

## WOMBWELL.

This township, which consists of a vill where is an antient chapel and an extent of agricultural ground remarkably rich and fertile, lies south of the Dove, by which it is divided from Darfield. There is a tradition (for it can be called no more) that Wombwell is connected with the monarchy of Deira. I find it in the papers both of Dodsworth and Thoresby. "Wombwell," says the former, "was a prison of the kings of Northumberland, as saith Mr. Burdet, and that Mr. Wombwell hath such deeds to prove it." Charters belonging to the affairs of Northumbria, or even referring to them, would be a curiosity indeed. But Thoresby, when he was at Wombwell, was introduced to the very chamber in which a king had been confined.

We must be content here, as in so many other places, to begin our account of Wombwell with what we can collect from Domesday Book, of its state in the time of the Confessor. It was then not in the hand of any single lord, but was held by three Saxons, named Cheteber, Tor, and Tori.

Cheteber's portion was small; only fourteen bovates, to which were annexed a bovate in Toftes, a place of uncertain appropriation, and two bovates in Melton. The value was twenty shillings, and the same at the date of the Survey. This had been given to Roger de Busli, who appears to have had, when the Domesday Survey was compiled, one carucate in demesne, and three other carucates, occupied by eight villains and four bordars.

Tori had three carucates and a half, with a portion of meadow and wood-land: the value, in the time of the Confessor, sixty shillings; but at the time of the Survey only ten shillings and eight pence, the lands being waste. This portion passed to Walter Deincourt.

Tor had two carucates and one bovate lying here and at Melton. His lands were not yet granted out. He himself was still holding them, and had a carucate in his own hands, with two carucates in the hands of five villains, three borderers, and two sockmen. There was a portion of wood-land. The value had been forty shillings, but had fallen to twenty.

At the time of the Survey, then,

To Cheteber had succeeded Roger de Busli;

To Tori, Walter Deincourt;

To Tor, the king, who included these lands, with the rest not before granted out in this neighbourhood, in what he gave to the lords of Skipton.

Each of these new Norman lords sub-infeuded. The two knight's fees which the Fitz-Williams held of the heirs of Roger de Busli, lay partly in Wombwell. The lands of Wood-hall, on this side the Dove, must have been portions of this tenure: but it would seem that there was some other portion of Wombwell which did not pass with Wood-hall to that branch of the *gens Gulielmiadum*, but that a grant in favour of the D'Eyviles took effect here, though not in respect of the half-advowson of Darfield. It was alleged by John D'Eyvile that Tho-

mas Fitz-William had granted to Dionysia his daughter, the wife of Robert D'Eyvile his father, all lands, &c. in Barnborough, Wombwell, Milnhouse, Darfield, Little Wood-hall, &c. And in the Hundred Rolls he was found to claim assize of bread and beer at Wombwell. In 1282 there was a charter executed by him at Torksey, by which he granted fifteen tofts in Wombwell and Darfield to John de Cresacre; and it must be presumed that either this grant or another conveyed the whole tenancy of D'Eyvile at Wombwell, as John de Cresacre is returned in Kirkby's inquest, holding Wombwell, that is a portion of it, of the honour of Tickhill. At the time of Bernard's Survey there was a difficulty respecting the holding of Cresacre; for, in that Survey, Wombwell stands thus among other towns of the honour of Tickhill: "manor formerly, as is said, Cresacre's, afterwards William Wombwell's, now Thomas Wombwell's." John Cresacre, however, appears not only in Kirkby's inquest, but in the *Nomina Villarum*, as a co-lord of Wombwell.

Deincourt's sub-infeudatory was the ancestor of the Saint Marys, who held also what the Deincourts possessed at Rawmarsh. Jordan de Saint Mary gave forty-four acres of land and four of meadow in Wombwell to the house of Helaugh, near York, of which this family were the founders, a grant which Richard Wallensis his grandson confirmed. Dodsworth has abstracted a fine 33 Henry III. Nicholas de Saint Mary plaintiff, and Hugh de Criglestone tenant of the moiety of the fourth part of the manor of Wombwell. In Kirkby's inquest, John de Annesley, Stephen de Bellew, and William de Appelforth, the heirs of Saint Mary, are returned holding one knight's fee in Wombwell and Rawmarsh of Edmund Deincourt.

