

ON THE GATES OF BOULOGNE, AT HARDRES  
COURT, IN THE PARISH OF UPPER HARDRES.

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VICAR OF LYMINGE.

Few families have held so distinguished a position in the annals of our county, and still fewer have maintained it through so many generations, as the family of Hardres, of Hardres Court, in the parish of Upper Hardres, a district which crowns the high land lying between Canterbury and the southern coast. And it may well be added, that in no locality could the traces of its ancient possessors have been more utterly obliterated than they have been in this. Cornfields and hop-gardens, unrelieved by a single tree, occupy the place of ancient woods of oak and other timber, once the most remarkable in their growth, and celebrated for their beauty in East Kent. The ancient manor-house with its quaint gardens and plantations, have given place to a farm-house with its homely accompaniments. Nothing remains but the ancient brasses and monuments of the church (itself falling rapidly into ruins), and the often-repeated name in the earlier registers of the parish, written in such striking contrast with the ordinary entries, as to mark at once that this was the family of the place,—the dignity of the parting possessor, and of the new-born heir being hinted at by painful efforts in caligraphy, their

names standing out from those of the surrounding tenantry in half-majuscule letters. Placed as I am at no great distance from this scene,—at once so desolate at the present moment, and so suggestive of a distinguished past, the very cradle of this ancient family being within the borders of my own parish,—I have for some years been anxious to gather up the few traditions which early historical records, and personal recollections (still more valuable in such a case) supply. In the latter I have been so fortunate as to secure the personal notes and reminiscences of one who remembered these scenes in her infancy, and whose mind is as singularly qualified to retain them in all their freshness as her hand is to convey a representation of them to others. To many here present I need hardly add that I allude to the venerable Mrs. Taylor, of Bifrons, probably the last remaining of those who remembered Hardres before “the glory had departed from it,”—before its great talisman was ignobly destroyed,—and while the Gates of Boulogne, the gift of King Henry VIII. to Sir Thomas Hardres, on the taking of that town in 1544, were still standing between the gardens of the ancient mansion.

Nor am I less indebted for the means of laying the few facts which I shall offer this evening before the Society, to a member of our own committee, Thomas Godfrey Faussett, Esq., himself connected with this remarkable family, not only through its early alliances, but also in the history of the gates, which the antiquarian zeal of the late Dr. Faussett would (but for a most fatal but unavoidable delay) have rescued from destruction, and preserved as one of the most singular treasures and trophies of our county, and I might add of our country itself. The first known mention of the family is in a description of the manors of the Archbishops coeval with the Domesday Survey, in which a much minuter account is given of the tenants than in the great national

record. This document appears to have been drawn up at the time of Lanfranc's division of the Chapter estates, which till then formed a common fund, and under the head of Lyminge we find that Robertus de Hardres held of the Archbishop half a suling as a tenant under that manor. I do not hold this mere identity of name to be sufficient to connect this ancient tenant of the Archbishop with the first mentioned in the pedigree given in the earliest visitation, were it not corroborated by the fact that the family had from the earliest period of its continuous history held property in this manor, under the Archbishops, and acquired rights within the manor and park of Lyminge, which were the subject of frequent conflict with the Archbishops, and were in a certain manner recognized by the life-tenure of the office of ranger or keeper of the park, which was granted or confirmed to Sir Thomas Hardres by King Henry VIII., on the surrender of the whole estate to the crown. On the origin of the name I cannot concur with the learned author of the extinct baronetage, in his derivation of it from the town of Ardres in Picardy. The place in which it originated gave name to the family, though there can be little doubt of the common Celtic origin of the French town and English village. *Ardd*, '*aratrum*,' 'a ploughland,' was doubtless a sufficient description of the site of both, before the one sprang up into a town, and the other became covered by the romantic woods which have now yielded in their turn to the primitive staple of the country. Nor do I venture to enter upon any speculations regarding the ethnological origin of the race, whether Norman or Saxon, but I may offer the suggestion, that if the descendants of the Saxon possessors of the soil are to be traced anywhere, we might expect to find them among the tenants of the greater manors whose names are recorded in Domesday and coeval documents. The displacement occasioned by the Norman invasion

