

EXAMPLES OF MEDIÆVAL SEALS.

IN resuming our endeavours to place before the readers of this Journal some of the most remarkable examples of Mediæval Seals, it may be observed that the series of contributions towards the History of Sphragistic Art, given in previous volumes, has been interrupted solely through the presence of more urgent matters of archæological inquiry. There has been no deficiency in the supply of curious inedited materials for the further exemplification of seals both in our own country and on the continent ; and, we may add with pleasure, no want of encouragement in our researches, but a growing interest in the subject, and a favourable reception of our former contributions.

We have alluded repeatedly to the valuable services, rendered by Mr. R. Ready, during many past years of unwearied labour ; the student and the collector of Mediæval Seals have had frequent occasions at meetings of the Institute and elsewhere, to appreciate the results of his skilful manipulation in copying seals by an ingenious process, attended with no risk of injury to the original impressions. Through facilities liberally conceded by the authorities of all the Colleges at Cambridge, Mr. Ready has been enabled to form a very extensive assemblage of seals, for the most part previously unknown, amounting to nearly 7000, obtained in the Treasuries and Munitment Rooms to which access has been most kindly allowed in that University. Of all of these seals, in addition to his large collection previously formed, facsimiles, either in gutta percha or electrotyped, may be obtained. It may moreover be welcome to our readers to be informed, that the extensive stock of moulds of seals formed by the late Mr. J. Doubleday, whose reproductions in sulphur have for some years been known to collectors of seals, has been acquired by the British Museum, and of these likewise Mr. Ready, being for the present there engaged, is permitted to supply copies.¹ That collection extends to upwards of 20,000 examples, and among these the Conventual, the Municipal, and the Episcopal series form an important feature ; lists of all of these exist, but that of the very numerous assemblage of Baronial and Personal seals remains to be completed. These particulars, with which many collectors may not be acquainted, cannot fail, we hope, to prove acceptable.

We may here advert to the good service in this branch of archæological inquiry, which might advantageously be rendered by any of the numerous and efficient provincial Societies, in compiling and publishing in their transactions descriptive catalogues or lists of seals connected with the county or the diocese to which their exertions are specially directed. An example has been well set by the Norfolk Archæological Society, in

¹ Any communication may be addressed to Mr. Ready at the office of the Archæological Institute, 26, Suffolk Street.

giving a catalogue of the seals of the Bishops of Norwich from the eleventh century to the Reformation, preceded by the very curious seal of Ethilwald, Bishop of Dunwich, about A.D. 850, the only matrix of an episcopal seal of its period with which we are acquainted.² We may here likewise invite attention to the useful inventory of Welsh seals collected by Mr. Ready, lately published by the Cambrian Archæological Association.³ Casts of any of these may be obtained from him.

The increasing interest in the study and collection of Mediæval Seals has given encouragement to the fabrication of matrices of various materials; and it may be well to caution the unwary against such malpractices, which have been carried to a considerable extent both on the continent and in our own country. Fictitious matrices of brass were largely manufactured in the north of Italy and certain other places, long before any prevalent taste for works of Sphragistic art. Bologna has been mentioned as a source from which imitative seals were extensively supplied. These brass matrices were, however, not without a certain value, being for the most part, if not wholly, casts in metal obtained from original impressions of ancient seals, which obviously might be inaccessible to the collector, and in some instances unique. The accurate reproduction, therefore, of such authentic specimens, so far as it was practised without deceptive intention, was not in itself objectionable; but it naturally suggested to designing persons the means of increasing their dishonest gains. In recent times, in our own country, fictitious matrices have frequently occurred, formed of jet, or of coarse bituminous shale, obtained, it is believed, on the north-eastern parts of Yorkshire, probably in the neighbourhood of Whitby, where jet is found in considerable quantities. These seals, in some instances fabricated with considerable skill, have been offered for sale in parts of England remote from Yorkshire, usually at low prices, and stated to have been found in burial places near those localities, or on some sites of ancient occupation. It has been supposed, with much probability, that the manufacture of such false matrices may have been suggested by a curious seal of jet, preserved in the museum at Whitby, and bearing the name of Osbert de Hiltune. It was exhibited in the temporary museum at the meeting of the Institute at York in 1846. See the Catalogue of Antiquities, York volume, p. 23. Several fictitious seals of such material have been shown at the meetings of the Institute. We may here also notice fictitious matrices formed of hone-stone, or a fine-grained material resembling lithographic slate, noticed in this Journal, vol. xvi. p. 196; vol. xvii. p. 60. Of the examples which have come under our notice, one was a pretended seal of King John, another of Lady Jane Grey, and a third of Mary Queen of Scots. We regret moreover to learn that the traffic in forgeries of seals has been carried to such an extent on the continent, that during the last year a report on the subject was made to the Society of Antiquaries of France by M. Boutaric, in which some curious facts are detailed, with cautions well deserving of perusal even by the most wary collector. He denounces the fraudulent fabrication of matrices of ivory; of these no example, so far as we are aware, has occurred in this country. This Report has been recently published in the *Revue Archéologique*, New Series, vol. iii. p. 167.

