

Some Account of the Legge Family resident in East Anglia,

COMMUNICATED BY

THE REV. A. G. LEGGE, M.A.

Collins, in his *Historic Peerage of England*,¹ states that the junior branch of the Legges, which descended from John, second son of Thomas Legge, who lived in the reign of Edward III., settled in Norfolk.

The following paper is an attempt to give some account, gathered from ancient charters which have lately come to light, of certain members of the family who held property in South Creake and Syderstone, together with notes respecting others, who from time to time were connected with East Anglia.

The family of Legge or De Lezze sprang originally, as the name indicates, from Italy. Several of its members were resident in Naples and other Italian cities, especially in Venice, whither they removed from Ravenna about the end of the tenth century. "Such," says Collins, "was their noble descent, and so great their wealth, that they were thought worthy of a place among the Patricians in the year 1297." They resided, according to the census of 1379, in S. Giovanni Nuovo,

¹ Fifth Edition, vol. iv., p. 295.

near S. Barnaba, and at S. Giminiano, and afterwards went to live at the Misericordia at S. Samuele.

Luca De Lezze was buried in S. Stefano in 1475, and Priamo De Lezze at the Cruciferi, opposite the church of the Gesuits, in 1506, where also Andrea and Geovanni were buried in 1573.

The De Lezze of the Misericordia were possessed of a magnificent palace, which, with another on the Grand Canal, may be seen to this day.¹

At what period they came over to England is not known, but Hugh De Lezze was sheriff of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire from the 10th to the 16th Henry II., and William De Lezze was sheriff of Herefordshire in the 17th Henry II. The Herefordshire Legges, from whom Thomas Legge, the first *Lord* Mayor of London, was descended, were the elder branch; although others who resided at Legge's Place near Tunbridge, Kent, were there many generations before his time. He held the office of Lord Mayor in 1346, and again in 1353, and lent Edward III. £300, a considerable sum in those days, to enable him to carry on the war with France. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, K.G., and they had two sons, namely, Simon, from whom the present Earl of Dartmouth is lineally descended, and John. John was Knight of the Shire for Surrey 2nd Richard II., and had issue. He was in the Tower of London with Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1381, and was surprised there by Wat Tyler and his rebels, who seized him and beheaded him on Tower Hill.

It is from him, as I have already stated, that the Norfolk Legges sprang, and amongst them Dr. Thomas

¹ For information respecting the De Lezze, I am indebted to the courtesy of the Librarian of the Palace of the Doges, Venice.

Legge, Master of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, is specially mentioned by Collins.

He was a man of some note, eminent for his learning, and known as a correspondent of Justus Lipsius. He was born in Norwich in 1535, and was the second of three sons of Stephen Legge, by Margaret, daughter of William Larke. He entered Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in November, 1552, but shortly after migrated to Trinity, of which he became scholar in 1555. He took his B.A. degree in 1566-7, became a Fellow of Trinity, and was incorporated at Oxford in the same year. He proceeded M.A. in 1570, and LL.D. 1575. He had previously, in 1568, become Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, where he was noted as an active tutor with a preference in religious matters for the Romish Faith. On the 27th June, 1573, he succeeded Dr. Caius as Master of Caius College. In addition to all this he was an Advocate of Doctor's Commons, a Master in Chancery, Commissary to the University, the King's Law Professor, and twice Vice-Chancellor. Like his friend, Dr. Caius, he was distinguished as an antiquary. He was the writer of two tragedies; the one, entitled *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, having been filched from him by a plagiarist just as it was about to be put upon the boards, was afterwards acted at Coventry; the other, *Ricardus Tertius*, was received with great applause at Cambridge. It was played in St. John's College in 1579. In this Palmer, afterwards Dean of Peterborough, was Richard, and Nathaniel Knox, eldest son of the Reformer, was Hastings. This play is alluded to by Harington in his *Apologie of Poetry* as a famous tragedy, and by Nash in his *Have with you to Saffron Walden*. It was probably the one which the Cambridge men requested Burghley to substitute in 1592-3 for the English comedy, which the Queen had asked for. MSS. of this play exist at Emmanuel, Caius College, and in

the University Library. It is also amongst the Harleian and Phillips' collections, and was edited from the Emmanuel MS. for the Shakespeare Society by Barron Field in 1844. In 1875 Mr. Hazlitt printed it in Vol. V. of his edition of Collier's Shakespeare's Library.