would be least likely to occur among those on whose successful cultivation and security of tenure the income of the new possessors entirely depended. Under the disguise of the half-Norman, half-Danish names<sup>1</sup> we recognize in such records, we might expect to find in a great measure the same class who had tenanted the soil under the dispossessed nobles. The simplicity of the ancient bearing of the Hardres family (Gu. a lion ramp. erm.) which was debruised afterwards with the chevron of the Clares, Earls of Gloucester, under whom they held the manor and estate of Hardres, points, as far as heraldic devices can point, to a Saxon or Celtic origin.

Be this as it may, we find them assuming an early and important place in the history of their native county. The very full and interesting pedigree furnished me by Mr. Faussett (and appended to these remarks), shows them not only to have filled important offices of state, but also to have been great benefactors to the monasteries of Christ Church and St. Augustine, from the reign of King John to that of Edward III., allying themselves with the Heringods, Estangraves, Septvans, and Fitzbernards. As early as 1282, I find from the register of Archbishop Peckham, that the family presented to the Church of Hardres, John de Hardres being appointed to the living in that year by Robertus de Hardres his kinsman. ("Johan. de Hardres ad titulum Dni. R. de Hardres et ejus piculo"). As this is the earliest record of such presentations among the registers of the Archbishops, it may be gathered that the living was appendant to the manor, and had been held with it from a much earlier period. From Henry Hardres, the

<sup>1</sup> The very sentence which contains the first mention of the name of Hardres as a patronymic, presents us with one of these hybrid designations, "*Rodbertus filius Watsonis*," where the Wat's-son is reduplicated by the ignorant Norman scribe into "*filius Watsonis*."

first mentioned in the visitation of 1619, a succession of five generations leads us on to Thomas Hardres, in whom the celebrity of the family culminated; while its fortunes reached their highest point in the next generation through the marriage of Sir Thomas Hardres to the heiress of Thoresby, of Thoresby. It is in the former of these that we are at present most interested, as accompanying King Henry VIII. to the siege of Boulogne, and the receiver from him of the gates of that town, as the meet acknowledgment of his distinguished bravery,—a gift unexampled, it is presumed, in the history of a private family.

The political combinations which led to that sudden invasion of France, which was begun and ended in this single achievement, are familiar to all. The coalition between Henry VIII. and the Emperor of Germany against France, had no real basis but the ambition and avarice of the former, and the political necessities of the latter monarch. The Pope and the other Catholic Powers looked with the greatest anxiety and even terror upon a union so unnatural, and so ruinous to their interests if it had been consolidated by a joint success. So skilfully was their influence brought to bear upon the French monarch, that the siege of Boulogne had hardly opened the campaign before a peace between the Emperor and the French King had been concluded, and Henry's occupation seemed gone. Boulogne had however fallen, or, what is more probable, had offered but a slight resistance. The near neighbourhood of the English rule at Calais had no doubt contributed not a little to this result; and if the gates of the town, which we shall have occasion to describe more minutely hereafter, were a fair specimen of its defences, we need have little wonder that the forces of the English, acting from a fortified base like Calais, encountered but little resistance. Our great antiquary, Leland, whose prosaic

nature was elevated into the poetic at the thought of his master's military prowess, represents Boulogne as apostrophizing the conqueror in words which are better adapted for those who are sharing in a triumph, than for those who are confessing a defeat :—

“ O quoties cladem et sum magnas passa ruinas !  
 Me Francus domuit, Danus et Anglus atrox.  
 Romani valeant, Franci Danique valete,  
 Anglus erit vitæ spesque salusque meæ.  
 Concussit (fateor) duro mea mœnia bello,  
 Pectoris et medio viscera rupta mihi.

Quid tum ? restituit mihi culmina Martius heros  
 Henricus, regum gloria, palma, decus ;  
 Nunc ego vicino discam servire Britanno,  
 Et Rutupina frequens littora nota petam.”<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the glories were which crystallized the thoughts of the antiquarian into panegyric verse, it cannot be doubted that Thomas Hardres,—for I read not that he was knighted at the time,—had a very considerable share in them. For the King, on his return to England, visited him at Hardres Court, and probably there inaugurated the erection of the gates between the gardens of the mansion.

