

PEERAGE AND PEDIGREE

STUDIES IN PEERAGE LAW AND FAMILY HISTORY

BY

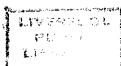
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The 'authorities' for this wondrous pedigree together with its opening portion are thus given in 'Burke.'

The following pedigree of the ancient family of SNEYD is compiled from the following authorities: SLEIGH's *History of Leek*; WARD's *History of Stoke on Trent*; *Domesday, Staffordshire and Cheshire*; *Ancient Pedigree of Trent-hams of Rocester*; and ORMEROD's *History of Cheshire*; and from MSS. in the muniment rooms at Keele and Ashcombe and the Hulton Abbey MSS.

EADULF VEL EADWULF, son of ORDGAR, ealdorman of the Defnsætas (Devon & Cornwall) m. Ælfwyn, dau. and heir of Æthelred, last king and 1st earl of Mercia, by Æthelflæd, dau. of Alfred the Great, and had a son

LEOFWINE, Earl of Mercia, who m. Alwara, dau. of Æthelstan, Duke of the East Angles, and had, with other issue, a 4th son,

GODWINE, tainus regis, lord according to Domesday of many manors in Staffordshire and Cheshire. He had a son

WULFRIC CILD VEL ULURIC, lord of Alditheley, Balterley, and many other manors in Staffordshire and Cheshire, according to Domesday, m. a daughter of William Count of Arques, son of Richard II, Duke of Normandy, and had, with other issue, an eldest son,

GAMEL, tainus regis, Lord of Alditheley, Talke and Balterley, etc. in the County of Stafford, Mottram Andrew, Cedde, etc. in the co. of Chester, at the Domesday survey, had issue by his wife (probably a Verdun)

ADAM DE ALDITHELEY (le [*sic*] Verdun), lord of Alditheley, Balterley etc. in the co. of Stafford. He was the brother of Robert de Stanley vel Stonlegh, Sheriff of Staffordshire 1123-1128. He was father of

LYNULPHUS [*sic*] de Alditheley, son and heir, sheriff of Cheshire *temp.* King Stephen, m. Mabel de Stonlegh vel Stanley, dau. of Henry de Stanley, and had issue

I. ADAM DE ALDITHELEY, of Alditheley, father of HENRY DE ALDITHELEY, lord of large estate in Staffordshire, Cheshire, etc., founder of Hulton Abbey A.D. 1223, d. 1286.

II. ROBERT DE ALDITHELEY, of whom we treat.

It is alleged that this Robert took the surname of Sneyd from the lands he held there, and that from him the Sneyds descend. But what concerns me here is the early portion of the pedigree, the descent from the Earls of Mercia.

It will simplify matters if I say at once that the first paragraph must all be rejected, because Leofwine's parentage (as Mr. Freeman observed) has not been ascertained. As for the rest, the sole 'authority' on which the pedigree rests is that of "the Hulton Abbey MSS." Now these consist, it is no secret,¹ of certain pieces of parchment which were purchased by a member of the Sneyd family as genuine within the last half century at most. Their *provenance* is quite uncertain and their genuineness is gravely impugned.

In 1893 General Wrottesley, perceiving the importance of these documents, if genuine, went into the matter with great care and had photographs submitted to him. The documents do not profess to be the original charters, but are transcripts or rather recitals of them, both sides of the parchments being written on, as if they came from the cartulary or register of a religious house. On the ground of the handwriting and of erroneous abbreviations, as well as from internal evidence, the General pronounced them to be "forgeries." He

¹ My authority for this statement and for others below is Major General the Hon. George Wrottesley, who had full knowledge of the facts.

subsequently showed them to two officers of the Public Record Office, who stated that, in their opinion, "They were very clumsy forgeries."

Internal evidence alone is enough, I consider, to condemn them, though only to the satisfaction, perhaps, of an expert. To those who, like myself, have made a study of such things, the most suspicious feature about them is that they are so obviously constructed for a genealogical purpose. Four charters prove, between them, a pedigree of ten generations! The first, however, is the most important, and also the most startling.

I.

