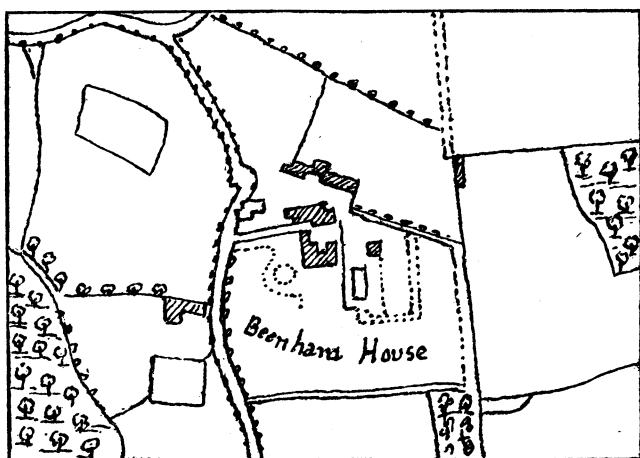


Beenham House and Manor.

SECTION II.

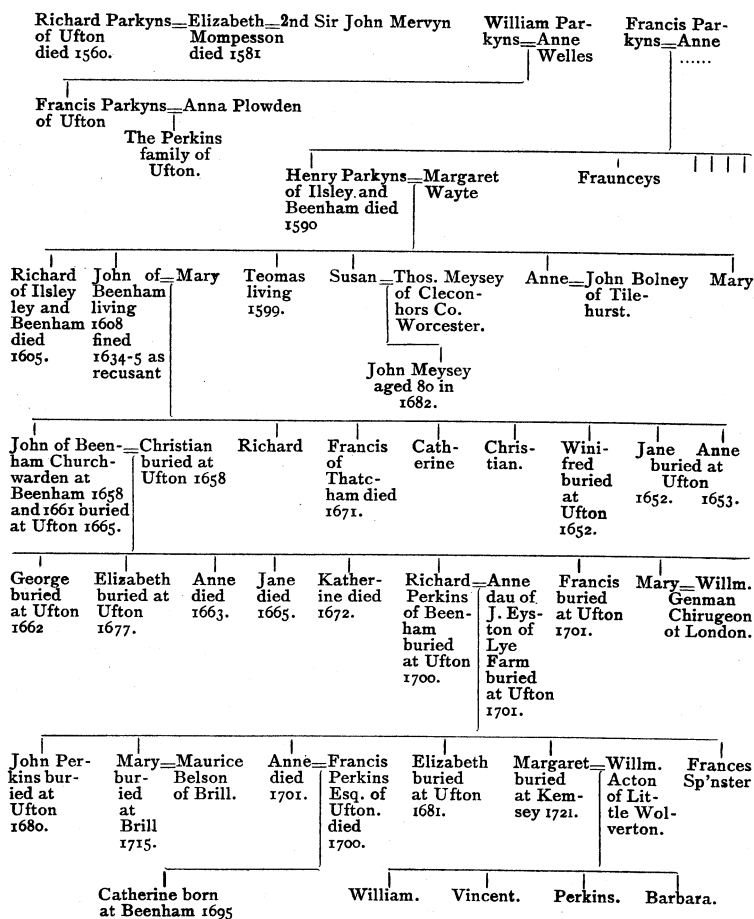
IN the year 1590 the property of a certain Henry Parkyns is described at the time of his death as including *a manor in* Beenham, of which "he was seized in fee and which premises he had held of Reade Stafford Esq. as of his manor of Bradfeldt in free soccage by fealty and an annual rent of 4s." All which means that Reade Stafford was the lord in chief, holding the Manor directly from the Crown, and that he underleased it to Henry Parkyns on feudal conditions of service and for a mere nominal rent, while the tenant or sub-lord became virtually, though not legally, the actual lord of the Manor. This double tenure was, in early times, almost universal. There is no mention whatever in the document above quoted of any past connection of this Manor with the Monastery of Reading; we may therefore conclude that this part of the parish had always lain outside the possessions of the Abbey. It fell into separate hands and has a separate history.

