Cotchett Family of Derby.

By F. Williamson.

THE few notes I have got together relating to the Cotchett family are worth recording as at least one of the family was a pioneer of industry in this country, and the notes, fragmentary though they be, may help some future enquirer to further discoveries.

It has been suggested that the family was of Huguenot origin, but this is impossible as the family were in Derby before French protestantism had been thought of. The name is French, i.e. *cochet,* " a cockerel " but it is just a matter of chance whether an English family finally adopted a surname in its French or its English form, and a surname in a French form does not prove a family to have been French in origin. It will be seen that a Cochet was connected with Derby as early as the middle of the 12th century, when surnames had not been generally adopted, and when it was quite common for brothers to have different surnames.

In the 15th century the family was settled in Derby, and by the end of the 16th century had acquired land at Mickleover.

Robert Cotchett, who died in 1657, is described in the Mickleover register as " Captain and Justice of the Peace," so that he must have been a Parliamentarian. Captain Robert was twice married, and he was succeeded in the Mickleover estate by Thomas, the second son by his second wife.

Thomas Cotchett was born at Mickleover in 1640, and in 1661, three years after the death of his father, he was admitted a barrister at Gray's Inn. Nothing is known of his career except that in his later life, in 1702, he built a factory on an island in the River Derwent at Derby, which he equipped with machinery for spinning silk. This was undoubtedly one of the earliest factories ever erected in this country, and although it may not have been a great success, yet success grew directly from it. William Hutton, the Derby historian, writing about 90 years after the event, waxes facetious about this early silk-mill, and says, " A gentleman of the name of Crotchet (*sic*) thought he saw a fine opening to raise a fortune; he therefore erected a small silk-mill in 1702 . . . Every prospect of the future undertaking was favourable, till the scheme was put in practice, when the bright ideas died away. Three engines were found necessary for the whole process: *he had only one* . . . Crotchet soon became insolvent."

As a matter of fact the factory contained eight Dutch mills, and long continued to work, under John Lombe and his successors. As the Dutch machines were not so efficient as those of the Italians, John Lombe, who, Samuel Smiles[1] tells us, was apprenticed to Cotchett, went out to Italy to find out how the Italian machines worked.

When John Lombe came back to Derby, about 1717, he set to work, and built two large factories alongside Cotchett's, on the same island in fact, and thus was founded the silk spinning trade of this country. The credit for this achievement always goes to John Lombe, but as a matter of historical fact, Thomas Cotchett was the pioneer, and without his initiative silk spinning might have remained backward in England for another century. The work of George Sorocold in fitting up the machinery and power in both Cotchett's and Lombe's mills should

[1] *Lives of the Engineers.*

not be overlooked, and I have dealt fully with this in the 1936 issue of this journal. Another important person connected with the Derby silk-mills was Thomas Lombe, later Sir Thomas, who is said to have been brother to John, for it was to him and not to John that the patent rights in their machinery was granted. John Lombe lived on four years after the establishment of the business, dying in 1722, while Thomas carried on the works until 1739.

Thomas Cotchett's eldest daughter was buried at All Saints', Derby, and there is still a monument to her in the church, inscribed:

" Near this place lyeth interr'd the body of the incomparably ingenious and vertuous Mrs. Hannah Cotchett, eldest daughter of Thomas Cotchett, of Mickleour in the County of Derby, Esq., she departed this life, the 29th of January, 1698." [1699].

The entry of Hannah's death in the register of All Saints' is unique so far as this particular register is concerned, and is fuller than others with the exception of families like that of Cavendish. It reads, " Hannah, daughter of Mr. Thomas Cochit, buried Feb. 1, 1698. Her funeral sermon preched by Mr. Horton, *Matthew,* ye 24 c. v. 44." The Rev. Walter Horton was vicar of All Saints' at that time.

There seems to be no living representative of the name left in the district, and indeed to-day it appears to be rare in any part of the country. It will be remembered that Henri Cochet was one of the best lawn-tennis players to represent France in the second quarter of the twentieth century.

