieu=

* The usual signature of his friend Mr. Denne; see p. 531.

† "I request my Executor to cause the following insertion, immediately after my death, to be sent for that purpose to the Publisher of the Gentleman's Magazine, to be inserted in the Obituary of the next Magazine after my death; and I am sure my much-respected friend Mr. Nichols will have the goodness to consent to it.
Edward Hasted."

523

tenant for the county of Kent with uncommon zeal and activity. He was F. R. S. and S. A. In the latter part of his life he felt the pressure of adverse fortune, which obliged him to quit his residence in Kent, after which he lived in obscure retirement, and for some time in the environs of London, noticed by a few valuable friends, from whom he received constant tokens of benevolent friendship, as having known him in more fortunate circumstances, several of whom are of the rank of Nobility, and of high estimation in life. A few years ago, his honourable and highly respected patron and friend, the Earl of Radnor, presented him to the Mastership of the Hospital at Corsham in Wiltshire (a most desirable asylum), to which he then removed; and, having obtained, a few years ago, the Chancellor's decree for the recovery of his estates in Kent, of which he had been defrauded, it enabled him again to enjoy the sweets of an independent competence during the remainder of his life. He died at the Master's Lodge of the Lady Hungerford's Hospital, in Corsham, Wilts, at the advanced age of 80, Jan. 14, 1812. By Anne his wife, who died in 1803, Mr. Hasted left four sons and two daughters, of whom the eldest son is now a respectable clergyman, vicar of Hollingbourne, with the chapel of Hucking annexed, near Maidstone, in Kent, and in the Commission of the Peace for that County.

...

524

XVIII. The Rev. Archdeacon JOHN DENNE descended from a family of good note in the county of Kent, which was seated at Denne-hill, in the parish of Kingston, in that county, so long ago as the reign of Edward the Confessor; and there continued in a direct line of male issue till 1656; nay, longer in the name, by the marriage of a collateral branch (Vincent Denne, Esq. Serjeant at Law) with Mary, a coheiress in the direct line, in whose female issue it ended in 1693.

“From this antient stem sprung many shoots, that were planted at different times and places through that county; whereof there was one at Littlebourne, in the time of Henry VII. from which came John Denne, Gent. who had the place of Woodreve to the See of Canterbury in these parts, by a patent from Archbishop Tenison *.”

Dr. John Denne, his eldest son, was born at Littlebourne, May 25, 1693; brought up at the free school of Sandwich and Canterbury; admitted of Bene't College, Feb. 25, 1708; and afterwards a scholar of that House. He proceeded B. A. 1712, M. A. and Fellow 1716, S. T. P. 1728; joint Tutor of the College with Dr. Thomas [afterwards Archbishop] Herring; presented by the College, to the perpetual curacy of St. Benedict's church, Cambridge †; rector of Norton Davy, or Green's Norton, co. Northampton, 1721, which he exchanged for the vicarage of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, 1723; Preacher of Boyle's Lectures 1725–1728; Archdeacon and Prebendary of Rochester ‡ 1728, on the presentation of Bishop

* What concerns the antient and flourishing state of this family is confirmed by some MS Papers belonging to it; and may be seen in Philpott's "Villare Cantianum;" Weever's Funeral Monuments; Collins's Peerage; in the Preface to Somner's Antiquities of Canterbury; and in a very remarkable inscription on the South wall of the Temple Church, on John Denne, a Barrister, who died Jan. 16, 1648, æt. 32, which is printed in Dugdale's "Origines Juridicales," p. 175.

† Masters's History of Bene't College, p. 276.

