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THE RISE AND RACE OF HASTINGS.

By GEORGE T. CLARK, F.S.A.

OF the great baronial sources which well out from the cloud-capt summits of our genealogical Olympus, that of Hastings, though among the most illustrious, has not been classed among the most remote. Asserting the stainless honour of its men and the chastity of its women, brilliant in its alliances, rich in its broad landed possessions, and fertile in the number and copiousness of its branches, uncertainty has rested over its founder ; nor is it known whether he is to be sought for in England or in Normandy, whether he gave name to or received his name from the Aquitanian balliage or the English cinque port.¹

A popular belief current in the fourteenth century, when the family touched its zenith, attributed its origin to the terrible Viking, Alstagnus vel Hastings, vulgo Gormundus, called also Huasten, "*omnium paganorum nequissimus*," who, from A.D. 855 to 893, ravaged the southern shores of England ; who, born a pagan and bred a pirate, became in later life a Christian of a very rugged stamp, and, having aided Rollo to conquer Normandy, took a part in its settlement and defence, and became the Lord of the County of Chartres.

But whatever may have been the source of the name of the balliage and cinque port, the belief as to the origin of the Barons, though not disproved by genealogists, has met with no support from their labours, which however, until recently, have been neither accurate nor extensive. The different branches of the family, numerous as they have been, and not wanting in "pride of place," seem to have been careless of recording their descent, and to have scorned the ordinary precautions,—

¹ Villam, balliagium, jurisdictionem et peagium de Hastings infra dueatum nostrum Aquitanum (Rot. Norm. 5 H. V. I.

257). It was upon the frontier of Navarre, and under the seneschal of Gascony. (N. Fæd. II. 1169, 15 Ed. III.).

“To show all ages plain,
 What honour was to HASTINGS due,
 What honours he did win :
 What arms he gave, and so to blaze,
 What lords had HASTINGS been.”

The name of Hastings occurs among the under-tenants in Domesday, in the persons of Ralph de Hastings of Essex, and Robert of Sussex;² but among the tenants in chief in that venerable record a very considerable personage is Walter the Deacon, who had lands in Gloucestershire, Essex, and Suffolk, as an under-tenant in Norfolk, and, as shown by the Ely Domesday, in that isle; and of the children of Walter, at least Robert the eldest, if not more, bore the surname of Hastings.

Robert de Hastings of Sussex seems to have been a follower of the Earl of Eu, and to have held under the Castle of Hastings, deriving thence his surname; but the Deacon and his children and Ralph had nothing to do with Sussex; they belonged to Essex, and may well have been related. Most of the Deacon's lands in the time of the Conqueror were held by well-known Saxons, and he was probably an intruder; but Domesday not only records Teddric or Theodoric, his brother, but mentions land derived from his ancestor Theodoric, and from the gift of Queen Ediva, after the advent of the Conqueror. It is therefore very doubtful whether the Deacon or his family and Ralph de Hastings acquired the surname in England from the cinque port, or derived it from the Aquitanian balliage, or from the great Viking himself.

In the *Liber Niger* of Henry II., and in the reign of Richard and John, the name of Hastings had become more common, but in very many instances it was a mere residential distinction, not adopted or transmissible as a regular surname; and Vincent, Philip, Alan, Ysaac, Harvey, Harald, and Manasser de Hastings, who appear in various early Sussex records, were evidently only burgesses or barons of the cinque port: “*Saponarii et furfurarii qui se barones vocant usque ad nauseam*,” having no connection with either the baronial house or that of Robert of Sussex, nor transmitting their designation to posterity.

