



THE ANCIENT CHARTERS AND DEEDS
AT HIGH LEGH, CHESHIRE, BELONGING
TO LIEUT.-COL. H. CORNWALL LEGH.

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MY object in directing attention to the early charters and deeds, belonging to Lieut.-Col. Cornwall Legh, is in the first instance once more to reiterate the great value of "original documents" in all historical enquiries, and secondly to show what interesting documents are frequently to be met with in the muniment rooms of old county families, and how important it is that these should be properly cared for and preserved. The labours of the Historical MSS. Commission have resulted in bringing to light very many documents of great historical value, but the commission does not deal with documents of purely local interest, which are therefore left to the local historian, antiquary, and genealogist.

HIGH LEGH is a township in the parish of Rostherne, about five miles from Knutsford, and it is very remarkable that in the thirteenth century the manor was held in moieties by two branches of the Legh family, whose descendants own the two halls, the East Hall and the West Hall, as they are called, at the present day. The

Leghs of the East Hall held one half of the manor of Legh; but the other moiety was subdivided in the fourteenth century, the Leighs of the West Hall now owning one-fourth of the original manor, and Lord Egerton of Tatton the other fourth. As far as my researches go, these two families of the Leghs do not appear to be descended from any common ancestor, or, if this has been the case, the ancestor is so far back as not to be traceable. They have lived side by side for the past six hundred years, and the only difference now is that the members of one family spell their name LEGH and those of the other LEIGH. So independent have they always been one of another, that whilst Lieut.-Col. Cornwall Legh, of the East Hall, has his own private chapel in his grounds, Captain Egerton Leigh, of the West Hall, has also his own private chapel in his grounds. The tenants of the one estate attend the one, and those of the other, the other. And yet the two Halls are so near each other that the grounds are only separated by a high brick wall, and the fields belonging to the one estate run into and among those belonging to the other in a most confusing manner.

The following lines, written by the Rev. A. J. Richardson in 1879, give such a good picture of this curious state of affairs at High Legh that I cannot refrain from quoting them here:¹

'Tis an odd state of things that a stranger would see,
 If he came on a visit perchance to High Leigh;
 To his mind it would cause great confusion and bother,
 To find things so mix'd up the one with the other:
 Two Establishments separate, two Halls, and two Squires,
 Two parsons, two chapels, two bells, and two choirs!

¹ I have already quoted them before in a paper relating to the West Hall deeds, read before the Manchester Literary Club, and published in the *Manchester Quarterly* for April, 1883.

Whilst the magnates themselves couldn't fairly agree
 As to spelling correctly the name of "High Leigh";
 One stoutly insisting on "i" with the "e,"
 The other on nothing between "e" and "g";
 On map and on sign-post you'd meet with the "i,"
 P.O.O.'s were without it and folks wondered why;
 Then the agent found out, when he took the big ledger down,
 The estates all mixed up with the farms of Lord Egerton;
 And directions for letters and parcels were wrapp'd in
 A regular muddle 'twixt Colonel and Captain;
 For if to "the Hall" they should chance be address'd,
 It was doubtful if meant for the "East" or the "West";
 But for rights of precedence 'twas doubtful which had 'em
 For neither could trace up much further than Adam!
 So what you're about, be particular, please,
 For Cheshire is full of cats, cheeses, and Leighs,
 Leighs of Lyme, Leighs of Adlington, everything "Legh,"
 From the innermost bounds to the banks of the Dee;
 And from dropping a letter what comes there's no telling,
 So you'd best mind your "i," and look after your spelling.

High Leigh, 1879.

THE EAST HALL DEEDS are most voluminous, and when they were placed in my hands by their owner for examination and arrangement, they filled two large boxes. In addition to this I found that certain deeds, formerly in the collection, were not amongst those first sent, and further searches were made in the muniment room at High Legh, which finally resulted in another box, full of deeds and papers, being forwarded to me. Both lots were in the greatest possible confusion, and much time and trouble were expended in getting them properly sorted and arranged. Each deed was then read through, and a short abstract of its contents was endorsed on its back. They were then classified into groups, and arranged in chronological order in each group, and were afterwards numbered consecutively. The endorsements on the backs of the deeds, together with

the names of the witnesses to the earlier ones, were subsequently entered in two thick folio volumes,¹ with their respective numbers, so that it is now possible to see at a glance what the deeds relate to, and to pick out any particular deed by its number. There is now, therefore, no fear of any deeds being lost or mislaid, as if taken out for examination they can at once be replaced in their proper bundles.

This collection contains in all about eleven hundred deeds² and documents, independent of a number of loose papers, many of much interest, which have been arranged and bound up in four folio volumes, entitled the High Legh MSS. For convenience of reference this mass of material has been divided into the following groups, each group containing many packets of deeds, arranged chronologically.

GROUP No. I.

CHARTERS AND DEEDS RELATING TO THE FAMILY OF LEGH OF THE EAST HALL, FROM *c.* 1230 TO 1828.

These are arranged as follows:—

- Bundle No. 1. Fifteen deeds before the year 1300.
- Bundle No. 2. Twenty-two deeds between the years 1300 and 1340.
- Bundle No. 3. Thirty-three deeds between the years 1346 and 1398.

¹ One of these is a catalogue of the Legh family deeds and papers, with those relating to High Legh, Swinehead, and the other is a catalogue of miscellaneous deeds contained in Groups III., IV., and V.

² The deeds in Groups I. and II. are numbered consecutively Nos. 1 to 429. This is exclusive of the contents of the four folio volumes of the High Legh MSS., the pedigrees and other rolls, &c. As other bundles of leases, &c., may some day be added to Group II., the numbers between 430 and 499 have not been filled up. Group III., the miscellaneous Cheshire deeds, therefore, begins with No. 500, and the deeds in that group and in Groups IV. and V. come down to No. 1,086. In addition to these, there are nearly a hundred deeds and papers relating to Birstall (co. York), Wakefield, Fiskerton, &c., not arranged or numbered. Thus the grand total of eleven hundred documents is shown to be rather below than above the mark.

- Bundle No. 4. Twenty seven deeds between the years 1402 and 1449.
- Bundle No. 5. Twenty-nine deeds between the years 1452 and 1464.
- Bundle No. 6. Twenty-eight deeds between the years 1465 and 1535.
- Bundle No. 7. Twenty-nine deeds between the years 1540 and 1600.
- Bundle No. 8. Twenty-seven deeds between the years 1601 and 1676.
- Bundle No. 9. Twenty deeds between the years 1678 and 1705.
- Bundle No. 10. Seventeen deeds between the years 1706 and 1731.
- Bundle No. 11. Eleven deeds between the years 1738 and 1761.
- Bundle No. 12. Seventeen deeds between the years 1762 and 1828.
- Bundle No. 13. Miscellaneous papers, 1724 to 1769.

