Historic Houses.

KING JOHN'S PALACE AT LITTLE LANGLEY, OXFORDSHIRE.

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[The following article possesses a melancholy interest. It was the last work of a learned scholar and antiquary, Dr. Macnamara, whose book on the "Memorials of the Danvers family" is a monument of patient research and accurate historical knowledge. To the readers of this Journal he was well known, as he has frequently contributed to our pages. We shall greatly miss his interesting and able articles. Had he lived, he intended to write the story of many other Historic Houses for this Journal, but death has deprived us of his invaluable assistance, and left us to mourn the departure from amongst us of an able scholar and literary friend.]

Some sixteen miles west and a little to the north of Oxford lies the village of Shipton, which gives its name to a station on the Oxford and Worcester railway. "Shipton-under-Whichwood" is the full name of the village, a name which it owes to its proximity to the once Royal Forest of Whichwood. The parish includes the districts of Leafield and Ramsden, and the townships of Shipton, Milton and Langley; it is with the last named place that we are at present mainly interested.

The hamlet of Little Langley—always a very small one—is situated on the high ground to the south of Shipton, and is locally famous as including the site of what is traditionally called "King John's palace." That the King had a palace at Little Langley is doubtful, for the very complete record which we possess of his journeyings makes no mention of his having ever stayed at Langley. At Woodstock John frequently stayed, and no doubt he often hunted in Whichwood Forest which stretched thence to the western

boundary of Oxfordshire, between the rivers Evenlode and Wainrush. Little Langley was a Forester's manor, and was attached to the office of Chief Forester of Whichwood, who had charge of the vert and venison, and held his manor on the service of carrying the King's horn when he came to hunt in the neighbourhood. The lord had of course his manor house, and there is evidence to show that as early as the time of Henry III. there was at Langley an honour in which the Courts of the Forest were held, which was known as the King's Court-house. Domesday survey tells us that the King owned an honour at Shipton, and Skelton has assumed that this was the Langley honour, but the survey also says that the King had twenty houses in Oxfordshire, of which that at Shipton was one. Clearly these could not have been occupied by the King himself; they were in fact tenements which he let on what we might call repairing leases. The occupiers, so the survey says, were free of all customs saving that they were to follow the King to war, and that each was bound to maintain the walls of his house in repair. Of the many royal forests distributed throughout England only three or four are mentioned in Domesday survey, and one of these is Huchennode; but Wychwode, as the forest was subsequently called, is very seldom mentioned in any ancient records excepting the Forest Rolls, and of Little Langley I have been unable to find any mention until the 13th year of King John's reign, when Thomas de Langelee gave the King one hundred marks and a palfrey to have the custody of the forest of Wychwode, undertaking, on the security of his goods and chattels, to safe custody the forest and to pay the King's dues. A mark was 13/4, and the sum paid may seem but a small one, though really at the time it was by no means so. Money was a very scarce commodity at the time, and we may judge of its value from the circumstance that a thousand marks was the amount of the annual tribute which King John this very year proposed to pay to the Pope when doing homage to him for his kingdom.* In our money the mark of the period was equivalent to about £16, and John, who was in dire straits at the time, scouted as he was alike by the church and by the nobles, doubtless welcomed de Langelie's gift. Moreover, there were the King's dues to be paid, £7 annually, and in addition 14s. as tithes to the Church of Lincoln, by no means an inconsiderable rent in the days when an ox was priced at 10s. and a sheep at 1s. One wonders what

* See Hallam's Europe during the Middle Ages, vol. 2, p. 429.