But what could have been the occasion, and what the date of this visit ?—of which, though its memories were so deeply rooted in the traditions of the family and of the place, we possess no contemporary record. The occasion might well have been the visitation of the park and lordship of Lyminge, which since 1531 had been held by the King, through the cession of Archbishop Cranmer, and which joined the demesne of Hardres. Sir Thomas Hardres enjoyed for life the custody of this park, by grant from the King himself,<sup>2</sup> and in all pro-

<sup>1</sup> Lelandi Collect., tom. v. p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> See the grant of Lyminge to Sir Anthony Aucher, in the Augmentation Office.

bability hunted with him in it as ranger. The transition from such a hunting-field to the adjacent mansion of Hardres was easy and natural, and we may reasonably conjecture that the King, on his return from the fatigues of the chase, partook of the hospitality of that ancient house. The dagger which was preserved by the family, and which now is in the possession of Mrs. Taylor, as the eldest coheiress of the widow of the last baronet, was given by the King on this occasion to his comrade in arms, with the expression, that "he knew no more fitting present for so brave a man." This interesting relic, which the King is said to have taken from his own belt, is of Damascus steel, the handle being of *niello*, incrustated with jasper, bearing on one side the motto, "*Fortuna audaces juvat*," and on the other, a similar and equally appropriate legend.

The date of this visit is not less difficult to determine than the occasion. The taking of Boulogne was accomplished on the 14th of September, 1544. On the 30th, Henry left for England, and landed at Dover on the 1st of October. (Rymer, *Fœdera*.) In the State Papers published by the Record Commission (vol. x.), we read, "The Council with the King to Wootton . . . from Leedes in Kent, 3rd Oct. 1544;" and we learn from the same source, that a privy council was held at Otford on the 4th, and again on the 10th. On the 7th, Cranmer writes to the King from Bekesbourne, with translations of certain offices into English,—Henry apparently wishing to celebrate his victory by some form like that of the old processional books,—and mentions the Secretary of the King having been sent to him.<sup>1</sup> On the 13th of October there is a privy council at Greenwich, and on the 14th the King dictates a letter from Westminster. Probably therefore the visit may be most safely

<sup>1</sup> Letters in Hawkins's 'Life of Cranmer,' vol. i. I am indebted to Mr. Faussett for the facts which form the groundwork of this conjecture.

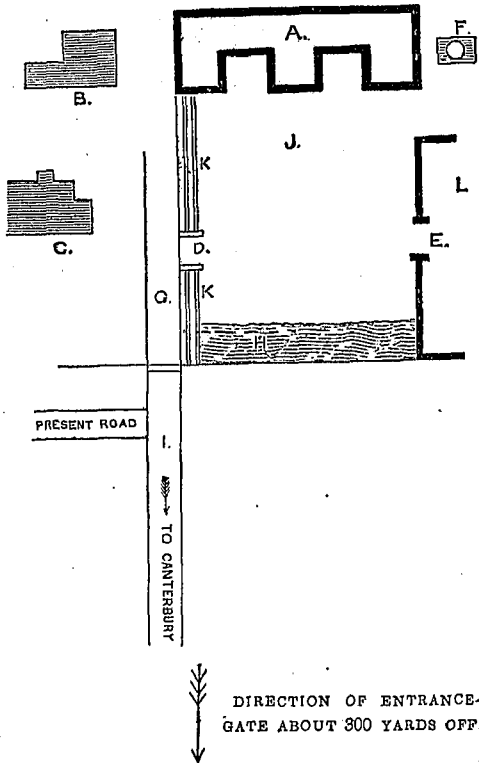
interposed between the 4th and 10th of October, while the King was at Otford, or at one of the other archiepiscopal estates which had so recently fallen into his hands.


