



ANNALS OF SMITH OF CANTLEY,
BALBY, AND DONCASTER,
COUNTY YORK;

EMBRACING ELABORATE PEDIGREES OF THE CONNECTED
FAMILIES AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF
THEIR MORE EMINENT MEMBERS.

COMPILED BY
HENRY ECROYD SMITH.

No man of well-regulated mind can feel an indifference respecting the genealogy of his family.

RICHARD COBDEN.

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SMITH OF CANTLEY AND BALBY, CO. YORK.

THE GREAT TREE.

From whence comes Smith, be he knight or squire,
But from the Smith that forgeth at the fire?

THUS writes old Verstegan, and undoubtedly this surname is derived, and directly, from the useful occupation, *Smit-an* (Anglo-Saxon) as Boswell tells us, meaning originally a smiter or one who strikes or smites with a hammer; an artificer; carpenter; smith; workman. It was thus a general term, but the chief artificers of the middle ages were the armourers, and when arms and armour were almost universally worn by all men above the rank of serfs, it naturally became not only a highly artistic and honourable craft, but the sponsor to unnumbered families. "In the ancient laws of England, the person of the armourer or *smith* was protected by a double penalty, whilst in Wales he was one of the great officers, who sat in the hall with the king and queen. In the Highland glens more legends may be heard of supernatural smith-work than can be gathered from all the poems of Ossian." No wonder, then, that the family of Smith is large, or that it assumes many forms of spelling in addition to the shape of *Gow* and probably *Cowan*, among those whose mother-tongue is Gaelic. Its name indeed is Legion, and the number using the plain Smith form alone, is now considerably over a quarter of a million, or above 1 in 132 of the entire population of the United Kingdom. We take no account of the secession of a despicable band, who disguise their real name by spelling it differently; he that is ashamed of it, is simply a craven. The proud *Hadad* of ancient Syria; the *Le Fabre* or *Lefevre* of France; the *Fabri*, *Fabricia*, or *Fabbroni* of Italy; the *Schmidt* of Germany; and, taking a latinised guise, the Farrars and Farrier of England, it is the best used name in Europe. Common and ubiquitous as it is, it has played a strikingly-prominent part in modern British History. Independently of royalty having repeatedly taken shelter under its capacious wing, is it not high in rank from dukedom downward, to say nothing of baronetage and knighthood? Let Edward Henry Smith-Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby, answer. Nay more, does it not stand high in literature and arts, wit, and arms? Dr. Adam Smith; Dr. William Smith, the erudite and laborious compiler; C. Roach Smith, the eminent antiquary; the Rev. Sydney Smith; Sir Wm. Sydney Smith, the hero of Acre, and a crowd of other names rise at once in reply. In point of fact, the race is as glorious by talent and ability, as it is great in numbers. We disdain to make any apology for *Smith*. He shall speak for himself:—

SMITH OF CANTLEY.

THE SMALL BRANCH.

My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far, my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.

Lines to my Mother's Picture.

IT is related that one morning a pompous little man called upon Sydney Smith, saying that, as he was about to compile a history of the distinguished families in Somersetshire, he had called to obtain the *Smith arms*. "I regret, sir," replied the reverend wit, "not to be able to contribute to so valuable a work; but the Smiths never had any arms, and have invariably sealed their letters with their thumbs." We fear that those of Cantley, whether in the practice of similarly manipulating their missives or not, were equally innocent of any heraldic bearings, whatever might have been the case with their ancestry in the Norman period, seeing that they have found no place in Mr. H. Sydney Grazebrook's *Heraldry of Smith*, (Lon., J. R. Smith, 1 vol., 4to). Be this as it may, we find it a substantial family of yeomen and settled at Cantley when the parish registers of this village commence; its head occupying Brockhole or Brockholes, one of the chief, as it now remains one of the oldest and most interesting residences in the neighbourhood. It was previously the abode of "Brockholes of Brockhole," a family later of Sykehouse. Brock signifies a badger, and very likely this locality may have been formerly noted for the earths of that animal. A Lancashire family, having the surname of Brockhole, bore for arms, *argent, a chevron between three brocks, or badgers, sable*; a family of Brock, *argent, three brocks proper*. Broxholme of Lincolnshire, bore *argent a chevron between three brocks, or badgers' heads erased azure, &c.* The house stands a short distance from the village, which lies 3 miles E. of Doncaster, being divided into Upper and Lower, or Over and Nether Cantley. Cantley Hall, the seat of the Childers family, is a comparatively modern erection. The Smith family was resident here a century before it appears at Balby, but we have so recently discovered the fact, through a couple of entries in the *Registers of the Society of Friends* made when its presumed representative was still resident at Brockhole, that at present we are solely dependent upon the information supplied by the parish registers of Cantley. The latter clearly shew the family to have been established here when the entries of marriages and burials commence—about 1540, but the baptismal record only begins with the 17th century. The