² Norfolk Archæology, vol. i. pp. 305-323. This useful catalogue was compiled by Mr. T. G. Bayfield.

³ Archæologia Cambrensis, third series, vol. vi. p. 281. The seals enumerated amount to 270.



1. ROYAL SIGNET OF THE EAGLE attached to the Will of King Henry VI., preserved in the archives of King's College, Cambridge, from a cast made of it by Mr. Ready, who has been liberally allowed access to those highly interesting documents for the purpose of making casts of any of the seals.

That Will, as it is called, is in reality a declaration of the uses, or, as we should now term them, trusts of the manors and other estates with which that sovereign endowed St. Mary's College, Eton, and King's College, Cambridge. It is dated the 12th of March, 1447, and the reference at the conclusion to the seals attached to it is, according to the copy published in the Collection of Royal Wills, as follows :—" And in witness that this is my full will and intent, I have sett hereto my great seale, and the seale of my said duchy,¹ and my seale apointed and assigned by me for the said castles, lordships, mannors, lands, tenements, rents, services, and other possessions put into the said feoffment : and also as well the signet I use in mine owne governance for the same duchie, as the signet of mine armes." Though this signet is not here designated the Signet of the Eagle, as was sometimes the case in documents to which it was attached, there can be no doubt that it is the seal here called " the signet I use in mine own governance for the same duchie." The real size of the seal is shown by the small outline woodcut ; but we have thought it expedient to give it of a larger size, that the legend and details may more clearly appear than they would if it were of the same size as the original. The device, as will be seen, is an eagle displayed with two heads ; the legend, which is in black letter, we read thus :—" **b** sicut aquila proucans ad volandum p., i.e., *pullos*, being the commencement of the 11th verse of the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy in the Vulgate. The mediæval artist has omitted the second *o* in *provocans*. By the **b** at the beginning we understand *versus*; it should have had a diagonal line through it, but this could not be given in type. The ground

¹ i.e., of Lancaster.

on which is the device rises boldly above that of the legend, as if the former were a stone set probably in silver or gold. As a work of art, however, this seal is by no means what might have been expected for a Royal Signet of that period. The stone may have been difficult to engrave; but more of this hereafter.

The existence of a Royal Signet called the Eagle has been for some years known to modern antiquaries. It is noticed in the Journal of Bishop Beckington's Embassy to the Count of Armagnac, edited by Sir H. Nicolas in 1828, and is the subject of a long note in the Trevelyan Papers, vol. i. p. 77, published by the Camden Society in 1857. On both occasions we believe the information relating to it was principally contributed by Mr. T. D. Hardy of the Public Record Office. In the former publication, p. 130, is a woodcut of the Signet; but, having been taken apparently from an imperfect impression, the legend is wanting, and the device is by no means satisfactory.

The earliest evidence of the use of this Signet that has been discovered should seem to be a letter from Henry V. in 1421 to the Bishop of Durham, then Chancellor of England, which concludes thus:—"Yeven under our Signet of the Egle in absence of our oothir at our town of Doovore the viij day of June." The next is another letter in the same year from the King to the Chancellor, which thus terminates:—"Yoven under our Signet of the Egle in absence of our oethir Signet at Webley the vij day of March." In the Rolls of Parliament, vol. iv. p. 299, under 4 Henry VI., we find mention made of a codicil to the will of Henry V., written with his own hand, "*et signeto suo de l'Egle signato.*" Henry VI. made frequent use of this seal. In the before-cited Journal, pp. 4, 6, are two letters from him in 1442, which conclude with, "Yeven under our Signet of Th' Egle at our Castel of Windesore," &c.; and several of his letters sealed with it are said to be existing among the public records. It was also employed by him to expedite his commands to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. We have seen it designated by him in his before-mentioned Will, "the signet I use in mine own governance of the same duchie." In consequence of an ordinance made in 1443, some doubt seems to have arisen as to the validity of certain grants which had been passed under the Great Seal upon the authority of warrants under this Signet; and Henry VI. addressed a letter to his Chancellor, dated the 7th of Nov., 23 Henry VI., under the Privy Seal, in which he stated that he held for good all grants since the 10th year of his reign made by letters under "our Signetes of the Egle and Armes." In the Trevelyan Papers, p. 75, is a grant to Sir John Trevelyan, dated the 15th of October, 24 Henry VI., which on the Roll is stated to have been made "*Per billam manu ipsius Regis signatam et signeto Aquilæ sigillatam.*" In probably the next year, on August 4th, one John Kerver having been found guilty of treason, the King, in the absence of the Privy Seal, sent a letter sealed with the Signet of the Eagle to the Chancellor, commanding him to grant the offender a pardon under the Great Seal.² Next in order of time comes the instance of the use of this Signet in the endowment of the before-mentioned Colleges. On the 31st of May, 1454, the Council ordered that, notwithstanding in time past the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster of that part that was "*putte in feffement,*" had in commandment from the King not to receive any letter