This portion of Wombwell appears also to have passed into the hands of the family known by the addition of de Wombwell, at an early period. For in Kirkby's inquest John de Wombwell is returned holding the moiety of Wombwell of one William de Whittington, who seems to have represented the Saint Marys, though I am unable to show how.

He acquired, however, as we know by the decisive evidence of Kirkby's inquest, what had been given to Skipton. This was included in the grant to Fleming, of whom it was held at the time of that inquest, as one-fourth of a knight's fee, by John de Wombwell.

The history of Wombwell is therefore to be looked for in the transactions of the family who used the name of the place as their hereditary name of addition, and who till within the memory of man were residing upon these lands, and whose male heir and representative sir George Wombwell, bart. has still a good estate of wood and land in Wombwell.

The descent of this family was the subject of controversy among the heralds of the reign of Elizabeth. Flower Norroy, at the visitation of 1563, deduced the family from one Henry Lowel de Womb-

well, otherwise Henry de Wombwell, who lived in the reign of Edward III. and who was alleged to have come out of Lancashire, and to have laid down his paternal name of Lowell, and assumed that of Wombwell. A record proving this was said to have been exhibited by Gilbert Legh, of Middleton near Leeds. This account was not satisfactory to the family, who employed Dethick, a celebrated herald, in 1593, to compile for them another pedigree, in which the descent is traced through a regular succession of Wombwells to a Robert Wombwell, who is alleged to be living in the second of king Stephen. Of this pedigree, the account of the Wombwells given in the Ducatus, p. 69, is, for the most part, a copy: but when, in 1775, a little before the first sir George Wombwell was created a baronet, Brooke was employed to compare this pedigree with existing evidence, and to compile an authentic pedigree of the family, he says that he finds so many errors in it, that it is of little use, and that he has, by the most undeniable proofs, destroyed its authority, though without being able to raise another superstructure upon its ruins higher than the Henry Lowell who changed his name to Wombwell. The descents before the time of this Henry are wholly without the support of reference to any authority, and two persons, whose existence can be proved as belonging to this line, are entirely omitted. I shall therefore take leave to refer the reader to the Ducatus for the earlier generations, and take up the thread at a point when there is an appearance of evidence.

The two persons omitted are, William de Wombwell, whose name appears among the witnesses to the foundation charter of the house of Kirklees, founded by his chief lords the Flemings: this was very early. And Robert de Wombwell, who was returned lord of Wombwell in 9 Edward II.

There is, moreover, perfectly authentic evidence of Wombwells long before the time of Henry Lowell. To the charter of William Fitz-William Fitz-Godric respecting Emley, mentioned in the first volume, Ricardus filius Ricardi de Wambwella, where the orthography approaches near to that of Domesday, is a witness, and standing in the third place among many, it is certain that he must have been a person of account in that early part of the 13th century, to which the charter in question is to be referred. To early charters of the Newmarches at Hickleton sir Richard de Wombwell is a witness. In a charter of the time of sir Roger of the Woodhall, John de Wambewell is a witness, following immediately after sir William Fleming and sir Nicholas Wortley. Again, Rainer de Wombwell, a name which is also wanting in Dethick's pedigree, witnesses a deed of sir Thomas de Horbury, in the chartulary of Monk Bretton, by which he gives to the prior and convent Richard de Darfield son of Mauger, with all his sequela and catalla, and the land which he held of him in Darfield. The first witness is sir Thomas Fitz-William; the second, John de Bosvile, not at that time, as it seems, a knight; the third, Rainer; and the fourth, Jordan de Ligh.