Legge's erratic conduct at Caius brought him sometimes into trouble, and about 1581 he seems to have been committed to the Fleet for treating with contempt certain letters of the Queen, which no doubt had reference to the encouragement given by him to Romanists in his college, he having on one occasion procured the election to a fellowship of a certain Depup, a Roman Catholic. The fellows of Caius resented his conduct in this respect, and made it the subject of an accusation in a letter to Burghley on the 31st January, 1581. He was also charged with misappropriating the college funds, and with using "continuall and expressive loud singinge and noyse of organs," to the disturbance of the students.

He died on the 12th July, 1607, having left by will a sum of money to be expended in building the side of the new court in Caius College by S. Michael's Church, and was laid to rest in the College Chapel. On the south side is a monument having a canopy and his effigy, kneeling in his doctor's robes, his hands upraised, and a book on the desk before him. Underneath is inscribed:—Thomas Legge Legum Doctor Quondam Custos Hujus Collegij Obiit Anno Domini 1607, 12 Die Jvlij Ætatis Suæ 72. Between the two columns of this inscription two hands are represented supporting a heart, and underneath are the words:—

Junxit amor vivos, sic jungat terra sepultos,
Gostlini reliqvvm cor tibi Leggus habes.
Moriendo vivit.

These verses were, no doubt, added by Dr. John

Gostlin, his great friend and afterwards Master of the College. They may be rendered thus:—

“That love, that living, made us two but one,
Wishes at last we both may have this tomb,
The heart of Gostlin, still continuing here
Is kept for Legge, to whom it was so dear;
By death he lives, for ever to remain,
And Gostlin hopes to meet him once again.”

On the top are Legge's arms, viz.:—Or, a cross flore sab., and under the following legend:—

“Col, Legame, Della, Legge.”

Blomefield, in a foot note, states his inability to give the meaning of these words, but Dr. John Venn of Cambridge, who most kindly replied to a query of mine upon the subject, is of opinion “that the words are a punning expression, in rather questionable Italian, of the sentiment ‘with the Union of Laws.’” The name Legge and the fact that Dr. Thomas was “*Legum Doctor*,” would give some appropriateness to this interpretation. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. xxxii. p. 413, edition 1892; also Blomefield's *History of Norfolk*, vol. iii. pp. 301-2.

CALENDAR OF CHARTERS RELATING TO THE
LEGGES OF SOUTH CREAKE & SYDERSTONE.

1. Richard Athelwald and John Legge, both of “Southreyk,” grant twelve acres of land “apud Crosdyk” in the same to John Richehan and Margaret his wife, of “Northreyk,” sc. ten acres and one rod “apud Crosdyk iux̄ ſtram Johis Barkere” to the west; “sup Crosdyk” to the south; and “sup ſtram quondam Robti

Chenere" to the north. Also seven rods "apud Medewecroft iux̄ t̄ram Edmundi Athelwald" to the north, and "sup t̄ram Wiffi Hendrey" to the east.

Witnesses. Thomas Athelwald, Edmund Godfrey, Thomas Norton, John Cade, John Norton, Alan Breton, Roger Smith, and others.

Date. Monday after the Feast of S. Michael the Archangel, 8th Henry IV. (1406).

Seals. 1.—A slipped trefoil between two smaller ones, growing on a mount, in reference, perhaps, to the Trinity. Legend: Verbū caro f̄ca est—Verbum caro facta est. 2.—A cinquefoil rose within two interlaced triangles. Legend: S. P. A. R. W. N.