There was probably no house on the Manor granted to Henry Parkyns, and in that case it seems possible that the dwelling in which he and his descendants lived was built by him, and that it is the one shewn in the map of the Enclosure Act (date 1811), a tracing from which is here reproduced. It stood on the site of the present mansion, and in outline it somewhat resembled Ufton Court (date 1571).



Its main frontage was flanked by two wings. The entrance faced to the north, and it was approached by a road between trees, running straight up the hill at its lowest point. It may possibly, like Ufton Court, have been a timbered and gabled mansion. This old house has entirely disappeared.

The ownership of the Manor by Henry Parkyns was earlier than the date above mentioned (1590), which was, in fact, that of his death. In 1571 he entered into some agreement with one Henry Blancharde, a cousin (probably a loan or mortgage), by which he borrowed £120 on the security of the Manor of Beenham, Francis Parkyns, of Ufton, being a party to the transaction.



By the accompanying table of descent it will be seen that Henry Parkyns, sometimes called of Ilsley, where he had lived before coming to Beenham, was first cousin to Francis Parkyns, of Ufton, their fathers having been brothers ; by his wife he was related also to Elizabeth Mompesson, his aunt by her marriage with Richard Parkyns, the same who, by a second marriage, became the wife of Sir John Mervyn, and who bought and rebuilt Ufton Court, leaving it in her will to Francis with a reversion to Henry in case the former failed to carry out her injunction as to the distribution of the Charity, still known at Ufton as the Mervyn Dole. She left various legacies to Henry's wife, Margaret Wayte, her own niece. The will is dated 1581.

Richard, the eldest son of Henry Parkyns, succeeded to his father's inheritance in 1590 ; he lived, however, only for a few years to enjoy it, and died unmarried at the age of 43 in 1605. In his will he styles himself "of Beenam" ; probably he had sold the Ilsley estates, but he had some property apparently in Brimpton, for he makes a small bequest to the poor of that parish. He also leaves small sums to his sister Anne Bolney and her children and to "his lovinge cosyns William Wollascot and Anne his wife." (His mother's sister, Susan Wayte, had married William Wollascot, senior). The Manor and estates in Beenham had evidently been settled by his father on his next brother John.

The Parkyns, Perkyns or Perkins of Beenham (for their name is at this time so spelt indifferently) had, like their cousins at Ufton, remained constant in their adherence to the unreformed faith, and had suffered accordingly from fines and restrictions. Richard himself, during his father's lifetime, while he was living at Ilsley, had been taxed as a Recusant £250 in one year—1591—as a penalty for not having attended his Parish Church during the previous twelve months, and £20 extra because he had not made submission and become conformable as was termed. His brother John, who succeeded him, was also fined as a Recusant ; his name appears in the Recusant rolls for £60 in the years 1634 and 1635.

As late as the year 1741 there still existed a small congregation of Recusants, as they were called, at Beenham, for in a register kept at Woolhampton College there is a list of persons confirmed at Mr. Doughty's house by the Roman Catholic Bishop Fisher, *alias* Chaloner, who also held a confirmation at Ufton Court.

Soon after coming into his estate, John Perkins made over his Manor and farm to Thomas Meysey, a relative, and others in trust

for his own use during his lifetime, and afterwards for the use of Mary his wife and of his heirs male of her body.

His son John succeeded him, the second of his name, but he had not waited till then to give in to the spirit of the times and to claim exemption from the heavy fines exacted from his ancestors, on the score of his having joined the Established Church, and later on, in 1661, his name appears as Churchwarden in the parish books. He was buried at Ufton in 1665. Richard Perkins, his son, was the last of the family at Beenham ; he seems to have returned to the old faith. His only son died in his life-time, and shortly afterwards he made a deed of settlement of his landed estates, with a special mention of the Manor of Beenham, leaving them in trust to his relative Francis Plowden for the use of his wife Anne, sister to John Eyston, and to his four daughters as co-heirs. He died in 1700, and is buried by the side of his forefathers in the family chapel in Ufton Parish Church, together with his wife, who survived him only a few months. The inscription on the slab above their graves is as follows :—

Here Lyeth y^e Bodys of
Richard Perkins of Beenham
Esq^{re} who died y^e 18th of July
1700 and Anne his wife
Daughter of John Eyston
Of Lye Farm in y^e County of
Berks Esq^{re} by whom he left
Four daughters. She departed
This life y^e 6th of May in y^e
Yeare 1701.