were the goods and chattels which were accepted as security for the payment of the King's dues. Cattle probably, and hawks and horses, for the furniture of a country squire's house was in those days of very little count. The house itself would consist merely of a hall with a small apartment, the "solar" or parlour opening into it on the south, and above the parlour the bedroom of the lady of the house. In the centre of the hall was the hearth from which the smoke rose and escaped through a hole in the roof, the windows were closed by wooden shutters, its floor was strewed with rushes, and all the furniture it contained was a few benches, a chest or two, and trestles on which at meal time were placed the boards which formed the tables. Attached to the honour was the grange or farm building in which the corn and meal and the farm implements were kept, and in which the more valuable of the stock found shelter in inclement weather. Even the King's Court honour—the palace as tradition has it—would embrace little more in the way of comforts, as the 19th century reckons comforts, than did the manor house. It probably boasted a covered entrance and a kitchen, and may have possessed a fire place and chimney and glazed windows. The dais at the upper end of the hall would be furnished with a table and with chairs and a buffet for the drinking vessels. This honour generally was surrounded by a wall which also included stables and other outhouses.

Of King John's Palace, supposing that it once existed, probably nothing remains. The site is occupied by a farm house, which includes a considerable piece of the outer wall of a Tudor building. The wall is pierced by several windows, all of which are of the style prevailing in the time of Henry VII., and their date is further fixed by the initials H. & E. with the Tudor rose carved in bold relief on a stone which forms part of the wall. The initials are no doubt those of the King and his Queen, Elizabeth of York. Henry was a great builder; he added much to the buildings of Woodstock palace, and there can be little doubt that while building there he also added to the Langley house, making it a fitting residence for the Court. In the Public Record Office Publication, Materials illustrative of the reign of Henry VII., I find an entry dated 4 March, 1486, regarding Richard Doland, Clerk of the Works at Westminster, the Tower and other places, including the Manor of Langley and the lodge within the park there. Again Oct., 1516 (Domestic State Papers), Wm. Est, Freemason, receives £9 for

repairs at Woodstock and Langley, and this is repeated in February, 1518.

Leland, who was commissioned by Henry VIII., as "King's Antiquary" in the year 1533, to search the records of antiquity throughout England, notes in his Itinerary (2nd Editn. vol. 7, pt. 2, fol. 63): "rode 3 or 4 miles through forest of Wichwood longinge to the Kynge where is plenty of wood and fallow deer." . . . . "Langley a myle from Burford, there remayne tokens of an old Manor Place in the syde of the forest." With Henry VIII. Langley was a favourite residence, and amongst the Domestic State Papers many notices may be found of his visits there. Thus in Sept., 1526, occurs mention of the King's "gests" at Langley, and on 24 Aug., 1529, Stephen Gardiner dates a letter from Langley to Cardinal Wolsey, stating that he was with the King yesterday at Langley concerning letters citatorial to Wolsey and Campeggio. In August, 1582, to the King at Langley to play at dice £23 6s. 8d., and on the 28th, paid to Mr. Weston won from the King at dice £46 13s. 4d., and to a servant for bringing a grey staghound to the Lady Anne, which she gave to the King, 40s. The Lady Anne was of course Anne Boleyn, who was secretly married to the King the following January, and the Mr. Weston was no doubt the Weston who with four others was executed on the charge of complicity in the Queen's crimes two days before she herself was beheaded. A letter from the Queen to Cromwell is dated from Langley, and appears to concern the wardship of a child which had been granted to her by the King: "Master Secretary I pray you despache with spede this matter for myn honneur lys mouche on ytt and wat should the Kynge's attornne do with Poyns hoblygaccion sens I have the chyld by the Kynge's grace gyfte, but wonlly to trobe(l) hym her haffter wych be no mens I woll soffer, and thus far you as well as I wold ye dyd. Your loving mestrees Anne the Quene." Very soon mistress and servant, the two most active instruments in bringing about the divorce of the saintly Catherine, had both perished on the scaffold. In 1536 Sir John Brudges (Bridges) and Thomas Brudges have a grant of the keeping of the manor and park of Langley with the stewardship of Minster Lovel, Burford, Shipton, Spellesbury, the bailiwick of Chadlington, the four bailiwicks called the Eight Walks in Whichwood Forest and the rangership of the Forest.