2. Richard Adthelwald of "Southreyk," Nicholas "atte Chirch" of Northbarsham, Edmund Godfrey, John Legge, Thomas de Norton, all of "Southreyk," and William Golding of "Wyghton," grant to "Louece" Adthelward of "Southreyk" lands and two messuages in Northgate in "Southreyk," sc. one messuage "in̄ mess̄ Joh̄is Hestyng" to the north, "messagiū Joh̄is Adthelwald filii Jacobi" to the south, and "sup Northgatestrete" to the east; the other, "iux̄ messuagiū p̄d̄ci Joh̄is Adthelwald" to the north, "z terr̄ nat̄iam d̄ni de Bellafago" to the south; all lands, tenements, &c., except lands lying in Westgate, "apud Stepebowe," "sup Stretgate," "apud Sthephonscrofte," and "sup regiam viam vocat̄ Holgatewey."

Witnesses. Thomas Adthelwald, John de Wokenham, John Cade, John Notyngham, Alan Breton, and others.

Date. Monday after the Feast of S. Andrew the Apostle, 9th Henry IV. (1407).

Seals. 1.—Same as No. 1, Charter I. 2.—A merchant's mark [—†—]. 3.—A saint (head wanting), probably S. Margaret.

3. Thomas Athelwald and Richard his son, of "Southcreyk," and Simon Baret of "Hecham," grant to Robert Scot of "Southcreyk," William Grave, Clk., and John Legge, jun., four acres of land "voç Chammescroft" in "Southcreyk Southgate" lying "int̄ terra⁹ nat̄iam Johis Howard milit⁹" to the south, "z terr⁹ p̄dict̄ Robi Skot" to the north, "cuig capud occident⁹ abut̄ sup Southgatemeer," at a yearly rent of "octo denarii," to be paid in equal proportions at the Feasts of S. Michael, S. Andrew, the Purification of the Virgin, and the Nativity of S. John the Baptist.

Witnesses. Edmund Godfrey, Thomas de Norton, John Cade, John Notyngham, John Legg, sen., and others.

Date. The Feast of S. George the Martyr, 10th Henry IV. (1409).

Seals. 1.—A seeded fleur-de-lis. 2.—The Annunciation of the Virgin in a niche. 3.—An ancient gem ring. A deity before an altar or term, between the initials S. B. (Simon Baret) and four cinquefoils.

4. James, son of Roger, grants to William flete, Armiger, John Payne of "Helgheton," John Legge and John Auntell of "Southcreyk," lands, a watermill, and the fourth part of a foldcourse in "Southcreyk" and "Sidesterne."

Witnesses. Edmund Godfrey, Robert Eloys, John Norton, John Lysse, Thomas Hard of "Southcreyk," and others.

Date. Monday before the Feast of the Epiphany, 8th Henry VI. (1433).

One Seal. The initial letter T crowned between two sprigs of foliage.

5. John Legge and John Auntell of "Southcreyk"

grant the above to Thomas the son of James, John Lysse, and Edmund Michell.

Witnesses. John Norton, William Harde, John Crane, John Tilneye, John Lyne, and others.

Date. Monday before the Feast of S. Gregory, 17th Henry VI. (1438).

Seals. 1.—The initial letter L (Legge) crowned. 2.—The initial letter G. Both seals from rings.

6. John Legg grants to John his son, and his son's wife Margaret, sixteen acres of land in "Systeene," together with the third part of a folcourse, sc. four acres "apud Rogerwong inter ter^o nup Johis Notynghm̃ de Southereyk & capud orientat abuttat sup Regiam viam," three acres "sup Tram Thome de Kerdeston, Militis," four acres "apud Snowdon iuxta terr^o Thome fit Jacobi ex pte boriaf & terr^o Johis Legg señ ex pte Austrat & capud orieñ abuttat sup Regiam viam & capud occideñ sup terr^o Prioris de Castelaere," four acres one rod and an half "iuxta terram Thome filij Jacobi ex pte orientat & capud Austi^o sup terram Johis Shropham de Southereyk & continet in se quatuor stadia."

Witnesses. Nicholas Legge, chaplain, John Norton, John Auntell, William Hard, John Crane, John Edmund, and others.

Date. 10th April, 20th Henry VI. (1442).