In the *Liber Niger*, which is a list of fees in the several

² Ralph de Hastings occurs also in the Exeter Domesday.

counties in the reign of Henry II., about 1165, the name of Hastings occurs several times. Besides the family of the Deacon, of whom were Robert of Easton, Ralph and William de Hastings, we have apparently another William in Gloucestershire; a William de Etona, Berks, probably the same person, and whom there is evidence to have been a Hastings; a William de Hastings in Warwickshire, probably grandson of Walter the son of the Deacon, and certainly ancestor of the baronial house; and two Williams, possibly the same with the last, attached to St. Edmund's Abbey, and one of them appears also in Suffolk.

It is proposed in the present paper to show that Walter the Deacon was the direct male ancestor of the two main lines of Hastings, that of Easton, and that of Ashley and Fillongley, or the Barons.

Hastings of Easton held the Windsor barony, and the ten fees comprising the Deacon's barony, including another Easton in Essex and a manor in Dorset. The elder line passed in five descents by an heiress into the House of Louvaine, and so into those of Bouchier and Devereux, and besides gave off a branch bearing the name of Godmanston, from their Dorsetshire manor, and which survived until the battle of Barnet in the fifteenth century.

The Barons Hastings of Ashley, sprung from a younger son, but by far the most copious and most distinguished of the name, only became, genealogically, its head, upon the extinction of the elder line.

The position of Ralph de Hastings of Essex, and Robert of Sussex, mentioned in Domesday, and the former possibly a collateral of the Deacon, will require a separate notice. The descendants of Ralph attained to considerable power.

The Sussex line, actually connected with the cinque port, and holding the lastage of Hastings and Rye, acquired by marriage the Waleran estates, also, singularly enough, in Essex. The family flourished as sheriffs of Surrey and Sussex, and as landowners in Kent, Sussex, and Essex, and seem to have ended in a Thomas de Hastings, who, 31 Edward III., was assessed for the rape of Hastings at one man-at-arms. There is no evidence of any connection between this family and those of Ralph or the Deacon. They were probably retainers of the Earl of Eu, holding under and taking name from the castelry of Hastings.

From whatever source derived, none of the name of Hastings ever, in those early centuries, possessed the cinque port, nor were they even tenants-in-chief in the county of Sussex. It was only by the marriage of a certain William de Hastings with Ida of Eu, that one branch of the family became allied to the real lords of the castle and honour of Hastings, the Earls of Augi or Eu. As Ida was not an heiress, and even the question of her issue is a doubtful one, this match gave them no share in the honour; but Ida was endowed with lands that carried the hereditary office of Seneschal of Hastings, though for this her husband had to struggle with a knight of the family of Echingham, with what success is not known.

In far later times, indeed, the celebrated chamberlain, anxious to proclaim the connection of his family with the Lords of the Honour through Ida, and to justify his rapid fortunes by adding lustre to his pedigree, obtained a grant of the castle, honour, and rape of Hastings; but these estates came in no way by descent.

Walter de Hastings, whom it will be one object of this paper to show to be the same with Walter Mascherel, second son of Walter the Deacon, was enfeoffed in the Marmion lordship of Fillongley in Warwickshire in the reign of Henry I., and was ancestor of the baronial house. It was his son, William de Hastings, who, by a fortunate marriage with the sister and heiress of Maurice de Windsor, of kin to Ralph the seneschal or Dapifer of St. Edmund's, obtained the seneschalship of that great abbey, with a corresponding estate in land for which the service was due.

William, as Lord of Ashley in Norfolk, was hereditary steward to Henry I., and to his son Ralph, omitted by Dugdale and Nicholas, he transmitted his various honours, with estates in Norfolk and Suffolk, Warwick, Essex, and Northampton. Ralph is described, in a royal charter, as steward to Alianora of Aquitaine, the queen of Henry II. He was also seneschal of Bury.

