

The Origin of the Shirleys and of the Gresleys.

By J. HORACE ROUND, M.A.

DERBYSHIRE can boast of having been the cradle of two of our oldest extant houses—families whose pedigrees from the days of the Conqueror are clear and beyond dispute. To say this is to assert that few in England can equal them, and none, perhaps, surpass them, in proved antiquity of descent. But they can claim more than this. The Gresleys of Drakelowe and the Shirleys of Eatington are alike still living on lands held by their Domesday ancestors when the Conqueror was King. Is there in all England any other family that is able to establish in the male line a connection so long as this? I do not, of course, say that there is not; but I cannot remember a single case in which it has yet been possible to prove absolutely the fact. The obscurities of twelfth century genealogy are almost invariably a bar.

Both these families still bear the surnames they derived from Derbyshire manors, and both were connected in the Middle Ages with the public life of the county as sheriffs and as knights of the shire. The ancestors of both, moreover, were great knightly tenants of the house of Ferrers, Earls of Derby, and are consequently found side by side in records of the twelfth century. Indeed, in the great return of his knights made by the Earl of Derby in 1166—the only return entered under Derbyshire, and one of extraordinary value for the feudal history of the county—the first two entries are

concerned with the knights' fees held by the ancestors respectively of the families of Shirley and of Gresley.

As no one, perhaps, is better known as a critic of pedigrees than myself, I should be the last to be suspected of undue credulity or of lightly accepting a descent which rests on no foundation. Nevertheless, Mr. Pym Yeatman, who has chosen, we shall see, to reject both the above pedigrees, has assailed me with curious fury for accepting that of Gresley—and would doubtless be no less wrathful if he knew that I had classed with it that of Shirley—as those of families whose ancestors were among “the companions of the Conqueror.”* It is singular that, while selecting for attack two of the best-known English pedigrees, Mr. Yeatman dedicates the latest section of his *Feudal History of Derbyshire* to a gentleman whose modest pedigree in Burke's *Landed Gentry* reveals him as the son of a Mayor of Manchester, but whom Mr. Yeatman hails as “himself a lineal descendant from the great family of Albini.”†

In this latest section of the work he terms *The Feudal History of the County of Derby*, Mr. Yeatman observes, in his preface, that “a good deal of this book has been necessarily devoted to exposing” my “crass ignorance.” No one, I presume, will expect me to reply to mere abuse. Indeed, from Mr. Yeatman abuse is a compliment; for on p. 192 we read of Mr. Sidney Lee—a scholar whose work, as editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and whose authority on Shakespeare are held in the highest repute on both sides of the Atlantic—

Having given up the search for the stinkpot of John Shakespere, the shoemaker in Henley Street, to tickle the ears of the great McDowie's “stinkpots” of New York with his crudities and inanities.

It appears to be Mr. Lee's offence that he has not deigned to take notice of Mr. Yeatman's work. As in my case, the latter, we read, has “exposed them” (the “crudities and

* See my paper with that title in the *Monthly Review*, June, 1901, pp. 103-5.

† Mr. Yeatman, after speaking thankfully of his patron's munificence, expresses his satisfaction at being able to offer so interesting an account of his ancestry. I gather from p. 144 that this includes the Peverels.

inaneities"), and "Mr. Lee has been discreetly silent respecting his castigation in England, because he could not answer it." I, also, have been advised that such attacks need no reply; but as the pedigrees of two Derbyshire houses have been unjustifiably impugned, I propose to gratify what I understand is Mr. Yeatman's ardent desire by replying to his criticisms thereon, the more so as the matter is of real interest for the feudal history of Derbyshire.

My critic, obviously, cannot complain if, while abstaining from the language he employs, I subject his own work to somewhat searching scrutiny.

I shall make, of course, no assertion without giving the proof on which it rests, so that all may test it for themselves, but I may as well state at the outset, to show that I have nothing to fear, that in not one single instance from beginning to end of his volume has my critic succeeded in impugning either the accuracy of my statements or the soundness of my conclusions. This is, perhaps, the explanation of his wrath.*

The great return (*carta*) of his knights and their fees, in 1166,† by the Earl of Derby, is transcribed in what are known as the Black Book (*Liber Niger*) and Red Book of the Exchequer. To the latter Mr. Yeatman devotes the third chapter (pp. 265-278), and to the Earl's *carta* the fourth chapter (pp. 279-312) of his first volume. From this will be seen the great importance he attaches to this record. But although he has avowedly taken for his model the admirable work of General Wrottesley for the William Salt Society, he presents his readers not (like that Society)‡ with the actual text of the records, but with his own translations of them. Indeed, he

* As Mr. Yeatman invites me to give a full account of my anonymous criticisms by way of "atonement," I may perhaps mention that I have never published an anonymous review of any one of his books. •

† I need not discuss Mr. Yeatman's objection to this date, which is accepted by all historians.

‡ See General Wrottesley's paper on "The Liber Niger Scaccarii," vol. i., pp. 146-152, for the text.

appears to consider that a text and its English translation are much the same thing.*

While fully agreeing with Mr. Yeatman on the great importance of these records, I cannot accept a translation as a substitute for the original text. I must, therefore, print side by side the opening portion of the Ferrers *carta* in the original Latin and in Mr. Yeatman's translation before we can estimate the justice of his rejection of the Shirley pedigree, which is based upon that translation. To avoid any possibility of dispute I will take the official version of the Red Book text, not any version of my own†:—

OFFICIAL TEXT.

Henrico Regi Anglorum domino suo carissimo Willelmus Comes de Ferrariis salutem. Mando vobis quod tempore Henrici Regis avi *vestri*

Henricus filius Sawaldi tenuit feoda v. militum Fulcherus frater ejus‡ feoda iiii^{or} militum; et modo Sewaldus *heres utrorumque* tenet eosdem IX. milites.

MR. YEATMAN.

Henry, King of England, to his beloved baron William Earl de Ferrars' health. We command you that in the time of King Henry, our grandfather. . . . Henry fil Sewell (Sawaldi) held five knights' fees, Fulcher, his brother, four, and now the heirs of Saswaldi held nine fees together.

Now, apart from the fact that this translation converts the opening portion from an address of the Earl to the King into an address of the King to the Earl, what are we to say to the rendering of "*Sewaldus heres utrorumque*" by "the heirs of Saswaldi"? For on the strength, we find, of this translation, and of this alone, Mr. Yeatman rejects the Shirley pedigree.

"This," he writes, "is a curious statement" (it is indeed, in his own version), ". . . and from the fact that the

* For on pp. 368-370 of his first volume he makes some amazing remarks on the famous Rolls Series of *Chronicles and Memorials*, in which he treats a Latin text as merely a reprint of the English translation in Bohn's *Antiquarian Library*. "Professor Stubbs," he writes, "the learned editor of Hoveden for the Master of the Rolls (Mr. Riley had previously very ably edited (*sic*) this work for Mr. Bohn). . . . We learn the details of the measure from Hoveden (see Bohn's *Antiquarian Library* and the reprint (*sic*) under the direction of the M.R.)." Imagine describing Dr. Stubbs' famous edition of the text as a "reprint" of the Bohn translation!

† The italics are my own throughout.

‡ "suus" in Black Book.

name (*sic*) of the heirs were unmentioned, it is probable that they were co-parceners, and female heirs or their descendants, so that no one was as yet responsible for the service due from the fees. . . . Several families claim descent, but it is to be feared that their claims will not stand the brunt of investigation. . . . The family of Shirley especially seem at fault with their proof, and they do not even possess the advantage of possessing any of Sewal's manors ”*

On another page he goes further, and boldly suggests that the family had to flee the country! Annotating an entry on the Pipe Roll of 1169, he observes:—

Henry fil Fulcher, 2 m. for his son and nephew, for whom he was bail, and who did not appear. (This was the first knight of Henry (*sic*) de Ferrers, and it may explain the extinction of that family. Probably they were involved in Henry Ferrars' rebellion and fled the country.†)

Of this we need only say that the first knight of William (*not* Henry) de Ferrers was *not* Henry, but his brother Sewal (see above); that Henry de Ferrers had, according to the author himself (p. 269), died so far back as 1088; that it was *not* Henry, but William de Ferrers, Earl of Derby, who rebelled; and that his rebellion did not begin till 1173. Only Mr. Yeatman, therefore, could suggest that these men had fled, in 1169, for having been involved in that rebellion!