In the year 1568 John Whitwell was appointed keeper of the garden of Langley, and overseer of the garden of Wodstoke. In

1587 the Earl of Leicester had the grant of the royalty of the deer in the Forest together with the manor of Langley, but to this is appended an objection that the Forest was a part of the jointure* of the Countess of Warwick, and that the Forest and Manor have always gone together.

Queen Elizabeth herself may have stayed at Langley, there is, however, no mention of her visiting there in the full account of her progresses which has come down to us (see Nichols' Progresses of Queen Elizabeth). Yet in the Burford Burgesses' Book occurs the following entry: "The Yeare of our Lorde God 1574, the showe daye, beinge the 4th daye of August, the Queen's Majestie came from Langley through the town of Burforde." King James visited Langley in August, 1605, and stayed there three days, attracted no doubt by the hunting which offered in Wychwood Forest (Nichols' Progresses of King James). An entry in Shipton Church Register, probably of this date, states that a French boy, drowned in the Evenlode, was buried from Langley the Court being there. Tradition states that King Charles stayed at the Lodge, and we know that under his orders a wall was begun which was to surround the park, but there is no record subsequently of royal visits to Langley, and it is probable that the lodge was neglected and suffered to fall into ruins during the great Rebellion.

In May, 1656, William Lenthall, Esq., and other Oxfordshire gentlemen were desired by Parliament to report regarding Wychwood Forest; and they reported accordingly in the form of a letter signed by Miles Fleetwood and others. They say that the forest is surrounded by a wall begun in the late King's reign, and by a ring fence sixteen miles in length, and that the wall is about seven feet in height, and that it would cost £700 to complete it on the former conditions, viz., owners of inheritance lands to dig the stones, the tenants to carry them, the King to build the wall. They state that the forest included 39 coppices, of which, however, only 18 belonged to the State, the greater part of the remainder to Lord Craven. The lodges are mentioned, but Langley Lodge is not specially named. Orders were passed sanctioning the completion of the wall.

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* Anne, 3rd wife of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, who died in 1589. Dudley was descended from Margt. Talbot, one of the daughters of Ric: Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. He left no children, and his lordships and lands obtained by grants from the Crown (part of the inheritance of the ancient Earls of Warwick) on his death lapsed to the Crown.

In May, 1659, it was ordered that the deer be strictly preserved, and that no warrants to kill or deliver are to be accepted save from Parliament or Council.

After the Restoration in April, 1661, the Earl of Clarendon obtained a grant of Cornbury Park, disafforested by the order of the King, with all lands, tenements and appurtenances near the Forest of Wichwood, also the deer and liberty of warren, and the office of the four Bailiffs or Eight Walks, and shortly after several coppices which had formerly belonged to Lord Danvers. In July, 1662, a warrant was issued for the grant to Lord Clarendon of the manors of Langley, Leefield and Ramsden, and of lands in the Forest forfeited to the Crown on the attainder of Sir John Danvers. The mention of the name of Sir John Danvers takes us back for a moment to the time of James I., who raised Sir Henry Danvers (Sir John's brother) to the Peerage as Baron Danvers of Dauntsey. Lord Danvers was subsequently made by Charles I. Earl of Danby, and he died in 1643 at his house in Cornbury Park, where he had been accustomed to exercise a splendid hospitality. On his death a great part of his estates fell to his brother, Sir John, who took the side of the Parliament and was one of those who signed the death-warrant of the King. Fortunately for him he died before the Restoration, when his name was excepted from the bill of indemnity and his estates were forfeited to the Crown.

To return to Langley, the lodge after the time of Charles I. seems to have been wholly neglected, and not improbably the material may have been used for the completion of the park wall during the Commonwealth times. Warton writing in 1815 (History of Kidelington) says: "The ruins of King John's palace, which was inhabited by the royal family till the beginning of the reign of Charles I., are still to be seen in the edge of the forest at a place called Langley; these vestiges of the palace remain: The Queen's garden, park pool, the slaughter-house, the park closes with stone walls ten feet high, a barn and a farm-house with Gothic arches and windows. The prospect is extensive and beautiful."