Requiescant in Pace.

Richard's will, which he made in 1696 after the death of his son, is very touching in its affectionate allusions to his wife. He says :—
“ I ordaine my dear and lovinge wife sole Executrix and I bequeath to my said wife all my plate, goodes and household stuffe, corne, cattell and other my personal estate and the sume of £500 as said in my other will (the deed of settlement) during her natural life and having had very lardge experience of her motherly and tender care of my children I leave it to her owne prudence and discretion to give what shall remain in her hands or power at her death to my foure daughters or their children in such shares as to her shall be thought meete, hereby obligeing my daughters to pay a dutiful respect to her having already made a more certain provision for them in my other will.”

Then he mentions his younger brother, Francis, who does not seem to have given him satisfaction :—" As to my brother Francis Perkins I do hereby enjoin to my Executrix and my daughters that they take a reasonable care for his convenient diet and lodging either with them or at some fitt and convenient place, also beside the same diett that they pay him the yearly sume of ten pounds during his life . . . the said diett, lodging and Ten pounds per annum to continue soe long as he shall permit and suffer my trustees quietly to hold and enjoy my reall estate . . . without interruption or disturbance of him the said Francis Perkins and no longer and he well knowing my circumstances I hope and desire he will quietly acqui : so therein." He did not long trouble his relatives, for he died and was buried at Ufton the same year as his sister-in-law, 1701.

Of the four daughters who after their mother's death were left co-heirs, Mary, the eldest, married Maurice Belson, Esq., of Brill, in which place she is buried ; Margaret married William Acton, of Little Wolverton, and Frances, the youngest, died unmarried.

Anne, the second daughter of Richard Perkins, had married, when she must have been very young, her cousin, Francis Perkins, Esq., of Ufton, who had already a large family by his first wife, Katherine Belson (we find family names constantly recurring in the records of the Roman Catholics, as they always intermarried with their co-religionists). He himself must have been over forty when he brought his young bride from her old home, to which she was to return in less than six months' time a widow, and it was at Beenham that her child, a daughter, was born, four months after the father's death. Her birth is the only entry concerning the family in the Beenham Registers, as their baptisms and marriages were all celebrated in their own private chapels, and, according to their wishes often expressed in their wills, they were always buried with their ancestors in Ufton Parish Church. The entry records that :—" Katherine, daughter of Francis Perkins Esq. and Anne his wife was ~~bapt~~ [scratched out thus] born July 11, 1695." This posthumous daughter was the grandmother of John Jones, of Llanarth, Esq., who, owing to the failure of direct heirs, eventually inherited the Ufton estates.

The four sisters, soon after they came into joint possession, agreed to sell their inheritance and Maurice Belson, acting for them, they parted with the Manor of Beenham to Sir Charles Hopson, and a new page in its history is now turned over.

Sir Charles Hopson, citizen and Sheriff of London, the new owner of Beenham Manor, had been Joiner to Queen Anne and Purveyor of Her Majesty's works in London, also he was Master of the Joiners' Company in 1708. He received his knighthood on taking part in the presentation of a congratulatory address to the Queen concerning the victory of Malplaquet in 1709. He is said to have been employed under Sir Christopher Wren in carrying out the designs of the latter for the woodwork of the newly rebuilt Cathedral of St. Paul's, which had been opened for divine worship in 1675. Like many other retired City merchants, having made his fortune he wished to settle in the country and found a family; accordingly he purchased the Manor and estates of Beenham from the heirs of Richard Perkins in 1703, and he died there on April 6th, 1710, having enjoyed the fruits of his success in life for seven years only. His family in the male line did not outlive the century; a white marble tablet in the belfry of the Church records some of their deaths thus :—

Here lie interred

Sir Charles Hopson Kt. late Sheriff of the City of London
he died April 6th 1710 aged 49.