² A copy of this letter is printed in the *Excerpta Historica*, p. 281.

for his warrant of any thing to be sped by him under any seal save the Signet of the Eagle only, the Privy Seal should thenceforth be sufficient warrant to the said Chancellor, and no other. This order was made during the incapacity of the King, after the Duke of York had obtained a place in the Council, and procured the imprisonment of his rival Somerset. The Signet of the Eagle was afterwards used for warrants to the Chancellor of the Duchy as before ; but whether in respect of the part not "putte in feffement," or because the order of Council was disregarded, does not appear. The last known instance of the employment of this Signet was for the Will of Henry VII. ; the seals attached to which are therein said to be "as well our privy Seale, as our Signet remaining in the keeping of our Secretary, and our privy Signet of the Egvell remaynyng in our owen keping, as also our grete Seale." What afterwards became of it has not been ascertained.

To the author of the note on this Signet in the Trevelyan Papers we are indebted for most of the above instances of its use ; indeed all of them, except the will of Henry VI., are there mentioned. As he has on two occasions with a considerable interval given his attention to the subject, he is not likely to have overlooked anything in the records that have come under his notice, which would elucidate it. "It is not exactly known," he says, "when the Signet of the Eagle was first used by the Sovereigns of England, but it was undoubtedly the Seal of the Honor of the Eagle which was annexed to the crown by King Henry III. in 1268, and then used to seal documents relating to that honor in the same way as the seals of the Earldom of Chester, the Duchy of Cornwall, and the Palatinate of Lancaster, were employed in matters concerning those seignories." With deference to such an authority we would submit, that it has been too hastily assumed that this Signet was the seal of the Honor of the Eagle. One remarkable fact is, that among all the known instances of its use, and among all the occasions on which it has been found mentioned, no one appears to have been in any way connected with that Honor. Its extreme dissimilarity also to the class of seals with which it has been compared is very striking. The name of the Signet, and that alone, should seem to have suggested the opinion which has been so confidently advanced and so readily accepted. An honor, when used to denote a seignory, signified a manor which comprised other manors dependent on it. For this reason the large manor where was the principal residence of an earl or baron was often so styled ; it was a very different thing from the earldom or barony, though in early times it generally formed part of the barony by tenure. The Honor of the Eagle was the manor or honor of Pevensey. It acquired the name of the Honor of the Eagle after it came to be held by the family De Aquila in the reign of Henry I. They derived their name from Aigle or L'Aigle, in Latin Aquila, a town in Normandy, whence they came. They were not at all pre-eminent either for their descent, or for their rank, wealth, or influence. The last of them that held this honor was Gilbert de Aquila. He forfeited it to the crown, and Henry III., in the 19th year of his reign, granted it temporarily to Gilbert Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, for the service of two knights ; and on its being surrendered by him, it was granted in the 25 Henry III. to Peter de Savoy, uncle of Queen Eleanor.³ After his death some provision seems to have been made out

³ Dugd. Bar., vol. i. p. 475-6, 605.

of it for the Queen herself. In 53 Henry III. that King, with her consent, granted to their eldest son, Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I., "le honur del Egle ove tutus les apurtenaunces a avoir e tenyr a luy e a ses eyrs Reys de Engleterre ensy ke enterement remayne a la corune quite-ment et enterement par droyt heritage a tuz jurs."⁴ Probably the importance of the castle of Pevensey led to this annexation of the Honor to the crown. It appears to have continued entirely so annexed till the 46 Edward III., when John of Ghent, having surrendered to the King, his father, the Earldom of Richmond, he had in lieu of it a very ample grant of manors and lands in several counties to him and the heirs of his body, *i.e.*, in tail.⁵ This comprised the castle and leucate or lowey of Pevensey (castrum et leucatam de Pevensey) with the appurtenances, nothing being said of the Honor of the Eagle; very different language this from that in the grant to Edward I., where the Honor of the Eagle is expressly mentioned. It is not clear that the Honor, *i.e.*, the seignory of it, passed to John of Ghent; but what did not pass to him continued, with the reversion on failure of his issue, in the crown. On the accession of his son to the throne as Henry IV., he, not being the heir of Edward I., did not come within the terms of the grant to that prince; but Henry was the heir in tail under the grant to his father of the castle and leucate of Pevensey. Knowing that he could not be at the same time king and duke, lord and vassal, he was too prudent to risk the union of his dukedom and hereditary estates with the crown, lest in case he lost his kingdom, he should lose them also. He, therefore, within a few weeks after he was acknowledged as King, obtained the sanction of Parliament to a charter settling the Duchy of Lancaster and his hereditary estates in general terms on himself and his heirs for ever, to remain, descend, and be administered and governed as if he had never acquired the regal dignity.⁶ If his father had the Honor of the Eagle, it should seem to have been comprised in this charter. On the 12th of February following, Henry granted, it is said, the office of constable of the castle of Pevensey, with the Honor of the Eagle, and all his manors, lands, &c. in the rape of Pevensey, to Sir John Pelham and his heirs male, in reward for his services; which grant was confirmed, it seems, on the 1st of July following. This reads like a grant of the Honor of the Eagle also to Sir John in tail male, but we do not know how far the language can be relied on. We have the notice of the grant and confirmation in Collins's Peerage,⁷ on the authority of the collections of Philpot, Somerset Herald, who drew out a pedigree of the Pelham family in 1632. We have searched the Patent Rolls of 1 Henry IV. without finding either the grant or the confirmation. They may be in the Duchy office; for we learn from the same authority,⁸ that in 3 Henry V., 1415, Sir John Pelham granted the office of constable of Pevensey to his son, and stated in the deed that he had it by the grant of Henry IV. under his seal of the Duchy of Lancaster. We have not been able to trace the history of this Honor farther, nor is it material for our purpose to do so.