"Henricus de Alditeleg pro salute anime sue et Bertheie uxoris sue et Ade patris sui et Petronelle matris sue et Liulfi avi sui et Mabilie avie sue et Ade proavi sui et Gameli abavi sui et Wulfrici Cild atavi sui et Godwini tritavi sui et Leofwini Comitris patris Godwini et pro salute animarum antecessorum et successorum dedit et concessit deo et Sancte Marie et abbati et monachis de Hulton VI caruc' terre in decanatibus Novi Castri et de Alueton. Et dedit predictis Monachis annuam pensionem X marcarum de ecclesia de Alditeleg. Harum rerum fuerunt testes Nicholaus de Verdun. Willelmus Pantun. Willelmus de Alditelele."

'The man in the street' must take it from the expert "that these things do not happen." Benefactors did not recite their pedigree for the convenience of remote descendants. Alexander Swereford set himself, at just about the same time, to recite, as a matter of historical interest, the descent of King Henry III from "Adam son of the living God."¹ But he did so in simple biblical

¹ *Red Book of the Exchequer*, pp. 3-4.

fashion, without borrowing a *tritavus* from Plautus or displaying his acquaintance with the niceties of classical genealogy. For Henry " de Alditheley " the strain of doing so must have proved too severe ; for it led him to give the name of his own mother as ' Parnelle ' (*Petronilla*), although it happened to be Emma.¹

Domesday, I ought to explain, does not prove a single link of the pedigree ; and as Godwine and Wulfric are two of the commonest English names in the record, it is virtually impossible to distinguish between the bearers of such names. The survey, indeed, does mention one Wulfric ' Cild,' but not as the lord of manors " in Staffordshire and Cheshire ; " he is named among those who had enjoyed special privileges in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (fo. 280 b.) Again, it would seem that Earl Leofwine actually had a son Godwine, but, as he predeceased his brother, earl Leofric, we should not expect to find his name. Indeed, all that we know of him is found in Heming's Worcester Cartulary,² where we read that at his death (before 1057) he restored Salwarpe (near Droitwich) to the church, but that his son and successor Æthelwine (not Wulfric) kept possession of it by the help of his uncle, earl Leofric.³

' Gamel ' was by no means an uncommon name

¹ I am indebted to General Wrottesley for this fatal flaw. Testing his criticism, I have found it sound. It is clearly proved by a suit of 12 Henry III for the manor of Horton, in conjunction with other evidence, that Henry was son of Adam de Audley by Emma daughter of Ralf son of Orm of Darlaston, and that he succeeded an elder brother Adam (unmentioned in the pedigree and the deeds).

² Ed. Hearne, I, 259-260.

³ He appears to be the " Ælwin[us] cilt " who is entered in Domesday as its holder before the Conquest.

in the ' Danish ' district of England : it was frequent, indeed, in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. But there is no question that a single Gamel held lands in Audley, Balterley, and Talk (in Audley) as a Thegn in 1086. Who his father was, or by whom he was succeeded, we do not know. A deed which forms the sheet anchor of the Audley and Stanley pedigrees will show us Gamel's lands in the hands of a single holder a century or so, perhaps, after the Domesday Survey. To this we shall come in due course ; but, for the present, we must keep to Sneyd.

It will not be necessary to print all the four documents on which the pedigree rests, but the second must be given because it forms the correlative of the one that is printed above. It is intended to prove that Richard de Sned was, like Henry de Audley, a grandson, paternally of that Liulf ' de Alditheley,' the one important man whom we have to keep in view. Like its predecessor, this document is suspiciously rich, it will be seen, in genealogical information.

II.

" Ricardus de Sned filius Roberti de Alditeley pro anima sua et Rosie uxoris sue filii Henrici de Praers et Roberti patris sui et Johanne matris sue et Liulfi de Alditeley avi sui et Mabilie avie sue et pro animabus antecessorum et successorum suorum dedit assensu Henrici de Alditeley deo et Sancte Marie et Abbati et Monachis de Hulton landam que vocatur Sithefeld¹ juxta boscum de Sned. Hiis Testibus : Willelmo de Auditheg

¹ Can this name have been suggested by the fact that a scythe is the charge on the Sneyd coat ? It is said, however, to be derived from the Praers family.

(*sic*), Roberto de Praers, Willelmo de Chetelton, Willelmo de Uppeslau, Benedicto de Coudray, Ricardo clerico, Ricardo Griffin, Johanne de Bec, et multis aliis.

Predicta landa jacet in Bosco de Sned quem Henricus de Alditeley dedit deo et Sancte Marie et abbati et Monachis de Hulton.