One Seal. Indistinct; perhaps a lion dormant. Legend illegible. The seal set in a twisted rush. Some seals with this device have the legend, "Wake me no man," or, "Ici dort le liun fort."

7. William and Robert Herward, William Hard, and John Scarlet grant to Joan Suwer, John Auntell, and Robert ffreman, on payment of eleven marks, three solidi and four denarii, *i.e.*, ten solidi at the Feast of the Purification, and ten at the Feast of the Nativity of S. John the

Baptist, every year, a messuage with curtilage, a parcel of land "vocatⁱ Hemplond iac^o apud Robynsgrene in Southereyk iuxta messuagiū Johis Marwe ex pte australi & messuagiū Johis Legge ex pte occidentali," and one acre and an half "apud Stubcroft iuxta t^ram Johis Legge ex pte occidentali & t^ram Johis Marwe ex pte orientali." Reservation of re-entry in case of non-payment of rent.

Witnesses. John Legge, John Norton, John Edmond, Robert ffreman, and others.

Date. Monday after the Feast of S. Faith, 21st Henry VI. (1442).

Seals. 1.—An Agnus Dei. Legend, ECCE AGNUS DEI. 2.—The sacred monogram, **✠ IHS**. 3.—The initial letter **W** crowned. All three seals from rings.

A^o Dñi. 1446.

8. These indentur^o made the fyfte day of Decem^br, the yer^o of the regne of Kyng Henr^o the sexte after the conqueste xxv. be twene Henr^o Notyng^ham, clerk, on theton p^tie, And John Leg the yonger on the other p^tie, bereth witnessse that the seid John hath boughte of the seid Henr^o alle the Londes and teñtz by and wⁱn the townes & feldez of Southereyk And Sidesterne sumtyme John Notyng^hm Hese fader vnder these condicōnez that the seid Henr^o shall make And delyue to the seid John Leg or Hese assign^o as lawfull astate of the Londes and teñtz forseyd, as can be Avysed be the counsell of the seid John Legge be twene the Day of the p^resent making and Candelmesse next comyng, And the seid John Leg at the Day of astate deliued shall deliue to the seid Henr^o An obligaçon of xx^{li} w^t A payer Defesaung to be payd in ten yer^o at the feste of Mihelmesse And Esterne be euen porçons the first Day of payment to be gynne at Michelmesse next comyng After the date

of these p̄sentz. In witnesse wher of the pties forseid to these p̄sentz altnatly have set her seales pove¹ the yer⁹ and Day a bove said.

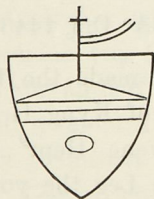
Seal. H interlacing N. Henry Notyngham.

9. Cicilia, widow of John Legge (sen.), grants to Sir John ffincham of ffincham, William Cobbe of Sandringham, and Nicholas Legge, her son, lands and liberty of a fold-course in "Systeme."

Witnesses. William Hard, John Crane, John Bataly of "Southereyk," Walter Souter, John Seman of "Sydesterne," and others.

Date. 1st March, 4th Edward IV. (1464¹).

Seal. A shield bearing a merchant's mark with the usual cross and bent lines indicating a flag or banner.



10. Cicilia, widow of John Legge (sen.), appoints Roger Hard, John Small, John Grene, John Bulwer, and Richard Shiryngham to be her Attorneys respecting the above.

Date. Same as above.

Seal. Same as above.

11. John ffincham of ffincham, William Cobbe of Sandringham, and Nicholas Legge release to John Norton of "Southereik," William Tendale, Armiger, William

¹ According to Mr. Warner of the British Museum, the initial letter "p" of this word is an error of the scribe for "z." The word should be "zove(n)" = "yove(n)" = "gove(n)" = "give(n)."

Whaite of "Tittleshale," Edmund ffyncham, and Richard Norton, fifteen acres of land with liberty of a mediety of foldcourse in "Sidesterne," lately held by John Legg, sen.

Witnesses. None. *Date.* 21st September, 5th Edward IV. (1465).

Seals. 1.—An escallop shell combined with a trident.