Making in all two hundred and seventy-five deeds relating to the Legh family alone between the years 1230 and 1828, a period of six hundred years.

Nine pedigree rolls relating to the Legh family.

Four pedigree rolls relating to the Cornwall family.¹

Two early rentals of the Legh estates.

The four folio volumes of miscellaneous papers recently bound up together and lettered the *High Legh MSS.*—

Vol. 1. Miscellaneous family papers, letters, &c.

Vol. 2. Papers, letters, &c., relating to the Leghs of the East Hall, the Cornwalls of Burford, &c.

Vol. 3. Papers and documents relating to Rostherne Church.

Vol. 4. Assessments for the land tax in Bucklow Hundred for the year 1734.

¹ George Legh, Esq., married, about the year 1730, Anna Maria, the daughter and heiress of Francis Cornwall, Esq., the last titular Baron of Burford, co. Salop.

GROUP No. II.

MISCELLANEOUS DEEDS AND PAPERS RELATING TO HIGH LEGH
SWINEHEAD, AND THE ADJACENT TOWNSHIPS.

Deeds relating to the tithes of High Legh, Swinehead, &c.,
1537 to 1753. Nine deeds.

Deeds relating to Swinehead, and the Leghs of Swinehead,
1623 to 1713. Five deeds.

Leases of lands in Swinehead, Sworton, Comberbach, &c.,
1562 to 1726. Fifty-four deeds arranged in two bundles.

Leases of lands in High Legh, 1609 to 1765. Six deeds.¹

Deeds relating to Millington, Old Greave Lane, and High
Legh (the Wilkinson family), 1605 to 1691. Twelve
deeds.

Deeds relating to the Wood Fields in High Legh, 1664 to
1687. Eleven deeds.

Deeds and papers relating to the Leghs of Adlington, co.
Chester,² 1670 to 1699. Eleven in number.

Three deeds relating to the family of Chambres of Plâs
Chambres, co. Denbigh,³ 1710 to 1740.

Office copies of wills, 1611 to 1769. Sixteen in number.

There are several important wills amongst these, of
which the following may be noted: Sir Gilbert Ireland, of
the Hutt, co. Lanc., Knt., dated 30th January, 1625[-6];⁴
Dame Mary Bolles, of Heath Hall, in the parish of
Warmfield, co. York, "Barronetsse,"⁵ dated 4th May,
1662, proved 23rd May, 1662; Sir Richard Brooke, of

¹ There are many bundles of old leases at High Legh which I did not take
away for examination.

² Richard Legh, of High Legh, Esq., married in 1676 Mary, daughter of
Thomas Legh, of Adlington, the elder, Esq.

³ John Chambres, of Plâs Chambres, Esq., married in 1710 Mary, daughter
of Richard Legh, of High Legh, Esq.

⁴ The original of this will is not now to be found at Chester, although the
inventory of his effects dated 1628 is there, together with the accounts rendered
by the Lady Barbara Ireland, widow and executrix, dated 1632. She was
daughter of George Legh, of High Legh, Esq.

⁵ The only lady who was ever created a "Baronetess." A very interesting
will, which well deserves to be printed.

Norton, co. Chester, Bart., dated 8th June, 1703; Sir Samuel Daniel, of Over Tabley, co. Chester, Knt., dated 19th February, 1723[-4]; Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton, of Combermere, co. Chester, Bart., dated 20th May, 1729. These are quite independent of the Legh wills, of which there are a great many among the Legh deeds in Group I.

Miscellaneous documents, bundles of old letters, &c.

Deeds relating to the Cornwall family, 1432 to 1738. Nineteen deeds, all but three of which are later than 1700.

To the two earliest deeds fine armorial seals of the Cornwall family are still attached in good preservation.¹

A bundle of deeds and papers relating to two Dutch bonds for 20,000 and 30,000 "gilderns," dated 26th August, 1579.²

Four rolls relating to Bucklow Hundred, co. Chester.

Amongst these is an old court roll of the court of Sir John Holcroft, Knt. for the Hundred of Bucklow, held at Bucklow Hill, 18th October, 1547; and three subsidy rolls for Bucklow Hundred, 1576, 1663, and 1664, which are documents of much local value.

A folio volume, entitled *The Swinehead Chartulary*, containing copies of deeds relating to the family of Legh of Swinehead, in High Legh, from c. 1215 to 1619, in which year it was written by George Owen, York Herald.³

¹ I exhibited these at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, in London, on the 16th December, 1886, and an account of them with notes by C. S. Perceval, Esq., F.S.A., appears in the Proceedings of the Society, vol. xi., pp. 217-20. It is most unfortunate that no other early Cornwall deeds are now in Colonel Legh's possession. There ought to be a large collection somewhere, as the family occupied an influential position in the county of Salop for over five hundred years.

² These bonds, given by the Government of the Netherlands, had become the property of Colonel Ralph Harrison, who died in May, 1656, and whose daughter and heir, Katherine, married for her *third* husband, c. 1673, Dr. Thomas Legh, of London, a younger son of Henry Legh, of High Legh, Esq. They were never redeemed by the Government of the Netherlands.

³ This valuable MS. has recently been handsomely bound in full vellum.

GROUP No. III.

MISCELLANEOUS CHESHIRE DEEDS.

Deeds relating to Alpraham,¹ co. Chester, 1312 to 1508.
Three deeds.

Deeds relating to Strethull, co. Chester, c. 1250 to 1677.
Twenty-six deeds.

Deeds relating to Mere, co. Chester, c. 1250 to 1677.
Seventeen deeds.

Deeds relating to Lymm, co. Chester, c. 1280 to 1742.
Seventeen deeds.

Deeds relating to Knutsford, co. Chester, c. 1280 to 1702.
Arranged in three bundles. Fifty-three deeds.

Deeds relating to the family of Cocker of Pickmere, co.
Chester, c. 1300 to 1595. In two bundles. Forty deeds.

Deeds relating to the family of Golburne of Golburne, co.
Chester, c. 1300 to 1648. In two bundles. Seventeen
deeds.

Deeds relating to Manley, co. Chester, 1500 to 1638. In
two bundles. Fifty-one deeds.

