

THE BROCKMAN PAPERS.

BY MISS BURFORD BUTCHER.

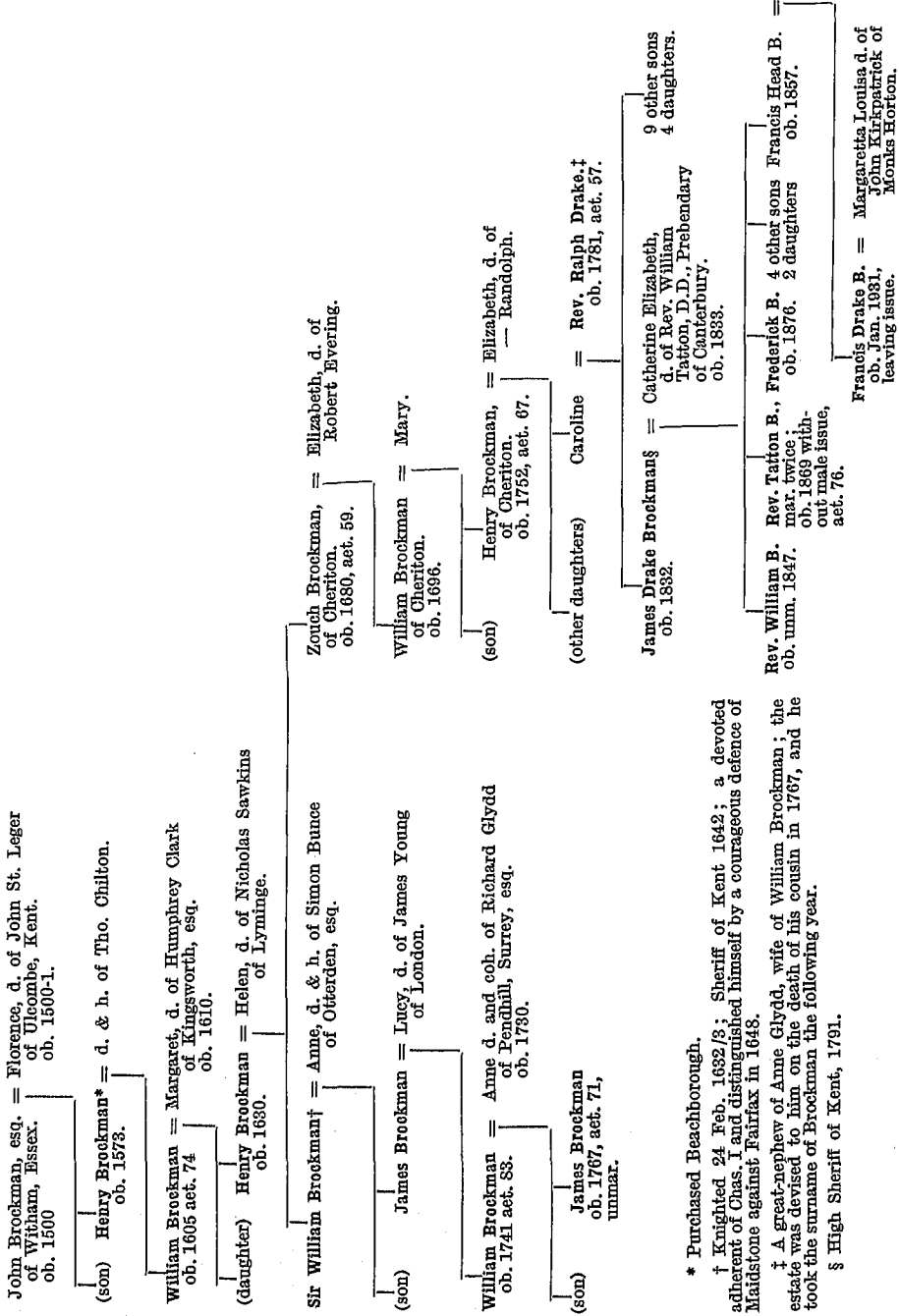
THERE has recently come to light a most interesting collection of family deeds belonging to the Brockman family of Beachborough, Newington, Kent. These deeds, which number about two thousand and date from 1256 to the nineteenth century, are in extremely good condition, only one or two having been injured by rats. Their good preservation is, no doubt, due to their having been kept locked up in two enormous chests, probably made on the estate, which had not been opened during the memory of any living member of the family until a few weeks ago, when the locks were forced so that the collection could be catalogued. Owing to the great generosity of the family, it will shortly be accessible to students, as, on the death of the late Francis Drake Brockman, it was presented in its entirety to the British Museum.

The family originally came from Essex, but settled in Kent early in the sixteenth century, Henry Brockman having purchased Beachborough in the latter days of the reign of Queen Elizabeth ; though it still belongs to the family, the place is now let as a school. They also owned property in Blechingley, Horley, Nutfield and several other places outside Kent. The accompanying pedigree, which is not complete, has been compiled from Burke and Hasted, and has not been verified from the deeds.

The collection naturally consists mainly of leases, releases, fines, etc., but there are numerous other interesting documents, including two Court Rolls, one of Newington, 1591-1603, and the other of Blechingley, Surrey, 1661-1670, two volumes of "matters transacted as Justice of the Peace," 1689-1781, and copies of thirty-two wills dating from 1424 to 1796. Besides these wills there are others included.

PEDIGREE OF THE FAMILY OF BROCKMAN.

Showing (in heavy type) the successive owners of Beachborough.



* Purchased Beachborough.

† Knighted 24 Feb. 1632/3; Sheriff of Kent 1642; a devoted adherent of Chas. I and distinguished himself by a courageous defence of Madstone against Fairfax in 1648.

‡ A great-nephew of Anne Glydd, wife of William Brockman; the estate was devised to him on the death of his cousin in 1767, and he took the surname of Brockman the following year.

§ High Sheriff of Kent, 1791.

with deeds sorted together at some previous date into bundles relating to the same property. For instance, there is a bundle of ten deeds concerning the purchase of land in Blyborough by Henry Brockman from 1553 to 1730.

The collection also includes papers, letters and receipts relating to the cure of Wye, 1606-1753 ; ten deeds relating to the churches of Boughton Aluph, Brenzett and Wye, 1596-1634, with papers relating to the parsonages of those places ; a Parliamentary Survey of Combe Manor, 1640 ; a rent book of Combe Wood, with other papers, 1639-1747 ; and a petition from the fishermen of Folkestone to the Commissioners of Dover Harbour, and other deeds concerning the Harbour, 1677-1750. An interesting section is formed by forty account books and journals, dating from 1644 to 1825 and relating to the affairs of the estate. A study of these would give a fair idea of the manner of working an estate during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The charters, about five hundred in number, date from the reign of Henry III to the Tudor period and beyond ; the earliest is dated 1256-7.

With this collection were found books and packets of recipes both culinary and medicinal of the eighteenth century. This section is, for the present, being retained by the Brockman family. Those particularly interested in this side of domestic life will appreciate the two following medicinal prescriptions chosen at random. One, called "Mr. Deeds Snail Water," tells one to take two hundred snails and two pounds of worms ; these, with various other ingredients, are to be pressed with a knife and then strained. Another "for strengthening of the sinews" requires that sixteen swallows "alive if may be" shall be pounded in a mortar until no feathers or bones remain, mixed with other ingredients, warmed by the fire and then eaten. It may be added that the recipe says this will keep for several years.