

ART. XI.—*Notes on Early Copeland.* By M. C. FAIR.

THE early history of Copeland is obscure and confused with a lack of positive evidence from which a coherent narrative can be compiled. The best that can be attempted therefore is to endeavour to assemble what evidence is available, and to consider the balance of probability where definite historical fact is unascertainable.

*The Register of St. Bees* (Edition Wilson) forms the basis of any attempt to disentangle the early history of Copeland, but to this must be added many documents dealing with a far wider area, especially Yorkshire and the Barony of Kendal from which light is shed upon the many dark places of local history. The Victoria County Histories are a mine of information and have proved invaluable to the present student of this difficult area of our Society.

The late Mr. W. G. Collingwood was of opinion that the meaning of the name "Copeland" was Bought Land, and this suggests very strongly that the allusion is to the purchase from William the Conqueror by Gospatric of the Earldom of Northumberland which had been Tostig's. The position occupied by Ketel, son of Eldred, points to this assumption as being at least possible: Ketel's son Orm married Gunhilda daughter of Gospatric; Ketel must have been a personage of outstanding position whose lands\* ranged from the Kendal district to Morland and Patterdale and thence to Workington and West Cumberland. He witnessed charters of the great overlords, Ranulf and William Meschin, and Ivo Taillebois,†

\* *Trans.* N.S. xiv, p. 347.

† Dr. Farrer, *Records of Kendal*, vol. ii, p. 142. *Trans.* N.S. xxv, p. 31.

and we find him also granting charters himself after the death of Ivo the wording of which conveys the strong impression that we have here a man confident of his own standing, a man of substance and power whose superiors as well as his underlings are fully aware of his rank and importance in a community where many of the post-conquest grantees had taken the wrong side and so fallen upon evil times, their vast possessions escheated to the Crown and doled out to new and wiser owners. Through all this upheaval and reconstruction by William Rufus and Henry I, Ketel and his family survived, his descendants after him, and there are certain hints which suggest that relatives or close connections may have been granted land in the Barony of Kendal or what had been the Fee of Hougun when Domesday was compiled. Possibly Henry I may have considered that Ketel needed some sort of supervision and so added Copeland to the already immense grants which he had made to William Meschin, for Henry's policy seems to have been that of replacing men who had given him reason to turn them out by others who had supported him during the early upheavals of his reign, and to inaugurate an administration of law and order.

Moreover,\* Ketel's nephew, William de Lancaster I, was also a local landowner of very high standing whose sphere extended to Copeland, who indeed, during the anarchy which followed Stephen's usurpation of the Crown, is believed for a short time to have held the Barony of Egremont. It is notable that direct descendants of Ketel are still in possession of estates held by him in West Cumberland.

Further, while Gospatric was deprived of his Earldom of Northumberland and Dolphin his son was driven out of the Lordship of the Land of Carlisle by William Rufus, Waldeve, another son, remained in possession of his fee

\* *Ibid.* n.s. xiv, pp. 380-81.

of Allerdale, which immediately adjoins Copeland where his sister's husband Orm son of Ketel had connection. It is of interest that when William Meschin was put in as overlord of Copeland\* he shortly proceeded to enfeoff Waldeve of the five townships abutting upon Allerdale, Brigham, Dean with Branthwaite, Eaglesfield, Greysouthen, Clifton with Stainburn, this grant being retained by William Meschin as a distinct title held under him and not merged with Ranulf Meschin's feoff of Allerdale. All this indicates a very strong Gospatric influence, so strong that it survived his own fall and banishment, in South and West Cumberland.

Of Ivo Taillebois as an early overlord of Copeland there exists no explicit evidence. Possibly he may have nominally been put in as feudal superior, but no grant or charter has been traced linking Ivo with Copeland, while he made many concerning his other possessions, and if he did in fact figure as overlord of Copeland it must have been a purely nominal honour with the Gospatric-Ketel connection in actual possession. His main interests lay in Lincolnshire where he had great estates and position in which he was succeeded by Ranulf Meschin, elder brother of William, who married Lucia widow of Ivo and Roger de Roumara her second husband. (Dr. Farrer's *Early Yorkshire Charters*, vol. iii, p. 184). In *The Lindsey Survey* (made between 1114 and 1116), Ranulf Meschin is several times styled Earl of Lincoln; his uncle and cousin (Earls of Chester) had extensive interests in co. Lincoln, also possibly the means of bringing Ranulf to the district and so ultimately to so extensive an ownership there through his wife. Ranulf's grant in Cumberland included the Land of Carlisle and a good deal of Westmorland, but there is no evidence that Copeland or the Barony of Kendal were included; he made his *caput* at Appleby. He too must have held the ubiquitous

\* *Ibid.* n.s. xxix, p. 70.