Deeds relating to Hargreave, in the parish of Neston, co.
Chester, 1577 to 1685. Twenty-five deeds.

Miscellaneous Cheshire deeds, c. 1320 to 1740. In two
bundles. Thirty-four deeds.

Thus making in all two hundred and eighty-four deeds
relating to various places and families in Cheshire, inde-
pendent of High Legh and the Legh family.

GROUP No. IV.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS OF CHESHIRE DEEDS.

An important collection of deeds relating to Thornton-in-
the-Moors, co. Chester, c. 1215 to 1796, arranged in seven
bundles:—

¹ There are many deeds relating to Alpraham amongst the Legh deeds, as John de Legh married, c. 1312, Joan, daughter and co-heir of Matthew de Alpraham, and this estate remained in a branch of the Legh family for many generations. John de Legh (the second son of the above-named John and Joan), who was called "John de Legh of Alpraham," was the ancestor of the Leghs of Northwood referred to on p. 16.

- Bundle No. 1. Deeds relating to the manor of Thornton-in-the-Moors, *c.* 1215 to 1473. Twenty-five deeds.
- Bundle No. 2. Deeds between 1502 and 1651. Nineteen deeds.
- Bundle No. 3. Deeds between 1661 and 1699. Ten deeds.
- Bundle No. 4. Deeds between 1700 and 1778. Thirteen deeds.
- Bundle No. 5. Deeds between 1700 and 1720. Seven deeds.
- Bundle No. 6. Deeds relating to Thornton Mill, 1728 to 1783.
- Bundle No. 7. Leases relating to Thornton-in-the-Moors, 1791 to 1796.

A large collection of deeds relating to the manor of Sale, co. Chester, and the family of Massey of Sale, 1335 to 1784, arranged in three bundles:—

- Bundle No. 1. Deeds between 1335 and 1568. Thirty-seven deeds.
- Bundle No. 2. Deeds between 1614 and 1691. Fifteen deeds.
- Bundle No. 3. Deeds between 1692 and 1784. Thirty-one deeds.

Old Court Book of the Manor of Sale, 1618 to 1623, wretchedly written and kept by William Williamson, Steward of the Court.

GROUP No. V.

DEEDS RELATING TO LANCASHIRE, YORKSHIRE, STAFFORDSHIRE,
AND LONDON, ETC.

These are arranged in the following bundles:—

Lancashire Deeds.

Deeds relating to the office of "Aulnager"¹ in the county of Lancaster, 1539 to 1572, three in number.

¹ Thomas Legh, of High Legh, Esq., was appointed to the office of "Aulnager," in the county palatine of Lancaster, in succession to his brother-in-law, William Trafford, of the Garrett, Esq.

Deeds relating to Manchester and Salford, 1420 to 1655.
Sixteen deeds.

Deeds relating to the family of Trafford, of the Garrett,¹
Manchester, and their lands in Manchester, and Taxal,
co. Chester, 1530 to 1575. Eight deeds.

Miscellaneous deeds relating to Manchester, 1679 to 1741.
Ten deeds.

Deeds relating to Barton-upon-Irwell,² co. Lancaster, 1583
to 1776. Arranged in two bundles. Forty-one deeds.

Leases relating to Barton-upon-Irwell,² 1631 to 1798. Twelve
deeds.

Papers relating to a trial at Lancaster about lands in Barton,²
1725.

Modern deeds and papers relating to Barton-upon-Irwell.²

Leases relating to Openshaw,² &c., near Manchester, 1588
to 1766. Nine deeds.

Miscellaneous Deeds.

Deeds and papers relating to Quick and Saddleworth,³ co.
York, 1557 to 1718. Twelve documents.

Miscellaneous deeds relating to Lancashire, Derbyshire,
London, &c., 1515 to 1751. Seven deeds.

Early deeds relating to Colwich, co. Stafford,⁴ c. 1250 to 1553.
Twenty-two deeds. Some of these deeds have good
seals attached to them.

Leases of messuages in London, 1657 and 1732.

Deeds and papers relating to Birstall, co. York,⁵ and other
places in Yorkshire, 1389 to 1720. Tied up in three

¹ The Thomas Legh, Esq., named in the note on p. 9, married Isabel, one of the daughters and co-heirs of George Trafford, of the Garrett, Esq.

² George Legh, of High Legh, Esq., married, c. 1587, for his *secona* wife, Anne, daughter and co-heir of John Booth, of Barton-upon-Irwell, Esq.

³ These lands formed part of the estates of the Traffords, of the Garrett, near Manchester, which passed to the Leghs. See note ¹.

⁴ George Legh, of High Legh, Esq., married, c. 1580, for his first wife, Elizabeth, daughter and co-heir of Peter Leycester, of Tabley, Esq., by Elizabeth, his wife, daughter and heir of Edward Colwych, of Colwych, co. Stafford, Esq.

packets, but not yet arranged or endorsed. An interesting collection.

Miscellaneous deeds, leases, &c., relating to Wakefield, co. York.⁵ Of little or no interest.

Deeds relating to Fiskerton, co. Nottingham, 1640 to 1680.⁶ Of little or no interest.

I. *The Legh Family Deeds.*

The earliest deed relating to the Legh family is, like most early deeds, undated, but from the character of the handwriting and the names of the witnesses⁷ it may be put down to about the year 1230. It is a quitclaim to Adam de Legh (*de Lega*) of a bovate of land in the vill of Leye. The seal attached to this deed is still quite perfect, bearing a large fleur-de-lys, a common device at that period. The next deed is a few years later, about 1245, and by it Adam de Legh grants half a bovate of land in "the vill of Ley," to Richard, his son. Attached to this is a seal of dark green wax, bearing a star of eight points and the inscription S' ADE DE LEE. One of the witnesses to this deed is Robert de Venables, parson or rector of Routhestorn

⁵ These deeds and papers came into the hands of the Leghs owing to the marriage of Henry Cornwall Legh, Esq., with Elizabeth, one of the two daughters and co-heirs of Robert Hopkinson, of Wakefield, co. York, gentleman. The settlement made prior to this marriage (No. 254 of the Legh deeds) is dated 20th June, 1761, when Robert Hopkinson was dead. Deed No. 257 is a "rental of the estate of Miss Hopkinson and Miss Mary Hopkinson, co-heirs of Robert Hopkinson, deceased, in Birstall, Wakefield, &c.," taken in 1761, and No. 258 is a survey and valuation of Miss Hopkinson's estates in Yorkshire.