Mr. Yeatman's objection to the Shirley pedigree is quite clear from his remarks in the Domesday chapter (p. 76), where he says of "Saswalo" (the first Sewal):—

His sons Henry and Fulc held 9 manors *temp.* Henry I., and in the reign of his grandson *they were held by the co-heirs of Henry*,‡ yet the Heralds claim these Knights as the ancestors of the noble house of Shirley.

The objection would be sound enough *if* the record stated that the fees were held by unnamed "co-heirs." Unfortunately for him, it states, on the contrary, that they were held by "Sewaldus, the heir of both" (Henry and Fulcher). This Sewaldus was son of Fulcher, and nephew of Henry, and we find him, the very year in which this return was made

* pp. 279-280.

† Vol. I., p. 111.

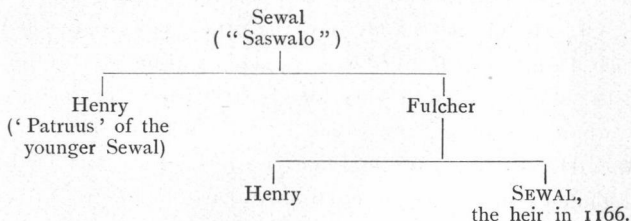
‡ The italics are mine.

(1166), appearing as the first witness to a charter of Bernard, abbot of Burton.* He also attests, with his brother Henry, another charter of abbot Bernard,† and one of Sir Robert Gresley's charters at Drakelowe.‡ We again find him on the Pipe Roll of 1175 (21 Hen. II.),§ on which his brother Henry also appears.||

Lastly, this Sewal, son of Fulcher, was a benefactor to Darley Abbey¶ and to Tutbury Priory, both of them Ferrers foundations, a charter of his to the latter affording decisive evidence of his identity:—

. . . Sawlus filius Fulcheri salutem in Domino. Sciatis me dedisse, etc. . . . virgultum meum quod est sub castello Tutesbiria, illud scilicet quod fuit Henrici filii Sawali *patrui mei*. . . concessione et assensu domini mei Willelmi comitis de Ferrariis et Henrici fratris mei de quo suscepi hæreditatem nostram.**

The relationship, therefore, we see, was this:—



Thus it was that the *carta* of 1166 returns Sewal as then the heir of both (his father) Fulcher and (his uncle) Henry ("heres utrorumque"). Mr. Yeatman's amazing statement (based on his mis-translation of that *carta*) that the name of the heir is unmentioned, is, as I have said, his sole ground for impugning the pedigree of the Shirleys, who, as a fact, descend from Sewal "heres utrorumque."

* "Hiis testibus Sewallo filio Fulcheri," etc. (*Burton Cartulary*, Ed. Wrottesley, p. 38.)

† "Hiis testibus Sewalle filio Fulcheri, Henrico fratre ejus," etc." (*Ibid.*)

‡ *The Gresley Charters* (Ed. Jeayes, p. 3).

§ Sewal[us] filius Fulcher[i] reddit compositum de x. marcis pro habenda assisa" (Ed. Pipe Roll Society, p. 31).

|| *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¶ See Henry II.'s charter of confirmation in *Monasticon*, vi., 359.

** *Ibid.*, iii. 395. The actual agreement between this Sewal and his brother Henry as to the inheritance, is printed in the appendix to *Stemmata Shirleiana*, together with other documents relating to Sewal.

The above example of Mr. Yeatman's treatment of the records with which he has to deal raises what he would call "a very grave question,"* namely, how far we can venture to accept the version he gives us. We have seen what he made of the opening words of the great Ferrers *carta*: let us see what he makes of the closing portion of this most important document. Again I take the Latin text from the official version:—

OFFICIAL TEXT.

Baggarugge† est de meis lx. militibus; ego inde servitium vobis facio. Et Meinfeninius‡ tenet illam contra me tantum quantum vobis placuerit (p. 340).§

MR. YEATMAN.

Baggarugge is mine. For sixty knights should I do service to you and Memstrums (Memtenin in the Black Book), Main holds against me. So much may it please you (p. 310).

"To you and Memstrums"! Such, according to Mr. Yeatman's punctuation, is the monstrous phrase. What he supposes it all to mean I have not the faintest idea. Turning in despair to his Index, I learn that "Memstrums" is a place. Six references follow the name, but five of them, unfortunately, prove to refer, not to "Memstrums," but to Melbourne. This, however, is relatively a trifle. For what Mr. Yeatman has read as "Memstrums," and taken for a weird place-name, is simply the Breton Christian name "Meinfelin" or "Meinfenin,"|| familiar to us as that of one of the Breton lords of Wolverton (Bucks.). We have only to turn to the Pipe Roll of the year (1167)¶ following that of the above return to find a Buckinghamshire manor obtaining thus the name of "Huinga Mainfelini"*** (or "Meinfenin"††).

Having thus converted a Christian name into that of a place unknown to topography, Mr. Yeatman converts the word which follows it into a Christian name by reading "illam"

* *Feud. Hist. Derb.*, vii., 124.

† An Oxfordshire manor of the house of Ferrers.

‡ "Meinfeninus" in Black Book.

§ This is almost the last clause in the *carta*.

|| The *Liber Niger* reading is clearly "Meinfeninus." In the *Red Book* it seems to me to be "Meinfenini[us]."

¶ Ed. Pipe Roll Society, p. 110.

*** Treasurer's Roll.

†† Chancellor's Roll.

as "Main."* "And here," we shall find him writing (p. 124), "it is imperative to notice another and most astounding instance of Mr. Round's mode of writing history." I find it equally imperative to notice another and most astounding instance of Mr. Yeatman's mode of reading records. That instance is taken from the *carta* which follows the great return of Earl Ferrers, namely, that of Ralf Hanselin. Mr. Yeatman gives us as an entry contained in that return:—

25.—Ulfus de Seccobiton held half a fee.

And to this entry he devotes nearly a page of comment, alleging that—

This is a very interesting and purely English family. This knight is, in all probability, the progenitor of the well-known Derbyshire family of de Hathersage.

The history of this family is a remarkably clear instance of the stability of the English race under Norman dominance, etc., etc.

Mr. Yeatman is here on what he would doubtless consider his special ground—the origin and feudal history of a Derbyshire family. But what do we find? In the first place, the words "held half a fee" are not to be found in the return after this man's name; he is entered as one of a group of seven who only held half a fee between them all!†

This, however, is as nothing compared with reading as "Seccobiton" a name which is "Stobbetone" in the Red Book text and "Stubbeton[e]" in that of the Black Book!‡

The right reading is most important, for it enables us to find the place from which Ulf was named. On examining the

* The word "illam" is perfectly clear in the MS.

† Although Mr. Yeatman has failed so strangely to understand this arrangement, there is nothing at all surprising in it to those conversant with these returns. For instance, of the six fees of St. Albans, one was held by four men and another by five (*Liber Rubens*, p. 360), while on the fief of William de Percy a single knight's fee was held by six men—"omnes isti de 1 milite," and a third of a fee by four men—"omnes isti de tertia parte militis," the sum total which is given (*Ibid.*, p. 426) confirming the statement.

‡ *Liber Rubens*, p. 341. Compare Hearne's *Liber Niger*, p. 224, where the reading is "Stubbeton." The *Liber Niger* text proves clearly that in the *Red Book* we should read "Stobbeton[e]." Its scribe, I find, actually wrote "Setobbetone," but sub-punctuated the "e" for deletion. The "t" of the *Red Book* is easily misread (as by Mr. Yeatman) as "c."

group in which he occurs, we find that one of the seven named was William "de Westburgo," and we know that Geoffrey "Alselin," in Domesday (fo. 269^b), had an important manor at Westborough, Lincs., immediately adjoining which is *Stubton*. Fulbeck, also, which gave its name to another of the group, is hard by. It was obviously this Stubton which gave its name to Ulf, and when we turn to the *Testa de Nevill* (p. 324) we actually find it included with Westborough as part of the Hanselin fief then held by Bardulf.

Mr. Yeatman, however, having first misread "Stobbeton[e]" as "Seccobiton," goes on to assert that this place "is no doubt Skegbi" (p. 317),* and proceeds to erect a pedigree upon this wild supposition. Mr. Yeatman, without the slightest ground, has denounced me as "a signal and deplorable example" of "wild cat genealogy."† I must leave my readers to discover a term for his own performance.

Having now sampled Mr. Yeatman's work, we shall find ourselves in a better position for appreciating the value of his fierce attack on the pedigree of Gresley of Drakelowe, of which no less an authority than Mr. Eyton spoke as "a genealogy second to none among the commoners of England."‡

On the opening page of the preface to Section VII. of his history, Mr. Yeatman describes this pedigree as "a most impudent fraud," originating in "the enlightened age of James I." He asserts that in that reign a family—

having acquired great wealth, purchased a baronetcy when James set them up for sale to replenish his coffers, and bearing a very ancient Derbyshire name—that of Gresley—eventually purchased the land and found a congenial herald to fake up a pedigree, showing that the *novus homo* was of the old stock.