The barons De Aquila, or at least the later of them, probably bore an eagle, as the books state, but not an eagle with two heads. However, waiving this discrepancy, we see nothing in the history of the Honor of

⁴ A copy of this grant is printed in Beckington's Journal, p. 130.

⁵ Rymer, vol. iii. p. 949, 950.

⁶ Rot. Parl., vol. iv. p. 46.

⁷ Edit. 1756, vol. i. p. 530; edit. by Bridges, vol. v. p. 492.

⁸ Collins's Peerage, 1756, vol. i. p. 543; edit. by Bridges, vol. v. p. 500.

the Eagle that should have induced our sovereigns, after the annexation of it to the crown, to use a seal with the device of an eagle, as the peculiar seal for documents relating to it. Besides that we find no example nor any evidence of such a practice, when we do meet with a document relating to this Honor, the seal is totally different; as the grant to John of Ghent and the letters patent of the next day for giving seizin,⁹ both which were doubtless under the great seal of Edward III., and the grant to Sir John Pelham, which was under the seal of the Duchy of Lancaster. It is remarkable too, that there is no evidence of this Signet, or of any seal with an eagle, having been used by Edward I., Edward II., or Edward III., though the Honor was unquestionably in the crown till the 46 Edward III.; nor by Edward IV. or Richard III. during their respective reigns, when the Honor, unless it had been granted to Sir John Pelham, was still in the crown as part of the estates comprised in the Duchy of Lancaster. If the Honor were granted in tail male to Sir John Pelham, it is improbable that Henry V. and Henry VI. would have adopted the seal relating to it as their private signet. This seal appears to have been used only by sovereigns of the House of Lancaster, and by them chiefly for their private affairs. They, it is true, if the Honor had not been granted away, were possessed of that seignory as part either of the duchy estates or of the royal demesnes. But we think the Eagle may be accounted for in another and wholly different manner.

If an eagle were not one of the badges of the House of Lancaster, it was frequently used by them otherwise than on this Signet. There is a seal of John of Ghent's, engraved in Sandford,¹ from a deed dated the 28th of January, 1375 (49 Edw. III.), on which, in a quatrefoil panel, are the arms of that prince, France and England quarterly a label *erm.*, on a shield couché, ensigned with his crest upon a heaume, and on each side of the heaume, occupying one of the foils, is an eagle holding in its talons a padlock, and trying to open it with its beak. The seal must be some years earlier than the deed, for the legend is—*S^r pribat : Johis : Ducis : lancastr : comit : richmond : Derb : linc : linc : senescalli : angl ;* and, as he was then Earl of Richmond, it must have been made before the grant to him of the castle and leucate of Pevensey on the surrender of that earldom in June, 1372. He is not styled King of Castile and Leon, though he had assumed this title in that year on his marriage with his second wife Constance. It was an age for enigmatical devices, often now difficult of solution. Whence this eagle was derived and what was signified by its trying to open the padlock, is uncertain. We do not think it was due to the Castilian alliance; for, besides that he is not here styled King of Castile and Leon, he relinquished that title in 1388, on the marriage of his daughter with the Prince of Asturias, and yet as we shall presently see, the eagle, though not the padlock, was used by his descendants. It may have been allusive to his name, John; but what restraint upon or object of his ambition was dimly figured by its trying to open the lock, is extremely obscure. About 1370 the illness of the Black Prince had become alarming; and in the event of its proving fatal the aspiring Lancaster saw only two children and the young wife of Mortimer between him and the succession to the crown. He may have then entertained his project of procuring a

⁹ Rymer, vol. iii. p. 950.