Below, the initial letters, i.b. 2.—A flagon or crowned jug. *Legend.*—S' Willi Cobbe (Sir William Cobbe of Sandringham). 3.—The initial letter A.

12. Thomas, son and heir of John Legge, jun., appoints Robert Redhead of "Lenn Epi," to be his Attorney in an action with Robert Myote of the same, Burgess, respecting the mediety of a message "voç Dame Amys in Southerek."

Witnesses. None. *Date.* 20th September, 7th Edward IV. (1467).

Seal. The initial letter R crowned; on the left hand a sprig of foliage. From a ring.

13. Thomas Legge confirms to Robert Myote the above, together with a dovecote, which he lately held jointly with his father, John Legge (jun.), now deceased, and William Crane, Clk., by gift of Nicholas Legge (uncle to Thomas) and John Auntell of "Southereyk."

Witnesses. Richard Norton, William Hard, Roger Hard, John Crane, Richard Sheryngham, alias Smythe, of Southerek, and many others.

Date. 29th September, 7th Edward IV. (1467).

Seals. None.

14. Richard Shiryngham of "Southreyk" and William Crane, Clk., grant a messuage and certain lands in "Southreyk" to Richard Brown, John Grene, and Nicholas Legge, all of the same, and appoint Nicholas Grene and Robert Norton as attorneys on their behalf.

Witnesses. Richard Norton, Robert Haridanus, Edmund Denys, John Clerk, William Crakesheld, and many others.

Date. 22nd March, 23rd Edward IV. (1483).

Seals. 1.—An ordinary lawyer's seal of the period.
2.—A crane holding the letter W in its beak, representing William Crane.

15. Edward (or Edmund) Legge and Margaret his wife, at Court Baron for the Manor of "Toftris," transfer "vn̄ū mesuagiū cont̄ tria teñta vocat̄ Louses Stirmes ⁊ Reres insimul iacent̄ et continent̄ tres acras cū viginti aeris ⁊ tribz rodīs ūre nat̄ie ac d̄iam pietellū vocat̄ Galtes in Southreyk ad opus Laurencij Norton Riçi Norton et Riçi Tilney hered̄, &c., &c."

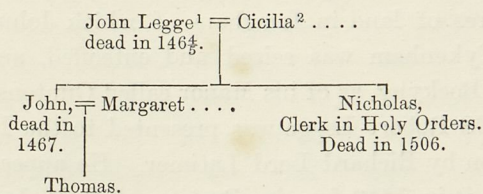
Date. Tuesday before the Feast of S. Faith the Virgin, 18th Henry VII. (1502). No witnesses. No seal.

16. Richard Brown of "Southreyk" grants messuages, lands, and tenements, formerly in the possession of John Goddyng, sen., John Grene, and Nicholas Legge, now deceased, to Nicholas Grene and Robert Lane, both of "Southreyk."

Witnesses. None.

Date. 4th August, 21st Henry VII. (1506). One seal, defaced.

PEDIGREE GATHERED FROM THE FOREGOING CHARTERS.



There is nothing to show in what relationship Edward and Margaret Legge, mentioned in Charter No. 15, stood to the last-named Thomas, who may have married and become Edward's father.

NOTES RESPECTING OTHER MEMBERS OF THE
FAMILY.

In December, 1311, John de Legis was instituted to the Living of Stanfield on the presentation of Richard Folyot, Miles, and in January of the following year Thomas de Legis by the same.

At a Court Manor of Lexham, held in 50th Edward III. (1377), Edward Legge, son of Roger and Margary his wife, were admitted as cousins and co-heirs of Christopher Brightliffe.

Amongst the Rectors of Waterden occurs the name of William Legge in 1447, who was presented to the living by Sir Henry Englose on the resignation of William Fowle.

In 10th Henry VII. (1496) the Escheator of Norfolk

¹ The dates will scarcely admit of his being the son, though he may possibly have been the grandson of John, second son of Thomas, Lord Mayor of London.

² "Just under the arch of the steeple (of Great Fransham Church) lies also a stone with the portraiture of a woman in brass, in a winding sheet, and on a plate, *Orate p̄ aīa Cecilie uxō Johis Legge . . .*"—Blomefield's *History of Norfolk*, vol. viii., pp. 59, 60.