Ketel in esteem for he figures as one of the witnesses of the Foundation Charter of Wetheral Priory founded by Ranulf Meschin and his wife Lucia early in the reign of Henry I. (*Register of Wetherhal*, Edition Prescott, p. 5).

*William Meschin* is one of the outstanding figures with whom the story of Copeland may be said to commence, for with him we emerge from a welter of misty conjecture to documentary evidence when he founded the Priory of St. Bees. He already had immense possessions when enfeoffed by Henry I of the Barony of Copeland. He took part in the 1st Crusade at the end of the 11th century,\* but when he returned (as did the leader, Robert Curt-hose, to endeavour to unseat Henry I) he assisted Henry to such good purpose that he was enfeoffed of Saltby, Bescaby and Garthope (co. Leicester), and Bingham (co. Notts). (*Victoria County History Yorks.*, vol. ii, p. 166). The land of Drogo de Bevere in Chadstone, Northants, which Ulf the Man of Earl Waltheof held, and which Countess Judith was claiming at the date of the Survey, was subsequently incorporated in the Honour of William Meschin of Skipton. (*Ibid.*, p. 172).

In Yorkshire the Fee of Gilbert Tison's Lands in five places near Knaresborough reverted to the Crown (Henry I), and of the remainder Nigel de Aubigny and William Meschin each obtained two or three estates, the rest being acquired by Percy. (*Ibid.*, p. 179).

In the time of Henry I Weeton and half of Weardly of the Lands of Gospatric son of Archil were given to William Meschin. (*Ibid.*, p. 184).

From land in demesne in the West Riding the following grants were made to William Meschin; Manors of Bolton Harewood and Skipton-in-Craven with extensive territory in Wharfedale and Airedale, the manor of Wath-upon-Dearne, and half a dozen adjacent manors. William selected Skipton-in-Craven as his *caput*. (*Ibid.*, p. 185).

\* *Reg. St. Bees. Introduction.*

In Rawdon the Land of Glunier was given to William Meschin. (*Ibid.* p. 206).

In *Lincolnshire* escheated lands of 23 carucates arising from a grant of the fiefs of Durand Malet and William Blund were allotted to William Meschin. (*Lindsey Survey*, p. 12).

This then is the man whom Henry I placed as overlord of Copeland sometime during the first quarter of the 12th century. He married, probably early in the century, Cecily de Romilly, a lady who has caused some confusion amongst local historians and with the details of whose family history it is desirable to deal. She is stated to have been the daughter of Robert de Romilly of Skipton (in some cases further confusion is added by the statement that after the death of William Meschin she married Robert de Romilly, thus taking to him the Honour of Skipton), but very little in the way of proof has been advanced connecting Skipton with Robert de Romilly.

That William Meschin married Cecily de Romilly is certain from a number of well-authenticated charters see the *Register of St. Bees*, Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicana*, *Victoria County History of Yorkshire*, vol. iii, etc.), but that her father, Robert de Romilly, had any connection whatever with Skipton has, so far, received no proof whatever, and long search in every possible known source has not brought to light anything which can connect Robert de Romilly with Skipton. Till Cecily de Romilly after her marriage with William Meschin granted charters dealing with property in the Honour of Skipton there is no evidence whatever of any connection of the family of Romilly with Skipton. This is the conclusion at which I arrived after several years investigation of the problem, but it is only now when the kindness of Mr. A. W. Brigg of the Yorkshire Archæological Society has most generously allowed me the perusal of Dr. William Farrer's unpublished MS. of the Skipton volume of

Early Yorkshire Charters have I been able to find any competent authority to confirm my conclusions. Dr. William Farrer here writes that the "erroneous statement that Robert de Rumilly was lord of Skipton-in-Craven seems to have been promulgated by Dugdale (*Baronage*, p. 62), and by him derived from a wholly incorrect story drawn up by a monk of Wetheral Priory" (*Mon. Ang.* iii, p. 584; *Prescott Wetherhal*, p. 387).