The charge is, at least, definite enough; the "fraud" is associated with the first baronet, Sir George Gresley, who

* That is, Skegby, Notts. In his index of places we read, "Seccobiton = Skeggisby," while his index of persons identifies "Scegby, Sceggebi, Seccobiton."

† *Feudal History of Derbyshire*, vii., 186.

‡ In his remarks on the "Staffordshire fief of Fitz Alan" (*Salt Society*, vol. i.).

obtained the dignity in 1611. After alleging that "the fakers . . . forged a few amazing charters," Mr. Yeatman asserts that "the first baronet would seem to have acquired an interest in Drakelowe, but how or when it is not stated." The charge, I have said, is definite enough; but what is the proof? Amazing though it may seem, Mr. Yeatman does not condescend to offer even a scrap.

Let us consider the position. In *The Gresleys of Drakelowe*, Mr. Madan has written an elaborate history of that family, giving his references throughout. With that work Mr. Yeatman is acquainted, for he actually quotes from its pages, and in it he must have seen the Gresleys succeeding one another at Drakelowe, without a break, for generations before the baronetcy was created. The first baronet had succeeded his father in the ordinary course at Drakelowe, and that father had been sheriff not only of Derbyshire, but of Staffordshire, and Deputy Lieutenant and Captain of the Horse of Derbyshire; for the Gresleys of Drakelowe were not a house whose light was hid beneath a bushel. They were, as records prove, the holders of a great estate, and they duly received knighthood generation after generation.

Where was the break in this knightly line? When and how did "the old stock" come to part with the estate? When did the "novus homo" buy it? To these questions Mr. Yeatman can give no answer. It is for him to prove that Mr. Madan's narrative is here a tissue of falsehoods; but he does not attempt to do so.* Ignoring that writer, he asserts, we have seen, that "it is not stated" how Sir George "acquired an interest in Drakelowe," and observes that "Lysons does attempt to prove a connection with Swadlincote," adding that—

Lysons, and, of course, the modern historians of the family (including Mr. Round), regard this as conclusive proof "that the Gresley family had continued to be superior Lords of Swadlincote from the time of their ancestor, Nigel de Stafford." This is absurd.

My readers will doubtless be surprised to learn that I have

* His attack on the Gresley pedigree here has been satirised in No. 10 of *The Ancestor* by the Editor of that magazine.

never even mentioned the name of Swadlincote, and have not so much as had occasion to consider the connection of the Gresleys with that manor.

The Gresley cartulary affords two similar opportunities of revealing the peculiar character of Mr. Yeatman's statements. On p. 126 he writes as follows:—

Mr. Round, in his sentimental mood, can find nothing more valuable than the Gresley chartulary, which he thinks, "taken as a whole is (*sic*) unsurpassed as a collection for the history of a family." It is to be hoped that this is inaccurate, for a more wretched compilation of fraud and forgery was never made!

What I actually wrote was:—

Taking *the documents at Drakelowe* as a whole, *they are possibly* unsurpassed as a collection for the history of a family.*

Now, the Gresley cartulary is at Manchester, and *not* among "the documents at Drakelowe," nor have I had occasion to make any use of its contents.

Again he returns to the attack on p. 139:—

It is amazing to find anyone so ignorant of mediæval documents as to write of this Cartulary as Mr. Round does—that "of course it is a valuable contribution to county history."

What I actually wrote was that *one of Mr. Madan's Appendixes* ("Notes on the Manors and Possessions of the Family") is, "of course, a valuable contribution to county history."† So the cartulary (as in the preceding instance) is not even mentioned in the paragraph from which this sentence is taken; the really "amazing" thing is that a writer should dare to make such statements. Mr. Yeatman speaks, we have seen, of "a most impudent fraud." I must leave my readers to select the language most fitting to describe the tactics by which he endeavours to prove my "crass ignorance."

I have honestly endeavoured to discover when Mr. Yeatman believes the Gresleys now of Drakelowe to have first obtained the estates. But, although his Preface is definite enough, he speaks far more vaguely when it comes to the text. Thus on p. 122:—

* *The Ancestor*, i. 202. Mr. Yeatman cannot even quote its title accurately, for he styles it on p. 121 "The Antiquary."

† *Ibid.*, p. 201.

Mr. Round should know that the modern Gresley tenure (if indeed it can go back so far) dates from a grant of the second year of King John, etc., etc.

This is far enough removed from the definite assertion that the Gresleys acquired the lands by purchase in the reign of James I. On p. 124 we find an even further admission:—

Whether the modern Gresleys have any descent from this William Fitz Nigel is a very grave question.

But, as we have seen, the Preface confidently spoke of this descent, not as merely open to question, but as “a most impudent fraud.” So, again, on the next page, the definite assertion in the Preface melts away into the vague claim that “the whole pedigree of the Gresleys is doubtful, and requires proof at many points.”

Seeking, instead of this vague language, some clear and definite point on which Mr. Yeatman rejects the accepted pedigree of Gresley, we find it in his fierce determination to claim that the lords of Drakelowe, in Norman times, were members of his beloved house of “Albini.” Mr. Yeatman can discover Albinis in most unlikely places. An amazing paragraph in Section VII. of his *Feudal History of Derbyshire*—a paragraph in which the hapless M. Combes figures as “Mr. Coombe” and “M. Coombs”—opens thus:—

The name of Aubini is a great one in Anjou. The finest tower in that city (*sic*), truly a magnificent one, and second only to the great Castle (two of the chief wonders of France), is called after St. Albani.*

What matters it that, in my “crass ignorance,” I imagine Anjou to be the name, not of a city, but of a province? What if this sainted “Albini” is not to be found in the Calendar? Shall Mr. Yeatman be deprived of “this grand Albini tower” merely because the family of Albini had no more to do with it than I have? If he can make them lords of Drakelowe, why should he not discover their name to be great in the city of “Anjou”?

Now, with Derbyshire, in sober fact, the Albinis had little to do. I am anxious to be strictly fair to Mr. Yeatman, and

* See the chapter on “The Albinis of the House of St. Sauveur.”

will, therefore, give, in his own words, his contention to the contrary. The chapter from which I have just quoted opens as follows:—

The Albinis of Cainho, although holding but a small interest in Derbyshire (four fees given by Henry Ferrars before Domesday with Amicia, his daughter), exerted a very strong influence upon Derbyshire history, partly because they aided the re-settlement of the Montgomeries in this county, and also because they originally held under Ferrars the whole of the Gresley territory (p. 164).

Here is the point at issue, the *fons et origo mali*, Mr. Yeatman insists on dislodging Sir Robert Gresley's ancestors to make room for his "Albinis" as holders of "the Gresley territory"; and he is full of wrath against the Gresley pedigree for standing in the way of this contention, and against myself for accepting (like others) that pedigree.

In his Preface he is not even content with installing the "Albinis" at Gresley, but asserts that "several distinct families—Albini, Montgomery, Seale, and others (!)—as they severally settled upon the lands, had used the territorial designation," but I cannot find in the text itself any attempt to prove that any family but that of Albini had previously used the name of Gresley. Of the Gresley estates he definitely states that—

At Domesday, and at the time of the Red Book of the Exchequer (in Henry II.), they were held by the Albinis, who here were styled, occasionally, de Gresley—of course from the Castle of that name—the caput of their small Barony (p. 118).

In spite of what is mere assertion, however confident and persistent,* we shall find—

(1) That Mr. Yeatman is unable to produce one scrap of proof that any Albini ever possessed either Gresley or Drakelowe;

(2) That his belief is inconsistent, on his own showing, with the Albini pedigree;

(3) That he is unable to explain how they came to lose the territory he asserts them to have held.