In 1858 the forest was broken up, the 7,000 acres of land still included in it were sold in lots and the deer quickly disappeared. The farm-house was remodelled.

Another relic of the past is the mound which to the west of the house extends in a straight line north and south a distance of one hundred yards. At its northern end the mound makes a right angle and runs west 200 feet. This mound no doubt marks the site of

the wall which formerly enclosed the lodge.

One other relic of ancient times remains at Langley, and it is one which takes us back to very early times. A little to the S.W. of the present farm-house is a five-acre coppice, a remnant of the ancient forest, and known as the "Nutteridge." Now in the Close Roll of the 15 Henry 3 (1230) occurs an entry to the following effect: "The King grants to Thomas de Langelee, his forester, of Wychwode, an acre of ground to be measured according to the King's perch (measure), the ground is that called Nutterigg and is before the gate of the King's Court house at Langley, on which acre Thomas is to build a chapel." The chapel no doubt stood in the field between the mound just mentioned and the Nutteridge Coppice; but nothing of it now remains, unless the tradition be true that the present entrance doorway of the farm-house is that of the chapel; and the only reference to it which I have been able to discover in any ancient document, is an entry in the Patent Roll of the 33 Edward I. (1304), which states that the King had given to Thomas de Netherton the chaplaincy of his chapel of the Holy Cross in the forest of Whichwode.

And here one is tempted to inquire whether in the circumstances of the time or place, one can find anything which may have prompted Thomas de Langelee to build this chapel? And in the affirmative one may point to the new and powerful religious influence which at this period the Friars Minor were exercising in many parts of England. Their great Master, St. Francis of Assisi, had but lately founded a new Evangel, and had sent forth his followers to preach the Gospel in all parts of the then known earth. Six years previously the Friars had landed in England, and had speedily established missions in London and York, in Norwich, Bristol and elsewhere, and in the year 1225 they reached Oxford. "Outside the City walls at Lynn and York and Bristol, in a filthy swamp at Norwich . . . . in the 'Stinking Alley' in London the Minorites took up their abode, and there they lived upon Charity, doing for the lowest the most menial offices, speaking to the poorest words of hope, preaching to learned and simple such sermons—short, homely, fervent, and emotional—as the world had not heard for many a day. How could such evangelists fail to win their way? Before Henry III.'s reign was half over the predominance of the Franciscans over Oxford was almost supreme,"* and as his business

* "The Coming of the Friars," p. 44, by the Rev. Dr. Jessopp.

must often have taken Thomas de Langelee to Oxford, he was quite in the way of hearing and of becoming impressed by the earnest call of the Friars to charity and good works, and may have been moved thereby to found a chapel for the spiritual benefit of the hamlet of which he was over-lord.

The office of Chief Forester which Thomas de Langelee now enjoyed, was one of importance and responsibility, obliging as it did a constant watch upon Vert and Venison over many square miles of country. Woe to the Forester if by any carelessness on his part the King suffered loss; his office might be taken from him, or at the least he would be mulcted with a heavy fine. Thomas de Langelee's case is one in point, for in the Close Roll of the 14th year of Henry 3 (1229), it is written that restitution of his bailiwick may be made to Thomas de Langelee, King's forester of Wychwood, taken into the King's hands because of trespass in the forest, Thomas having paid a fine of £100 in satisfaction thereof. And not only as regards the King's officers, but in the case of trespassers and others the forest-laws were at this period severe and cruel in the extreme—the King could without leave or asking take possession of any tract of country, drive out the inhabitants and afforest it, that is convert it into a forest—force offered to the keeper of a forest entailed loss of limb, and a second offence, of life; it was death to kill a deer, and to hunt a deer till it panted was punished by a heavy fine. It was not till some twenty-seven years after the time of which we are writing that the Nobles wrung from the King the Charter of the Forests, which vastly ameliorated the punishments prescribed by the old forest-laws.