The following extracts from local records and registers embrace all that is known of the family.

1154-1160. Hugh Cochet witnessed a grant of lands at Kegworth to Calke Abbey, co. Derby.

(Jeayes, *Derbyshire Charters,* No. 530, from an original in Derb. Pub. Lib., D193).

1498-99. John Cotchett, churchwarden of All Saints', Derby.

1560. Joan Cochett, widow, bur. 25 Feb. 1560 at All Saints'.

1559. Robert Cochett.

Katherine Cartell, dau. of Robert Cochett, bap. 24 Nov. 1559 at All Saints'.

William, s. of Robert Cochett, bur. 9 Nov. 1559 at All Saints'.

[This is the order in the register].

1561. Robert Cochett, marr. Agneta Smyth, 24 Nov. 1561, at All Saints'.

Probably his second wife.

1593. John Cotchett d. before 1630; Joan his widow was bur. 3 Mar. 1630, at Mickleover. Had issue:

1. Edward, bur. 20 May 1593, *ex peste*, at All Saints'.
2. William, bur. 22 May 1593, *ex peste*, at All Saints'.
3. William, of whom further.

1602. John Cotchet, pauper, bur. 21 Dec. 1602 at All Saints'.

1633. William Cotchett, freeholder at Mickleover, in 1633 (*D.A.J.* vi, 67); bur. 14 June 1635 at Mickleover; marr. Margery, who was bur. 24 Sep. 1629 at Mickleover. Had issue:

1. Dorothy, bap. 16 Oct. 1609, at Mickleover.
2. Robert, bap. 3 Oct. 1611, at Mickleover, of whom further.
3. Cleer, bap. 18 May 1614, at Mickleover.
4. Francis, bap. 22 June 1618, at Mickleover.
5. Temperance, bap. 2 Feb. 1622, at Mickleover.
6. Joan, bur. 7 Sep. 1629 at Mickleover.
7. Thomas, bur. 19 Sep. 1629, at Mickleover.

Robert Cotchett, Captain and Justice of the Peace; bap. 3 Oct. 1611 at Mickleover; d. 8 Nov. 1657, bur. at Mickleover; marr.:

1st. Mary, bur. 30 Oct. 1632, by whom:

Thomas, bap. 20 Oct., bur. 20 Nov. 1632 at Mickleover.

2nd.   Ann, by whom:
  1.   Robert, bap. 1 Jan. 1635-6 at Mickleover, d.
        young.
  2.   Anna, bap. 16 Apr. 1637 at Mickleover; marr.
        26 Feb. 1661 at Mickleover, John Chamber-
        lin, of Nottingham.
  3.   Thomas, bap. 29 Mar. 1640 at Mickleover, of
        whom further.
  4.   Mary, bap. 29 Jan. 1643 at Mickleover, bur.
        19 Oct. 1648 at All Saints'.
  5.   Sarah, bap. 23 Nov. 1645 at All Saints'.
  6.   Nathaniel, bap. 2 June 1646 at All Saints'.
Thomas Cotchett, of Mickleover and Derby, heir of Capt.
  Robert Cotchett, late of Mickleover, admitted to Gray's
  Inn, 5 Dec. 1661; bap. 29 Mar. 1640 at Mickleover;
  marr. Hannah, she was bur. 2 Apr. 1678 at Mickle-
  over; by whom:
  1.   Hannah, d. 29 Jan. 1699, bur. All Saints'.   A
        monument in All Saints'.
  2.   Sarah, bap. 30 Dec. 1674 at Mickleover.
  3.   Thomas, bap. 16 Apr. 1677 at Mickleover.
  4.   Robert, bur. 23 Jan. 1701 at All Saints'.
Robert Cotshett marr. Rebeckah . . . .
  Hester, a dau. bap. 23 Nov. 1679 at West Hallam, co.
  Derby.
Mrs. Mary Cotchett marr. Mr. John Carrington at Spon-
  don, 29 Dec. 1701.
Richard Cotchet marr. Elizth. Souter at St. Mary's,
  N'ham, 6 Oct. 1585.