We will now proceed to the description of the gates themselves, and shall endeavour to combine the descriptions of Mrs. Taylor and Mr. Faussett, so as to give the reader as clear an idea of them as the recollections and traditions of so distant a period can be expected to supply. The site of the gates is thus described by Mr. Faussett:—"They stood in a wall which formed the east side of the front garden of the old house, and corresponded to the kitchen-garden wall, still standing, which formed the west side. All accounts place them just at the west end of the church. I should think, however, that they were not exactly *opposite* the church, as the large gateway remaining in the kitchen-garden, doubtless made to correspond, is a few yards further to the north. . . . The house," continues my informant, "was in the form of an E, and (therefore) was not the very building in which Henry VIII. was a guest, but rebuilt, or at least much altered, a few years later. The foundations are still traceable in the grass, especially in dry seasons. It had a curious wooden gallery running outside it. A mound still remains which formed the end of the terrace garden, and was probably planted. The present drive was, as far as I can learn, the old one, and certainly points straight at the outer road which was then in an avenue leading from the entrance gate, which now, as then, bounds the property, and stood about three hundred yards distant on the road to Canterbury. . . . The ground at the back of the house is very rough, and in heaps, showing that the offices, yards, stables, etc. must have been very extensive. The kitchen-garden remains entire, and covers an acre and a half."



The following diagram, which Mr. Faussett has appended to his description, will convey to the mind as accurate an idea of the arrangement of this venerable mansion as the Vandalism of the last century enables us now to conceive.

- A. The site of the House.
- B. The Modern Farm-house.
- C. The Church.
- D. *The Gates*.
- E. The Kitchen-Garden Gate.
- F. The Well.
- G. The Present Drive.
- H. Mound indicating site of Terrace.
- I. Avenue leading to Entrance Gate.
- J. The Garden.
- K. K. Wall in which the Gates stood.
- L. Kitchen Garden.

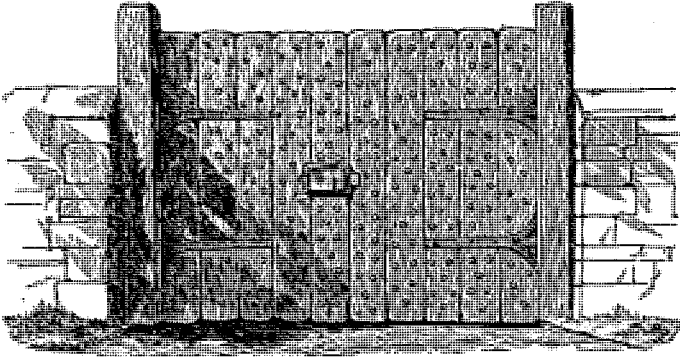



 DIRECTION OF ENTRANCE-GATE ABOUT 300 YARDS OFF.

Let us now fix our eye on the gates themselves, of which Mrs. Taylor writes:—"It is sixty-three years ago (when I was ten years old) that I remember the gates of Boulogne placed in a garden wall in Hardres Court. . . . They were formed of massive oak boards" placed upright, and "capped over one another, and fastened with rough and massive nails, about half an inch in thickness, their heads having five or six sides, and cut on the face like a rose-diamond." The woodwork was studded



and strengthened throughout with these rude defences, and “was coloured (but whether originally or not it is not easy to determine) with red ochre.” It was this



THE GATES OF BOULOGNE, FROM MRS. TAYLOR'S SKETCH.

weight of iron which tempted the hand of the destroyer, and like the leadwork of our cathedrals and abbeys, in the days of the Reformation, decided the fate of this trophy of the Royal Reformer himself. So that the garden wall of Hardres was able to take up the lamentation of the walls of Boulogne, in old Leland's phrase,—

“*Concussit, fateor, dura mea mœnia bello.*”

“The story of the destruction of the gates,”—I take up again the narrative of Mr. Faussett,—“I have always heard to be as follows:—Mr. Beckingham, Mrs. Taylor's father, and the last owner of the house previously to its sale to Mr. Tillard, had given them to my grandfather, who from delicacy refrained from beginning the work of spoliation, and left them standing. Mr. Tillard was no antiquary, and thinking them part of his purchase, sold them for the iron they contained, and my grandfather, knowing nothing of the sale, on passing his own forge near Heppington, had the satisfaction of seeing them just arrived at a state of hopeless destruction.”