His whole contention will be found to rest on one argument,

* See pp. ix., 118, 123, 124, 126, 127, 136, 164.

and on one alone. He claims—and he rightly claims—to have shown that Catton in Croxall, Derbyshire, was held of the Ferrers family by the Albinis of Cainhoe (Beds.), and descended with a share of their barony to their co-heirs, the St. Amands.* Therefore, he would have us admit, because the Nigel who held Catton of Ferrers in Domesday was Nigel “de Albini,” every other Nigel who held a manor of Ferrers was also Nigel “de Albini.” But, if so, why is he quite unable to connect any other Derbyshire manor with the Albinis or their heirs, although he can easily do so in the case of Catton? The answer is obvious: it is that these other manors were held, not by Nigel “de Albini,” but by Nigel “de Stafford,” the Domesday tenant-in-chief of Drakelowe and the lineal ancestor in the male line, as I and other genealogists are satisfied, of the present Gresleys of Drakelowe.†

We may turn Mr. Yeatman’s words against himself, and say of his view with perfect truth: “It is simply guessing on the name Nigel.”‡ On that name he has an obsession, insisting that it was “a well-known name, one of the few surnames (*sic*) of the period” (p. 125), and that “Nigel was a well-established surname (*sic*) with the Albinis, and each son would be entitled to use it” (pp. 131-2). Now, Nigel, I need hardly say, was not a *surname* at all, and as a Christian name it was not distinctive of any one family. Thus, among the tenants-in-chief of Domesday we have Nigel de Stafford, Nigel de Bereville (whose fief in Bucks. follows immediately on that of Nigel de Albini), Nigel Fossard, and Nigel the

* See, for instance, p. 123, and compare *Feudal Aids*, i. 248, for the St. Amand tenure. But even this is no new discovery of his own. Lysons, whose work he has used (see vol. i., pp. 86, 89, etc.), observed so far back as 1817 that Catton “passed in marriage with Amicia de Ferrars to Nigel de Albini, and it continued in that family in the reign of Hen. III. Aylmer, Baron St. Amand, descended from one of the co-heiresses, died seised of it in 1403” (p. 93).

† The descent is accepted by General Wrottesley in his writings and in *British Museum Charters*, etc.

‡ We read on p. 125 that “Mr. Round’s mistake in confounding the Toesni’s (*sic*) with the Albini’s (*sic*) is curious, but there is no ground for it. It is simply guessing on the name Nigel.” As a matter of fact, I have never, we shall see, confused the Toesnis with the Albinis.

physician. Among the under-tenants, also, the name is quite a common one.* The fact that a man bore it does not create even a presumption that he belonged to the house of Albini.

We saw, in discussing the origin of the Shirleys, the importance of the entry relating to their ancestor in the great Ferrers return of knights in 1166. It is immediately followed by that which relates to the Gresleys' ancestor:—

Willelmus filius Nigelli feoda iij. militum; et Robertus filius suus, modo tenet eosdem milites.

Here we have, there is no dispute, a pedigree of three generations; and we who uphold the Gresley pedigree recognise the Robert who was holding these four knights' fees in 1166 as Robert de Gresley.† The Bishop of Coventry's return in 1166 mentions Robert de Gresley as holding one of his fees.

* See Ellis' *Introduction to Domesday*, II., 357-8. It is impossible to agree with Mr. Yeatman's views on the frequency of Christian names. On p. 280 of Sec. II. he writes that "both Fulc and Sewell are common christian names," though the latter is, on the contrary, rare in the twelfth century, and valuable in Derbyshire as pointing at that time to a descendant of "Saswalo." So, too, on p. 190 of Sec. VII. we read that "If Mr. Round had only examined some of the original charters which he has edited, he would have discovered that the names of Alan and Flaald were both extremely common in Brittany." On the contrary, while Alan was one of the commonest names in the Duchy, Flaald was one of the very rarest; so extraordinarily rare, indeed, as to be really distinctive.

† Not an Albini, nor of necessity a Toesni either. Mr. Yeatman asserts (p. 121) that "Mr. Round . . . warmly confirms the statement of Mr. Jeayes of a Toesni descent." This is the exact opposite of the truth. I did not even mention Mr. Jeayes in my article, and I praised Mr. Madan for his candour in admitting "that actual proof is wanting" for the descent from Toesni (*The Ancestor*, No. 1, p. 196). Here, then, we have another of Mr. Yeatman's characteristic assertions. And yet another, I am sorry to say, is found on pp. 211-12. After stating that I have "adopted without any acknowledgment" the views of the author of *The Norman People*, and "adopted the absurd theory" of that writer (pp. 186-7), and thereby "fallen into his ditch" (p. 189), Mr. Yeatman boldly asserts that "The author of *The Norman People* has boldly annexed Alan fil Flaald, of Monmouth and Norfolk, as son of Guihenoc the Monk . . . and Mr. Round adopts this affiliation." This, as in the instance preceding, is the exact opposite of the truth, for I mentioned that affiliation only to reject it absolutely. The author of that work makes Flaald (not, of course, as Mr. Yeatman, blundering again, asserts, his son Alan) son of Guienoc. What I wrote on this was that "the rashness and inaccuracy which marred that book resulted in his being wrongly pronounced a 'son of Guienoc'" (*Peerage Studies*, p. 117). Oddly enough it is my critic himself who has adopted the baseless theory of that work that Flaald was a son of Guihenoc (see 203 of his work).

General Wrottesley has identified this fee as lying in "Morton, Tamhorn, and Wolsey," Staffs., all of which were held "by Nigel, the grandfather of Robert de Gresley," in Domesday, and were subsequently held by Robert's descendant, Geoffrey de Gresley, *temp.* Edward I. (*i.e.*, 1284-1286).^{*} This is of the greatest possible importance, as affording independent testimony from Staffordshire to the Gresley descent. For Gresley itself, etc., descended in precisely the same way to the above Geoffrey de Gresley, who held it in 1284-1286† (Kirkby's Quest).

"And here it is imperative to notice," as Mr. Yeatman himself would say,‡ his treatment of Kirkby's Quest. Insisting that "to write history correctly, one must first study our great national records," he complains§ of the *Testa de Nevill*, that "the Editor, who, in 1833, prepared this edition for the Master of the Rolls,|| took no trouble whatever to ascertain its true date."¶ For the question of date, of course, is all-important in dealing with such returns.

Now, according to him, "Kirkby's Quest shows that Galf de Gresley held three fees in the reign of Edward I."^{**} Yet in the same volume, when he comes to Kirkby's Quest, he pronounces it, after careful consideration,†† to have been "taken 22-25 Henry III."‡‡ (1237-1241); that is to say, more than thirty years before Edward came to the throne! In the

* See his paper on "The Liber Niger Scaccarii: Barony of the Bishop of Coventry" (Salt Society, i., 153). It is important, we shall find, to observe that he also considers the "Willelmus filius Nigelli," who witnesses a charter of the Bishop of Coventry, *temp.* Stephen to be probably William de Gresley.

† *Feudal Aids*, i., 248.

‡ "And here it is imperative to notice another and most astounding instance of Mr. Round's mode of writing history." (Sec. vii., p. 124.)

§ Sec. ii., p. 381.

|| This is yet another of Mr. Yeatman's inaccuracies, for although he begins his account of the *Testa* by stating that it was "printed under the direction of the Master of the Rolls" (p. 365), the Master of the Rolls had nothing to do with it. It was edited for the old Record Commission.

¶ Sec. ii., p. 365.

** *Ibid.*, p. 288.

†† *Ibid.*, p. 458-9.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, p. 457. Accordingly we find, in the index, the date "22 Hen. III." against some names that occur in it.

volume, however, so largely devoted to exposing my own "crass ignorance," we read of Catton that "20 Edward I. Almaric de St. Amand held it (Kirkby's Quest)"*; while on p. 132 the date becomes "Kirby, Quest 20-5 Edward I." So the date of this important return was, we learn, 1291-2 at earliest; that is, at least half a century later than the date he had himself deliberately assigned to it! Whether Mr. Yeatman would attach or not any weight to the verdict of the Public Record Office on the subject, my readers will probably be inclined to do so, and may, therefore, be interested to learn that this Quest is there assigned to 1284-6.†

But there is worse to come. Owing to Mr. Yeatman's inability to understand the record, he has actually omitted altogether, in the translation he gives of it, the Gresleys' tenure of Gresley! This assertion does not rest on any reading of my own: it is based on the reading of the text by the officers of the Public Record Office. I here place on the left Mr. Yeatman's own translation, and on the right the actual Latin text "prepared under the superintendence of the Deputy Keeper of the Records":—

MR. YEATMAN.

Cotes.—Nich de Segrave held Cotes for one fee for the service of one bow (Berselet) with a string of the king. Galfry de Gresley held the same of the said Edmund. (Nic. de Segrave succeeded to this inheritance 22 Hy. III.)‡

OFFICIAL TEXT.

Nicholaus de Segrave tenet COTES pro uno [eodo] et pro uno berselet cum uno ligamine de rege.