I could produce other proofs of the high antiquity of the house; but it is one thing to show persons of a family existing at a particular period, and another to show the affiliations of each, and the marriages which they made. But the above may be sufficient.

A little before the time of Henry Lowell of Wombwell, there was a Hugh son of Ralph de Wombwell. He was slain by Richard son of John D'Eyvile, of Hymalingfield (now Hemingfield, in Wombwell). D'Eyvile was in the gaol at York in 8 Edward III. when a pardon was granted from the king, as it appeared that he had slain Wombwell in his own defence.

I have met with the name of Henry Lowell de Wombwell in three deeds relating to lands in Bradfield, and in one relating to lands at Cawthorne. So that the existence of a person so denominated is indisputable. He occurs also in the Inquisitiones Nonarum, where he is described as one of the very few merchants of the time,<sup>1</sup> and as having in merchandise to the value of ten marks. The question upon his case would be, How he stood connected with the old line of Wombwells? Whether, at a period when surnames were in an unsettled state, he used this addition as a personal distinction only, being one of the male line of the ancient lords, or whether, as was alleged by Flower, he came a stranger to Wombwell, and possessed himself of these fair lands by purchase or by marriage? His era is the reign of king Edward III., and nothing is better established than that he was the ancestor of the succeeding Wombwells of Wombwell: for in a suit in the reign of Henry VI. the assize came to know if John Wombwell, esq. and William Pye chaplain, did unjustly disseise Richard prior of Monk Bretton of his tenement in Darfield, when the jurors say, that one Hugh de Wombwell, son of Henry Lawell, grandfather of the said John, whose heir he is, to wit, son of Thomas son of the said Hugh, released to John Birthwaite prior of Bretton two messuages, &c. in Darfield. It is remarkable, however, that in the original grant of these messuages, which is preserved in the chartulary of Monk Bretton, the donor is described as Hugo filius Henrici de Wombwell, without the interposition of Lowell. It is dated in 33 Edward III.

HENRY LOWELL de Wombwell.==  
 ┌──────────────────────────┐  
 HUGH DE WOMBWELL.==  
 ┌──────────────────────────┐  
 THOMAS DE WOMBWELL.==  
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 JOHN DE WOMBWELL, living 1457.

A deed of Thomas de Wombwell of 6 Henry IV. was in the museum of Thoresby, and is now in the museum of the late Mr. Wilson, of Broomhead. The contents are not remarkable, but it has a beautiful impression of his seal, exhibiting the arms at present borne by the family, with the inscription, SIGILLVM THOME DE WOMBWELL.

Between 7 and 18 Henry VI. there was an ad quod damnum that he might inclose a certain part of the king's highway in Wombwell, from the

<sup>1</sup> A Robert del Skyres, of Wombwell, merchant, occurs in a deed relating to Thurgoland 24 Edward III.

grene lane in Wombwell towards the south, as far as Tunstall-cross, beneath the house of the said Thomas.

His will is among the testamentary documents at York. It is dated in 1452. He describes himself as Thomas Wombwell, of Wombwell, esq. and directs that he shall be buried in the church of Darfield. He gives to John his son four yoke of oxen and all the ornaments of his chapel, with the cup, book, and vestments. To Joan his wife he gives £40, and to Thomas his son 100 marks; and to each of the five poor widows in my alms-house, eleemosynario meo, near my chapel, 6s. 8d. Of this charitable foundation I hear no more.