¹ Genealogical History of the Kings of

England, p. 244, and also in Nichol's Leicestershire, vol. i. pl. xiii.

settlement of the crown on the male issue of his father,² or even his later one (the other having failed), a claim on the behalf of his son, afterwards Henry IV., as the heir of Edmund Crouchback, pretending that he was the elder brother of Edward I ;³ a claim which was renewed by his son, as is well known, on the deposition of Richard II. If such ends or means as these were within the scope of this device, we can understand why the lock was discontinued after Henry's accession, and the eagle was retained and held in high esteem. The Falcon and Fetterlock of the Duke of York have been often noticed, but the Eagle and Padlock of John of Ghent have received little attention. At the nuptial feast, on the marriage of Henry IV. with Joan of Navarre, one of the "Sotilties" was "Egle coronys in sotelte."⁴ The crowning of the bird was not without significance. Upon the soffit of the canopy of their monument in Canterbury Cathedral were eagles volant and greyhounds, severally surrounded by a garter ; and two collars of SS. had each a golden eagle with wings expanded for the pendant.⁵ The stops between the words *soverayne* and *a temperance*, which are several times repeated on the soffit, are eagles with wings expanded, crowned, and gennets also crowned. At the interview of Henry V. with the King of France at Meulan, the former had a large tent of blue velvet and green, with devices of antelopes, and on the top was "a greate Eagle of golde, whose iyes wer of suche orient diamondes that thei glistered and shone ouer the whole felde." At the top of the French King's tent was his badge, a white hart flying, made all of fine silver, with wings enameled.⁶ Henry VI., we have seen, used this Signet of the Eagle frequently, and at that time the eagle was regarded as a royal badge. This we learn from a satirical poem, written in 1449 or 1450, wherein the persons spoken of are indicated by their badges, over which their names have been inserted in a contemporary hand. In it the following verses occur :—

" The Cornysse chawgh oft wt his trayne
Hath made our' Egull' blynde :"

and over "Cornysse chawgb" is written "Trevilian," and over "Egull" is "Rex."⁷ By Trevilian was meant Sir John Trevelyan, who was one of the esquires of the body to Henry VI.

It can hardly, we think, be reasonably held, that the eagle thus used and honored by these sovereigns was due to the annexation to the crown of a seignory of little importance upwards of a century before.

A remarkable feature in this Signet is that the eagle has two heads. Did we suppose it to have been engraved for either John of Ghent or his son, this would present more difficulty than it does in our view of the subject. We think the stone was a mediæval gem, many years older than the setting. That it was an engraved stone, appears almost certain from the impression. Its setting we have seen was peculiar, being deep within a metal rim, which rose much above it and bore the legend. The letters are faint in the impression, as if in 1447 the Signet had been a long time in use, and the rim a good deal rubbed down. Judging from the characters of the

² Archaeologia, vol. xxii. p. 231.

³ Leland's Collectanea, p. 383.

⁴ Harleian MSS., No. 279.

⁵ Blome's Monumental Remains, Henry

IV., p. 19; Willement's Heraldic Notices of Canterbury Cathedral, p. 51.

⁶ Hall, fo. lxxv. verso.

⁷ Excerpta Historica, p. 161.

legend, the setting was most likely executed late in the fourteenth century, or soon after 1400. The Signet may have been an ornamental pendant, or even a gold ring with a gem, though the shoulders have left no trace on the impression; for the rim was so high that they were not likely to touch the wax. At the probable date of the setting, the usage as to the Imperial Eagle was to represent it generally with two heads; but the father and brother of the first Queen of Richard II. were Emperors, and had borne it with one head. The change, therefore, of that eagle from single-headed to double-headed must have been familiar to the English court at the end of the fourteenth century. But eagles with two heads had been known in Germany many years before, and in the East even much longer. The gem of this Signet may have come from Germany or the East; and John of Ghent or Henry IV., who both appear to have used more than one eagle, might have seen no inconsistency in adopting for his signet a double eagle or two eagles conjoined by dimidiation, as this form has been considered. The execution of this device reminds us of some of the Persian gems which are often brought from the East reset in rings. A mediæval oriental gem with such an eagle need not surprise us. In the last volume of this Journal, p. 145, attention was called to two Saracenic coins of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which bear a double-headed eagle; and in the very choice Collection of John Henderson, Esq., F.S.A. are a large and beautiful brass dish inlaid with silver, and also a fine spherical *pomme chauffrette* of unusual size, both evidently by the artificers of Mosul or its neighbourhood, and probably not later than the thirteenth century; on which are several such eagles, all of the same type and very like the usual European form of this device in mediæval times.