St. Edmund, king and martyr, was, in his beatified state, not unmindful of the mundane interests of his chief secular officer. The seneschals of the abbey acquired, in successive generations, by a series of fortunate marriages, power and broad lands and high connection, inferior to those of no English subject. Their matches with the heiresses of

Windsor, Flamville, Banastre, Scotland Chester and Huntingdon, Cantilupe, Leybourne, Valence, and Manny, bringing in their train Mareschal, Munchensy, and De Braose, and many lesser heritages, gave them estates all over England, an earldom palatine in Wales, a claim upon the throne of Scotland, and a near relationship with the reigning house, which they strengthened by a direct alliance with a daughter of Edward III.: an alliance barren indeed in the fruit of the womb, but very fertile in power, consideration, and royal favour.

All this enormous aggregation of wealth and honour was scattered and brought to nought by the extinction of the elder male line in the person of John de Hastings, Earl of Pembroke, who, while yet under age, was killed in a tournament at Woodstock in 1389.

A very moderate portion of the spoil passed to the next of kin in the female line, the Lord Grey de Ruthyn. With some of the most ancient of the family estates, as Ashley, Burbach, and Aston-Flamville, he gained the representation of the elder line, and the empty but coveted honor of bearing the gold spurs on occasions of coronation. After various very remarkable vicissitudes the fragments of these oldest estates have come down, with a slight "*scintilla sanguinis*," to Earl de Grey, still lord of Burbach, while the barony of Grey de Ruthyn has, curiously enough, by a marriage and now by heirship, vested in the representatives, in the female line, of another great branch of the Hastings name.

The distant kinsman but male heir of the earls of Pembroke was Hastings of Elsing and Gressinghall, whose treatment when pursuing his claim to be the head and to bear the unbroken insignia of his name, has often been recorded, and rises almost to the grandeur of tragedy. As none of the estates were adjudged to this branch, then become the main trunk, they sought fortune in the north; and, while retaining Elsing and their Norfolk lands, they became Yorkshire knights and squires of high degree. After eight generations, Hugh de Hastings, the elder brother, left two daughters, coheirs, of whom one married Browne Viscount Montagu, and the other Le Strange of Hunstanton. The heir general of Le Strange, in the person of Sir Jacob Astley, claimed and obtained, in our day, the long dormant barony

of Hastings de Hastings. Sir Brian, the younger brother of Hugh, was father of Sir Francis of Hatfield in Yorkshire, who carried the line to the ninth generation, when it also terminated in heiresses in the middle of the sixteenth century.

There were yet other male heirs, though, from the very early period at which they parted from the parent stem, they took no share in the disputes consequent on the failure of the Earls of Pembroke. Of these one was Hastings of Daylesford and Yelford-Hastings, whose founder, Milo de Hastings, was probably a cadet of Hugh, second baron, by Erneburga de Flamville, and whose descendants, long seated at Daylesford, but landless during one or two of their later generations, came to a not inglorious close in Warren Hastings, who satisfied the one great desire of his life when he repurchased Daylesford, and the right there to lay his bones with the bones of his fathers.

Another branch, also extinct, was that of Eton-Hastings, founded by William de Hastings, a knight of large estates in Berks and Gloucester, probably a cadet of William of Filongley, first baron. This line endured but four generations, when their heiress gave her hand and land to Benedict de Blakeham, a magnate whose possessions lay in Suffolk. Their son came to an ill end, and died landless and childless.

Besides all these now extinct branches there remains one, the present and only hope of the name, the founder of which, Thomas de Hastings of Gissing, was probably a cadet of Hugh, third baron, by Erneburga de Flamville.

The immediate descendant of this Thomas, to Gissing, an early Hastings manor in Norfolk, and derived from the match with Windsor, added divers manors in Westmoreland, and, with the heiress of Alvestan, acquired, like his kinsfolk of Elsing, a firm footing in Yorkshire. Early in the reign of Edward III. Sir Ralph, their representative, married the heiress of Justice Herle, who brought in lands in Leicester and Northampton. Sir Ralph was a great personage in Northumberland, had licence to fortify his house in Leicestershire, and fell honourably on the winning side at Neville's Cross.