There does not seem to be any positive proof that Cecily de Romilly was the daughter of the only Robert de Romilly or Rumelli of whom there is record, but it has been assumed with some degree of confidence. This Robert is mentioned c. 1080 as witness to a charter granting lands in the South of England to the Abbey of St. Evreux. (Round, *Cal. Docs. in France*, p. 219). A few years later in a Roll containing particulars of the endowment of the Abbey of Troarn c. 1086 to 1104, there is an entry concerning gifts of land in England to the Abbey of Troarn by "Robert de Romielleio." The gifts concerned were in counties Gloucester, Devonshire and Dorset. (Round, *Opus cit.*, p. 167; *Cal. Cl. Rolls*, iv, 282; Stapleton, *Norman Exchequer*, vol. ii, p. clxxxv). These lands descended to Cecily daughter and heiress of Robert de Romilly, and in 1166 they were held by William de Curcy the King's Steward as of his mother's (Avice daughter and co-heiress of William Meschin and Cecily his wife) portion of the Barony of William Meschin. (*Red Book*, p. 225, and *Early Yorkshire Charters*, Dr. William Farrer, vol. iii, *The Barony of Meschin*).

Mention is also made of "Adelaidis de Lingronia, . . . Soror Roberti de Romilleio" (Stapleton, *Norman Exchequer*, vol. ii, p. clxxxv), but other than the above they seem to have had no English connection. Dr. Farrer says that the name was derived from Remilly in Normandy.

Cecily de Romilly retained her own name after her

marriage with William Meschin and her daughters also retained the surname of de Romilly. Cecily's charters granted after the death of William Meschin suggest that some portion of the Skipton estate must have formed her dower-charge on her husband's property. She married Henry de Traches or Tracy, *c.* 1135, who Dr. Farrer says was probably a Devonshire baron who witnessed charters of Henry I and Stephen.

William Meschin died 1131-32. His son Ranulf succeeded him and founded Calder Abbey but died soon after unmarried, and the vast possessions of William Meschin were divided between his two heiresses, Avice and Alicia, the latter's portion including Skipton and the Barony of Egremont, her husband, William FitzDuncan of Scotland, a connection of the great earl Gospatric.

William Meschin, like so many of the great Norman military barons was very pious, and as well as founding with his wife the Priory of Embsay in Yorkshire he founded St. Bees in Cumberland and was a generous benefactor of the Abbey of St. Mary, York, as was his brother Ranulf.

In Copeland Egremont was his *caput* where he had a motte and bailey stronghold later succeeded by a stone castle. It is exceedingly probable that, having regard to the wide extent of his landed property and its administration, his chief headquarters was not in so remote a district as Copeland must then have been, but that its affairs were carried on by stewards who had areas put under their charge, sub-tenants of considerable standing and importance under their great feudal chief.

In the northern portion of the district there was Waldeve of the Honour of Cockermonth with his five towns held of William Meschin, and there were also Ketel and William de Lancaster I; in the Egremont central headquarters of the barony we have a tried and trusty lieutenant, Reiner le Fleming, seneschal of Skipton, steward, and land-owner of Rottington, and very probably

enfeoffed of a considerable holding at Beckermet as well as lands in Yorkshire. Lastly in south Copeland, at Millom there was Godard Boyvill, also described as Dapifer (Steward), who in Yorkshire held a small property as sub-tenant of Adam son of Swane, who in turn had been enfeoffed by the lord of Skipton. Godard seems to have had some close connection with Adam who, with William FitzDuncan and David of Scotland, later confirmed a gift by Matilda Godard's wife of land in south Copeland to the Priory of St. Bees. Adam himself was a considerable land-owner,\* granted property in north Cumberland by Henry I, and witnessing many important charters granted by the family of Cecily de Romilly and her daughters as did Reiner le Fleming the Steward and his son William who succeeded him, and Godard Boyvill. Unfortunately, though by inference, we conclude that both Reiner and Godard were enfeoffed by William Meschin of their respective fees in Copeland, there has not survived any documentary evidence of origin of title though we do know that Godard held his manor of Millom of the Lord of Egremont by homage and the fee of one knight.