To return to Thomas de Langelee, the Close Rolls of the period contain many notices of him, thus in the first year of the reign of Henry 3 he is ordered to allow the Abbot of Bruerne wood from two carucates of the forest, and the following year to allow William de Harcourt to take three bucks in the forest, and Robert Arsic to hunt foxes and hares as he has been accustomed. The last of these entries is in the year 1239 when Thomas had become custodian of Cornbury park, and it would seem had charge also of the manor of Woodstock. He had complained to the King that the men of Woodstock did not attend as they were bound to do the forest courts, and that they refused chiminage, that is toll for passage through the forest; in reply, the King tells him to let the men be at peace till he next comes into the neighbourhood, when he will cause that Thomas has his rights.

Thomas de Langelee died in this or the following year, and was succeeded in the Bailiwick by William de Langelee, who was no doubt his son, for the office was hereditary, and moreover we find him in the year* 1240 acting as the representative of the family. A certain Marsilia, wife of Henry de Langelee, claimed as dowry from William de Langelee, in the King's Court at Westminster, the third part of four virgates of land and of a mill in Shipton. William appeared and asserted that Marsilia ought not to have this dowry because she really never became the wife of Henry. The Court referred the matter to Bishop Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, but of his decision no record is forthcoming. Five years after this trial the Patent Roll of 30 Henry 3 (Memb. 7) records a notification from the King to the Verderers of Whichwood Forest, that Ralph, formerly with William de Langelee, forester of Whichwood, had been convicted of transgressions and that William was henceforth sole Forester. William was dead in the year 1259, the original of his post mortem inquisition is missing, but the printed calendar states that it was taken during the 44 Henry 3, and that it concerned his property in Langley, Whichwood forest, Middleton (Milton) and Shipton. William left a widow and children who were with the Bailiwick† entrusted to the charge of Thomas Credle, Justice of the Forests on this side Trent. This was in the year 1260, and eleven years‡ after we find Thomas de Langelee acting as Chief Forester of Whichwood forest, preferring charges against offenders before Geoffrey de Langelee,‖ a man very famous in his time, who, amongst other offices, held that of Chief Justice of the Forests. And here it may be well to note that the Langleys of Whichwood were not of the same family as Geoffrey de Langelee; the latter belonged to the de Langlees of Warwickshire and Gloucestershire, and from him sprung the Langleys of Suddington, Gloucester. But owing to the identity of the names of the two families, the connection of two members of the Gloucestershire family with the Royal Forests, and the fact that the family possessed property in Oxfordshire, at Chalgrave, Brightwell and Kirtlington, the pedigrees have been mixed and confused. Yet, that they were not connected has been made clear by a very large number of references to ancient records, in which mention is made of members

* Abbrevatio Placitorum, p. 118.

† Roberts' Excerpt: e. rotul: finium p. 334.

‡ Chapter House Forest Roll, Oxon, box 3, No. 3. A.D. 1271.

‖ For an account of this Geoffrey, see Dugdale's Warwick.

of the two families and of the lands which they held. Moreover, the armorial bearings of the families were quite distinct.

