

The Greaves Parchments.

BY W. R. HOLLAND.



THE family of Greaves was settled as long ago as the reign of Henry III. (1216-1272), at a place, within the Manor of Beeley, Derbyshire, called Greaves, whence the surname is derived. Beeley (the Begelie of Domesday) is a Chapelry in Bakewell Parish. Greaves, the former seat of the family bore that name until 1687, when a new owner changed it to Hill Top, where may yet, or in recent times could, be seen the remains of the old Elizabethan mansion, with a good deal of carving in two of the rooms, and the arms of James I., and the motto of James, "*Beati pacifici*," over a chimney-piece. In very early records this surname is spelt "Greves," and there is, or was, amongst the Duke of Rutland's muniments, a parchment, said to be of the time of Henry I. (but more probably Henry III.), with the name of Greves and the spread eagle (the family crest) on the appended seal.

A few documents relating to the Manor of Beeley came into my possession some years ago. They consist of an Indenture of Feoffment or Grant, dated 9th June, second year of Elizabeth (1560), and an Indenture of a Fine levied in the Common Pleas at Westminster, in Michaelmas Term, 2 Elizabeth. These documents all relate to the same transaction, the fine completing the Conveyance attempted by the Feoffment. The Deed of 9th June, 1560, is a good example of an early Conveyance in the English language, as Latin was generally employed down to and after this date. The writing presents an interesting specimen of

the style of caligraphy prevalent about Shakespeare's time, and there is much quaintness in the phraseology and spelling. The deed is between Nicholas Vaux, of Harrowdon, Northants., brother of William Vaux, Lord Harrowdon, of the one part, and John Greaves, of Belaye, and Edward Deane, of Greaves, in Belaye, of the other part. Deane was merely a trustee for Greaves, and took no interest; and the property conveyed by the deed was limited by the fine (which completed the transaction) to the use of Greaves and Deane, and the heirs of Greaves (only) for ever. The property conveyed to Greaves, and his trustee Deane, was the manor of Belay, and all the lands, etc., in Belay, which, by a previous Indenture, Lord Harrowdon had conveyed to the said Nicholas Vaux.

The fine is dated in Michaelmas term in 2 Elizabeth, and it records the "Final Agreement" between John Greaves and Edward Deane, plaintiffs, and Nicholas Vaux, deforciant, relating to the manor of Belay, and 9 messuages, 2 cottages, 1 toft, 20 gardens, 10 orchards, 1 water-mill, 2 dove-houses, 400 acres of tilled land, 140 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 40 acres of wood, 500 acres of furze and heath, 1,000 acres of moor, and 30s. of rent in Belay. These quantities, according to a practice which prevailed down to 31st December, 1833 (from which date fines were abolished), are mere general expressions, round numbers being employed, care being taken to make them large enough to cover the actual extent of the property referred to. The fine, which is in duplicate, is a beautiful specimen of the stiff court hand of the period, and is in Latin much abbreviated.

King James I. granted or confirmed to a John Greaves (who was probably a grandson of the John Greaves before mentioned), the manors of Beeley, Cowley, Gretton, Stanton, Birchover, Winster, and Bridgetown (Rot. Pat. 12 James I., 26 pt., No. 13, A.D. 1615), for the nominal sum of 20s. The family were staunch Royalists in the civil wars. In Burke's "Commoners" there is a pedigree of the Greaves family. The late Mr. Charles Sprengel Greaves, Q.C. (who was a member of this Society, and a highly-valued contributor to its *Journal*), was a representative of this old

Derbyshire family, being the son of William Greaves, M.D., of Mayfield Hall, Staffordshire.

The Manor of Beeley was sold in the reign of James I. by the Greaves of that date to the ancestors of the Duke of Rutland, and according to Lysons (1817, Vol. v., p. 32), William Saville purchased the Greaves estate in Beeley of the Greaves family in 1687, and occupied the ancient residence at Greaves, the name of which Saville changed to Hill Top.

The last Greaves of the Greaves appears to have been a John Greaves, who sold the ancient family seat to William Saville in 1687. The estate had doubtless been greatly impoverished during the civil wars, the family having taken the side of King Charles I. against Cromwell and the Parliament. In 1655, there was an ordinance by the Parliament for the decimation of the cavaliers, whereby all that had borne arms for Charles I., or declared themselves in his interest, were to pay the tenth part of their estates *that were left*, to support the charge of the Commonwealth, etc.; and in a list of "Gentlemen of the County of Derby who compounded, extracted from, 'A Catalogue of the Lords, Knights, and Gentlemen that have compounded for their estates, 1655,'" will be found the names of "Richard and George Greaves, Beeley, gents., £160."

In the episcopal chapel at Beeley there is (or was), within the rails, a flagstone bearing an interesting inscription to the memory of the last Greaves of Greaves. He appears to have removed to Woodhouse (qu. Stanton Woodhouse), and died there. The memorial was probably placed in Beeley Chapel by his widow, who survived him six years, and to whom also a similar memorial was placed, near that of her husband. The two inscriptions will form a fitting conclusion to this paper:—

"This marble stone doth presse, but not oppresse, the body of John Greaves, son of John Greaves, of Greaves, Esq., who was always a true son of the Church of England, merciful and charitable to the poor, patient and courageous in a tedious sickness, and at length, being full of faith and hope, did exchange this troublesome world for a better, the 13th of October, 1694."

“In Morte Lucrum—the remains of that excellent woman, Mrs. Ann Greaves, daughter of George Birds, of Staunton Hall, gent., and relict of John Greaves, of Woodhouse, Esq., lie here interred; her better part to blissful regions ascended, the 25th of May, 1700; to whose pious memory this marble is dedicated by her brother, Mr. Thomas Birds.”