N.B.—Alas! the brass is no longer there.—A. G. L.

accounted for the issues of eight messuages and twenty-eight acres of land in Longham, of which John Legge of North Pykenham was seized and enfeoffed, and held of Richard Bockyng, as of his Manor called Guntons.

In 1498 Robert Legge was presented to the Rectory of Houghton by Richard Lord Latimer. He appears to have resigned it in 1510 for the Rectory of S. Michael-at-Plea, Norwich, on the presentation of Lord D'Acre.

In 1511 the Manor of Sayes in Long Stratton was assigned to John Legge. It came to him through his wife, Elizabeth. She and Eleanor, her sister, were daughters and co-heirs of Anne, daughter of Thomas Pygot of Stirton, and wife of Robert Barnard of Norwich, Esq. Eleanor married Christopher Calthorpe, who by that means came into possession of the Manor of Stirton.

In 1518 Sir Thomas Wodehouse, Knt., Roger Townesend of Stinton, Esq., Christopher Calthorpe, Esq., and Robert Harward of Boton, Gent., sold Leches Manor (which they had purchased of divers persons A^o 7th Henry VIII.), Cawston, to John Legge, Gent., and Elizabeth his wife. It lies next Cawston Heath.

By will bearing date 12th March, 1547, Christopher Calthorpe of Cockethorpe, Esq., bequeathes "to Anthony Legge, my wife's nevwewe, 6s. 8*d.*, and one blacke plated chest." In 1554 Richard, son of Christopher, leaves him "a chiste that was myne aunts, his mother, of my father's gift."

In 1550 John Legge was presented by King Edward VI. to the Vicarage of Hunstanton.

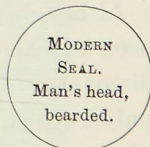
Blomefield mentions that the following inscription is to be seen in the north aisle of St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich:—
 "Hic jacet Hester Legge Filia Tobiaë Legge Clerici
 (dum vixit) donis Naturæ, Artis, et Gratiaë fuit cælitus
 ornata, obiit Nov. 29, A^o Dom. 1639. Speravit sperans,
 moriens Cæli attigit aures."

Stephen Legge is mentioned among the witnesses to the will of William Windham, of Felbrigg in the county of Norfolk, Esq., bearing date 2nd April, 1682.

Copy of agreement between Nathan Tilson, or Jilson, gent., on behalf of the Most Noble Charles, Duke of Richmond and Lenox,¹ and Robert Legge, Alderman of Colchester:—I doe promise to pay to Nathan Tilson (or Jilson), gent., to the use of the Most Noble Charles, Duke of Richmond and Lenox, the sume of ffifty pounds of lawfull money of England before the last day of february next, which is in dispute and alleadged to bee in arreare of my rent payable for the farme of the subsedye and Aulnage,² if before that tyme it bee not made appeare that I became bound to Godfrey Lee, Merchant, for paymt of y^e s^d sume to him before such tyme as the s^d Duke re-entred upon y^e farme of y^e subsedye and Aulnage heretofore in Lease to y^e s^d Godfrey Lee and Mr. Sharpull.

In witnes whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale the 7th day of January, 1663.

ROBERT LEGGE.



Sealed and delivered in the presence of

J. Wrenham.

Wm. Bartram.

Know all men by these p^sents that I, Robert Legge, of the City of Colchester, Ald^rman, am holden and firmly bound unto Thomas Sto.

¹ In 1660 Charles Stuart, Earl of Lichfield, cousin and heir of Esme Stuart, 4th Duke of Lennox in Scotland, and s. and h. of George, next brother of James II., succeeded as Duke of Richmond and Lenox, K.G. He died 1672, s.p., when all his dignities became extinct. See Courthope's *Historic Peerage of England*.

² *Aulnage or alnage*. A measuring by the ell. The Alnager was a sworn officer in England, whose duty it was to inspect and measure woollen cloth, and fix upon it a seal.