His son, with the heiresses of Sadington and Sutton, gained a considerable estate in Holderness; but his son, a third Ralph, joining in Glendower's rebellion, lost his life

and lands under Henry IV. The lands were recovered, probably in part only, by his successor, who seems also to have made independent way, since he acquired estates and offices in Leicester, Warwick, Northampton, York, and Salop.

But it was in the tenth generation of this line, in the person of William Hastings the celebrated chamberlain, that the old vitality of the race made itself again greatly conspicuous. William and his father had actively supported and been honoured by the friendship of Richard, Duke of York, whose son, Edward IV., found it, no doubt, to his interest and inclination to secure the services of the survivor. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the career of a man whom Shakespear and the chroniclers have made historic. So wide were his grants as almost to rival the ancient wealth of the great earls of his name, and although much was lost at his fall, his seat of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and his barony of Hastings of that place were left supported by very considerable estates.

To this wealth and power his son made an enormous addition by a match with the heiress of Lord Hungerford, a lady who had estates in every county from Wilts westward, and bore tacked to her ermine the three baronies by writ of Hungerford, Botreaux, and Molines, with which, and the lordships of Heytesbury, Newmarch, and Moels, those estates were associated.

Thus reinforced, their son George, Lord Hastings of Ashby, obtained from Henry VIII. a revival in his person of the earldom of Huntingdon, therein commemorating the great marriage by which the elder house became claimants of the throne of Scotland. His son, Francis, still in the ascendant, wedded Katherine the niece of Cardinal Pole, and the grandchild and coheir of George, Duke of Clarence, brother to Edward IV. His brother, Thomas Hastings, endorsed the connection by marriage with Winifrid, another sister.

This marriage of Earl Francis placed its issue, Henry, the next earl, in dangerous proximity to the throne of Elizabeth, who regarded him with a jealous eye, which however he somewhat averted by his marriage with the sister of her favourite, Leicester, and by the general prudence and moderation of his character. Francis, the tenth earl, died childless, and his sister and heir married John, Earl of Moira. Their

son, the celebrated Earl of Moira, as heir general of Hastings of Ashby, inherited his mother's estates and four baronies, and was created Marquis of Hastings, and to these Hastings honors, and to those derived from Scottish sources, the late and last marquis added, by maternal descent, the barony of Grey de Ruthyn, and therefore the representation, as heir general, of the eldest line of the House of Hastings, that of Pembroke, now vested in the Countess of Loudoun, his sister.

The earldom of Huntingdon, though stripped of the estates and baronies, did not become extinct. It devolved upon the collateral and only heir male, Hans Francis, the descendant of a younger son of Earl Francis and Katherine Pole, who thus became eleventh earl, and whose son, Frank Theophilus Hastings, twelfth earl, worthily represents the last surviving male line of this ancient and untarnished name, the cadets of which, four times cut off from the main stem, have four times carved their way to wealth and honour by distinct and independent channels.

There remains but one family in England, that of Nevile, Earl of Abergavenny, which descends in direct legitimate male line from an ancestor who has matched with a Plantagenet, and it is believed but five, Beaumont, Talbot, Courtenay, Berkeley, and Hastings, whose collateral male ancestor has attained to the same honour. In addition to this the House of Hastings, in their elder line, have been claimants of the throne of Scotland, and, in their youngest and extant line, near heirs to the throne of England. In their name have been an earldom palatine, Pembroke; two earldoms, Athol and Huntingdon; and ten baronies, Hastings by tenure, 1 Hen. I.; Hastings by writ, 1299 and 1342; Hastings of Ashby, also by writ, 1461; Hastings of Loughborough, 1558, and again 1643; and by inheritance Botreaux, 1 Hen. II.; Welles, 1229; Molines, 1347; and Hungerford, 1426. Nine of the name have worn the garter, and two signed the very celebrated and patriotic letter to the Pope in 1300-1.

G. T. C.

[*To be continued.*]