Ricardus de Sned sepultus festo sancti Mathei Apostoli anno regni Regis Henrici filii Regis Johannis vicesimo tercio."¹

What concerns me in this paper is to show that there is no evidence for the descent in the male line (alleged in the pedigree) of the Audleys from the earls of Mercia, or rather that the evidence consists only of documents concocted for the purpose. Whether the Sneyds (as is now alleged) are descended in the male line from the Audleys is a wholly distinct question which does not immediately concern us. It is, however, the conviction of General Wrottesley that even for this alleged descent there is no trustworthy evidence, and that the earliest authentic mention of the family is in 1298, when the Inquisition taken on the death of Nicholas de Audley reveals the first Sneyd in a somewhat humble position as the socage tenant of a messuage and 24 acres of land in Tunstall.² In the next Inquisition (1307) the same 'Thomas de Snedde' recurs with the same holding, together with an Andrew and a John 'de Snedde,' of whom the former holds a messuage and 15½ acres, both

¹ i. e. 1239. I have had to take the text of both these Sneyd documents from copies made by a member of the family for General Wrottesley.

² General Wrottesley writes to me on this subject: "I have not met with any Sneyd anterior to the socage tenants named in the Audley Inquisitions *temp.* Edw. I." These Inquisitions are published in Vol. XI. (New Series) of the Salt Society's Collections.

in Tunstall. Such is the inexorable witness of the Public Records.

There might here be an end of the matter if it only concerned the family of Sneyd; but it concerns at least three others, and one of these is the historic house of the Stanleys, earls of Derby.

I will deal, however, first with that of Wolrich, because its claim (through Henry de Audley) to precisely the same descent from the Earls of Mercia was published in Burke's *History of the Commoners* (IV, 757) so far back as 1838, which proves that this descent is no recent invention.¹ It is there similarly carried up to "Ethelred, last king and first Duke of Mercia," etc. etc., but is a good deal developed both before and after the Conquest. The Domesday Gamel becomes "Gamel de Tettesworth," and is provided with three brothers, who become the patriarchs of yet other houses. The Wolrich pedigree itself is traced from Adam, an alleged third son of Henry de Audley, who, instead of being styled, as we might expect, Adam Fitz Henry (or Adam de Audley) was named, we learn,—presumably from one of his supposed ancestors—"Sir Adam Fitz Wolfric or Wolriche knt. of Gretton, Wenlock, and Wickshall."

Nowadays, however, the Woolrych pedigree, in Burke's *Landed Gentry*, begins abruptly with this Adam, of whom we read that—

¹ A curious MS. pedigree of the Trenthams of Rocester, of which I have seen a copy, traces the descent of "the worshipfull Francis Trentham of Rocester," through his great-grandmother, Jane Sneyd, from "Leofwine, Earl of Mercia and so.... from Alfred the Great." As the grandfather and namesake of this Francis was aged 19 at the 1583 visitation, this pedigree may be of about the middle of the 17th century. But where is its original?

This very ancient Shropshire family is descended from Sir Adam Wolryche, knt. *temp.* Henry III he was admitted of the Roll of Guild Merchants of Shrewsbury 1231, by the Saxon name ADAM WULFRIC.

A humble and suitable name this for a Shrewsbury merchant,¹ but not one under which we should expect to find "Sir Adam Wolryche knt.," and even less, a son of Henry de Audley, a descendant of the earls of Mercia.²

Exeunt, therefore, Sneyd and Wolrich as descendants of the house of Audley and, through it, claimants to a share in the finest pedigree in England. There remain the house of Audley itself and, more important than all, the Stanleys, Earls of Derby.

It was practically, under Henry III that the Audleys, in the person of Henry, rose to wealth and importance.³ They became Lords Audley and eventually Earls of Gloucester ; and their native origin curiously illustrates the resilience of the English race. It is also a singular coincidence that "James of Aldithel" is a witness to what would seem to be the earliest Royal proclamation issued in the English tongue.⁴

Audley—the 'Aldidelege' of Domesday—from which they derived their name, lies in the north-

¹ The admission Roll has been printed by the Shropshire Archæological Society. The name is "Adam Wulfricus" simply ; the date 1232 ; and the names among which it is found are obviously those of men in a lowly position.

² I take this opportunity of observing that, in my experience, a pedigree which is traced up, as in this case, to an alleged cadet, should always be most narrowly scrutinised, as bygone genealogists were apt to foist such cadets into a family without any ground for doing so.

³ See the long list of his lands (1227) in *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, I. 36-7.