Also Mr. Thomas Hopson second son of the said Sir Charles
who died Jan. 20 1718 aged 24 years.

Also Mr. George Hopson father of the said Sir Charles
who died July 25th 1719 aged 90 years.

Also Dame Anne Hopson widow and relict of the said Sir Charles
who died June 22nd 1720 aged 53 years.

Also John Hopson Esq. eldest son of the said Sir Charles Kt.
who died June 19th 1718 aged 31 years.

Also Mary Hopson wife of John Hopson Esq.
who died April 22nd 1722 aged 31 years.

Also near the opposite wall lies the body of Charles Hopson, Esq., their eldest son, who died August 10th, 1749, aged 40 years. And of Anne Trevor Zinzan, daughter of Richard Hopson, Esq., who afterwards married Peter Zinzan, M.D., she died September 21st, 1764, aged 42.

On a slab in the belfry floor :—

“ Here lyeth the body of Eliz. wife of Rich^d. Hopson Esq^{re}
only daughter and heiress of Edward Trevor Esq^{re}
eldest son and heir of the Hon^{ble} Sir John Trevor Kt.
late Master of the Rolls

who departed this life June 22nd 1727 in the 31st year of her age

Also the body of the said Rich^d. Hopson Esq^{re} son
of Sir Charles Hopson Kt. who died July 31st 1745
in the 47th year of his age.”

During the tenure of the Hopson family at Beenham the Kennet Navigation works were carried out. Short canals were made to connect the windings of the river and to make it available for barge traffic between Reading and Newbury. These of course cut through the open lands in the valley, and compensation was accordingly paid to such as held rights of common there. The work was completed in 1716, the further extension from Newbury to Bristol, known as the Kennet and Avon Canal, was not finished till 1789.

The grandson of Sir Charles Hopson, also Charles, having died without heirs his sister Mary inherited the estate. It was during the lifetime of this last Charles in 1740, though he was not then living at Beenham House, that Dr. Girle, a London Physician, paid a visit to a small property which he owned in the parish. We owe an account of it to the diaries kept by his daughter, afterwards Mrs. Lybbe Powys, extracts of which have been edited by the Hon. Mrs. Climinson (Longman & Co., Publishers).

It appears to have been Dr. Girle's custom during his summer holidays, with his wife and daughter, to make driving tours in his own carriage with post horses into the country in different directions, stopping at the houses of many country friends on their way, for they seem to have been very well connected people. These diaries give us most interesting pictures of the life of the country gentry of the day. The following is a passage which relates to our subject.

"On Tuesday we set out early for our farm at Beenham, Papa being obliged to go there on business with his tenants, and we, not a little fond of the place, chose to accompany him in this excursion. It was a very agreeable one. Beenham lays about a mile out of the great road to Bath on a pretty steep ascent and near nine from Reading, which nine miles is allow'd to be as fine a ride with regard to the prospects each side as almost anywhere met with. As thro' my journal I intend to mention every seat we pass nigh to, I must not omit that fine old mansion call'd Inglefield House, now Mrs. Brathawit's, and a little farther, on the same side, is Mrs. Zinzan's (Beenham House), a very delightful situation. We called there and had the pleasure of finding them all well. After a short visit we proceeded to the farm which is only three-quarters of a mile distance from their house, but as 'tis a rise the whole way I think our prospect still, if possible, more pleasing; here we spent our day most agreeably in walking over the grounds which command views both near and extensive, in short, every object (so partial am I to Berkshire) except the ocean, that can please the most luxurious fancy

without those very distant landscapes which, in my opinion, always have a flatness and only tire the eye in endeavouring after what perhaps they may never reach. In the evening we returned again to Reading."

The Mrs. Zinzan on whom they called was a grand-daughter of the original Sir Charles Hopson; she had married a London medical man, and so perhaps naturally was an acquaintance of the Girle family. She was living or staying at the time at Beenham House.

