PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Bury & West Suffolk Archæological Institute.

JANUARY, 1849.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE DUCHY OF CLARENCE, THE COUNTY OF CLARE, AND THE CLARENCEUX KING AT ARMS.

[READ DECEMBER 14, 1848.]

Had I been able to attend the meeting at Clare, I should have taken the opportunity of calling your attention to one or two points more particularly connected with that Town; I conceive, however, that the matters to which I refer are so interesting in themselves, that I shall be justified in bringing them forward now. It has appeared to me to be a task which more particularly devolves on a Suffolk antiquarian society, to settle definitely the origin of the royal title of "Clarence", of the name of the County of "Clare" in Ireland, and of the designation "Clarenceux" borne by the King at Arms, to whose jurisdiction the south of England is assigned: because I believe that they are all equally derived from the old Town of Clare, which was from the earliest times the site of an important fortress. Probably there are few among my hearers, who are not more or less convinced of this. But I have never seen the facts formally established, and, on looking into some of the older authorities*, I observe a statement, which has been

* See, for example, Speed's *History of Great Britaine*, p. 589. The reason why people have looked to Ireland for the origin of this royal Duchy may have been their knowledge of the fact that the first Duke was Earl of Ulster, and was, at the time of his creation, Viceroy of Ireland. Perhaps too, very few are aware that the division of Thomond into counties was long subsequent to the creation of this title.

copied into modern Cyclopædias and other similar compilations, to the effect that the title of Clarence is derived from the Honour of Clare in Thomond; and I believe that this is the common opinion among the uninquisitive in this country. There is another opinion, held by very few, which refers the title of Clarence to the modern Greek title *Clarenza*, said to have been borne by the Hainault family: but there is no evidence for the transference of this title to the family of Edward III.

I. It is needless to mention to you, who are professed antiquaries, that Clare was a border-fortress on the confines of the East Anglians and East Saxons in the days of the Saxon Heptarchy, and that it was given by William the Conqueror, together with many other important and valuable fiefs, to Richard FitzGilbert, Earl of Brion in Normandy, a distant kinsman of his own and one of his most powerful adherents. This nobleman having exchanged his Castle of Brion with the Archbishop of Canterbury for the Castle of Tunbridge in Kent, was styled *Ricardus de Tonebruge*, and the same surname was borne by his son Gilbert. But his grandson Richard, Earl of Hertford, having, in 1124, removed the monks from his Castle of Clare, and made it his principal and usual residence, according to the custom of the day changed his surname accordingly. Now the only languages, in which his style and title could formally appear, were the Norman-French and the Latin. In the former he was designated as "Richard de Clare", in the latter as "Ricardus Clarensis". This Latin designation was in strict accordance with the rules of classical Latinity, which were observed more accurately than is generally supposed in cases where the relations of provincials to their Roman masters required to be defined or expressed. Thus, the Romans called the native Spaniards *Hispani;* but a Roman settled in Spain would be called *Hispaniensis.* You will observe that the designations "de Clare" and "Clarensis" never appear as baronial titles of this great family: but rather constituted their family name or surname. They became Earls of Hertford, Gloucester, Pembroke, &c., but never took any title or rank from the Honour of Clare, which gave them their name. If any one of the family was called "comes

Clarensis", which, in itself, is by no means improbable*, this meant "the Earl residing at Clare", and not "the Earl of Clare". The signatures still kept up by our Bishops furnish us with an excellent example of the difference on which I wish to insist. Other peers sign by their titles only, but Archbishops and Bishops sign with their Christian names also. Thus the Earl of Durham or Viscount Canterbury, who are hereditary Peers, need no personal addition, such as that of a Christian name, to particularize their signatures: "Durham" or "Canterbury", attached to a paper with a date, sufficiently indicates the Earl or Viscount for the time being. But the Bishop and Archbishop, whose sees are identical with the places which give these noblemen their titles, sign *E. Dunelmensis* and *C. B. Cantuariensis*, as if to shew that they are temporary incumbents rather than hereditary peers. I make these remarks that you may see the more clearly the nature of the transition from the adjective "Clarensis" to the substantive "Clarence". The former was originally synonymous with the Norman designation "de Clare". But the Norman equivalent became a regular surname, and was borne by members of the family settled in differents parts of the kingdom, whereas the Latin "Clarensis" was appropriated to the occupant of Clare Castle and to the possessor of its feudal honours, whether he was called "de Clare", "de Burgh", or "Plantagenet". Consequently, the territory of which he was feudal chief would be called in Latin *Clarentia*, and in Norman-French *Clarence;* comp. *Provence* from *Provincia*, *Florence* from *Florentia*, *France* from *Francia*, &c. Now I need hardly tell you that Gilbert de Clare, called also "Gilbert the Red", 7th Earl of Hertford, and 3rd Earl of Gloucester, married Joane of Acre, daughter of Edward I.: that his son Gilbert having died without issue at the battle of Bannockburn, the Earldoms of Gloucester and Hertford became extinct, but that the Honour of Clare, with his other large possessions, devolved ultimately on his youngest sister *Elizabeth*, who married *John de Burgh*, alias *Burgo*, alias *Burke*, Earl of Ulster: that the son of this marriage, *William de Burgh*, Earl of