⁴ That of Oct. 18, 1257, announcing the King's adhesion to the Provisions of Oxford.

west of Staffordshire, near the Cheshire border. Adjoining it on the west is Balterley, and on the north-east, Talk (on the hill).

"The Moorlands," in the western corner of which these places lay, were a mainly rocky, barren region, presenting few attractions to Norman greed. In it, therefore, there lingered, even at the time of Domesday, a group of English thegns. Of these one was Gamel, who held at the above places. He is identified in the Sneyd pedigree with a Gamel who held far to the north at Mottram (in Prestbury), but I know of nothing to support this, which seems, indeed, at direct variance with the manorial descents. Mr. Eyton, however, appears to have formed the strange theory that they were not only one, but a son of Grifin (? "Rex Grifinus") T.R.E., and he added that "The Pipe Roll of 1130 shows Gamel to have been recently slain by Lyulph de Audley, whose posterity enjoyed Gamel's three estates".¹ This is a statement which is frequently and confidently made, but it involves two suppositions, both of them, surely, hazardous.²

We have seen how Liulf makes his appearance in the 'Landed Gentry' pedigree of Sneyd: we will now see how 'Burke's Peerage' enters him under 'Derby.'

ADAM DE ALDITHLEY attended duke WILLIAM to England and was accompanied from Aldithley, in Normandy,

¹ *Staffordshire Domesday*, p. 76.

² The first is that the "Aldredeslega" of the Roll represents Audley. This it certainly does not do, so that one would be forced to assume that the scribe had written it in error for 'Aldidelege' or some such form. The other is that the slain Gamel was the man of that name who had held Audley 44 years before. This obviously is a mere conjecture.

by his sons Lydulph and Adam de Aldithley, and had large possessions conferred upon him by the CONQUEROR.

LYDULPH, eldest son, was father of Adam de Aldithley, which Adam was possessed in right of his wife, Mabella, dau. and heir of Henry Stanley de Stoneley (!) of the manor of Stoneley and Balterley co. Stafford (*Dugdale's Baronage*) and was ancestor of the Barons Audley, of Healey Castle, co. Stafford ; and

ADAM DE ALDITHLEY, second son, was father of WILLIAM DE ALDITHLEY, to whom Thomas Stanley, of Stafford, kinsman of Henry Stanley, of Stoneley, gave his only dau. and heir, Joan, and with her, as a marriage portion, the manor of Thalk, co. Stafford : he having exchanged Thalk for Stoneley, and half the manor of Balterley, with his cousin Adam, made choice of Stoneley for his seat, and in honour of his lady, and the great antiquity of her family (of noble Saxon descent), who flourished in England many years before the Conquest, assumed the surname of

STANLEY, and became the immediate founder of the Stanleys.

Here one need not be a critic : one has only to act as showman. Side by side we place those productions of Burke Brothers, *The ' Landed Gentry '* and the *' Peerage. '*¹ Both they tell us, are authoritative works : in both we find the latest fruit of genealogical research. Excellent. Let us, therefore, now deal with that gallant family party which landed at Pevensey Bay on that eventful Thursday in 1086.

They came, says *' Burke's Peerage, '* " from Aldithley in Normandy " ; but, if so, they must

¹ There lie before me the 1894 edition of the *' Landed Gentry '* " edited by his sons," and the 1899 edition of the *' Peerage '* " edited by his son " (*Somer set Herald*).

have brought it with them. For "Aldithley," according to the 'Landed Gentry,' lay "in co. Stafford," and was the home of Adam and 'Lynulph,' as it had been of their fathers before them. 'Lydulph,' again, according to the 'Peerage' arrived in 1066; but the 'Landed Gentry' shows us his grandfather Gamel in possession of the family seat twenty years later (1086). But Liulf, however spelt, could afford to wait: according to the same authority, he was sheriff of Cheshire under Stephen (1135-1154), when he doubtless delighted the county with his personal reminiscences of William's great victory in 1066. It was he, according to the 'Landed Gentry,' who married the 'Stanley' heiress: not at all, says the 'Peerage'; it was his son Adam. As both these works, we know, are authoritative, there would seem to have been a clear case for the ecclesiastical courts.