The last named John lived within the time whence authentic account of his posterity might be given to the heralds, and the table which follows will shew the descendants from him down to our own time. But it is now proper to observe that the question of the descent of this line from the antient Wombwells of Wombwell, was not one of genealogy only, but of right to important interests here. For Gilbert Legh, who drew the attention of the heralds to the fact of the then Wombwell of Wombwell not being, as alleged, of the male line of the lords of Wombwell, but sprung from Lowell, an intruder, himself claimed the manor of

Wombwell as his right by inheritance. He alleged that his ancestor Roger Legh, who lived in the reign of Henry 7, married Elizabeth, the daughter and heir of John Cudworth, esq. whose ancestor had married the daughter and heir of Barley, who had married Constance, the daughter and heir of John Wombwell, of Wombwell. Roger had Thomas Legh, who married Elizabeth, a daughter of William Wentworth, of Wentworth-Woodhouse, pursuant to covenants, dated 2 August 22 Henry VII. and had William Legh, attainted of high treason in 33 Henry VIII. with Edmund Tattersal, a clothier, and Amble a priest. In the inquisition after the death of this William Legh it was found that he had been seised of the manor of Wombwell, with its appurtenances, held of the barony of Wath, by fealty and annual rent of 6s. 8d. and that it was valued at £8 per annum. This is from Hopkinson, whose pedigree of Legh, of Middleton, is one of the best laboured in his collection.

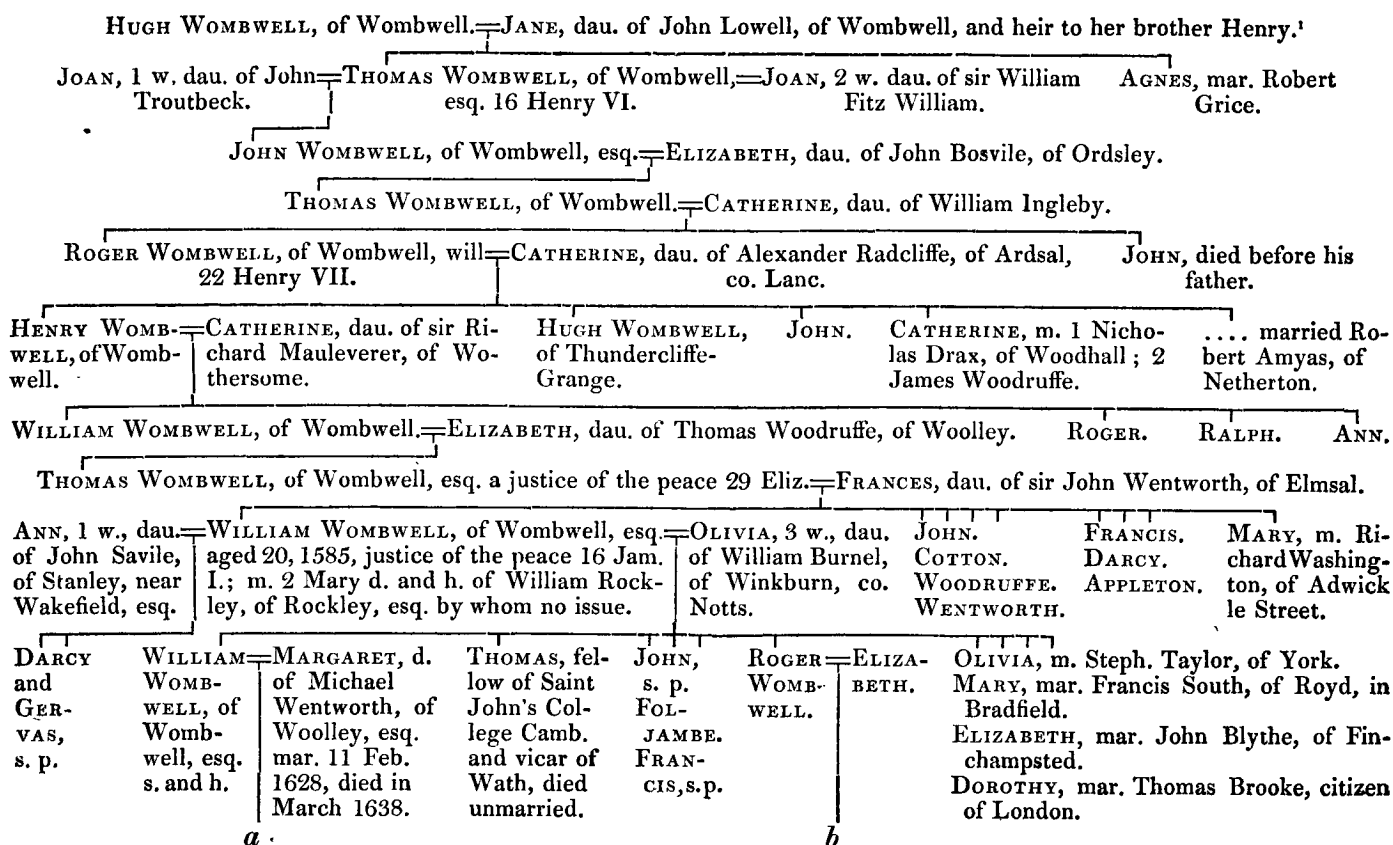
The Leghs possessed property in Wombwell to the middle of the 17th century. Ferdinando Legh, esq. demised a capital messuage, &c. in Wombwell to Richard Laughton, who had married Elizabeth his mother, and had by her Henry and Stanley Laughton.