The legend, as has been stated, is the commencement of the 11th verse of the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy, according to the Vulgate. The whole passage is as follows:—"Sicut aquila provocans ad volandum pullos suos, et super eos volitans, expandit alas suas, et assumpsit eum atque portavit in humeris suis." May not this have been adopted to be obscurely allusive either to the ambitious Lancaster, who was so solicitous to advance his progeny to the throne, and who so effectually tutored the aspirations of his son that they were crowned with success; or to Henry IV., when in possession of the throne, counselling his sons how to secure to themselves the kingdom that he had acquired?

As Henry V. made use of this Signet, it was hoped that it might be found in the inventory of his jewels, &c., which is published in the Rolls of Parliament;^s but, though there are four signets, all of gold, and many rings mentioned, none of them could be identified with it.

2. SEAL OF WILLIAM DE FORZ OR FORTIBUS, EARL OF ALBEMARLE.—For this example of a personal seal of early date we are indebted to the kindness of his Grace the Duke of Northumberland. The original impression is appended by a braided cord, once of two colors, red and probably yellow, to an undated charter or deed, whereby the Earl granted to Reginald "Portarius" (or Porter) in fee a considerable quantity of land in Cumberland, on the north side of the river Derwent, between the townships of Papcastle and Bridekirk, in consideration of his homage and

^s Vol. iv. p. 214.

service, and at a yearly rent of two shillings. The document, with the contractions not doubtful extended, is as follows:—

“Omnibus hoc Scriptum audituris et visuris W. de Forc’ (or Fort’), Comes Albemarle, salutem. Noveritis me dedisse et concessisse, et hac presenti carta mea confirmasse Reginaldo portario et heredibus suis, pro Humagio et Servizio suo, totam terram per has divisas, videlicet, a capite essarti Huttinge super Derewente in australi parte ascendendo usque ad Syket juxta terram defensibilem de Papecaster, et sic versus occidentem usque ad viam Regalem, et deinde usque ad Siket in aquiloni (*sic*) parte de Gallheberge, et deinde usque ad Turbariam, et deinde versus orientem descendendo per divisas inter Papecaster et Brydeskyrke usque ad ripariam (or ripam) de Derewente; Tenendam et habendam de me et heredibus meis sibi et heredibus suis libere, quiete, pacifice, et honorifice, cum omnibus asiamentis et comuni (*sic*) in omnibus infra (*sic*) villam et extra de Papecaster, pro omni servicio et consuetudine reddendo inde annuatim mihi et heredibus meis duos solidos, scilicet, xij denarios ad Pentecosten, et xij denarios ad festum Beati Martini. Ut hec donatio rata sit hoc Scriptum sigilli mei appositione corroboravi. Hiis testibus, Domino Gaufrido de Campo Denar’, Petro Gyllote, Willelmo de Driffelde tunc Senescallo de Allerdale, Ada de Derewentewater, Johanne de Brigham, Hugone de Moryscebe, Gaufrido Talentire, Ricardo de Alneburch, Alano de Chaldebèche.”

The seal is of dark green wax, of the same size as it is represented in the wood-cut. On the obverse appears the Earl in armour on horseback; the legend, which is now mutilated, we may safely assume to have been originally as follows, the missing letters being supplied in parentheses:—SI(GILL :) WILLELMI : DE : FORZ : COM(ITIS : ALBEMARL)IE. On the reverse is an escutcheon, having the upper corners rounded off according to a fashion not uncommon among Scotch seals of the period, which is charged with a cross patonce *vair*; the legend, which is also mutilated, was in all probability as follows, the missing letters being supplied as before:—SECR(ETVM : WILLELMI : D)E : FORZ : COMITIS : ALBEMARLIE.

The origin of this name, Forz or Fortibus, we have not seen noticed. It should seem to be French and local; possibly from Fors, a village in Poitou, about four leagues south of Niort, or from a seignory of Fors in Poitou. That province came to the Kings of England by the marriage of Henry II. with his Queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine. The earliest mention we have found of the family is in 1 Richard I. (1190), when William de Forz was a witness to a charter granted by that King to the Jews, and dated at Rouen.⁹ In the same year William de Forz de Vlerum or Valeron was with Richard in Anjou, and was created one of the admirals of his fleet about to sail for Palestine;¹ and soon after we have “Willielmum de Forz Dulerum,” associated with several bishops and barons who engaged on oath, that Richard should observe a treaty which he had entered into with Tancred, King of Sicily.² Ulerum or Valeron was most likely a seignory or some local distinction. The same person was doubtless intended on each of these three occasions. Seeing the spelling of the name in this country was Forz, and occasionally Fortz, it is not improbable that it was here pronounced as if written Forts, and if so, this would account for its plural form in Latin, de Fortibus. There was a few years later a William

⁹ Rymer, vol. i. p. 51.

¹ Hovenden, Script. p. Bedam, 666;

Brompton, Script. Decem, 1173.

² Rymer, vol. i. p. 52.