“One nail” Mrs. Taylor remembers to have been preserved by Mr. Faussett, as a relic of the doomed gates. “A very small consolation,” observes his grandson, “for so great a loss.” Another nail was long in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Sandys Lumsdaine, the present Rector of Upper Hardres. This I had hoped to have recovered, in order to exhibit it in illustration of this sketch; but after a fruitless search on the part both of Mr. Lumsdaine and Mr. Faussett, I am driven to the melancholy conclusion that the cruel destiny which has deprived us of this memorable trophy, has pursued it to its very last relics. Even now it is but a visionary memory; in the next generation some pupil of Niebuhr may consign it to the region of the “myths.”

But the utter destruction of the gates is too suggestive a symbol of the absolute extinction of the family of their ancient possessors, to enable us to close without reverting to this still more interesting subject. The pedigree of the family, enlarged and corrected from the visitation of 1619, by the valuable notes and additions of the learned father and grandfather of Mr. Faussett, is full of interest and significance to every student of history or of genealogy. Already in the dawn of the seventeenth century, the family had fallen into those financial errors through which, far more than through the supposed influences of the law of gavelkind, the great estates of the county have passed and are still passing into the hands of strangers. In 1604, we find the description of an Act of Parliament (Harl. MSS. No. 6847) for the sale of the lands of Sir Anthony Aucher, Sir Thomas Hardres, and others, to raise money to pay their creditors. It recites, that Thomas Hardres was “seised in fee or fee-tail of the manors of Great Hardres, Stelling, and Bekehurst, and of divers messuages, etc. in Great Hardres, and of the manors of Barden and Thoresby in Com. Ebor., and of messuages, etc. in Barden, being all of the clear value of

£800 per annum." It further recites, that Sir Thomas Hardres and Sir Anthony Aucher had gone beyond seas to avoid their creditors, having first fraudulently conveyed their lands to others for their own use. This is a sad and humiliating revelation, but one which has too often been disclosed in the same station, and doubtless from the same causes of temptation, in our own day, to occasion any feeling of surprise. The family would seem however to have recovered this shock, though it is probable that a considerable diminution of its outlying property must be ascribed to this fatal delinquency. After paying a heavy *fine*, it seems to have had a temporary *recovery*, for we find that at the opening of the eighteenth century it still occupied that place in the county which the prescription of so many centuries had secured it. There was a strange vitality in this ancient stock, through seven centuries, and then its history closed suddenly and for ever. So utterly had it failed before the dawn of another age, that in the latter years of the past century Sir William Hardres, childless, and in that childhood of mind which seems the death-watch of a race falling into decadence and decay, sought in vain for the most distant relative to perpetuate his name and family. His days were spent lonely and wearily in wandering through those ancient woods in which his ancestor had the gay court of the merry monarch for his companions, and the manly sports of the day to speed its hours.

Silent and dreary walks were those, in which (we are told) he studiously avoided the society, and even the sight of his fellow-men, and acquired that shyness of character and vacancy of look which may be traced in his portrait, which still hangs at Barton Court, the residence of the late lamented Mr. Chesshyre, who represented the youngest of the coheireesses of the last Lady Hardres.

To her he bequeathed the inheritance which for seven

centuries had followed his name, some idea of the extent and value of which may be formed from the fact, that one of the fortunate sharers in the spoil of this exhausted race realized £3000 a year for four or five years in succession, by felling the oaks on the estate. This was none other than the Baron de Montesquieu, the grandson of the great President who explored the causes of the decadence of an empire,—a significant coincidence,—for the failure of a family as of an empire may have the same causes, though in different degrees, and the varied fortunes of a family run parallel with those of a vast community.