name appears indifferently as Smith or Smyth according to the caprice of the respective writers. We should first state that Hunter in his *South Yorkshire*, I. 84., mentions a *William Smyth* who was vicar of Cantley at the latter end of the 13th century, but at present we have nothing but probability for assuming him to have been an ancestor of the family whose pedigree we are now entering upon.

One of the earliest entries in the parish register is that of the burial of ISABEL SMITH of Cantley, 2. I. 1539; presumably a widow, who had issue—

Thomas Smith of Cantley, of whom presently. Robert Smith, bur. 24 X. 1592.

William Smith, bur. 4 II. 1597. Isabel Smith, bur. 28 I. 1597.

Janet Smith, mar. at Cantley, John Law of Brampton, a neighbouring village, the Brantone of to-day as in *Domesday*—where it takes precedence of Cantley: “In Brantone et Canteleia habet Tochi,” &c. The family of Law had branches also at Cantley, Wheatley, and other neighbouring villages.

THOMAS SMITH of Cantley, mar. Alice . . . who was bur. 17 IX. 1586; he was bur. at Cantley 25 I. 1597, having had issue two sons and a dau.

I. Edward Smith of Over Cantley, mar. at Cantley Church 13 III. 1606, Elizabeth Taylor, who was bur. there 10 VIII. 1646, being recorded in the register as “a good woman, and died in a good age, with a good report of all her neighbours.” He was bur. under date “11 May, 1647, Edward Smyth of Ou Cantley. This was a verie honest man, of a good age, a good housekeeper, and for the good of the poore and the parishe in generall;” rather curious testimonials to the worthy yeoman and his spouse. They had issue 3 sons and 2 daus.

i Francis Smith of Brockhole, assumed to be eldest son, but his baptismal date is omitted in the register. He mar. at Cantley ch. 25 XI. 1644, Mary, widow of . . . Houghton, who died 3 XII. 1683, having had issue 4 sons and 2 daus.

1 Francis, bap. 29 XI. 1647; bur. 22 IV. 1648.

2 Francis, bap. 6 II. 1652; mar. Martha Killam, issue,—see p. 8.

3 Thomas, bap. 23 VI. 1653, bur. 2 X. 1654.

4 Thomas, bap. 11 X. 1655, bur. 16 V. 1701 unmarried.

1 Sarah (no birth-date registered) mar. at Balby 2 X. 1663, Christian Middlebrook, eldest son of Christ. Middlebrook of Thorne and Ann his wife (bur. VII. 1675); she was his first wife and was bur. 4 X. 1655, having had issue an only son—

Samuel Middlebrook born 26 VI. 1664; died 2 I. 1665.

Christian Middlebrook mar. *secondly* at Richmond 12 II. 1668, Johanna, dau. of . . . Chaytor of that place; she was bur. at Thorne 26 III. 1702, having had issue 3 sons and 3 daughters, of whom presently.—Christian’s family, as well as that of each of his wives, was now connected with the Society of Friends; his first