Thomas de Langelee was dead in the year 1282. His post-mortem inquisition (No. 7 of 14 Ed. I.) also is missing: but the printed calendar shows that at the time of his death he was custodian of the Forest of Whichwood, and held land in Little Langley, Shipton, Burford, Milton, Littlewood, Nonnescroft, Axton, all places in the neighbourhood of the Forest. His children at the time of his death were under age, and were with the Bailiwick* committed to the charge of Richard de Williamscote, a gentleman of good family, seated at Williamscote near Cropredy. In due time John, son and heir of Thomas de Langelee, was put in charge of the family office,† and in the year 1302 we find‡ him with his wife Joan buying land in Swynbrok, Asthalle, and Wydeford, and a little later in Shorthampton and Walcote. In addition to the Bailiwick of Wychwode, John de Langelee held the Bailiwick of Cornbury‖, or as in one document is called "lagarde" of the park of Cornbury in Wychwode Forest. From the documents just quoted, and from three ancient petitions preserved at the Record Office, Nos. 2789, 2790, and 2801, it appears that the Langelee family had a quarrel with Roger le Chambre, guardian of the manor of Woodstock as regards their respective rights, and not improbable it was Roger who stirred up Edward I. to order an enquiry regarding John Langelee's right to the manor of Langelee. At any rate in the year 1306 Edward, who was then resting at Lanercest Priory from his wars against the Scots, issued a warrant to the Escheator of Oxfordshire, Walter de Gloucester, to summons a jury to enquire by what right and service John de Langelee held the manor. The jury¶ assembled and reported that John and his ancestors had held the manor from time immemorial on payment to the King of 20s. per annum, and that the manor was worth 111s. 8d. per annum. But the jury do not mention a further condition, which is however supplied by another document of the period, namely that the holder of the manor was to carry the King's horn when he came to hunt in the neighbourhood. However the family's rights were thus confirmed, and the jury further declared that John de Langelee

* Pat. Roll, 10 Ed. I. (Jan. 23, 1282).
† Inquis. No. 98 of 30, Ed. I.
‡ Oxon fines, 146 of 31 Ed. I., 65 of 4 Ed. II., 125 of 7 Ed. II.
‖ Close rolls of 5 and 11 Ed. II. and Ancient Petitions, No. 13169.
¶ Inquis. ad quod damnum 35 Ed. 1.74 b.

had within his manor right of view of Frankpledge, and of Infang and Outfang, terms the meaning of which it may not be amiss to explain. At the age of 14 a new freeborn had to give security for his truth to the King and his subjects, and when doing so some of his neighbours became bound to see him forthcoming at all times when required, and the lord of the manor who had view of frankpledge took cognizance of these pledges. "Infang" implied the privilege which the lord of the manor possessed to try any felon taken within his lordship, and "Outfang" the right to try for felony any man dwelling within his manor though the offence was committed elsewhere.

In the year 1316, Parliament ordered a return of the lords of the townships throughout the country, and in the return* for Oxfordshire, Isabel de Clare, John Trillowe and John de Langele appear as lords of the townships of Shipton cum Middleton, Sywnbroke, Rammesden, Walcote, Ascote Earls, Shorthampton† and Langley.

In the year 1322, John de Langelee was summonsed to muster on the 24th July at Newcastle for service against the Scotts, and necessarily shared in the disastrous results of the campaign, and we have reason to believe that he, as was the case with many other knights and gentlemen of Edward's army, fell into the hands of the enemy, and was obliged to pay a heavy ransom in order to gain his release. Unless this was so, it is difficult to explain the fact that at York, in February of the following year,‡ John de Langelee borrowed £300 from Thomas West on the security of his Bailiwick and his lands in Oxfordshire. The deed was enrolled in the Chancery at York, the Mayor of the City acting as one of the witnesses to it.

In the Lay Subsidy Roll of the year 1316 (Oxon $\frac{161}{8}$) John de Langeleye heads the list of those paying the subsidy in Langley. He paid 25 shillings, while Robert Dobbe who follows paid but 8 shillings. Seven other individuals in the hamlet contributed smaller sums.

John de Langelee died in the year 1324, which year his post mortem inquisition‖ was taken at Oxford on the 23rd September.

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* Parl. Writs, vol. 2, div. 3, p. 352.

† Kirtlington, Bigenhull and King's End are included, but this has arisen from a mistake in compiling or editing the returns, for John de Langelee of the Suddington family was the lord of those townships.

‡ Close Roll, 16 Ed. 2, Memb. 14, dors.

‖ 59 of Ed. 2.

It states that he had a capital house and garden at Langley, 95 acres of "assart" (land cleared from the forest) and land and houses in Middleton and Shipton. He held his manor on the service of carrying the King's horn when he hunted in Wychwood. Thomas, his son, was of full age.