#### PEDIGREE OF WOMBWELL, OF WOMBWELL.

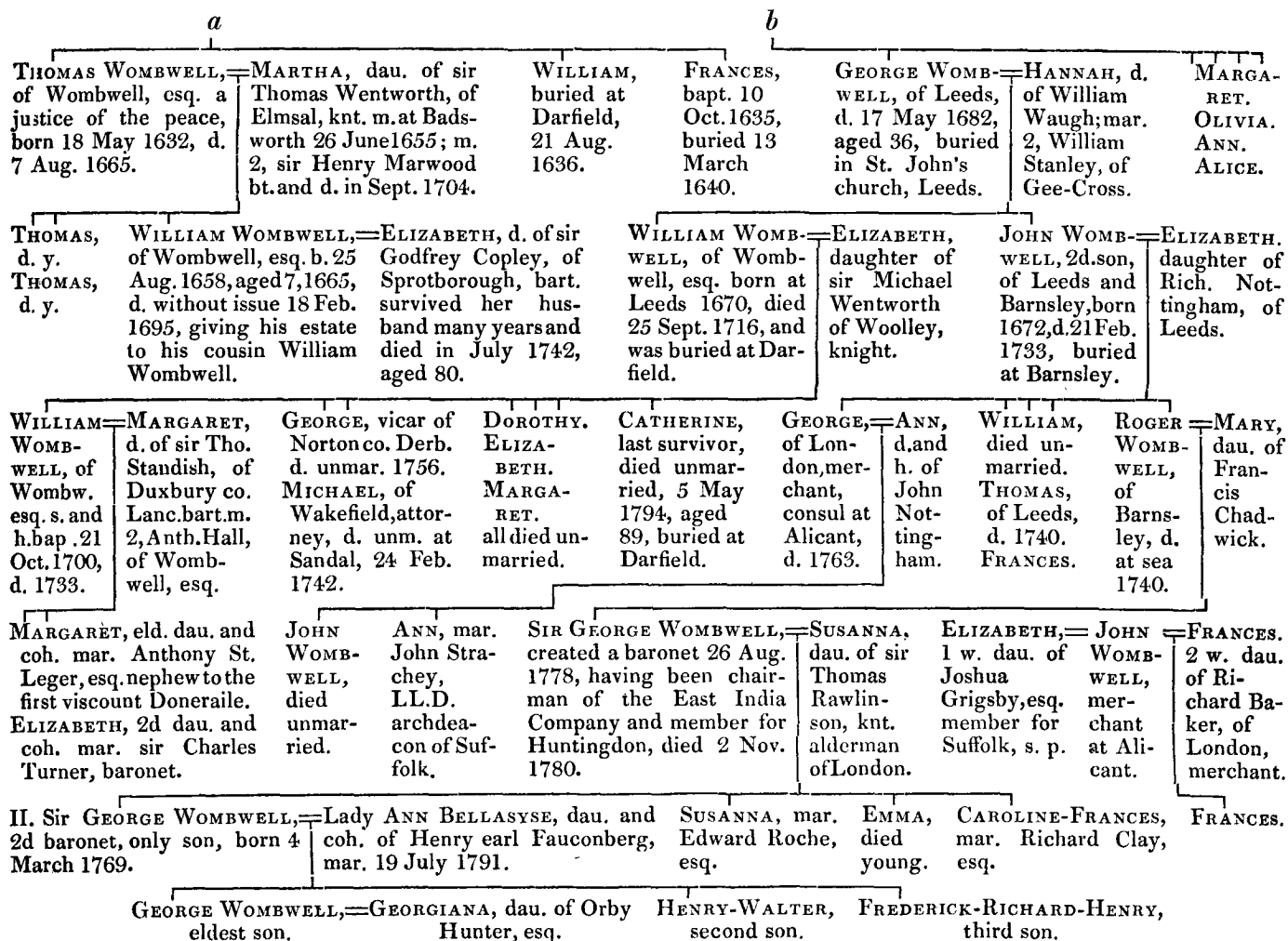
ARMS. Gules, a bend between six unicorns' heads coupéd Argent.