Galfridus de Greseley tenet eandem (*scil.* GRESELEY) de predicto Edmundo, et idem Edmundo de rege i.c. sed non dicunt, etc.§

Here, it will be seen, two entries are rolled by Mr. Yeatman into one, the whole of which is referred by him to the Segrave fee of "Cotes" || (*i.e.*, Coton in Lullington), because he is

* Sec. vii., p. 109.

† See *Feudal Aids*, i., 246-249, and *passim*.

‡ Sec. ii., p. 462.

§ *Feudal Aids*, i., 248.

|| The reader may be amused to learn, of this Derbyshire manor, that the words which Mr. Yeatman here renders, "one bow (Berselet) with a string," really mean "a hound in leash"! The hound due from this manor was sometimes described as a "berselet" (*Calendar of Inquisitions: Henry III.*, vol. i., p. 89; *Feudal Aids*, vol. i., p. 248); and sometimes (*Red Book of the Exchequer*, p. 566; *Testa de Nevill*, pp. 18, 20; *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, vol. i., p. 81) as a "brachet" (*brachetum*). Oddly enough, in this same volume (p. 401) Mr. Yeatman describes the render for this same manor as "one fleet hound (Brachetum) with leash (ligamie [*sic*])," while on yet another page (p. 388) its tenant is entered as "rendering one armlet (bracketum)"!

not acquainted with the special meaning of the phrase "eandem" in these returns. The result is that he actually omits the tenure of Gresley by Geoffrey de Gresley at the date of this return.* Shall I follow his own example, and exclaim that "it is amazing to find anyone so ignorant of mediæval documents" †? On no account. My readers may form their own opinions from the facts.

And now having prepared the ground by examining Mr. Yeatman's work, we are at length in a position to approach his attack on the Gresley pedigree. Of that pedigree the late Mr. Eyton, of whose "master mind" Mr. Yeatman speaks, ‡ asserted that it was "a genealogy second to none among the commoners of England." § General Wrottesley, whose work is highly praised by Mr. Yeatman, || invariably accepts it in his papers for the Salt Society. Mr. Jeayes, ¶ who has compiled an account of the charters and muniments at Drakelowe, ** duly accepts it in a passage which evokes from Mr. Yeatman "severe comment" and the denunciation of the passage as "wholly inaccurate." †† Of my own condemnation for accepting the pedigree I have already spoken; but the treatment of Mr. Madan's work is the most surprising thing, and calls, as Mr. Yeatman would say, for "severe comment."

Triumphantly citing against us Mr. Madan's work, Mr. Yeatman exclaims:—

What does Mr. Falconer Madan, another, and a more cautious, and a very able author, who has written upon the Gresleys, think of it? He writes:—"The first few Gresleys are shadowy persons, the dates of whose births and deaths are unrecorded, and of whom no personal traits are preserved." This is strictly accurate. ‡‡

Who would believe, after reading this, that the pedigree so

* See, for its importance, p. 166.

† See p. 161.

‡ Sec. vii., p. 224.

§ Salt Society's publications, i., 223.

|| Sec. i., p. vii.

¶ Of the Department of MSS., British Museum.

** Mr. Yeatman, with curious inaccuracy, gives the title of his book as "History of Gresley."

†† Sec. vii., p. 121.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

fiercely attacked by Mr. Yeatman is duly set forth as fact in Mr. Madan's book? No one can read that book without knowing this; and, indeed, it will be evident to those who look at the above quotation that it does not impugn the *descent* in any way whatever; it merely states that, as is naturally the case at that remote period, we cannot amplify the pedigree by dates and "personal traits." Mr. Yeatman, however, has his own explanation "why Mr. Madan could find no personal traits of any of them, or of their deaths or births," namely, that "these, if anywhere, would be found at Cainho, their chief residence in England."* Alas! if only Mr. Madan had guessed that his "Gresleys of Drakelowe" in the twelfth century were really Albinis of Cainhoe he would doubtless have hurried off to Bedfordshire to look in the parish register for the dates of their births and deaths, and to gather their "personal traits" from the lips of the oldest inhabitants.

But let us be serious, and consider Mr. Yeatman's main contention against the accepted pedigree. I say "accepted," for later in his book my critic makes this awkward admission:—

If the consideration of the connection of the Albin family with Derbyshire compelled the author to discuss the unsound views of Mr. Round, much to his regret, for unfortunately they appear to be held in common with other writers, for some of whom the author has sincere respect,† etc. That contention, peculiar to my critic, is that the William fitz Nigel and his son Robert of the 1166 return‡ were Albinis, the former being son of Nigel de Albin of Cainhoe, who obtained the four fees they held of Ferrers by marrying a daughter of Henry de Ferrers, the Domesday baron.

It is on pp. 281-2 of Sec. ii. that Mr. Yeatman deals with William Fitz Nigel and Robert, his son. He there asserts that—

There is no doubt about one, at least, of the manors (Catton) held by this knight, nor any about his indenty (*sic*), for Domesday records that he held Catton (Chetune), and the Baron St. Amand obtained it as one of the co-heirs of Robert fil Nigel, Lord of Cainhoe.

* Sec. vii., p. 127.

† *Ibid.*, p. 186.

‡ See p. 162.

Whichever of the two men above is referred to as "this knight," he did not, and could not, appear in Domesday, and he did *not* hold Catton. Moreover, even on the writer's showing, there was no such person as "Robert fil Nigel, Lord of Cainhoe," no Robert among its lords having a Nigel for a father. Mr. Yeatman proceeds to state on the same page that "Ailmer de St. Amand" married the Albin co-heir, although it was *Ralf* de St. Amand (as elsewhere stated by himself*).

In the next paragraph we read that—

At this period the Gresleys were not certainly tenants of the Ferrars family.† It is clear that they were knights of the Honour of Peverel, etc.

To this I reply that they *were* knightly tenants of Ferrars under Henry II., as the very next paragraph, it will be found, admits,‡ and that they were *not*, either then or at any other time, "knights of the Honour of Peverel."

I will take this last proposition first, in order to clear it out of the way once and for all. For the Derbyshire Gresleys were never "knights of the Honour of Peverel."

If I were suddenly to announce that "two and two are five," I should probably find "great difficulty" in explaining the fact. Mr. Yeatman's difficulties are at times due to similar discoveries. - We read in his latest volume that—

A great difficulty is to be found in the fact that three fees were held in Derbyshire (*sic*) by a Gresley of the Honour of Peverel, but records give no particulars of their manors. . . . Ralf, the second of these five sons, held three fees of the Peverel Honour in Derbyshire (*sic*) in 3 John, and there is a good deal of evidence in the Pipe Rolls showing that this Ralf was no myth, but not showing who he was or what were his fees" (pp. 131-2).

* Sec. vii., p. 174.

† Six pages further on it is definitely asserted that—"It was not until about the year 1200 that the Gresleys of Drakelowe became knights of the Earl of Ferrars" (p. 286).

‡ This paragraph, referring to "the duel of the Earl de Ferrars" in 1177, speaks of "the list of his knights (see p. 121, where the names of a number of the Earl's tenants of that date are to be found)." We refer to p. 121, and duly find a list of men whose families are known to have been knightly tenants of the Earl under Henry II. Among them are Robert and Henry de Gresley, two brothers who appear together in several of the Gresley charters now at Drakelowe and in one of the Okeover charters. Robert was the son of William Fitz Nigel, who held four fees of the Earl in 1166.

There is no difficulty whatever about these fees; the records do show which they were; and not one of them was in Derbyshire. A valuable return for the Honour of Peverel, which is assigned to John's reign, contains the entry—

Radulfus de Grasele iij. milites, scilicet in Grasele in Notinghamscira, j, in Claydon in Bokinghamscira ij.*

That is to say that one of the fees lay in Greasley, Notts., and the other two in Claydon (*i.e.*, Middle Claydon), Bucks. This entry is abundantly confirmed by record evidence, which shows that Greasley and Middle Claydon descended together.† There is no mystery in this, neither is there anything new.‡ All that has happened is that Mr. Yeatman has confused the Derbyshire Gresleys of Greasley with the Nottinghamshire Greasleys, who held Greasley of the Honour of Peverel.§ The two families, of course, had no more to do with one another than has Lord Middleton, who takes his title from Middleton, co. Warwick, with Lord Midleton, who takes his from Midleton, co. Cork.||

It will be observed that the words "in Derbyshire," which have led Mr. Yeatman astray, are interpolated (doubtlessly inadvertently) by himself, and that no record places, or, indeed, could place the fees in that county.¶

I have now disproved Mr. Yeatman's assertion, and explained the origin of his error. In his latest volume, I observe, he seems to be vaguer on the subject (p. 132). We there read of Ralf, who held the Peverel fees: "Possibly his family, if they ever existed,** were of the Nottingham Grellys (*sic*) or

* "Honor Piperelli de Notingham," in *Red Book of the Exchequer*, p. 584.