‡ "At the time of his becoming a member, not a few of its monuments and papers were in much confusion; these he digested,

525

Bradford, to whom he had been many years domestic chaplain, and whose daughter, Susannah, he mar-

and by that means rendered the management of the affairs of the Dean and Chapter easy to his contemporaries and their successors. He is well known to have been very conversant in our ecclesiastical history; and this employment afforded him an opportunity of increasing his knowledge in it, and of gratifying his inclination to other antiquarian researches. The indefatigable and judicious author of British Topography (vol. II. p. 373.) acknowledges that his passion for the pursuits of antiquity was fostered within the walls of Bene't College, and observes that other Antiquaries have obligation to the same seminary. In which number Dr. Denne may be classed: for, whilst a Fellow of that Society he transmitted to Mr. Lewis, from MSS in the libraries of the University of Cambridge, many useful materials for his Life of Wicliff; and when that learned Divine was afterwards engaged in drawing up his History of the Isle of Tenet, he applied to Mr. Denne for all the pertinent information that could be collected

from the MSS. bequeathed to his college by Archbishop Parker. The care and diligence of Dr. Denne in collating the Textus Rofensis, and in subjoining to his copy of Hearne's edition such additions and remarks as would elucidate it, have been commended by Mr. Pegge (Bibl. Top. Brit. No. XV.)

"In examining the archives of the church, no grant, lease, or chartulary, seems to have escaped his notice. Almost all of them were endorsed by him, and from a great many of them he made extracts. His enquiries were not however confined to the muniments of the Dean and Chapter. The registers in the office of the Bishop of the diocese, their consistorial acts, and the minutes of the Archdeacon's Court, were likewise closely inspected. The late Dr. Thorpe saved him the trouble of searching many of the wills, by obliging him with the perusal of the transcripts he had from them. The acts of the courts of the Bishops and Archdeacons, which lay loose and dispersed in the office, were arranged by him and bound up in volumes. And in the opinion of Bishop Gibson, who was apprized of many of the contents, there are few registries of our Ecclesiastical Courts, that can furnish a more satisfactory report of proceedings in them previous to the Reformation.

"Dr. Denne, in his enquiries, had doubtless his first view to the discovering and ascertaining of the revenues, rights, privileges, and usages of the body corporate of which he was a member, and of the judicial office which he held in this diocese. But it was his further intention to make collections for a History of the Church of Rochester, concerning which very little was generally known in his time. With the same purpose he noted references to whatever printed books he had of his own in which that church was named, and copied largely from other books and manuscripts that accidentally fell in his way. That he often had it in his

526

ried in 1724; vicar of St. Margaret, Rochester, 1729; resigned for the rectory of Lambeth, 1731; and Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation. "Whether we consider him," says the Historian of

thoughts to write such a history is evident; but for many years the duties of his station, to the discharge of which he always paid the most assiduous regard, and a multiplicity of other affairs of importance, prevented his engaging fully in this work. It is highly probable he entertained a hope that when the busy scene of life was past, he might find leisure for such an employment, and a pleasing one it would have been to him. But, long before his decease, he suffered from a want of health; and his quick and active mind, owing to an almost unremitting exertion of it, was so much impaired, that after Rochester became his constant place of residence, which was in the summer of 1759, writing of every kind was a burden to him.

"A part of what it is conceived was his design has been pursued in the preceding pages. Every hint suggested by him, it may be well supposed, has had its full weight, and not been dissented from without assigning a reason. The writer has differed from what seems to have been Dr. Denne's opinion respecting the choirs being in ruins for near half a century, in consequence of a fire which he also imagined to have happened not in 1179, but two years earlier; nor have I concurred in his idea of his stalls near the communion-table having been used for a confessionary. His copious and accurate extracts were, however, of the utmost use; and indeed without them I could not have presumed, in my present situation, attempting any thing like a history of the fabric.

"It is a fortunate circumstance when collectors have it in their

power to compleat their own plan; and it is in a great measure from a want of this ability that so many books upon subjects of antiquity are complained of as being erroneous and defective. Between Dr. Thorpe and Dr. Denne there was a frequent and unreserved communication of their respective enquiries into the History and Antiquities of the church and diocese of Rochester; and it is to be regretted that time and other circumstances would not admit of their uniting in a production of the matured fruits of their researches. The editor of *Registrum Roffense*, and of the supplemental volume, has not withheld either trouble or expence in endeavouring to perpetuate the valuable deposit with which he was entrusted, and to have many of the remains of antiquity to which the MSS. refer illustrated by suitable engravings. And I acknowledge myself to be greatly obliged to him for accepting me as a coadjutor in a branch of his labours. One motive must have had an equal influence with us. We would have the work considered as a respectful tribute to the memories of the compilers of the materials from which it originated. May it, as the object of their wishes and intentions, meet with the more favourable reception from the publick! S. Denne."