CREST. A unicorn's head Argent, maned Or.

MOTTO. IN WELL BEWARE.



<sup>1</sup> This was the way in which the connection of Wombwell and Lowell was shewn on the part of Wombwell.



The Wombwell estate was divided between the two coheirs of William Wombwell, esq. Sir Charles Turner is said, by Brooke in his MSS. to have bought colonel Saint Leger's share for £40,000, and then to have sold the whole estate to the same colonel Saint Leger, and Thomas Elliot, of Frearmington, in the North Riding, gentleman, for £105,000. They sold it off in parcels, when sir George Wombwell was a principal purchaser.

The Hall was not included in his purchases. It is still existing, standing in the town-street of Wombwell. It is now divided into a number of sordid dwellings, but the whole edifice still exhibits some traces of its former consequence.

THE CHAPEL.

The earliest notice of the chapel at Wombwell which I have seen is in the time of William Fitz William and Jordan de Saint Mary, who with John de Rockley, and others, witness a deed, preserved in the Monk Bretton Chartulary, by which Richard, son of Richard de Wombwell, confirms to the monks the land which Nicholas Aldham held of him in Smethley, rendering 4d. to the altar of St. Nicholas in the chapel of St. Mary of Wombwell. Roger Wombwell, by his will 22 Henry VII. founded and endowed in this chapel a chantry of our lady of Pity, to pray for his soul and all christian souls. The clear value at the time of king Henry's Valor was £4. 11s. 3d. issuing out of

lands at Bolton, Newhall, and Darfield. Robert Curtis was then the chantry priest. Among the reprisals were small payments to the prior of Saint John of Jerusalem.

The incumbents of the two medieties of the church of Darfield find service here alternately.

The original design of the chapel of Wombwell was like that of most other small ecclesiastical edifices, a nave and chancel. It was in the style called Saxon, as the columns still remaining show. A chapel is added to the original design, and was probably erected for the chantry founded by Roger Wombwell.

Lands at Wombwell, late belonging to the religious house of Syningthwaite, were granted, 29 April 19 Elizabeth, to Thomas and Robert Warcopp.

Thomas Allott, of Wombwell, in his will, proved 14 September 1347, after desiring to be buried at Darfield, says: "Item, lego filiis et filiabus meis, post presentem plagam mortalitatis viventibus, secundam partem bonorum." This will was made in the time of the great pestilence.

Burton, in his Monasticon, says that Richard, son of Richard de Wombwell, gave all his land at Smethley to the prior and convent of Bretton. Smethley came by an heiress of Hall to Rayney, and appears to have been the birth-place of John Rayney, alderman of London, of whom before, and of whose munificent benefactions we shall have occasion to speak at Worsborough.