The records of this ancient race can now be read only on the brasses and monuments which fill the church of Hardres, one or two of which are of considerable beauty and elaborate workmanship. Of the brasses, Mr. Faussett fears that several at least which were remembered by his grandfather have been since removed. We may express the hope that the influence of the Society and the spirit of restoration which is so active around us, may not only preserve what remains to us of these mournful records of a departed race, but probably discover some new traces of their history, some additional relics of so long and so glorious a past.

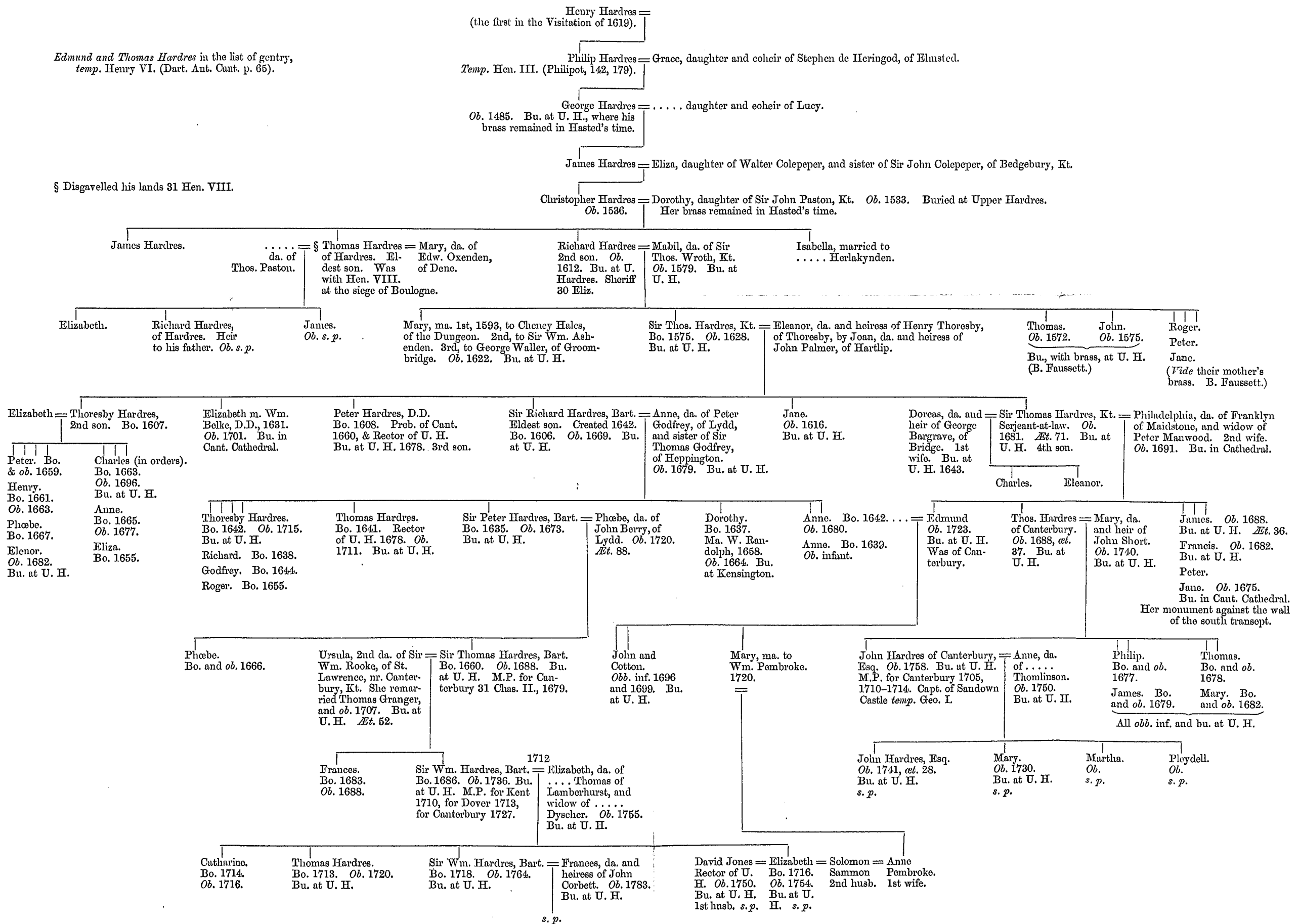
Many here present will have remembered or heard of the great impulse given, if not to antiquarian, at least to genealogical research, by the failure of this long line. The inheritors of the name, hungering for something more substantial, gathered round the prey, mustering themselves from every place or station in which fortune or misfortune had cast their lot. What an earnest exploring was there of the ancient registers, what anxiety to detect the latent “cadets of the house,”—the second and third sons of distant generations. Vain hope!—a scion whose derivation from the parent stem was admitted, yet hardly proved, had struck out in Ireland,