⁶ These deeds formed part of the collection relating to the Masseys of Sale, in group iv. Samuel Cliffe, of Newark-upon-Trent, co. Nottingham, married Anne, one of the daughters and co-heirs of Richard Massey, of Sale and Nottingham, Esq., in 1694, and the Cliffs held some property at Fiskerton.

⁷ These are Sir (*dño*) Warin de w'nū [Vernon], Hugh de Venables, Sir (*dño*) Robert de W'ū [Vernon], Robert de Tabbeleye, Robert de Manlye, Roger de Moldewurthe, Hamon le Bret, William de Mere, Laurence de M'bur [Merbury] and many others.

(Rostherne).¹ The earliest deed with a date belongs to the year 1268. This, which is the record of a fine concerning lands, made between Hugh de Legh and Aytrop de Mulinton, has the seal of the latter, bearing an eagle. This fine, or "final agreement," was made in the full court at Chester, before the lords (*dn̄is*) Thomas de Boulton, then Justiciary of Cheshire, Thomas de Meynegarin [Mainwaring], William de Boydel, Peter de Arden, Urian de Saint Pierre, Thomas de Dutton, then Sheriff of Cheshire, Geoffrey de Chedle, Thomas de Orreby, William de Massey, and others, which supply us with the names of some of the chief persons in the county palatine in 1268. To a deed belonging to the year 1279 William de Haurthin, then sheriff of Cheshire, Hugh de Venables, rector of the church of Routhestorn, and G[ilbert] de Gropenale, then dean of Frodsham (that is rural dean), are witnesses. In 1280, or possibly earlier (deed No. 9), there is mention of Thomas, chaplain of Legh, showing that a chapel of some kind existed at High Legh, and it is probable that this would be the same chapel or church mentioned as existing there at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086.

In a deed (No. 20) of about the year 1320 there is a curious reference by John, son of Hugh de Legh, the then owner of the half of High Legh, to "an old charter which I had of the gift of Hugh, son of Edward de Lega," which is probably the origin of the Edward or Esward, who is sometimes given as the earliest ancestor of the Leghs of the East Hall in old pedigrees, &c. After 1320 the deeds are regularly dated, and for the remainder of that century are fairly numerous, many of them being in Norman French instead

¹ The other witnesses are Hugh de Lymme, Aytrop de Mulinton, William de Mere, Richard de Ley [of the West Hall family], Gilbert de Tabbeley, Thomas de Ley, clerk, and many others.

of Latin. There are some valuable deeds of settlement which supply many particulars for the true history of this old Cheshire family at that early period. In 1397, Hugh de Legh, of Legh, was appointed by Richard II. to the office of escheator of Cheshire, before whom all the inquisitions *post mortem*, &c., were taken. He, however, did not hold this office long, and died in 1405. The first deed in English is in 1406,¹ and is a marriage settlement for John de Legh to marry Isabel, daughter of John de Pulle or Poole. The next English deed is dated 1427,² but Latin continued to be the prevailing language till the end of that century.

A Latin document (No. 89) dated the 31st Oct., 1442, is a "commission and mandate from the official of the Archdeacon of Chester," addressed to all the chaplains or clergy within the Archdeaconry, commanding them to admonish "three times and peremptorilly all those sons of iniquity, who have cut and carried away trees and underwood of the worshipful Thomas de Legh of Northwood, in his woods, &c., at Northwood and Sworton, have fished his ponds and marlpits, and have carried off his timber from his houses, &c., at Knutsford, and have taken his household stuff and done him other injuries." And that if these evildoers did not within fifteen days of such monition make full satisfaction and restitution, then they were to be openly and publicly excommunicated, and here follows the really interesting part of this deed, "with bells rung, and candles lighted and extinguished, and the cross in the hands

¹ All deeds prior to 1450 or 1460, which are in English, are noteworthy. This contains many curious forms, as "ho" for he, "hom" for them, "hor" for their, "vchonn of hom" for each one of them, and so on.

² This relates to the above marriage, being a bond to perform an award, given by Thomas de Pull [or Poole] to John, son of Hugh de Legh. Another English deed, dated 1445, is an agreement for the marriage of John of the Holyns with Blanche, sister of Henry de Legh.

upraised, and all other legal solemnity.”¹ Any deed in which there is reference to the old mediæval practice of “cursing by bell, book, and candle,” is of very great rarity and of much interest, as it is not generally known how frequent this form of cursing was in the Roman Catholic Church in mediæval times, although it is unknown now.²

A conveyance of certain lands, &c., dated 1453, has a seal, which contains a straw imbedded in the wax. I have elsewhere alluded to this practice,³ which is much more uncommon in the north of England than, as Dr. Jessopp informs me, it is in the south. This deed, which is in English, is also noteworthy for the use of the word “sho” for she.

¹ The words of the original are: “Campanis pulsat^s Candel’ Accens’ & extinct^s ac cruce in manibz er’ca cumque omnia alia Juris solemnitate.”

² I contributed an account of “Cursing by Bell, Book, and Candle,” with copies of some curious Lancashire deeds in which it is referred to, to the *Local Gleanings* columns of the *Manchester Courier*, in 1878, and this paper, with additions by Mr. J. Paul Rylands and others, was subsequently reprinted in pamphlet form. The deed referred to in the text and two others subsequently mentioned are the only other examples of this quaint custom which I have met with since that time, notwithstanding that many hundreds of Lancashire and Cheshire deeds have passed through my hands. The curse as described in the *Ingoldsby Legends* will probably occur to many of my readers:—

“The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
 He call’d for his candle, his bell, and his book !
 In holy anger and pious grief,
 He solemnly cursed that rascally thief !
 He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed,
 From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head ;”
 &c., &c., &c.

This form of cursing with bell, book, and candle is mentioned by Shakspeare in *King John*, act iii., scene 3 ; also by Chaucer, Bishop Bale, Fox, Strype, and others (see Halliwell’s *Annotated Shakspeare* and Knight’s *Pictorial Shakspeare*).

³ See a paper on the deeds of the West Hall, High Leigh, Cheshire, read before the Manchester Literary Club, and printed in the *Manchester Quarterly* for April, 1883. In the same number Mr. W. E. A. Axon added some remarks on the meaning of a straw or rush in the seal.