* William de Warren, Earl of Surrey, was called *Comes Warrensis*.

Ulster, by his wife, *Maud Plantagenet*, left one daughter, *Elizabeth;* and that *Lionel of Antwerp*, third son of Edward III, having married this lady in 1354 (as may be inferred from the fact that his daughter Philippa was born in 1355), became possessed of the Honour of Clare, and was in the Parliament of 1362 formally created Duke of Clarence, that is, either "Dux Clarentiæ", or "Dux Clarensis", i.e., the Duke at Clare*. There cannot therefore be any doubt as to the origin and meaning of this Royal Title, which, as we shall presently see, was not only a solemn announcement of the fact that the immense possessions of a powerful and almost princely family had been added to the domains of the Plantagenets, but was in itself as significant of a large district as the Principality of Wales and Duchy of Cornwall, which have been, since an epoch little anterior to the creation of the Duchy of Clarence, invariably bestowed upon the eldest son of the reigning sovereign. The first Duke of Clarence died in 1368, in consequence of living too like an Englishman in the very different climate of Italy (Barnes, p. 719), whither he had gone to celebrate his marriage with Violante, the daughter of Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan. He was buried at Clare, and left one daughter by his first marriage with Elizabeth de Burgh, namely, Philippa, whose descendants intermarried with those of Edmund, 5th son of Edward III, and, as is well known, successfully vindicated their better title to the throne in the latter part of the following century. Since the reign of Edward III., the three following princes have been Dukes of Clarence: (1) Thomas, son of Henry IV., was so created in 1411, and was slain in a skirmish with some Scottish mercenaries in France, in 1421; (2) George, brother of Edward IV., was so created in 1461, and was put to death in the Tower in 1477; (3) William Henry, third son of George III., was so created in 1789, and died as King William IV., in 1837. The Earldom of Gloucester, which became extinct before the marriage which converted a Plantagenet into a Clarensis, has been, ever since the reign of Richard II., either represented by a

* The motion for the creation of this and other royal titles in the Parliament of 1362, seems to have been the celebration of King Edward's Jubilee. See Barnes, p. 625.

corresponding Royal Dukedom, or left dormant. The Dukedom was created in 1385 in favour of Thomas of Woodstock; and it is worthy of remark that the three Plantagenets who bore the title met with violent deaths. Thomas of Woodstock was murdered at Calais in 1397; Humphrey, for whom the duchy was revived in 1414, perished by foul means in this very town in 1446; and Richard, who was raised to the same dignity in 1461, was slain at Bosworth on the 22nd August, 1485. The princes who bore this title in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, were at least allowed to die in their beds or their cradles.

II. In order to ascertain whence the County of Clare in Ireland derived its name, we have only to inquire what member of the de Clare family, or what possessor of the Honour of Clare, was most likely, by his acts or possessions, to lend his name as a territorial designation to a tract of land on the Western Coast of Connaught. The whole of the district now comprised within this county, together with the territory of the Cas tribe on the East of the Shannon, was called originally Thomond, i. e. *Tuaidh Muin*, or "North Munster". Now it was a king of "North Munster", a son-in-law of Dermot Mac Murrogh, who first introduced the English into this part of Ireland, and the leader of the English adventurers was no other than Richard de Clare, commonly called Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke. As he afterwards became a brother-in-law of the King of Thomond, it might be presumed that he was the first cause of the designation which afterwards distinguished an important part of North Munster. But there is no evidence that he obtained any great property in Munster. His acquisitions were limited to the province of Leinster, of which his father-in-law, Dermot, was King. On the contrary, there is good reason to believe that another member of the de Clare family, Thomas, son of the second Earl of Gloucester, and brother of Gilbert the Red, became possessed, about 1267, of a large tract of land in this part of Ireland, either by grant from the crown or by cession from the O'Brians; and it is known that the passage across the river Shannon, at Killaloe, in Clare, was called Clarisford within 50 years of the date assigned to this grant. This is proved by the accompanying extracts, for