The family of le Fleming appears in Furness during the reign of Stephen (*Trans.* N.S. xxxi, p. 29), where Colonel Chippendall suggests the probability that Michael, the traditional founder of the local family, was not the first of his line to receive the original grant from the king, which says Colonel Chippendall must have been between 1098 and 1115. What relation Reiner was to Michael has not been discovered to my knowledge, nor who was the first le Fleming of Furness, but it is suggested as very probably a William. Reiner, who died about 1140, must have been of an older generation than Michael, who died c. 1170. Sir Daniel le Fleming, the 17th century chronicler of the family (*Memoirs of Sir Daniel le Fleming*,

\* He died c. 1159.

p. 24), appears to have placed Reiner le Fleming Steward ("Dapifer being added to his name") out of his proper time because though he placed him as succeeding to the Estate "in Ye sd. Counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland which belonged unto his father" and specifically mentions Reiner's grant of land in Rottington to St. Bees as being ratified by William Meschin he has moved him forward in the family tree apparently confusing him with a later "Rainerus." The connection between these two branches is somewhat obscure. Reiner the First had it would appear two sons, Walter, and William who succeeded him in his capacity as Steward. William had a son Reiner who was alive 1190-1195, he founded Kirklees c. 1190. Several generations later there was in 1234 a Reiner le Fleming whose wife was named Rosamund whose son Richard may have been that le Fleming of the name who married Elizabeth de Urswick c. 1240 (*Memoirs of Sir Daniel le Fleming*, p. 19), thus bringing the manor of Coniston into the family. They had a son John who had a son Reiner or Rayner, and it is this Reiner who led Sir Daniel into the confusion between generations.

William, the son and successor of Reiner le Fleming I (The Steward), died before 1166.

The fee in the wapentake of Strafford assessed at 23 carucates 7 bovates forming part of the Honour of Skipton bestowed by Henry I upon William Meschin was enfeoffed by him to Reiner le Fleming his Steward.

Godard Boyvill's Yorkshire holding was at Bordley which he granted to Furness Abbey c. 1134-5. Later Arthur his son granted it to Fountains Abbey which took possession of it in 1159, a rent of 8/- being reserved, but released by Henry son of Arthur (*Chartulary of Fountains Abbey*).

A branch of the Boyvill family was enfeoffed by Henry I of the barony of Levington (Kirklington), and from this.

stock possibly came the Boyvills who later obtained Thursby by marriage with an heiress. William son of Guy de Boivill of Thursby had land at Kirksanton.

Kirkby's Quest, 1284-5, shows Boyvills in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and in the time of Edward II there was a Peter de Bosvyll who with William son of Thomas held the vill of Derfeld from William le Flemmyng.

A family connection (which has not yet been clearly ascertained) between the families of Fleming, Huddleston, Boyvill and Curwen (the latter descended from Gospatric and Ketel) is suggested by their coats of arms which carry the fret. On a red shield, a Fret *Argent* Hudleston; on a silver shield a Fret *gules* with Chief *azure*, Curwen; on a red shield a Fret of Six *argent*, Fleming; on a silver shield a Fret *vert* Boyvill. (Curwen, *Trans.* N.S. vi, pp. 226-27).

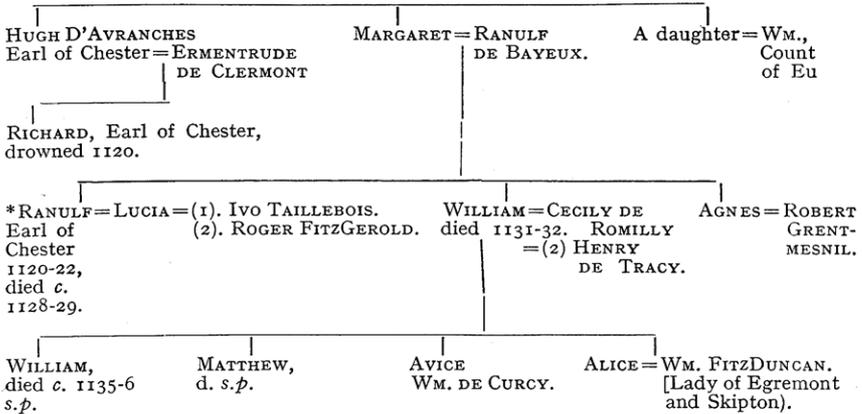
Of the lesser families of Copeland it would appear that their origin of title is obscure; probably some had quietly remained in possession of manors held before the enfeoffment of William Meschin, quite possibly relatives or adherents of the family of Ketel. The Penningtons of Muncaster originated as an offshoot of the family holding Pennington near Ulverston whose first recorded representative is Gamel. It is probably coincidence, but in Domesday Book for Yorkshire there are two associated holders of land, Gamel and Baret his father. Now the family holding Bardsey were neighbours of that at Pennington, and Bardsey in Domesday Book was Beret-seiga (the Seat or House of Beret). There is here a shadowy suggestion of a Gamel and a Baret coming from Yorkshire and settling near each other.