In a curious notarial instrument (No. 109), dated in 1463, containing a record of an oath taken in the chancel of St. John's Church, Chester, there is mention of persons swearing upon the holy evangelists and also "upon the red book of St. John, then placed upon the high altar there." This must evidently have been a book, that was very highly valued, and of the sanctity of which there could be no possible doubt, as it would almost seem to occupy higher rank than the evangelists. The making use of churches for such secular purposes as the confirming of deeds, &c., by the taking of oaths or in other ways, was not so uncommon as might be imagined, and many instances might be given of their being used for such purposes.

Deed No. 110, dated 26th September, 3rd Edward IV. [1463], is noteworthy from the fact that all the witnesses were members of the Stanley family. Their names are as follows: Thomas de Stanley, knight, Lord Stanley, justiciary of Chester; William de Stanley, knight, chamberlain of Chester; and William Stanley, of Hooton, sheriff of Cheshire. Although this deed, which is a grant by Henry de Legh of all his messuages, lands, &c., to trustees, is said to be "given at Legh" it is most probable it was done at Chester, where the witnesses would be in their official capacity.

Deed No. 115, dated 1463, is a very elaborate settlement of the estates of Henry de Legh, in which no less than twenty persons are named, who were entitled "in remainder," one after the other, in the case of failure of issue of any of those inheriting.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, between 1510 and 1520, great disputes took place about the rightful succession to the Legh estates. The direct male line of the Legh family terminated in the person of Ralph de Legh,

who died about the year 1508, leaving three daughters and co-heirs. The estates being strictly entailed, an heir appeared in the person of Thomas Legh of Northwood, an old hall in High Legh, who was the direct descendant of a certain John de Legh, who was living in 1329, and who was a younger son of John, son of Hugh de Legh of High Legh. He ultimately made good his claim and succeeded to the estate, and the present Colonel Cornwall Legh is his direct descendant. In connection with these disputes there are three documents in English, which show how the claimants made use of the terrors of the Church in those days. Allusion has already been made to cursing by "bell, book, and candle," and these documents are confessions that certain persons heard some such form of curse pronounced in the churches of Rostherne and Warrington. The first (No. 148) is endorsed, "The confessyon of the Scole Mayster of Knotsforde," and is to the following effect: "Memorandum that I Richard Holdfield understand and know that Thomas Legh of Northwood gentleman hath gotten out a letter of a cursing from the Court of Canterbury to be pronounced within the said province [of Canterbury] for the withholding of certain evidence belonging to him that be out of his possession, wherefore I the said Richard hearing the said curse proclaimed in my parish church of Rowstorne in escaping and avoiding the peril thereof do acknowledge that I have heard seen and read three entailed deeds," &c. The second (No. 149) is a similar document slightly differently worded,¹ and it ends by stating that he had confessed this matter to a priest who would not give him absolution until he had made his knowledge public, and he swears it is true "as I shall

¹ This names Sir Hugh Achsley as then curate of Rotheston (Rostherne).

answere afore god at ye day off dome." The third document (No. 150) states that another person, Thomas Hawarden, "hearing the said letter of cursing proclaimed in my parish church of Warrington, within the said province of Canterbury, I the said Thomas Hawarden in escaping and avoiding the said curse do acknowledge that I have heard and seen evidence," &c. He finishes up by saying that this acknowledgment is "to save my conscience and not from any partiality for I would rather that the adversaries of the said Thomas Legh had the land by twenty times than he and this is true as I shall answer before god and man," which clearly shows that these "letters of cursing" had their due effect. None of these three deeds are dated, but they are about the year 1510.

In the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign, in 1582, a curious dispute took place between the two families of the Leghs of High Legh, as to their armorial bearings, and the matter was referred to the Earl of Shrewsbury, K.G., as Earl Marshall. He was at Buxton, having charge of Mary, Queen of Scots, who was then residing there, and he writes from that place to "his very loveinge ffriend Mr. Thomas Legh," of the East Hall, and states that with a view to end the controversy between him and Mr. Richard Legh, of the West Hall, he had appointed a "cocking," that is, a fight between game cocks, at Chapel-en-le-Frith, near Buxton, on the 9th of July, at which he desired that he, Thomas Legh, and all his friends and relations should attend and state their case, and produce all pedigrees, arms, &c., and other records. His letter is as follows:¹

"Aft my hartie Comendaçons: where for the decidinge of the controùsie betwene you and Richard Legh for the bearinge of yo^r Armes: I ment accordinge to my pmyse to

¹ From the contemporary copy, now preserved in High Legh MSS., vol. i.

have had the three kings of Armes, yo^r selfs and others allied to you boothe to mete at at (*sic*) Buxtons: And thervppon dyirected my fres to the heraults to that effecte: ffrom whom I have latlye receyued answ^r, that Gart^r and others of them are psentlye to be otherwise employed in her Ma^{ties} s^uice into denmarke, So that the[y] can not then all be theire as I willed and wishe[d] the[y] might: And besyds the Scottishe Quene my charge staieth longer at Buxtons then I had thought she wolde have done: yett for that I wolde gladlye be throughlye acquaynted w^t the matt^r my selfe: I have thought good to appoint a Cockinge at Chappell of ffrithe on monday the ixth of this instant Julye for the same purpose: wherof I thought good to giue you adūtisement: And also (althoughe all the heraughts can not be theire at that tyme beinge otherwise employed as aforesayd) yett to requyre you to be theire, then before me, and to bringe with you boothe suche gentlemē as are either come owt of yo^r howse or allied, or are able to say anye thinge therin for the exptaçon of the truethe, and all suche pedegrees armes Records and auncient evidences as you have or can pduce that may best pve and iustifie yo^r discents: that vppon the sight and exaiacon therof I maye the bett^r know and iudge of the truethe: and therevppon together with suche knowledge and not[e]s as I have or then may have I may pcede to the det^rmynaçon therof acco^rdinge to equitye for the quyetnes of you boothe, wiche I hartelye wishe, And so bed you hartelye fare well: Buxtons this first of July 1582.

yo^r lovinge ffrend

G: SHREWSBURY.

To my very lovinge ffrend

M^r Thoms Legh.”

Endorsed: “ My lorde of Shrisbyry to come to y^e chappell in y^e fryth.”

The meeting was duly held “in the presence of sundry as well knights, esquires and gentlemen of their blood surname and alliance and others,” and the Earl Marshall then decided that Thomas Legh, of High Legh, should henceforth be entitled to bear the arms “with a lion

rampant gules," to him and his heirs for ever.¹ This is the coat the family has always borne, "Argent a lion rampant gules," whilst the other family of the Leighs (of the West Hall) now bear "Or a lion rampant gules," although they are really descended from the family of Lymme, and should bear the arms of that family, Gules, a pale fusillé argent.