and the name, somewhat varied by the difference of soil, appears in the Sir Hardress Waller of the days of the Commonwealth. The military genius of the family cropped up again, but at a great interval of time as well as distance of place; while in our own Kent the name has sunk to the level of much humbler life; the line has not passed away altogether,—“The blast hath passed over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof knoweth it no more.”

In the Archbishop's Manor of Laminge, as recorded in a Survey contemporary with Domesday, "*Rodbertus de Hardres* (habet) dimid. sull. (in feodo)." *Batteley's Somner. App. I. p. 45.*  
*Philip de Hardres*, Recognitor Mag. Assise, temp. John. (Hasted.) Philipot makes him father of the Philip who married Grace Heringod. (p. 179.)  
*Philip de Hardres*, grandson of the above, benefactor to Christ Church, Canterbury, temp. Hen. III. Arms in cloisters. (Hasted.) [In the north ambulatory, T. G. F.]  
*Sir Robert de Hardres*, of Hardres, temp. Ed. II. His heirs paid aid 20 Ed. III. (Hasted.) *William de Hardres* sold lands in Wickling to St. Augustine's. *Regist. St. Aug. east. 441.* (Hasted, II. 809.)  
*Thomas de Shaldefelde*, son of *Luca de Hardres*, gave lands in Lenham to the Monastery of St. Augustine. *Regist. St. Aug. (Hasted, II. 439 m.)*  
*William Hardres*, of Hardres, (whose ancestors matched with Estangrave, Septvans, and Heringod (the latter descended from Fitzbernard), M.P. for Canterbury, 1, 3, and 7 Rich. II. (Hasted.)  
*Thomas de Hardres* held lands at St. Helen's, in East Barming, under the *Clares, Earls of Gloucester*, temp. Ed. III. (Hasted, II. 151 l.)

*Edmund and Thomas Hardres* in the list of gentry, temp. Henry VI. (Dart. Ant. Cant. p. 65).

§ Disgavelled his lands 31 Hen. VIII.



1620, 14th Oct. Richard Cheston, married to Elizabeth Hardres.  
 1571, 21st Oct. Thomas Hardres, christened.  
 1572, 6th Oct. Richard Hardres, buried.  
 1579, 23rd March. Mr. Roger Hardres.  
 1637, 6th June. Thomas Hardres, gent. (a child).  
 1756, 13th Feb. Mrs. Philadelphia Hardres (from Canterbury).

A few names which I cannot place, from the Upper Hardres Register. (All the rest are embodied in the pedigree.)

Arms:—Gu. a lion ramp. erm. debruised by a chev. or.  
 (But the Canterbury branch, descendants of Sir Thomas, the Serjeant-at-law, seem to have borne them without the chev. See Jane Hardres's monument in Canterbury Cathedral, and their monuments at Upper Hardres. The brass of Dorothy Hardres, 1533, has also no chevron on the shield.—T. G. F.)

Alicia, daughter of Thomas Hills, and widow of John Aucher, of Otterden, married James Hardres (Visn. of Kent, 1619.) [The Hillses were of Eggarton, near Godmersham, and John Aucher died 1508. She was probably wife of James, third son of Christopher Hardres above.—T. G. F.]  
 James Hardres, in 1676, bought Southouse, in Selling, his descendant, John Hardres sold it in 1702. (Hasted, III. 24.) [Qu. Thomas, not James, son of the Serjeant.]