527

his College, p. 278, "as the minister of a parish, or as a Governor in the Church, he has never failed, in an uncommon degree of application, to acquit himself with credit in each station. His abilities as a scholar and divine may be judged of from his printed Sermons, amounting to 15; a *Concio ad Clerum Londinensem*, 1745; articles of enquiry for a parochial visitation, 1732; and the state of Bromley College, 1735: but, as to his skill in biography and the History of the United Kingdoms, particularly the ecclesiastical part of it, I dare venture to affirm, he has few equals."

The Archdeacon died August 5, 1767, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and was buried in the South transept of his Cathedral. Mrs. Susanna Denne, his widow, survived him upwards of thirteen years. She had just completed her seventy-seventh year, being born November 27, 1703, and deceasing December 3, 1780; to whom, but not to her family, friends, domestics, and the poor, the day of death was better than the day of her birth. By this lady the Archdeacon left two sons, John and Samuel, who were educated, first, at a private school at Streatham; then at the King's School, Canterbury; whence they were both admitted at Bene't College; and one daughter, Susannah, who kept the younger brother's house, and was living in 1799.

JOHN DENNE, the eldest son, born at Bromley, July 21, 1726, was elected Fellow of Bene't College March 2, 1749; and proceeded M. A. 1751; perpetual curate of Maidstone, by presentation of Archbishop Herring, and chaplain to the gaol there, Feb. 13, 1752-3; and rector of Copford, Essex, 1754, in the gift of the Crown.

He published one Sermon, on the Election of a Mayor, 1753, from 1 Tim. ii. 2, 4to.

In the desperate riot in Maidstone gaol, Aug. 7, 1765, when several persons and two prisoners were killed by the fire of the towns-people in

528

their own defence, two desperate Italians, under sentence of death, having stabbed the gaoler to the heart, seized his arms, and sallied forth, firing on all who opposed them, and marched to Sevenoaks, where the two ruffians abovementioned, their ring-leaders, were shot dead. Mr. Denne, who was attending the malefactors officially previous to their execution, had so narrow an escape with his life, that the fright brought on what his brother properly styled an intermitting fever of the mind, in which state he continued the last 35 years of his life.

He died, in his 74th year, at the Palace at Maidstone, in March 1800. His wife Mary, second daughter of George Lynch, M.D. of Canterbury, died before him, Dec. 5, 1797; and her remains were interred, on the 12th, in the family-grave at Rochester Cathedral.

SAMUEL DENNE, the Archdeacon's youngest son, was born at the Deanry at Westminster, Jan. 13, 1730; admitted of Bene't College, 1748, where he proceeded B. A. 1753, M. A. 1756; and was elected F. A. S. 1783. He was presented in 1754, by the Dean and Chapter of Rochester, to the vicarage of Lamberhurst, in Kent; and in 1767 to that of Wilmington, near Dartford; and, the same year, to the vicarage of Darent, having resigned Lamberhurst.

Worn out and nearly exhausted from his disorder, a bilious complaint (which at length fixed, after having tormented him forty years), he was for nearly the two last months of his life confined to the chair in the library; which unassisted he could never quit, and in which he was supported by a pillow, frequently sinking under an oppressive languor. But in this situation his mind was not clouded, nor his expression much confused; continuing almost to the last to write, and to write connectedly and pleasantly to his friends. The very last letter received

529

by the late Mr. Gough, from the friendly hand which had afforded so much instruction and pleasure, ends thus: "Perhaps I have scribbled quantum suff.; perhaps more than sufficient; for, though I am well able to subscribe myself your faithful and obliged servant, yet in the spirit of weakness is added the signature of S. Denne."

On Saturday Aug. 3, 1799, early in the morning, seated in his chair, without having kept his bed a single day, at the age of 70, he breathed his last; and on the next Saturday was deposited, near his father, in the South transept of the Cathedral of Rochester.