A document,² dated 1615, is a licence under the hand of John Cheddocke, the Vicar of Rosthorne, granting permission to George Legh, of High Legh, and Elizabeth his wife, to eat flesh upon certain days and times prohibited, because of their ill-health, and for what seems to us the very strange reason, because "their weake and feeble stomackes cannot in anie wyse brooke or digeste fish soe well as flesh."

In 1694, Richard Legh, of High Legh, Esq., was high sheriff of Cheshire, and the Letters Patent appointing him and bearing a fine and perfect impression of the seal of the County Palatine of Chester is still preserved in this collection. During his year of office an election of members of Parliament took place, and he had to make the return of the election of Sir John Mainwaring, Bart., and Sir Robert Cotton, Knt. and Bart., as the two members for the county of Chester. From an expression in this deed (which is in Latin), it would seem that the two newly-elected members were duly "girt with swords" (*gladios cinctos*), and so literally made "knights of the shire."

About 1730, George Legh, of High Legh, Esq., married

¹ "A copy of the Earle Marshalls Warrant [dated at Chelsea, 4th December, 1584] directed to Mr. Norroy King of Armes and [to] Somerset Herald for Registering of the Accord by him made betweene the two Leghes of High Leghe in Cheshire for bearing of Armes," is preserved in the Ashmolean MSS., No. 857, f. 200, in the Bodleian Library. The original is not now at High Legh, but a contemporary copy of it is preserved in vol. i. of the High Legh MSS., and also in the Swinehead chartulary.

² Now preserved in the High Legh MSS., vol. i.

Anna Maria, daughter and heir of Francis Cornwall, Esq., Baron of Burford, co. Salop, the representative of a very old Shropshire family, which took high rank in that county. By this marriage Mr. Legh's successors were enabled to add something like seventy quarterings to their shield of arms, and on the fine illuminated pedigree of the Leghs, originally drawn up in 1619, and continued to 1811 by Francis Townsend, Windsor Herald, the latter allowed the family no less than the very large number of eighty-six quarterings.¹

Some of the contents of the four folio volumes of the HIGH LEGH MSS. deserve to be referred to here. In volume i. is the painted shield of arms of Thomas Legh, of High Legh, Esq. (quartering Alraham), on parchment, signed by William Flower, Esq., Norroy, and R. Glover Somerset, the two heralds who came to Cheshire for the Visitation of 1580, and confirmed and signed by Richard St. George, Norroy, at the next Cheshire Visitation of 1613. In this volume is also the sermon preached at the funeral of Henry Legh, Esq., on the 25th February 1684[-5], and many interesting papers, specially relating to the Legh family. Volume ii. contains notes and abstracts of the old deeds of the Legh and the Cornwall families, &c., made by George Legh, Esq., about 1778, together with other Legh notes, made by Richard Legh, Esq., about 1690. There are some interesting old plans of the seats in Rostherne church, with other documents relating to that edifice in volume iii., whilst volume iv. contains long lists of those assessed for the Land Tax, in the various townships of Bucklow Hundred, in the year 1734.

¹ This pedigree, with the beautifully painted shield of arms of eighty-six quarters, was exhibited at the meeting, together with one of the Wogan family drawn up about 1586, with very curiously painted shields of arms, and an old illuminated pedigree of the Cornwall family, on which many interesting old deeds relating to that family are copied.

II. *Deeds relating to the Leghs of Swinehead, &c.*

About the year 1686, Richard Legh, of High Legh, Esq., purchased from his nephew, Richard Legh, of Swinehead, gentleman, the Swinehead¹ estate, near High Legh. The lands forming this estate had been in the possession of the Leghs of Swinehead for over three hundred years, having been granted by John de Legh to his younger son, Matthew de Legh, early in the fourteenth century. It would naturally be expected that all the old deeds relating to this estate would now be found in Colonel Legh's possession, but, strange to say, beyond a few late seventeenth-century documents, there are hardly any which relate particularly to Swinehead. There is, however, a valuable folio volume, which is a Chartulary of the deeds formerly in the possession of the Leghs of Swinehead, commencing *c.* 1210 and coming down to 1619, in which year the book was written by George Owen, York Herald.

This SWINEHEAD CHARTULARY contains about three hundred pages, closely and clearly written on both sides of the page, the deeds being copied in full, and, in the case of the early Latin ones, being accompanied by translations placed opposite to them. The quartered shield of the Leghs of Swinehead is on the first page, followed by a pedigree coming down to 1619, and at the end are some memoranda of births, &c., relating to the children of Lawrence Legh, gentleman, who married Mary, daughter of Charles Bold, of Upton, co. Chester, in 1623, between the years 1624 and 1662.²

The earliest deed in this Chartulary is the grant of the

¹ Now called Swinyard. The old house, now used as a farmhouse, is a black and white, timber and plaster, gabled building.

² The memoranda of births, &c., here alluded to, were printed in the *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, for August, 1876, vol. ii., pp. 326-7.

moiety of Comberbach to the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, not dated, but about the year 1210. This grant was made by Roger de Lacy, constable of Chester, which office he held from 1190 to 1211, and there are an unusual number of witnesses, showing the great importance attached to the deed.¹ It is also noteworthy that this volume contains full copies of no less than six wills of members of this family proved between the years 1512 and 1619, *not one* of which is now to be found in the Probate Court at Chester! These are, Matthew Legh, 1512;² Richard Legh, 1552;³ Joan Legh, widow, 1558; Richard Legh, 1582; Jane Legh, widow, 1585; and Richard Legh, 1619.

III. *Miscellaneous Cheshire Deeds.*

There are many interesting documents amongst the miscellaneous deeds relating to various parts of Cheshire. To

¹ The names of these witnesses are as follows: Henry the prior of Norton; Richard the chaplain; Richard, brother of the Constable; Hugh de Boidele; Rafe the son of Symon; Thomas Dispenser; Hugh de Dutton; Adam de Dutton; Ralph the son of Roger; Alexander the son of Ralph; Liulph the sheriff [of Cheshire]; Bertram the chamberlain; John Burdon; Hugh de Eccleston; Richard, son of Henry; Robert de Pulle; John, son of Alured; Gilbert de Lymme; William de Camvile; Alan de Waley (?); William the son of Matthew; Richard the son of John; Richard the son of Gilbert; Aitrop [de Mulinton]; Richard Starkie; Richard de Whiteleth; William de Tabbeleth; Walter de Toft; John de Comberbach; Henry, his brother; and the whole Hundred of Hethetton. This deed is referred to and quoted by Sir Peter Leycester in his *History of Bucklow Hundred*, p. 237, from this very Chartulary. He reads the last words as "the whole Hundred of Haltonshire," for which he probably had some good warrant.