which I am indebted to Mr Tymms*. As therefore the name had established itself in this district so many years before, it is very likely that this was not forgotten when Thomond was divided into three counties in Queen Elizabeth's reign: and whereas the other two shires were called after *Limerick* and *Tipperary*, their principal towns, Clare, which had no flourishing municipality, would naturally derive its name from the great family which had struck a deep root in the country some 300 years earlier. This is more probable than that the subsequent connexion of the Earls of Ulster with the de Clare family, or the vice-royalty of a Duke of Clarence in 1362, gave rise to a territorial appellation in a different part of the country.

III. We may now enter upon the consideration of the third particular—perhaps, in its results, the most interesting of the three—namely, the origin of the designation "Clarrenceux", given to one of the Kings at Arms in the Heralds' College. You are aware that there are now three Kings at Arms, "Garter", "Clarenceux", and "Norroy". Although this enumeration gives them in their precedence, the reverse order would probably place them according to the relative antiquity of their offices. For the "Garter King at Arms" was not created until the reign of Henry V., and the "Norroy" may be traced back to the reign of Edward II. In fact, it appears that there were originally two Kings at Arms, corresponding perhaps to the two Archiepiscopal provinces; one, to whom the jurisdiction north of the Trent was assigned, and who was consequently styled "Roi des armes des Norroys", *i. e.* "King at Arms of the Northmen", and the other, who had the control of the district south of the Trent, and who was called "Roi des Armes des

* According to Lodge "all that tract of Thomond which extends from Limerick to Ath Solais was bestowed by Bryan Ruadh, Prince of Thomond, upon Thomas de Clare, in consideration of this lord coming with the English troops to reinstate him in his kingdom." But according to others, this immense property was a reckless gift from the Crown: and a grant Pat. Roll, 4 Edw. I., of ample liberties in his lands of Thomond to Thomas de Clare, seems to confirm this statement.—*Rylcy's Placit. Parliamentar. Appx.*, 438; *Moore's Ireland*, ii., 32.

The passage across the river at Killaloe in Clare, was in the beginning of the 14th century "called *Claris ford*, from Thomas de Clare, who had obtained possessions in the east of Clare from one of the Princes of Thomond."—*Hall's Ireland*, iii., 419.

This Thomas de Clare was a great favourite of Edw. I., with whom he had been in the Holy Land. Thomas Wyke calls him the prince's friend and bedfellow (familiaris et cubicularius).

Surroys", or "King at Arms of the Soûtherns": and under this title he is mentioned in the reign of Edward III. It is perhaps as well to state that the termination of the words *Norroys* and *Surroys* is the French *-ois*, which represented the Latin *-ensis;* similarly we have *Albigeois* and *Vaudois* from *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*. Now the district assigned to the "Clarenceux" is co-extensive with that over which the "Surroy" was placed, and I think it may be demonstrated that the designations are feudally equivalent. Noble, indeed, tells us (p. 61) that the title "Clarenceux" is not older than the reign of King Henry the Vth, and that it is due to that King's preference for the herald of his brother as Constable of his army. This seems to be an unfounded conjecture, springing from a misapprehension of the meaning and formation of the plural adjective "Clarenceux". Besides, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, was not at the battle of Agincourt, nor was he constable of the army in any battle in which the King commanded in person*. Those who have studied philology do not need be told that in French and old Norman the termination *-ux* implies an original *ls* or *les* (see *Varronianus*, p. 210). Thus we have *aux* for *a les; animaux* and *chevaux* are the plurals of *animal* and *cheval*, and *ceux* is the plural of *cel*. Consequently, *Clarenceux* is the plural of *Clarencel*. Now who were the *Clarencels?* We have already seen that *Clarensis* meant the man who had the "Honour of Clare"; and that *Clarence* or *Clarentia*, the substantive derived from this epithet, meant the territory of which he was the feudal chief. As therefore *Provincialis* and *Provençal* are derived from *Provincia* or *Provence*, so *Clarentialis* or *Clarencel* would be regularly formed from *Clarentia* or *Clarence*. Accordingly the *Clarencels* were all those who owed obedience or fealty to the feudal Lord of Clarence—the vassals, in fact, of the mighty Seneschal of Clare. Now it would be absurd to suppose that these vassals were merely the immediate dependents of the castle in Suffolk. With that interpretation