EXAMPLES OF MEDIEVAL SEALS.



Seal and Counterseal of William de Forz or Fortibus, Earl of Albemarle.

de Fortz of Vivonne, in Poitou, who bore different arms from those above mentioned. For in the Roll of Arms, t. Hen. III., edited by Nicolas, we find William de Fortz de Vivonia with the arms, "d'argent a chef de goules;" while in the same Roll those of the Earl of Albemarle, who was a William de Forz, are "de goules ung croix pate de verre." This William de Fortz de Vivonia was probably the same person that is mentioned as William de Fortibus in the Additions to Dugdale's Baronage, in the Collectanea Topographica, &c., vii. p. 137, under Malet. According to Dugdale, Mabel, the elder daughter and co-heir of William Malet, married Hugh de Vivion. The learned contributor of those Additions calls the family *Vivoin*, and says: "The family was seated in Poitou, and this Hugh, who married the elder co-heir of Malet, was steward of Poitou, Aquitaine and Gascony, under King Henry the Third. He had issue by the said Mabel two sons, William and Hugh, and one daughter William the eldest son was called de Fortibus (ob militarem virtutem) and in 32 Henry III. had leave to go over to Poitou to recover such lands and tenements as ought to descend to him by inheritance from the death of Americ de Vivonia his uncle. He married Maud de Kyme, sixth daughter and co-heir of Sybyl de Ferrars, by whom he had four daughters his co-heirs." According to French genealogists, it should seem probable that this William was a cadet of the house of Vivonne, and derived his surname from a seignory of Fors.³ The arms of Vivonne were *erm.* a chief *gu.* Those ascribed to him in the Roll t. Henry III. are not more unlike than might be expected to be borne by a junior branch of the family. The uncle, Americ, may have been the head of the French family. If the Earls of Albemarle named De Forz were of the Vivonne family, the first of them had most likely assumed for his arms *gu.* a cross patonce *vair*.

There were three of those Earls, grandfather, father, and son, who had the christian name of William. The grandfather married Hawise, daughter and heir of William le Gros, Earl of Albemarle, and widow of William de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, who died in 1189. This William de Forz died in 1195, leaving his wife surviving, who then married Baldwin de Betun. He became Earl of Albemarle in her right, and died in 1212; whereupon her only son, William de Forz, became Earl when he could have been but just of age. He married Aveline, daughter of Richard de Montfichet, and died in 1241, having been for awhile an active supporter of King John, though he was one of the twenty-five barons chosen to enforce his observance of the Great Charter. He had a confirmation of his lands by that King in the sixteenth year of his reign. His son and heir, William, married first Christian, daughter and one of the co-heirs of Alan de Galloway, and secondly, Isabella, daughter of Baldwin Earl of Rivers, and died in 1256. He had three sons and two daughters; the sons and one daughter died young and without issue; the other daughter, whose name was Aveline, became his sole heir, and married Edmund Earl of Lancaster, son of Henry III.

The deed, we have seen, is undated; but from the handwriting, the language of the grant, the character of the seal, and some indirect evidence supplied by the names of some of the witnesses, which will be presently noticed, we are led to attribute the document to the second William de

³ See Dictionnaire de la Noblesse, v. Fors; and Dictionnaire Genealogique, &c., Paris, 1757, v. Vivonne.

Forz, who was Earl of Albemarle from 1212 to 1241, The arms ascribed to these Earls by Brooke, uncorrected by Vincent, are the same as those of William de Fortz of Vivonne in the Roll t. Henry III.; and in the Roll of Arms t. Edward III., printed in *Collectanea Topographica, &c.*, ii. p. 324, we find "William de Forz de Coupland⁴ port d'argent ove un chief de gouples : cestuy feust Conte d'albemarle." But it appears from the Roll t. Henry III., that the then Earl of Albemarle, who was most likely the third of the name, bore *gu.* a cross patée *vair*: at that time patée often meant what is now termed patonce, the form shown in the woodcut of the seal. A portion of what is supposed to have been a surcoat of the last mentioned Earl is engraved in *Vetusta Mon.* vi. pl. xviii., on which are a cross patonce *vair*, and a lion rampant *az.* for Rivers, his second wife; and in the letterpress that accompanies it there is a woodcut of a seal on which are an escutcheon charged with a cross patonce *vair*, and the legend SIGILL. COM. GVILLE(LMI. D)E. FORZ. The form of the escutcheon is like that on the seal to this document, and both these seals may probably be referred to the same Earl. If so, the equestrian figure on the obverse of the seal now engraved would seem to show they are both earlier in date than 1241, when the third William de Forz succeeded to the earldom.