² This will mentions "the Chappell of Seynt Anne within the parish church of Handley," co. Chester, no reference to which is believed to have previously occurred.

³ This will *was* at Chester in the Rev. J. Piccope's time, and was examined by him, and the notes he made of it I have printed in *Wills and Inventories at Chester*, Chetham Society, N.S., vol. iii., p. 220. It cannot now be found. A comparison of this will, as copied in the Swinehead Chartulary, with Mr. Piccope's genealogical notes, enables us to judge of the accuracy of the latter, and to recognize what he has omitted to copy.

the Strethull deeds many of the early rectors of Rostherne were witnesses, and in one of them, of about the year 1250, Adam, lord of Legh, and Richard, lord of Legh, were two of the witnesses, showing how early the two estates were separate. The Knutsford deeds are very numerous, extending from *c.* 1292 to the year 1702. The earliest is a copy of the grant from William, lord of Tabley, to his burgesses of Knutsford, which is printed in full by Sir Peter Leycester in his *Bucklow Hundred*, p. 295. Most of the early deeds relate to the burgages there belonging to the family of Venables of Strethull. Others relate to the "George Inn" there at the end of the seventeenth century. There is a large collection of deeds relating to the family of Cocker of Pickmere, between the years 1300 and 1595, from which the early descents of this now extinct family might easily be deduced. There are a few leases and other deeds relating to Chester between the years 1513 and 1582. The deeds relating to Golburne, Manley,¹ and Hargreave, although of considerable value to any one engaged on the history of those places, do not call for much comment here. Amongst the documents in the last bundle in this group, attention should be called to No. 771, which is an interesting contemporary account of the baptisms, marriages, &c., of the children of Peter Mainwaring, of Smallwood, co. Chester, gentleman, between the years 1603 and 1650. His eldest daughter, Eleanor, married Elias Ashmole, Esq., the founder of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and Windsor Herald, and another, Elizabeth, married the Rev. Henry Newcome, of Manchester, the celebrated Nonconformist.

¹ These Manley deeds and others of these miscellaneous Cheshire deeds came into the possession of the Leghs owing to the marriage of Henry Legh, of High Legh, Esq., about 1630, to Dorothy, daughter of Gregory Turner, Rector of Sefton, co. Lanc., who had an estate at Manley.

IV. *Special Collections of Cheshire Deeds.*

The two collections of deeds contained in Group IV. deserve special mention. The first of these relates to Thornton-in-the-Moors, co. Chester, and comprises a fine series of deeds of much interest, dating back to the early part of the thirteenth century. The earliest of these deeds, which is of about the year 1215, is a grant of the whole "vill" or township of Thornton, and all his rights therein, together with the advowson of the church there, from Richard, lord of Aldeford, to Peter, "clerk of the Lord the Earl of Chester." Here again the importance of this deed is shown by the large number of twenty-one witnesses, whose names are as follows:—

Philip de Orreby, now Justiciary of Chester, Warin de Vernon, William de Venables, Hamo de Masci, Robert Pâte, Hugh and Geoffrey de Dutton, William de Haselwell, Patrick de Modburlegh, Robert de Pulford, Liulph de Tuamlawe, Joceramus de Hellesby, Robert and Randle de Praers (*perijs*), Richard de Sandboch, Richard de Vernon, David de Malpas, Richard de Bresci, Philip de Wirhall, Richard de Raudestorn, clerk, Thomas, Chamberlain of Chester, and many others.

Of these persons we know that Philip de Orreby was Justiciary of Chester from 1209 to 1228, which helps to fix the date of the deed. To this document there is a large portion of the seal still remaining, showing the equestrian figure of a knight in armour.

The next deed of this series is the grant of the "vill" of Thornton to Peter, his clerk or secretary, by the celebrated Randle Blundeville, Earl of Chester, free from all services at his courts for the County, Hundred, or Forest. To this deed there are twelve witnesses, amongst whom are Philip

R. Comel Dester Constabulario. Episcopo. Justiciario. Vicecomiti. Raynolds Dux et Comes et Raynulfus
 et Comes Grents Dux plesens et Francus plesens Cetera plesens et Sandwicus plesens. Statos etc
 Radulfus et Concessus Deco Ovis et Grents Dux aut Qui assensuere Sullary de Chorinthi
 Comendatariis de Deco Comendatariis et Grents Dux et plesens foreste. Et genteria de plesens de du
 cal plesens Dux in foreste etc. Et genteria de foreste etc. et Grents plesens. Et ut hec dona
 eis etc. et Concessus plesens Libertat in plesens Dux et Concessus plesens tenenda et Grents illi
 et Grents Dux aut Qui assensuere de etc. et de Grents etc. et plesens plesens etc. et
 Sigilli etc. assensuere Concessus etc. Dux et Grents etc. plesens etc. plesens etc. plesens etc.
 R. Radulfus de plesens etc. Grents etc. Grents etc. Grents etc. Grents etc. Grents etc.
 R. de Grents etc. Grents etc. Grents etc. Grents etc. Grents etc. Grents etc.

de Orreby, then Justiciary of Chester, and Hugh, Abbot of Chester. The date of this is the same as the one last mentioned, *c.* 1215. A facsimile of this interesting deed is given in the annexed plate. The following is a translation:—

Randle, Earl of Chester, to his Constable, Shieldbearer, (*constabulario dapifero*), Justiciaries, Sheriffs, Barons and Knights and Bailiffs and to all his men (*hominibus*) present and future, who shall see or hear this present charter, greeting. Be it known that I have given and granted to Peter, my clerk (*clerico*), and his heirs or to whomsoever he may assign it, the vill of Thornith', [with] acquittance of suits of the County and the Hundred Courts, and of pleas of the Forest, and acquittance of pannage of the lord for his swine in my forests, and acquittance [from the liability] of feeding the foresters and serjeants (*forestariis et servientibus*). And that this my gift and concession of the liberties aforesaid may remain for ever firm and unbroken, to have and to hold to him and his heirs, or to whomsoever he may assign the same, of me and my heirs, I have strengthened it by the testimony of those present at this writing and by the placing of my seal. These being witnesses, Philip de Orreby, now Justiciary of Chester, Hugh, Abbot of Chester, R., Seneschal of Montalt, William de Venables, Warin de Vernon, Hamo de Masey, Ralph, son of Simon, Richard de Kingsley, Joceramus de Hellesby, Gilbert Bruno, Robert de Trohford, Hugh de Hole, and many others.