† See *Feudal Aids*, i., 85, 93, 119, for the descent of Middle Claydon to Ros and Cantelupe, as did Greasley. See also *Testa de Nevil*, pp. 6, 12, 13, 14 for Greasley, and pp. 258, 261 for Claydon.

‡ See Mr. Madan's *Gresleys of Drakelowe*, p. 210, and the works there quoted.

§ "Griseleia" was held by William Peverel in Domesday.

|| In Mr. Yeatman's *Index of Places*, vol. i., he similarly combines under "Gresley" the entries which relate respectively to Greasley and to Greasley.

¶ Being in Notts. they would, of course, be found in records which cover both Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

** I am quite at a loss to know what this means.

Greslets (*sic*), who were certainly distant cousins"—which, to recur to my own illustration, is like assuming that Lord Middleton and Lord Midleton must be "certainly distant cousins." Yet, lower down on the same page, we read that—

Whether these de Gresleys (*sic*) were any relation of the Derbyshire or Lincolnshire families is not known. It is curious that they are only found in Derbyshire (*sic*) as tenants of Peverils, and it would not appear that the Muscapp family ever held of that honour.

Again a needless puzzle! These Peverel fees, as I have said, were *not* in Derbyshire, and there is nothing "curious" in the fact of their tenure by the Greasleys of Greasley, who had nothing in the world to do with the Gresleys of Drakelowe and Gresley.*

Having disposed of the Gresleys' tenure of three Peverel fees, we must now do the same for three Stafford fees. According to my critic—

The *Liber Niger* shows that Robert de Gresley held three fees in Staffordshire of Robert de Stafford, which at Domesday were held by Nigel.†

Sheer imagination on Mr. Yeatman's part! Not a single fee is entered in the "*Liber Niger*" as held of Robert de Stafford by Robert de Gresley;‡ and as Mr. Madan observes of Nigel: "Of Robert de Stafford," in Domesday, "he is in no case a tenant."

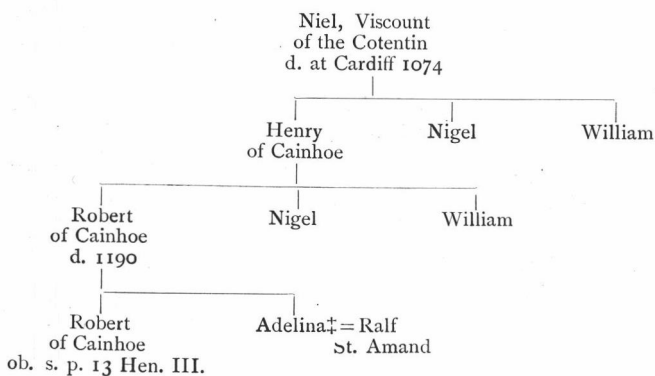
If my readers will now refer to p. 163 they will find that I there claim that Mr. Yeatman's attempt to instal the Albinis barons of Cainhoe, as Grésleys at Gresley, "is inconsistent, on his own showing, with their pedigree." And, in spite of his loud assertions, we shall find that he is conscious of the flaw.

* Mr. Yeatman might have been saved from his error by my own article in *The Ancestor* (No. 1), which stirred him to so much wrath. For I wrote of Mr. Madan's book, that—"the snares that beset the path of the unwary genealogist are admirably illustrated by the next Appendix, which introduces us to two families who seem to have existed for the express purpose of being confused with the Gresleys. One of these is Greasley of Greasley."

† Sec. ii., p. 288.

‡ See General Wrottesley's paper on *The Liber Niger Scaccarii*, and his analysis of *The Barony of Robert de Stafford*, therein. (Salt Society, i., 159-188.)

For what is his own version of that baronial pedigree? "For a full account of the Albinis," we read, "the learned reader is referred to the author's history of the House of Arundel."* To make the point at issue clear, I must give the pedigree of the Cainhoe Albinis as it appears in that work (p. 81)†:—



Now, Catton in Croxall descended, as Mr. Yeatman rightly contends, with Cainhoe itself from Nigel, the Domesday tenant,§ to the St. Amands, and consequently presents no difficulty. But the Gresley territory, which, according to him, was held by Nigel de Albini in 1086, and should, therefore, have descended in the same line, did *not*, as he is forced to admit. For it was held, in the days of Henry I., not by *Henry*, son of Nigel, but by *William*, son of Nigel. Here are the two pedigrees, as to which there is no dispute:—

* Sec. ii., p. 282.

† It would seem that I know more even of the Albinis than Mr. Yeatman does, for I have supplied the name of Henry de Albini's wife and traced the heirs of their younger son "Nigel," whose fate, he admits, is "unknown" to him (p. 150), in my paper on "A D'Aubenev cadet." (*Ancestor*, No. 12.)

‡ The true name of Ralf's wife, who was only the younger co-heiress, was not Adelina, but Ascelina, as given by my critic himself on p. 174 of Sec. vii.

§ In the above pedigree the first Nigel ("Niel") is made to die in 1074, but on the opposite page (p. 80) we read that "Cainhoe was held by Nigel de Albini at the date of Domesday," *i.e.*, 1086 (which is correct).

Nigel
|
HENRY
of Cainhoe
temp. Hen. I.
|
Robert
of Cainhoe
in 1166.*

Nigel
|
WILLIAM
held 4 fees of
Ferrers *temp.* Hen. I.
|
Robert
held 4 fees of
Ferrers in 1166.†

And here is Mr. Yeatman's own admission of the difficulty with which he is confronted—a difficulty created solely by his own attempt to confuse two distinct families:—

There is probably some error in the generally received pedigree of the Albinis of Cainhoe,‡ for *it has to be explained how*§ the older branch of the family came to inherit this, if William fil Nigel was the younger brother of Henry, etc., etc.||

Just so; and that is precisely what he can only explain by throwing over his own pedigree, to which “the learned reader” is referred.

So insuperable, indeed, is Mr. Yeatman's difficulty that in his latest volume (Sec. vii.) he is actually driven to set forth, unconsciously, no doubt, *both* versions of the pedigree. On p. 173 we have the “generally received” version, in which Nigel is succeeded at Cainhoe by his son *Henry*, and Henry by *Robert*; but on p. 125 we read of Henry:—

He had a brother William, as well as a son of that name, and the son of *William*¶ was *Robert*, who died 1190,** holding Nigel Albin's barony of Cainho as well as these Derbyshire manors.

That this latter version is the wrong one is proved to demonstration by evidence with which Mr. Yeatman is acquainted,†† namely, the Abingdon Cartulary, the charters in which show that Robert de Albin succeeded at Cainhoe (as in the “generally received version”), to a father Henry, *not* to a father William.

* This is Mr. Yeatman's own version in the *History of the House of Arundel*.

† See p. 165.

‡ Which is also Mr. Yeatman's own.

§ The italics are mine; they call attention to his difficulty.

|| Sec. ii., p. 281.

¶ The italics are mine.

** Compare Mr. Yeatman's own chart pedigree given above.

†† See Sec. ii., p. 281.

Let it be clearly understood that all this difficulty and confusion arises solely from the desperate endeavour to prove that the Gresleys of Gresley were really Albinis of Cainhoe. Nor have we even yet exhausted the difficulties thus created. For if the Albinis, as alleged, were the holders of the Gresley manors, how did they come to lose them? Why did not these manors descend with the rest of their property, as did Catton? Mr. Yeatman confesses that he cannot tell us. Here are his own words:—

How the Albinis lost the greater part of their Derbyshire possessions is unknown, just as it is uncertain how the later Gresleys crept into them; but it is quite sufficient to prove that the older Gresleys were Albinis, and to show a continuous holding by them and by the St. Amands of portions, and it is not necessary to prove how they lost them.*

On the contrary, it is most necessary to prove that they did lose them, Mr. Yeatman having failed to produce any vestige of proof that they ever held them or that “the older Gresleys were Albinis.”

I have already shown (pp. 164-5) that in two passages Mr. Yeatman has charged me with making the early Gresleys Toesnis, and “confounding the Toesnis with the Albinis.” In yet a third he calmly states that—

Mr. Round took the Albinis history so far as it is recorded, but misread it, and guessed, wrongly, that they were Toesnis, and then, by means of tampering with the records by most unwarrantable additions and glosses of his own,† he converted the Gresleys (Albinis) to his own satisfaction into an unknown family, who merely took the name of the territory, and who evidently intruded without a shadow of right,‡ etc., etc.