An affectionate son he was; and true lover of the spot appointed for his resting-place, and has done much for its illustration. For his character, the poor and needy of his parishes of Wilmington and Darent will afford the best testimonial in one respect; the literary world has sufficient in another.

In 1771 he published "A Letter to Sir Robert Ladbroke, Knt. senior Alderman and one of the Representatives of the City of London; with an Attempt to shew the good Effects which may rea-

sonably be expected from the Confinement of Criminals in separate Apartments," 8vo.

Of the "History and Antiquities of Rochester," published by T. Fisher in 1772, he was avowedly the compiler; and was author of an anonymous pamphlet, signed RUSTICUS, relative to the hardships experienced by the families of Clergymen who happen to die just before the time of harvest; and, under the same name, wrote a letter on the Curates Act, in the Gentleman's Magazine, vol. LXVII. p. 747.

In 1795 he published "Historical Particulars of Lambeth Parish and Lambeth Palace, in addition to the Histories of Dr. Ducarel, in the Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica."

In Mr. Thorpe's "Custumale Roffense," p. 153–242, are "Memorials of the Cathedral Church of Rochester; by the Rev. Samuel Denne, M. A. and F. S. A.;" the History of his parish of Darent, in a letter to Mr. Thorpe, *ibid.* p. 90–102; and various

530

smaller communications are mentioned in pp. 103, 104, 252, &c.

In Mr. Gough's "Sepulchral Monuments" he is several times noticed as a valuable correspondent.

He communicated some articles to Mr. Hasted, particularly concerning Wilmington. (Some remarks on the church, church-yard, &c. Mr. Hasted rejected.)

To the "Archæologia" he communicated some Observations of Rochester Castle, vol. VI. p. 381; on Hokeday, VII. 244; on the words *ecclesia* and *presbyter* in Domesday Book, VIII. 218; on the Waldenses, IX. 292; on the time when William of Newburgh wrote, *ibid.* 310; on Canterbury Cathedral, X. 37; on the painting in Brereton church windows, *ib.* 334; on stone stalls at Maidstone and elsewhere, *ib.* 261, 298; on the burning of St. Paul's church, XI. 72; on the lavatory at Canterbury cathedral, *ibid.* 108; brief survey of that cathedral, *ibid.* 375; review of Mr. Clark's opinion on stone seats, *ibid.* 381; on a figure over the porch of Chalk church, Kent, XII. 10; on Upchurch church, *ibid.* 101; on papermarks, *ibid.* 114; memoirs of Phineas Pett, *ibid.* 217; a paper on Arabic numerals XIII. 1797."

In the "Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica" are two letters of Mr. Denne's on the subject of Chrysons, and some Observations by him on the Archbishop's Palace of Mayfield in Sussex.

His "Observations on Parish Registers" are printed in the "Illustrations of the Manners and Expences of antient Times in England, 1797."

In the last edition of Bp. Atterbury's Epistolary Correspondence, in 1799, vol. V. p. 316, are his "Remarks on a Passage in a Letter from Bp. Atterbury to Pope, in which he refers to an Epistle of Cicero to Atticus, that mentions his Country Neighbours, Arrius and Sebosus."

In "The Topographer," vol. III. p. 3, is a letter from him on the cypher I. H. S.

His assistance to the Historian of Shoreditch was considerable, and is properly acknowledged by Mr. Ellis.

His communications to Mr. Urban's Miscellany were numerous and valuable (the first of them, that can be now ascertained, on a Visitatorial Decree concerning Magdalen College, Oxford, in vol. XLI. p. 18). From that time till his death his communications were frequent; and it may be said, with great truth, that the mantle of T. Row fell on W. & D. and was worn by him with advantage, though for a shorter term.

An interleaved copy of "Letsome's Preacher's Assistant," filled with additions by Mr. Archdeacon Denne and his son Samuel, is in the possession of the Rev. Robert Watts, the excellent Librarian of Sion College; who is preparing a new edition of that very useful work.

...

<Note that there are some additions to the memoir of Samuel Denne to be found in volume 9 (1815); I have made a separate file for them. – C.F. May 2012.>