Dr. Girle's property in Beenham consisted of three messuages (farmhouses), three cottages, four gardens and four orchards, in all about 160 acres, besides his common rights of pasture in the open fields of Bucklebury and Ufton, as well as in those of Beenham and Padworth, of the annual rent of £186. He also owned the Rectorial or great tithes of Beenham.

He had purchased the whole in 1729 from a certain Francis Hawes, who was connected with the fraudulent speculation known as the South Sea Company. When the bubble burst in 1720 causing the ruin of thousands of innocent investors, great and universal indignation was felt, and an Act of Parliament was passed authorising the sale of the estates of the Governor, the Directors, the Cashiers and Accountants of the Company for the purpose of raising money in order to make good to some extent the great loss and damage sustained by the victims they had deceived. Almost all the wealthy persons, and very many poor, in the kingdom had become speculators in this fatal scheme. Those concerned in its promotion were declared by the Act to be disabled henceforth from holding any office or place of trust under Government, or from voting or sitting in Parliament.

At the time of Dr. Girle's death in 1761 his farms were let to Mr. Thomas Englefield.

In Dr. Girle's Will, dated 1754, he left to his wife an income from the rents of the great tithes of Beenham as well as those of his farms in the parish, all of which she held till her death in 1801.

She erected a marble tablet to her husband's memory which now hangs on the wall of the tower of the Church. The inscription is:—

"This Monument was erected by Mrs. Girle in memory of her deceased husband John Girle, Esq., late of Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, Surgeon, who having early in life acquired an ample fortune, the just reward of superior eminence and unremitting diligence in his profession, indulged himself in the pleasing prospect of

dedicating the remainder of his days to the noblest purpose of humanity, the relief of the distresses and infirmities of his indigent fellow creatures, an office which the goodness of his heart made him ever undertake with readiness and which the skill of his hand enabled him generally to execute with success. But the pious purpose was broken off by his death which happened July 5th, 1761, in the 59th year of his age. He married the daughter of John Slaney, Esq., of Worcestershire, by whom he left an only daughter, married to Philip Lybbe Powys, Esq., of Hardwicke, Oxon."

It was in the year following Dr. Girdle's death that the marriage mentioned on the Church tablet took place. On the death of her mother in 1801 Mrs. Lybbe Powys inherited the great tithes of the Rectory of Beenham and also the land and farms that her father had owned in the parish. In 1804 the whole, including the great tithes, was sold, with her consent and that of her trustee, Mr. John Mount of Wasing, to the Rev. Sir Charles Rich, who had already purchased the Manor of Beenham 1793. He was the younger son of the Rev. Dr. John Bostock, Canon and Vicar of Windsor and Rector of Clewer, and owner of the Hopson estates in Beenham in right of his wife, Mary, grand-daughter and heiress of Sir Charles Hopson. At Dr. Bostock's death in 1786 his eldest son, the Rev. John Bostock, inherited these estates and also succeeded his father as Vicar of Windsor, which office he resigned in 1789. Meanwhile the younger brother, formerly Charles Bostock of Shirley, near Southampton, had married at New Windsor, January 4th, 1783, Mary Frances, daughter and heiress of Lieut.-General Sir Robert Rich, fifth baronet. His title which had been conferred on his ancestor by Charles II. died with him but was revived in the person of his son-in-law, when in consequence of his marriage he took the name of Rich and became the first baronet of the new creation. Thus, after the purchase by Sir Charles Rich of Mrs. Lybbe Powys's property in Beenham, it came to pass that he and his brother John Bostock owned between them the greater part of the Parish.

(To be continued.)

MARKET PLACE, BURFORD.—I own an engraving, evidently taken from a magazine (title not given), shewing the Market Place, Burford, in 1600, in which is seen a small but graceful market cross, standing in front of the old Tolsey. This still remains, converted into a reading room, though the memory of the cross seems to have been lost to the townspeople. When visiting Burford a few months ago my sons were told that not long before, in repairing the road, the workmen came upon a huge stone, which being dug out proved to be the basal stone of the ancient cross, with the four shaft-holes still intact, and were shewn the stone, which was reared up against the wall of the Tolsey.—M. STEVENSON.