Thomas de Langelee found his inheritance burdened with a debt* of one hundred marks to Thomas West, secured on his lands in the county. But the times were favourable to the landholders. Wool was the great staple and to some extent the coin of England; thus Parliament granted the King not so much coin, but so many bales of wool. The Oxfordshire wool was a famous brand, and the de Langelees with the large extent of country which they controlled must have had opportunities for pasturing many flocks of sheep. So it came about that Sir Thomas, he was knighted, became a leading man in the county and mated with daughters of two ancient and noble families.

The Close Roll of the year 1330 contains an entry that Thomas de Langelee was to have custody of the Abbey of Bruerne, which, for want of good rule, had fallen into decay and debt. Like his father, Thomas had disputes with Roger de la Chambre. In his petitions to the King he calls himself son and heir of John de Langelee, "lagarde" of the park of Cornbury, which is part of the forest of Whichwood, an office which he asserts he and his ancestors had held from time out of mind.

In the year 1335, Sir Thomas represented the county in Parliament, and again did so in the years 1337, 1351-2, 1353, 1354 and 1360, during the stirring times of Edward III.'s wars with Scotland and France. During the same period he frequently acted collector in Oxfordshire of the subsidies to the King by Parliament.

The years 1315-16 were years of a terrible famine in the land, but from thence onwards till the coming of the Black Death in the year 1348 was a time of great national prosperity and glory which culminated in the great victory of Crecy in August of that year. But just two years after the Black Death appeared, first in Dorsetshire whence it quickly reached London, devastating on its way the counties of Gloucester and Oxfordshire and killing one-third and more of the population. The plague raged a second time in the years 1361-62, and a third visitation occurred in 1369. Thomas de Langelee and his three sons, John, Simon and Peter, died during

* Close Roll of 1327.

the years 1361 and 1362, and doubtless owing to the pestilence.

Some time prior to the year 1335, Thomas de Langelee had married Margaret Tracey, and with her received as dowry the manor of Burgate in Southampton (Hampshire). She was no doubt the daughter of Sir William Tracey of the noble Gloucestershire family of that name, who* in 1316 and in 1327 was lord of Burgate. Margaret was alive in the year 1335, as we learn from an ancient charter† of that date which has been preserved. This charter conveys to Thomas, son of John de Langelee and to his wife Margaret and to their heirs male lands and rents in Shipton, Wolcote, Estcote and Shorthampton, and failing heirs male (sons) to the right heirs of Thomas. Margaret died not long after her marriage, and Thomas retained her dowry, the manor of Burgate, until his death, when in default of heirs of her body the manor‡ escheated to the Crown. Thomas's second wife was named Alice—Alice de Montfort as we shall presently see. If so, she was probably a daughter of Peter de Montfort of the noble family of that name and kin to Simon de Montfort, the famous Earl of Leicester, slain at the battle of Evesham in August, 1265. Peter de Montfort§ was himself famous in his day; he died in the year 1369, leaving no legitimate issue, but several children by a concubine Lora de Uttenhale, daughter of Sir Richard Astley of Uttenhale. The sons took their father's name and arms (Bendy of 10 or and azure and probably another coat, borne by the de Montforts, arg. a lion ramp. gules) and are called "de Montfort" by him in his will.

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* Parliamentary Writs of 1316, and Lay Subsidy Roll, Southampton 172—4, 1327.

† Miscell. Charters, Vol. vi., No. 22, P.R.O.

‡ Inquis. P.M. of Thos. de Langelee, Excheq. series ii., file iii., No. 28 of 35 Ed. III., and Inquis. P.M. No. 116 of 35 Ed. III. These inquisitions taken in the year 1361 wrongly state the age of John, son and heir of Thomas, 30 and upwards. Had he been 30 in the year 1361 he would be son of Thomas by his first wife, Margaret, and would have inherited the manor of Burgate, to which however the inquisition expressly denies his right.

§ See "de Montfort" in Dugdale's Baronage of England.

(To be continued).