I never took “the Albinis history” or even had any Albinis in mind when dealing with the early Gresleys. On the contrary, I reject and repudiate, as a perfectly baseless delusion, the view that these Gresleys were Albinis, which is merely Mr. Yeatman’s own. Moreover, I do not even accept it as *proved*§ that those Gresleys were of Toesni stock. Who, then, is guilty, in Mr. Yeatman’s words, of “confounding the Toesnis

* Sec. vii., p. 123.

† I shall dispose of this gross charge on p. 176.

‡ Sec. vii., p. 186.

§ See p. 164.

with the Albinis"? Why, it is my critic himself! Here is an extract from his great work, to which he refers "the learned reader":—

Nigel de Stafford held Gresley and Drakelowe. . . . It would seem probable that he was a Toesni, and the brother of Robert Todenii of Stafford, younger son of Roger de Conches. It seems probable that he was also called at other times Nigel Albini.*

What has "the learned reader" to say to that?

I now proceed to meet, fairly and squarely, Mr. Yeatman's charge against me of "tampering with the records by most unwarrantable addition and glosses" of my own. Here is his chief example of my doing so:—

And here it is imperative to notice another and most astounding instance of Mr. Round's mode of writing history. At p. 213 of his *Feudal England*. . . . He then adds:—" . . . William de Gresley, holder of Linton (a Derbyshire hamlet close to Gresley) had succeeded there and at "Widesers" Nigel, a tenant of Henry de Ferrars in 1086 (D.B., i., 233 b). . . ."

It is not the fact, as Mr. Round asserts, that "William de Gresley had succeeded at Linton and Widesers, Nigel, the tenant of Henry Ferrar (*sic*), in 1086." Domesday shows that Henry Ferrars (*sic*) held both these manors, but it does not state that Nigel was his under-tenant; in fact that record proves that he held them in demesne. It is equally untrue that, etc., etc.†

There is no possibility, in this matter, of misunderstanding or of doubt, for Mr. Yeatman quotes, it will be seen, the reference I give for my statement, namely, Domesday Book, "I., 233b." On turning to that page, "the learned reader" will discover that the only entries relating to those manors are these:—

Nigell[us] ten[et] de H[enrico] in Windesers III. car terræ vastas. . .

Nigell[us] ten[et] de H[enrico] in Lintone I. car. terræ vastam.

in absolute accordance with my statement. And on turning to the text of "The Leicestershire Survey," first published by me in *Feudal England* (p. 200), he will read:—

In Widesers III. car. Willelmi de Greseel[e]. Idem in Lintona I. car.

Is it, then, or is it not the case that Nigel, tenant of Henry de Ferrars, was succeeded here by William de Gresley? And which of us is guilty, in Mr. Yeatman's words, of an "untrue" statement?

* *History of the House of Arundel*, p. 41.

† Sec. vii., p. 124.

Here is Mr. Yeatman's other example:—

Mr. Round writes, with a view "to settle the matter by the inexorable evidence of the Pipe Rolls," that—"Certain lands belonging to the honour of Lancaster had been granted out to William Fitz Walkelin and Nigel de Gresley. It is certain that these lands were at Stainsby and Drakelow respectively." A statement which, if true, has no bearing upon the question, even when supplemented by the unwarrantable addition made by Mr. Round. Neither Stainsby nor Drakelow are even mentioned, and it is not certain, nor even probable, that the co-granter (*sic*) was William Fitz Walkelin, of Stainsby.*

We have only to turn to the Pipe Roll of 1175 (21 Henry II. †) to find, under the three years' account for the Honour of Lancaster ‡ no fewer than three entries (pp. 7, 8, 9) of lands granted "Will[elm]o filio Walkelini . . . in Steinbia" § and "Nigell[o] de Gresel[ega] . . . in Drakelawa." So much for Mr. Yeatman's statement that "neither Stainsby nor Drakelowe" are even mentioned, but are an "unwarrantable addition" of my own. It may strike "the learned reader" as curiously foolish on his part to charge me with "tampering with the records" when his charge can be instantly disproved by referring to the text of the records, which are printed and accessible to all the world. But that is Mr. Yeatman's business, not mine.

The charge has at least enabled me to make a contribution to the history of these two Derbyshire manors.||

I am disposed to agree with Mr. Yeatman when he writes of "those puzzling facts of county history which have produced, for Derbyshire readers, so much unhappy guesswork and too frequently such deplorable blundering."¶ But I am not sure that we should look for them in the works of his predecessors.

* Sec. vii., p. 122. Mr. Yeatman adds that "A William Fitz Walkelin did receive a grant at Stainsby in the reign of King John." As a matter of fact he received it, as the Pipe Rolls show, about the middle of the reign of Henry II.

† Published by the Pipe Roll Society in 1897.

‡ "Lancastra de tribus annis."

§ "Steinebi" on the Chancellor's Roll.

The original charter of Henry II., granting "Steynesbi" to William Fitz Walkelin is preserved at Hardwick Hall (3rd Report on Historical MSS., p. 44), and is transcribed in *Cartæ Antiquæ*, N. 33.

¶ Preface to *Feudal History of Derbyshire*.

He tells us, of "these Derbyshire historians," that "it is to avoid a repetition of their mistakes, to point them out, and to correct them, that these records are here printed."* He cannot complain if I follow his example, and endeavour to correct some of his mistakes.

It is "curious," as he would say, how many puzzles disappear when we abandon fantastic theories for the plain evidence of records. Take, for instance, the descent of Catton in Croxall. This, Mr. Yeatman himself insists, was held at the time of Domesday, under Ferrers, by Nigel de Albini of Cainhoe, and descended from him to his co-heir, Almaric de St. Amand, who undoubtedly held it, as one fee, under the holder of the Ferrers fief, in 1284-6.† If so, it must have been held in 1166 by Nigel de Albini's heir, and that heir was admittedly Robert de Albini of Cainhoe.‡ Therefore, we ought to find Robert de Albini holding one fee under Ferrers in 1166; and we do so find him.§ Nothing could be clearer or neater. Not so, however, for Mr. Yeatman. According to him—

It is not clear whether this Robert was the son of William of the time of Henry II., or his uncle, as the first Robert died without male issue; the latter relationship is the most probable. Here, doubtless, we get the stem of the family of Abney in Hope (which Derbyshire historians have mistaken for Habenai, the wasted manor of Wm. Peverel), who are now represented by the Abneys of Willersley.¶

Here is one of the alleged errors of the hapless "Derbyshire historians." Mr. Yeatman indicts them as follows:—

A curious instance of the danger of rashly accepting a possible identity exists in the case of Abney. Every Derbyshire historian, without exception, identifies it with Henry Ferrers' (*sic***) wasted manor of Habenai.

* Preface to *Feudal History of Derbyshire*, p. ix. I must here again point out that Mr. Yeatman only prints his own translations of the "records" referred to, not their actual text.

† *Feudal Aids*, i, 248.

‡ Compare *Red Book of the Exchequer*, p. 324.

§ Robertus de Albeneio, feodum 1 militis" (*Ibid.*, p. 339).

¶ On the contrary, he was succeeded by his son and heir at Cainhoe, according to Mr. Yeatman's own pedigree of the famil (see p. 173).

¶¶ Sec. ii., p. 308.

** It should not be overlooked that in the preceding extract it is (rightly) a manor of "William Peverel"!

. . . But actual proof exists in numerous charters of the Abney family, that their name and the name of the manor (!) was Albini, a family who had but little connection with the county at this early period,* and whose name has no affinity with Habennai.†

Nor has it any affinity with Abney. As Mr. Yeatman tells us that this pedigree is "one of the greatest in the county,"‡ the point should be of some interest to Derbyshire antiquaries. "De Albini," of course, as is well known, is only a conventional form of the real name, which is d'Aubigny; and this name, on English lips, became Daubeney not Abney. For proof thereof we have the lords Daubeney, who existed from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century,§ and the fact that Stoke (Northants.), which was held by "Albini" of Belvoir, is known therefrom as Stoke Dawbeney. Domesday shows us no other representative of Abney in Hope but "Habennai," and in the early Wolley charters Abney is found as "Abbenay" and "Abbeney,"|| but not, I need scarcely say, as "Albini." There is, consequently, no ground whatever for charging Derbyshire historians with error in identifying "Habennai" as Abney, nor is Mr. Yeatman able to offer us any other identification.¶

Nevertheless, in dealing with the entry in the Ferrers *carta* which relates to the Gresley fees, Mr. Yeatman recurs to his Albini theory:—

The Abneys of Willersley (*sic*) now undoubtedly represent the Derbyshire branch of this great family, who are of the male blood of the family of the ducal house of Normandy,** etc., etc.