The Sneyds, it would appear, jealously refused to share even with the earls of Derby their great Mercian descent; for the 'Landed Gentry,' as it lies before me, ignores the Stanleys' ancestor.¹

On the other hand, the earls of Derby, greedy for Norman origin, could hardly claim, at the same time, to be sprung from Mercian earls. It is true that both Liulf and 'Alditheley' are distinctively English names, but 'Burke' is obsequiously ready

¹ He has been subsequently, but unfortunately, introduced under 'Lynulphus de Alditheley,' of whom we now read that he married a daughter of "Henry de Stanley whose younger brother Adam de Alditheley, was father of William de Stanley, ancestor of the present Earl of Derby." This makes 'confusion worse confounded.'

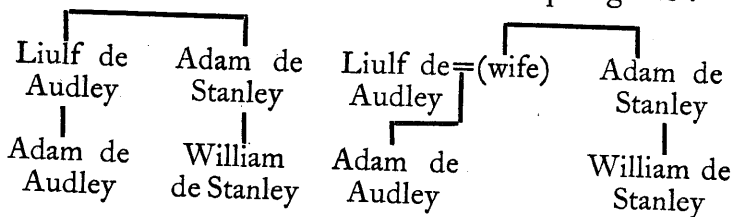
to recognise them both as Norman. The grossness of the error has been pointed out, and not only by myself : but why trouble to remove mere error from one's text ? It is infinitely less trouble to assure the public that you do so ; and, as for the critics, *eant ad inferos*.

Now the real explanation of all this contradiction and confusion is to be found in a single deed, which constitutes, as I have expressed it, the sheet anchor of the pedigree. Around its actual evidence has been woven a fabric of fiction, and the whole resultant production has moved up or down in time according to the date assigned to the deed. Dugdale, who had seen this deed, gives its purport in his *Baronage* (II, 247), and a transcript of it is preserved among his MSS. This runs as follows.

Adam de Aldelegh omnibus hominibus suis et amicis Francis et Anglicis salutem. Sciatis quod ego Adam filius Lydulfi de Aldelegha do et concedo Willelmo de Standleggha filio Ade de Standleggha avunculi mei totam Standleggh cum omnibus pertinentiis suis libere et quiete de omnibus que ad me pertinent pro duodecim denariis annuatim reddendis etc., ipse et heredes sui mihi et heredibus meis. Præterea do eidem Willelmo dimidiam Balterlegam et servitium Lidulfi de toto quod de me tenuit. Et si ego vel heres meus non possumus warantizare illi vel heredibus Standleggam, ego vel heredes mei dabimus illis quantum etc. Et hanc predictam terram de Baltreleggh tenebunt pro forinsecum servitium faciendo. Has autem predictas terras do ei et heredibus suis in escambium propter villam de Talc, tenend' et habend' de me et heredibus meis etc. Hiis testibus : Henrico de Preyes ; Roberto de Aldelegh ; Ada capellano ; Rogero de Paynell' ; Ricardo fratre suo ; Joceranno ; Philippo

capellano de Lec ; Willelmo..... Ada fratre Willelmi de Standlegh ; Thoma fratre ejus etc.¹

As the word 'avunculus' is ambiguous and may mean the brother of a father or of a mother, this deed is compatible with either of these pedigrees :—



But, as William de Stanley, we see, was already in possession of Talk (on the Hill), which, with Audley and half Balterley, formed the Domesday holding of Gamel, it is reasonable to suppose that Liulf and Adam were brothers, between whom that holding had been divided.

It will be observed that this deed does not mention Adam, the alleged father of Liulf, and, although Eyton assumed his existence and even asserts that he divided his holding between his two sons,² General Wrottesley assures me that he is "a complete myth."

Liulf himself was a real man, and, as he must have been contemporary with Ralf Fitz Orme of Darlaston (whose daughter married his son), he must have flourished about King Stephen's time. There is grim humour in the thought that the compilers of the Stanley pedigree, anxious to find a Conquest ancestor, in the male line, for the earls,

¹ This text was kindly supplied to me by General Wrottesley. It is obvious that the transcript has some small inaccuracies, but they do not affect the purport of the deed.

² *Staffordshire Domesday*, p. 90.