* The Duke of Clarence left the army and returned with the sick to England, after the siege of Harfleur, in which he greatly distinguished himself (N. H. Nicolas, *Battle of Agincourt*, p. cccii). His post was that of chieftain of the king's first ward (Nicolas, p. xcvi). The Constable at this time was the Duke of York (Nicolas p. civ), who commanded the vanguard and right wing (Nicolas p. cxcii). At the time of his death, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, was Captain-General of Normandy (Monstrelet, chap. 249).

of the term, the "King at Arms of the Clarencels" would be a very unmeaning title. But the domains of Richard FitzGilbert and his descendants really included a large portion of the fairest lands south of the Trent. In addition to his fiefs in Wilts*, Devon, Cambridge, and Kent, the founder of this family had 38 Lordships in Surrey, 35 in Essex, and 95 in Suffolk. His grandson added to this the Earldom of Hertford and extensive possessions in Wales. The great-grandson of this nobleman became Earl of Gloucester; and when Gilbert the Red married Joane Plantagenet, there was scarcely a county in the breadth of England south of the Trent which did not own the influence of the great "Clarensis". It is impossible to say when the term "Surroys" gave place to its synonym "Clarenceux"; but it is most probable that this change was made when Prince Lionel assumed a ducal title from the Honour of Clare; so that the Duchy of Clarence and the Clarenceux King at Arms are to be considered as distinct but cognate records of an increase in the royal domains, analogous to those which led to the creations of the "Prince of Wales" and the "Duke of Cornwall".

Upon the whole then, it seems that we may safely refer to the Castle and Honour of Clare, in this County, the origin of the Royal Duchy, of the Irish Shire, and of the Heraldic King. If any one asks what advantage has been gained by this investigation, I think the answer is easy. Whatever is calculated to throw a new light on the most trivial particulars in the history of this great nation, is worthy of at least the same regard as that which we bestow upon the learned speculations of Classical historians. It is by our collective knowledge of these details that we are enabled to furnish the critical historian of our own and after days with the facts for his philosophical inferences. And if we cannot now discover and record the meaning of terms, which have taken their origin in our own neighbourhood, we are not to expect better results from the researches of a future generation. Some of you may tell me that you knew already all or nearly all the facts which I have detailed: and that my inferences and combinations were

* The village of Clarendon, celebrated for the Parliament held there in 1164, seems to have been originally *Clarense-dunum.*

very near to the surface. Granting this, I would remark that the same is the case with nearly all antiquarian investigations. The last step is generally an easy one; but, as long as that step still remains to be taken, there is still the gap between ignorance and knowledge, or at least the interval between vague conjecture and certain information.

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THE PRINCESS JOANNA OF ACRE AND HER ALLIANCES.

[READ SEPTEMBER 14, 1848.]

The following account of the Princess JOANNA OF ACRE, Lady of Clare, her parentage and alliances, is offered with a view to shew the intimate connection of the Honor and Town of Clare with some of the most striking incidents in English History.

The father of Joanna was Edward the First, who, when Prince, so successfully asserted the kingly authority against the rebel barons; temporarily subjected the kingdom of Scotland, and finally annexed the principality of Wales to the English crown. But his great improvements in our laws won for him the yet more honorable title of "the English Justinian". He was the first Christian prince who passed an Act of Mortmain, and his reign was an epoch in the formation of our House of Commons. Royal by birth, the father of Joanna of Acre was valiant in battle, gallant in the tournament, wise in council, and affectionate in his family.

Nor was her mother less illustrious in her origin, or less distinguished by those virtues and accomplishments which grace and dignify even exalted station. Eleanor of Castile was the daughter of Frederick the Third of Castile, and sister to Alphonso, the royal philosopher of Spain. She was so elegant in her person that historians describe her as a model of feminine beauty; and so fondly affectioned as to obtain the honourable surname of "the Faithful". Her gentle manners, her sweet temper, her prudence and her charity, were crowned by a pure piety most rare in that age.