Of the grantee, Reginald Portarius, nothing more has been discovered; nor have we been able to identify any of the witnesses to the grant; but six of them are found attesting a grant by a William de Forz, Earl of Albemarle, to the Priory of St. Bees,⁵ and they are there associated with Sir Thomas Keret and Sir William de Ireby, names which occur several times in the Close and Liberate Rolls of the reign of John. The former was one of the Flemish knights in his service, and was rewarded by some grants of land in Kent and Essex, but we can find no mention of him or any son of him after that reign. The latter was in that King's service as "vadelettus," in the twelfth and fifteenth years of his reign, having charge of his dogs on several occasions, and being otherwise employed in matters relating to hunting. He was of the Cumbrian family of Ireby,⁶ and at that time most likely young. In 17 John, a precept was issued to the Sheriff of Carlisle, to deliver to him land lately held by Nicholas de Stouteville in the vale of Liddell, and land late of Ranulph Wonekil in Ulvesdale.⁷ He married Christian, daughter of Odard de Hodeholme, and left a daughter Christian, his heir, who married Thomas de Lascell.⁸ A Sir William de Ireby appears also as a witness to a grant by Richard, King of the Romans, to Knaresborough Priory in 1257.⁹ If this were the same person, he was then in all probability above sixty years of age. He was living at that time, but it may have been a great nephew of the same name, grandson of his eldest brother. In the grant to St. Bees Priory, as printed in the *Monasticon*, William de Driffelde is called "senescallo de Cokermutha," and Alan de Chaldebèche appears as "Alano persona de Caldebèche," while the name, Geoffrey de Campo Denar' is given as "Galfrido de Chandever." Supposing Campo Denar' to be correct, it might mean Campeny, or Campeneys, according as we read Denarii, or Denarium; names derived from De Campania, and to be found in the

⁴ Coupland was in Cumberland near Whitehaven. See *Mon. Ang.* (orig. edit.) vol. i. p. 396.

⁵ *Mon. Ang.*, vol. i. p. 397.

⁶ Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 365.

⁷ *Rot. Litt.*, Claus i. p. 256.

⁸ *Excerpta e Rot. Fin.*, vol. ii. p. 267.

⁹ *Mon. Ang.*, vol. ii. p. 834.

records of that period. As Odo, Earl of Champagne, the Conqueror's brother, had been the founder of the family which was represented by Hawise, the wife of the first William de Forz, it is not improbable that some of their dependents may have had the surname De Champagne. There was, however, the name of Candevre at the same period, derived, we may suppose, from one of the three places in Hampshire so called, and formerly so spelt, but now Candover. The two last syllables seem the same word that occurs in Micheldever, a place in the same county near the Candovers. Whence it came and what is its meaning, is uncertain; but in the forms of *defer* and *defr* it is found in Anglo-Saxon times. If an English scribe did translate Campeneys (now Champneys) into De Campo Denarium, it was not a bolder flight than his who rendered Hussey by Usus mare. We have sought in vain for some other mention of this Sir Geoffrey, to clear up the obscurity that envelopes his surname.

As to the land comprised in this grant to Reginald Portarius, it will be observed that the boundaries are given with a degree of particularity unusual in a deed of that period. These, one of the members of the Institute, Mr. Frecheville Dykes, who resides near the spot, has been so obliging as to examine with great care, and has been able to trace them so closely as to ascertain that the land is almost identical with the outlying hamlet of Haimes Hill, containing about 165 acres, which belongs to the township of Dovenby. The head of the assart (or clearing), the Huttinge (or Holm),¹ and also the two Sikets, or Gills, as such brooks are there called at the present day, can be identified. He finds the "Viam Regalem," he thinks, in the Roman road, and the "terram defensibilem" in the remains of earthworks which mark the site of what was a Roman station at Papcastle; or it may have been land there free from common and liable to be fenced or inclosed (terra in defenso).² Gallheberge is now Gallow Barrow (or Gallows Hill), and the turbary is represented by a moss.³ This land was, in all probability, some part of that which had descended to the grantor William de Forz from his mother, Hawise, daughter of William le Gros, Earl of Albemarle, by his wife Cecilia, daughter of William Fitz Duncan, son of Duncan, the illegitimate brother of David, King of Scotland. At that time Cumberland, it will be remembered, had been recently part of Scotland, or at least held by the Kings of Scotland. The descent of the manor of Allerdale, of which this land probably formed part, is set forth in the proceedings in a suit prosecuted in the parliament of England in the reign of Edward II. for the recovery of it by Alicia de Lucy and Thomas de Multon, who claimed it as the heirs of William Fitz Duncan, after the death of Aveline, the daughter and heir of the third William de Forz, Earl of Albemarle.⁴

W. S. WALFORD AND ALBERT WAY.

¹ Hutting is probably a cognate of the German Hutung (pasture), though we have not found it in Bosworth or Lye.

² See Du Cange, v. Defensum.

³ We regret that our limits will not allow us to give more fully the interesting particulars furnished by Mr. F. Dykes.

⁴ Rot. Parl., vol. i. p. 348-9.