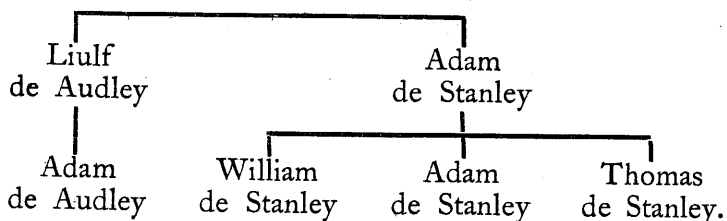
pitched upon this Liulf with his essentially English name, turned him into a Norman, and threw him back to the Conquest. They then further made him contemporary with a Henry and a Thomas Stanley, whose essentially Norman names proved them to be native English and to be members of a "family of noble Saxon descent, who flourished in England many years before the Conquest." All this we read in 'Burke,' and it is dear to the heart of the newspaper paragraphist, who will tell us how a quite impossible "William Stanley of Stanley was a powerful man in England fifty years before the battle of Hastings." ¹

The glory of the Norman Liulf has of late been somewhat dimmed by the splendour of the Saxon Stanleys, although the latter are only claimed as ancestors in the female line of the earls. There was, of course, no such family, nor can Henry or Thomas Stanley, so far as I know, be discovered. We can only find a Robert de Stanley, sheriff of Staffordshire (1123-1128), whose identity has not been determined. Stanley itself, a township in Leek, lay in the Staffordshire 'Morlands,' some eight or nine miles eastward of Audley, and, therefore, at some distance from Gamel's compact holding. It is not even named in Domesday, but has been supposed to be there included under Endon, its neighbour. There is nothing to show how it came to pass into the hands of the Audleys' ancestor; and the difficulty is increased by his younger brother (as he is assumed to be) Adam taking his surname from the place, though the deed

¹ *Evening Standard and St James' Gazette*, 5 Dec. 1905.

shows that it belonged to his nephew and, presumably, to his nephew's father.¹

The pedigree established by the above deed may be set forth as follows :—



But this pedigree is complicated, though in an interesting fashion, by a series of deeds in the Kenilworth cartulary, for my knowledge of which I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. H. J. Ellis.² Kenilworth Priory was a Clinton foundation, and these deeds exhibit the Audleys in close connexion with Clintons and Verdens. Norman de Verdon had married Lesceline daughter of Geoffrey de Clinton, the chamberlain, and the Audleys seem to have been connected (though it is not known how) with the Verdens, of whom they held Audley, and whose arms they bore with the tinctures differenced. When Bertram de Verdon was sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire in 1180, Adam de 'Aldithelega' (or 'Aldedelega') was one of his two deputies,³ and the latter witnesses a charter of the former to Croxden Abbey, Staffs.⁴ We find ourselves on sure ground with that

¹ It should be observed that Adam, the grantor, recognised his title of Stanley to be somewhat doubtful, for he admits, in the deed, a doubt as to his power to "warrant" it to the grantee.

² Of the Department of MSS., Brit. Mus.

³ *Pipe Roll*, 26 Hen. II, p. 97. His mother Lesceline is mentioned on the Roll as still living.

⁴ Cott. chart. XI, 7.

" Adam de Alditheleg(a) ", who buried his wife Emma in Kenilworth Priory,¹ for they, we have seen, were the parents of Henry de Audley. Adam granted on this occasion a small endowment in Redfen ('Wridfen'). It is round this Adam, as it seems to me, that the Kenilworth charters revolve;² and the " L(iulfus) frater Ade de Aldithel(ega) " who is a witness to two of Henry de Clinton's charters concerning Redfen must therefore be a brother (?unknown) of his—apparently a younger brother—and not his father Liulf. This conclusion is strengthened by " Adam filius Ade de Aldithel(ega) " attesting one of these charters as well as Adam himself, for we know from other evidence that Adam had a son of his own name, senior to Henry, who obtained, doubtless through Verdon influence, lands in Ireland.

The deed of family arrangement transcribed above provides, we saw, that Stanley itself was to be held by annual payment of twelvecence from the Stanleys to the Audleys, and, as General Wrottesley has pointed out to me, it is again to the Inquisitions taken on the death of the Audleys that we must have recourse to learn the names of those by whom Stanley was held. Now the Inquisition of 1298 shows us a Walter de Stanley as then paying this rent, and, although he does not figure in the pedigree of the earls of Derby, he must have been the holder of Stanley at the time. A Walter de Stanley also occurs on a Staffordshire Assize Roll of 56 Hen. III (1271-2). It is

¹ Harl. MS. 3650, fos. 66, 71 b. Compare p. 21 above.

² *Ibid.* fos. 8 b., 62, 65, 65 b, 66, 71 b. Mr. Ellis dates these charters " late Hen. II," which harmonises well.