The first tenant of Austhwaite (later Dalegarth) was granted his manor by the lord of Millom; the clan of de Copeland de Rengles (Ravenglass) de Corney and de Waberthwaite possibly originated from the great Sir Michael le Fleming, whose son Ulf, father of Ketel and his

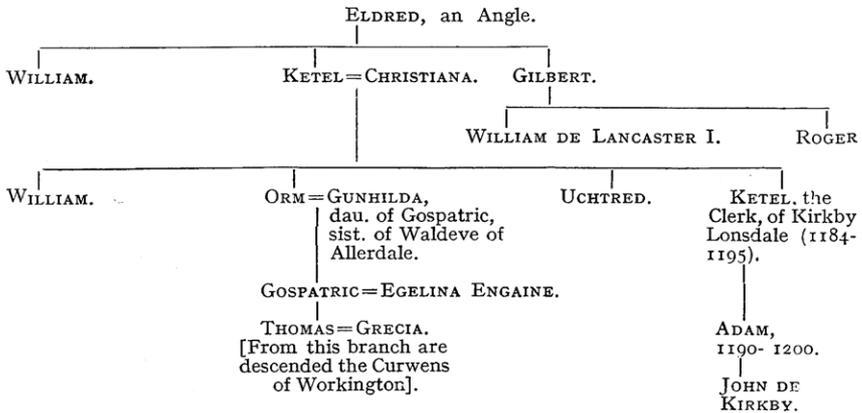
brothers, may have been (*Furness Coucher*, ii, p. 559). The origin of title of the Irton family too is doubtful for Warburton's pedigree is quite unreliable and therefore may be of pre-Conquest foundation. In the churchyard stands a noble Anglian memorial cross, possibly that of an Anglian thegn or his lady whose descendants remained quietly in possession (were they too connections of the family of Ketel?) when Henry I instituted the new regime administered by William Meschin and his députies.

It is to be noted that neither Roger de Poictou nor Nigellus de Albigni can be traced as having any direct connection with Copeland. It is I think a permissible conjecture that William Meschin was enfeoffed of Copeland early in the 12th century, possibly c. 1110-1115, that he might undertake the reorganisation of that remote district in accordance with the policy of Henry I. It was at the time of Domesday Survey, 1086, included as a part of Yorkshire from an administrative aspect, and this may account in a great measure for the king's choice of a feudal superior already having extensive territorial interests in that county. With William came his trusted steward Reiner le Fleming, and in all likelihood Godard de Boyvill already a sub-tenant under Adam son of Swane a feoffee of William's Honour of Skipton. Having regard to the known fact that the Boyvills and Adam son of Swane were enfeoffed of manors actually within then Cumberland by Henry I and appear as well in close connection in South Copeland it is possible they were related; Adam later appears as a Christian name in the family of Boyvill of Millom and in the Austhwaite family who may very well have been family connections of the de Millom grantor of their manor.

MESCHIN.



FAMILY OF KETEL SON OF ELDRED.



\* Note. Lucia wife of (1) Ivo Taillebois; (2) Roger FitzGerold; (3) Ranulf Meschin is said to have been the heiress of Thorold Sheriff of Lincoln, brother of Godiva wife of Leofric, Earl of Mercia. She survived Ranulf, Earl of Chester. Ivo Taillebois had been a standard-bearer at the battle of Hastings, and married Lucia 1071. *Vic. Coun. His. Lincoln*, vol. ii, p. 119.



## SOME COPELAND CHARTERS IN THE PUDSAY DEEDS.

(Yorkshire Archæological Society *Record Series*, vol. lvi).  
p. 309. No. 349. Stainton. Early Edward I or possibly Hen. III.

A deed by which Michael, son of Richard de Renglas quitclaims to John de (Hodeles)ton all his land, etc. in Stainton. To John son and heir of Roger de Renglas XXV pence was to be paid for all customary services. For this concession John gave Michael "in his great necessity," 10 pounds of silver. The witnesses are all local men, viz. Alan de Coupland, John de Kyrkeby, Richard le Fleming, William de Morthing, Robert de Haverington, William de Waiburthait, Richard de Hudelston.

p. 210. No. 350. Same date as No. 349.

Johanna, daughter of Adam de Milumn grants to Richard her son by John de Hudelleston, land that had belonged to Henry Gand.

Witnesses: Richard de Coupland, John de Langliferghe, Patrick son of Thomas, John his brother, William de Alemunderlaughe.

p. 311. No. 351. Early Edward I.

John, son of John de Huddeliston grants to Richard de Huddeliston his elder brother all his land in Barton in Richemundschere.