The Earl's seal is unfortunately now broken, and what remains of it is tied up in linen. Randle Blundeville was Earl of Chester from 1181 to 1230, and in 1217 he was created Earl of Lincoln, after which date he styled himself Earl of Chester and Lincoln, and not Earl of Chester only. Hugh Grylle, Abbot of Chester, held that office from 1208 to 1226.

The other deeds in this collection relate to the manor of

Thornton, and the advowson of the church there,¹ as also to the families of the Thorntons and the Booths of Dunham Massey, and are of much importance for the history of that part of Cheshire. This manor was the inheritance of the Hon. Langham Booth, who died in 1725. He, by his will, devised this estate and his lands in Ince, Elton and Stoake, to his brother, Henry Booth, for his life, with remainder to his heirs male in tail male, remainder to his brother, the Earl of Warrington, and his issue in like manner, with final remainder to George Legh, of High Legh, Esq., and his issue in like manner. The Hon. Henry Booth died unmarried, and the Earl of Warrington enjoyed this estate till 1758. On his death, in that year, without issue, it passed to George Legh, Esq., and was sold a few years ago.

The other collection contains a fine series of deeds relating to the manor of Sale, co. Chester, and the family of Massey of Sale, between the years 1335 and 1784, many of which are of much interest. One of these (No. 871) is a notarial instrument, reciting the will of Richard le Massey, of Sale, Esq., which had been made in his house in Bridge Street, Chester, in the year 1407. Another (No. 879), dated 28th September, 1461, is a settlement of the lands of Hamo Massey, of Rixton, near Warrington, by which Joan his wife was to hold the same for the term of twelve years after his death and to find priests to do divine service, &c., during that time. There is also an interesting award (No. 881), dated 25th August, 1480, between Sir Randle Assheton, parson of Assheton upon Mersey, and Robert Vawdray, concerning land in Sale. Nos. 884-5, dated July, 1501, relate to a parcel of land in Sale which

¹ In 1545 it is spoken of as the church of St. Ellen of Thornton upon the Moors. It is now, I believe, generally said to be dedicated to St. Mary.

had been settled "to the service of our blessid ladie of Assheton upon Mersey bonke." The names of many of the rectors of Ashton-on-Mersey and Northenden and the vicars of Bowdon occur in this collection.¹

I will not enlarge upon the contents of the deeds contained in Group V. relating to Lancashire, Yorkshire, Staffordshire, &c., &c., especially as I purpose to bring them to the notice of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, at Manchester, and this paper is already sufficiently long. A summary of the contents of the various bundles will be found on pp. 9-10, and a more detailed account in the Transactions of the above Society for 1887, vol. v.²

The history of these Legh deeds is a somewhat curious one. When Sir Peter Leycester was writing his *History of Bucklow Hundred*, he was most anxious to examine all the deeds relating to the various families, holding lands within that Hundred, and he accordingly applied to the then owners of the various estates for permission to inspect their deeds. In almost every case this permission was accorded to him, and in his MSS. still preserved at Tabley House, near Knutsford, by Lord de Tabley, which I carefully examined some years since, are to be found his abstracts of all the documents he saw, on which abstracts and other public records, he based his well-known *History of Bucklow Hundred*, a most valuable book published in 1673. But in that volume, whilst he gives a full account of the Leighs of the West Hall, he adds (p. 309): "Here should have followed the Descent of the other Legh de

¹ The manor of Sale was purchased by George John Legh, of High Legh, Esq., towards the end of the last century, but was subsequently sold by him or his son.

² My paper was read at the meeting of the Society held on 1st April, 1887.

East-Hall in High Legh, but I could not have the Perusal of the Evidences of that Family: For that Henry Legh, Esquire, now Owner thereof, affirmed that his Deeds were most of them lost in the late War."

Whether this was an excuse or not, one cannot now say, but the deeds, even if they were mislaid then, have since been found, and are now in Colonel Legh's possession. About four years ago, whilst examining the deeds preserved at the West Hall, High Legh, belonging to Captain Egerton Leigh, I was much surprised to find a great many relating to the East Hall family, and these mostly of a very early date. When this was pointed out to Captain Egerton Leigh, he most courteously sent Colonel Legh all the deeds which had any connection with the East Hall family, and thus at the present time the East Hall deeds are for the first time, possibly for centuries, all brought together again and properly arranged and calendared.¹ I fancy that as the Leighs of the West Hall were mixed up in the disputes about the East Hall estates between 1510 and 1520, it is quite possible that they held the old deeds as trustees and never gave them up to the new owner.

In conclusion, I would only wish to point out that these High Legh deeds are by no means exceptional, and that very many other large landowners in Lancashire and Cheshire are the possessors of deeds and documents, no doubt quite as important and as interesting as these, but their value is at present unknown, because they have never been properly examined and arranged. Some years ago the Duke of Westminster set an excellent example by printing a calendar of the deeds at Eaton Hall, and in 1866 Mr. Egerton-Warburton printed a calendar of the deeds at

¹ A few West Hall deeds, found amongst the East Hall deeds, have been added to Captain Egerton Leigh's collection.

Arley Hall, but these are the only two Cheshire collections, to my knowledge, of which calendars have been made, and I know of no Lancashire ones.¹ I can only hope that other landowners will now follow Colonel Cornwall Legh's example and have the contents of their muniment rooms set in order, and I can assure them the results will be well worth the trouble and expense. It is surely no small matter for Colonel Legh to know that, not only does he represent one of the oldest territorial families in the county, but also that from the year 1230 to the present time *every step* in his pedigree can be proved by documentary evidence in his own possession!

And what is true of private individuals is also, looked at from another point of view, true of corporations. Fortunate is the city, which has a history, and still more fortunate is that city, whose historical records are still extant. Here in Chester, the old records of the city are now well cared for and carefully preserved, but their contents are practically unknown. Considering what light they would most probably throw on the past history of this ancient city, I shall be only too glad if the few remarks I have made about the value of the Legh deeds should cause these far more historically important records to be carefully examined, and, if possible, printed.

¹ The fine collection of deeds preserved at Agecroft Hall, near Manchester, was recently examined and arranged by me, and they will be printed as an appendix to a History of that old Hall and the families connected with it, which I am at present engaged upon.