But the Abneys of Willesley ceased to be even of "the male blood" of Abney so far back as 1790, when an heiress carried Willesley to a Hastings, while the line of Abney-Hastings itself became actually extinct in 1844, when Willesley passed

* Quite so!

† Sec. i., p. 87.

‡ Sec. ii., p. 308.

§ The surname is still to be met with.

|| *Index to Charters and Rolls in the British Museum*, p. 2.

¶ Sec. i., p. 82.

** *Ibid.*, p. 281.

away, under a special entail, to the Countess of Loudon. And so vanishes Mr. Yeatman's claim.*

Having now at length disentangled the web, we may sum up most concisely the definite conclusions reached by placing side by side the early pedigree of the Gresleys of Drakelowe and of the Albinis of Cainhoe.

GRESLEY.
 Nigel (de Stafford)
 Held several manors under Henry de Ferrers and also held three Staffs. manors under the bishop of "Chester" in 1086.
 |
 William Fitz Nigel (*alias* William de Gresley) *temp.* Henry I.
 |
 Robert de Gresley
 Held 4 knight's fees under William de Ferrers and also held (three Staffs. manors as) 1 knight's fee under the Bishop of "Coventry"* in 1166.
 |
a quo Gresley of Drakelowe.

* The see had changed its name.

"ALBINI."
 Nigel (de Albini)
 Held the Cainhoe barony in chief and also held Catton under Henry de Ferrers in 1086.
 |
 Henry de Albini* *temp.* Henry I.
 |
 Robert de Albini
 Held the Cainhoe barony in chief and also held (Catton as) 1 knight's fee under William de Ferrers in 1166.
 |
a quo St. Amand.

* It is not absolutely *proved* that he was the son of Nigel, but I see no reason to doubt it, and Mr. Yeatman accepts it.

Strictly in accordance with these conclusions, we find, on Mr. Yeatman's own showing, Robert de Albini and Robert de Gresley entered separately among the Earl de Ferrers' knightly tenants in 1177,† the former heading the list in virtue of his exceptional position as being himself a great baron as well as a tenant of the Earl. And they are similarly entered

* The Abneys of Measham, co. Derby, are of the male line of the old Abneys of Willesley, but the family (as above) obviously derive their name from Abney, the "Habennai" of Domesday, and have nothing to do with "Albini."

† Compare Sec. ii., p. 282, and see Pipe Roll, 23 Hen. II. Ed. Pipe Roll Society, p. 61.

separately on the Earl's *carta* in 1166 as Robert de Albini and Robert, son of William Fitz Nigel. Everything thus falls into place, and all "difficulties" disappear.

It is on the endeavour to confuse these two distinct families that Mr. Yeatman concentrates his efforts, and with its failure there fails also his assault on the Gresley pedigree, for I cannot find any other point on which he definitely sets himself to disprove the accepted descent from William Fitz Nigel set forth in Mr. Madan's book.*

This paper has unavoidably extended to so great a length that I very reluctantly venture to deal as briefly as possible with the three chapters in Mr. Yeatman's book (xvi.-xviii.) devoted to the Fitz Alans and various Breton families. I do not understand what they have to do with the "Feudal History of Derbyshire," but it is clear that Mr. Yeatman is very angry with myself, for "Mr. Round's wild-cat genealogy sweeps away English, Scotch, and Irish history for a foolish theory of the author of *The Norman People*" (p. ix.)—a work, by the way, against which I have invariably cautioned genealogists as rash and untrustworthy."† After wading through my critic's vague denunciation of this "ridiculous theory," this "absurd theory," this "extraordinary blunder," my "wild theories" and "especially ridiculous idea" (p. 186-189), I at length discovered, with some difficulty, the cause of his wrath. It is due to the fact that, instead of adopting the legendary descent of the Fitz Alans from "Fleance, son of Banco" (p. 237), which "the poet Shakespeare has adopted and stamped with his imprimature (*sic*) . . . in his great play of *Macbeth*" (p. 187), I have preferred the sober evidence of charters, which prove that Alan Fitz Flaald, the founder of the house, was a Breton‡ It is, indeed, as Mr. Yeatman

* See *The Gresleys of Drakelowe*, pp. 224-230. As I stated at the outset, he impugns the origin of the first baronet, but without adducing any evidence for denying it.

† See, for instance, *The Ancestor*, 2, 165-174.

‡ Even since this article was written there has appeared vol. i. of the new *Scots Peerage*, in which my views on the Breton origin of the Stewarts are explicitly accepted, and the Banquo legend discarded.

observes, "a curious fact that we . . . have to resort to Shakspeare to learn the true history of the Fitzalans" (p. 191), and I must really be excused for seeking information on the genealogy of the eleventh century in a rather more authoritative and less "curious" quarter.

And when I am contrasted with "these writers who, following Eyton, pay proper respect to Shakspeare's authority" (p. 191), I am obliged to observe that what Mr. Eyton, as quoted by my critic himself,* really wrote was this:—

The existence of this legend being established, Shakespeare's personal belief thereon, or particular use thereof, are no longer matters for our consideration.

The legend must stand or fall by its own authority alone. What, then, is that authority? Mr. Yeatman closes his volume by giving us this legend in a form which "fairly summarises the Scotch account of the history of Flaald, son of Banco." He observes, of course, that it wrongly interpolates an unknown "Walter" between "Fleance" and Alan, son of Flaald (the "Fleance" of the legend), and he gravely remarks thereon:—

It is to be regretted that Scotch historians know so little of the history of their own country. Where is the proof of the existence of this Walter fil Flaald?

Quite so; I entirely agree with him. The legend upon which he takes his stand, and which he denounces me for rejecting, is obviously undeserving of any credit whatever.†

Far from adopting "without any acknowledgment," as Mr. Yeatman alleges,‡ the theory of the author of *The Norman People*, I expressly reject his statement as to the paternity of Flaald,§ and base my own view on the charters of St. Florent de Saumur "calendared in my work."|| Mr. Yeatman writes:—

The great fault of Mr. Round's book is that it does not (because he could not) give proper references to the present repositories of these

* *History of the House of Arundel*, p. 325.

† I had myself already pointed out this flaw in my *Peerage Studies* (p. 116, note) as invalidating "the whole story."

* Sec. vii., p. 186.

§ *Peerage Studies*, p. 117.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 120. I refer to my *Calendar of documents preserved in France*, published for Government.

charters. He has not scrupled to help himself (of course without proper acknowledgment) to the works of the great Breton historians, Lobineau and Morice.*

Of this absolutely false and most malicious statement I need only say that I give the full and exact references for the present repositories of the charters of St. Florent in my *Calendar* (pp. 395-416), having visited Angers for the purpose; and that when, in my *Peerage Studies*, I have occasion to use Lobineau's work, I give the full reference to him, by name, at the foot of the page.† If I do not speak, as Mr. Yeatman does, of "the Bibliothèque (*sic*) Nationale of Angers," it is because, when I was in France, the Bibliothèque Nationale was in Paris, as the British Museum is (or was when I last saw it) in London.

One word more. Mr. Yeatman asserts that Eyton did "summarily reject the madcap conclusions of the author of *The Norman People*."§ Now, Eyton's work was published in 1858,|| and it was not till 1874 that *The Norman People* saw the light! This topsy-turvy chronology is indeed worthy of a writer who can speak of—

A very valuable document (see page 109 of *The History of the House of Arundel*), said to be of the date of the Conquest, in which Wace of Jersey is styled—"ingenieur charpentier de Marine."¶

For it was more than a century *after* the Conquest when Wace of Jersey wrote! And if my critic believes that a document of the date of the Conquest would speak of a "charpentier de marine," he would obviously believe anything.

Such, then, is the character of that section of *The Feudal History of Derbyshire*, of which "a good deal" is devoted to exposing my own "crass ignorance." ¶ I do but cite my critic's words when I say that he "may possibly discover

* Sec. vii., p. 189.

† *Peerage Studies*, pp. 121, 122, 123, 126, 127. Morice's work I did not even use.

‡ Sec. vii., p. 167.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

|| *Shropshire*, vol. vii.

¶ Sec. vii., p. 115.

that it is one thing to abuse your neighbour's books, and quite another to write one" (p. xi.). It is pleasant, however, at parting, to be able to agree with him also in his words: "It is a mad world, my masters, and our ignorant critics, who profess to teach us wisdom, have much to answer for" (p. 194).

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