Three of the witnesses are local men, viz.: Henry de Middilton, William de Mordig, William de Weythis (Thwaites).

A note to this deed gives a Fine at York of 1279 between Richard de Hodelston, plaint. and John de Hodelston, Sibilla his wife, defendants.

Also in 1287 an assize was taken between Richard de Hodelston, Adam de Hodelston (probably Richard's brother), and others concerning the disseizement of a tenement in Barton (co. Yorks.).

p. 309. No. 347. Early Edward I.

A grant made by Emma, widow of John de Berford (Yorkshire) of property to Richard de Hodilston and Johanna his wife.

Note: Joanna, daughter of Harsculf de Cleseby married before 1285 Sir Richard de Hudleston eldest son of John by Johanna or Joan daughter of Adam de Boyvill or Boisvill, Lord of Millum, co. Cumberland and brother of John de Hudleston, ancestor of the Hudlestons of Millum (*Introduction Pudsey Deeds*, pp. 76-77).

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Thanks also to Mr. Gray and Mr. Hogg of Tullie House; Mr. D. Hay of Whitehaven Public Library; Mr. Frank Warriner and the Rev. S. Taylor of Millom; the Rev. W. S. Sykes; and our Editor who have all given me great and much appreciated help.

#### ADDENDUM: THE FAMILY OF BOYVILL OF MILLOM.

The origin of the family of Boyvill of Millom seems to be solved by an entry in a document copied into the Chartulary of the diocese of Bayeux in which Boievilla is included amongst the fiefs held by the Vicomtes of le Bessin from the Bishop of Bayeux.

In the Rolls of the Norman Exchequer there are numerous entries of payments by members of the family written in various forms, Beowel, Bosevill, Bouvill, Beuzeville, Bovill, Boivill, Buivill. The Christian names borne by members of this family entered on the Roll of the Norman Exchequer are William, Nicholas, Girard, Richard, Fulk, Walter, Giselb., Thomas, Hugh, John, Symon and Robert. Many of these names will be found

in documents recording activities of the various branches of the family which settled in Yorkshire, Copeland, north Cumberland, and Westmoreland. For instance, Richard de Boisville gave land to the Abbot of Calder by an undated charter whose witnesses, however, suggest it to have been about the last third of the 12th century. Amongst these witnesses were Gilebt. de Boisvilla and Wills. de Boisvilla. A transcript of this charter is printed in Jefferson, *History of Allerdale above Derwent*, p. 316. The names of William and Giselb. de Beovill appear very close together on the Roll of the Norman Exchequer of 1198.

Between the years 1140 and 1153 Engelger de Bohun executed a charter granting to the Cistercian Abbey and monks of Quarr in the Isle of Wight his lands at Haseley in the Isle of Wight. This deed is undated, but as Serlo Abbot of Savigny witnessed it the date must have been between 1140 and 1153, the time of Serlo's rule at Savigny. Two other witnesses were William de Bosevilla and Gervase de Bosevilla. (*Mon. Ang.*, vol. i, p. 761).

Engelger de Bohun was later one of the Justiciars in the Bessin for Count Geoffrey of Anjou after the death of Henry I. His wife was Adeliza, third daughter of William Count of Aumale and widow of Bertrand de Briquebec. Her younger sister was the wife of William de Roumare and after his death of Peter de Brus.

It is thus I think permissible to conjecture that the de Boyvills came to England, Godard with William Meschin, Richard probably with Ranulf as he obtained a grant from Henry I of the fee of Levington (Kirklington) in the Land of Carlisle, of which Ranulf was feudal superior. Hugo son of Arthur de Millum appears as of de Rouseley, Lincs., but they seem to be chiefly in north Cumberland, Copeland, Yorkshire, and later as feoffees of the Cliffords, Westmorland.

The origin of the family of Adam son of Swane is

given in our *Trans.* N.S. xii, p. 413, by the late Mr. J. F. Curwen, who traced the descent of Adam from Alric or Ailrich, thegn of Hornby (Lancashire) in 1066. Mr. Curwen's valuable pedigree there printed also shows the descent of the family of Montebegon, Adam of that family, lord of Hornby marrying the younger daughter, Matilda, of Adam f. Swane.

*Note.* Grateful acknowledgements are made to Mr. William E. Preston, Director of the Corporation Museum and Art Gallery, Cartwright Memorial Hall, Bradford, Yorkshire, for most valuable help in connection with research into the Boyvill family history.