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THE FAMILY OF SEPTVANS.

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A NOTABLE example of a Kentish family living in or about the same locality from the twelfth to the seventeenth century is that of Septvans, of whom many traces are found in the village of Ash-next-Sandwich in the form of effigies and brasses.

The name Septvans appears to be a corruption of Sept Vannes¹ (seven winnowing fans or baskets). It has been suggested that the name is derived from a supposed place in Normandy of the name of Septvas or Septvents (seven winds). In Latin it is generally rendered Septemvannis or Septemvallibus; but in Norman French or English it is given in every imaginable spelling, such as Septvans, Setuans, Sepuans, Sepuens, Septvaus, Septvaunz, Septvannee, Septvance, Setvaus, Setzvans, Setvans, Sewans, Sewanz, Sevanz, Sevaunces, Senantz, Sephan, Seavans, Sevaunce, Septans, Cennants and even Setwentz and Setwetz.

Members of the direct line, extending from about 1180 to 1448, were known as Septvans or one of its variations, but the younger branch, descending from Gilbert de Septvans (about 1400) who married Constance, daughter of Sir Thomas Ellis of Sandwich, preferred the surname of Harflete or Harfleet, sometimes varied by the surname of Atcheker or Atchequer (after their home at Chequer in Ash). In a few cases, however, the name of Septvans was revived, even as late as 1617. No rule can be found for the use of the surname, particularly by the younger branch, by whom the names Septvans, Harflete, Atcheker etc., were taken promiscuously, the son being sometimes known by a different name from his father.

¹ *Vanne*, French for basket. Cf. the word *Vanner*, as found in early Charters and trade regulations, describing our basket-makers.

The family Arms were Azure, three winnowing fans, or. Originally the shield bore seven winnowing fans but, as happened in the case of many early shields bearing more numerous charges, later heraldic use reduced them to three. In a Roll of Arms, temp. Edw. I, occur the Arms of a Sir Robert de Septvans—Azure, three fans, or, differenced by nine cross crosslets of the second, three, three, two and one; evidently that of a younger brother or collateral. (Planché, *Corner of Kent*, p. 314, n.) The Septvans Arms are found in a glass window in Nettlestead Church, near Maidstone described by Mr. W. E. Ball in *Arch. Cant.*, vol. xxviii, pp. 157-249, dating from about 1300, when Sir William Septvans married Elizabeth, daughter of Philip de Pympe of Nettlestead.

The name does not appear in Domesday, and the first record in Kent is that of Robert de Septvans, of Aldington (Thurnham, near Maidstone), husband of Emma, co-heir of William Fitz Helte. Fitz Helte died shortly before 26 Hen. II. (1180); for, by the Pipe Roll of that year, William de Ceriton, Anfrid de Cani and Emma de Septvans rendered account of one hundred marks to have the land of William Fitz Helte. (Planché, p. 308.)

This Robert de Septvans was dead in 1180, and in 1185 his son, Robert, was twelve years of age and in the wardship of the King. (Rot. de Dominabus.) Emma was dead in 1187, and in the Plea Roll of 9 John (1216), she is called "avia Rob't de Septemvannis." (Abbrev. of Pleas, p. 57. See also *Arch. Cant.*, vol. ii. pp. 29-30.) Further, Robert Fitz Bernard, Sheriff of Kent, in his accounts for 1180, states: "William de Cyreton, Amfred de Canci and Emma de Setvans render account for 100 marks for to have the land of William Fitz Helte. In the treasury 5 marks from Wm. de Cyreton and there are due four score and 15 marks. Also two marks from John Monaco and Emma de Setvans, and they owe £55. 6.8." (*Kent Records*, vol. ii. p. 39.) Emma de Septvans was in 1181 the wife of John Monaco. She was living in 1185, but dead in 1187.

The second Robert de Septvans was born 1173 and died

in or before 9 John (1216), being succeeded in his estates by his son, a third Robert, of whom Emma de Septvans is in that year described as a grandmother. The second Robert held lands in Wigeberg (or Wigberg) in Essex in 10 Rich. I (1199), in which year a suit was brought against him, then of full age, and Malger de Wigeberg by Alicia, wife of Robert de Newlond, and daughter of Avicia, wife of Swainus, or Swain, to recover $1\frac{1}{2}$ hide of land in Wigeberg, then held by the said Malger. (Planché, p. 309.)

In a Scutage, begun 2 John and completed 13 John (1201-12), a Robert de Septem Vallibus held one fee in Co. Kent and one fee in Gloucester. Robert de Sevans held one fee in Meleton (Milton, near Canterbury), being one of the knights of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1210-12; also at the same date held one fee and a quarter in Kent by barony and military service held from the King; also one fee in Kent, part of the Honor of Gloucester. (Red Book of Exchequer.) Among further references to this Robert are the following: (i.) Sir Robert de Septvans, patron, commission to induce Thomas de Schireborn, Chaplain to the Rectory of Meleton (Milton, near Canterbury), in *Arch. Cant.*, vol. xxxviii., p. 188; and (ii.) Robert de Septvans confirms grant made by William Fitz Helte, date before 1215, in *Arch. Cant.*, vol. vi., p. 191.

The third Robert succeeded his father in 1216. His wife's name was Matilda. A Charter, said by Planché to be before 1216, provided: "Know ye, both present and future, that I, Robert de Septvans, give and grant and by this present Charter have confirmed to the Prior of the Church of St. Gregory at Canterbury and the Convent of the same place, half an acre of his land, with an osier bed (cum algnicio) and all that belongs to it, which lies between my meadow which is on the east and the court of the Prior and Monastery at Huggefeld¹ on the west, and adjoins my meadow on the south, and the garden (gardino) of Hothfield Court on the north." This Charter is in the archives of the College of Arms, where also is another charter of one of the two Roberts

¹ Hothfield.

mentioned, confirming the advowson of Aldington in Thurnham to the Abbey of Cumbwell. (The text is given in *Arch. Cant.*, vol. v., pp. 236-7.) The seal to the above Charter is preserved in the College of Arms. It is reproduced as the frontispiece of Planché's *Corner of Kent* and also in vol. v. of *Arch. Cant.* quoted above.

The third Robert died 33 Hen. III. (1249). At the time of his death he held one knight's fee at Aldington in Thurnham from the King; also one knight's fee at Meleton (Milton) from the Earl of Gloucester; and half a knight's fee at Welmeston¹ from the Archbishop of Canterbury; and two knight's fees in the county of Essex of William de Shoford. He was buried at Lydd, being survived by his wife Matilda, who was living in 1253, and by a son, then aged about forty.

The fourth Robert did homage for his father's lands on January 17th, 1248-9, but died four years later (37 Hen. III.) 1253, when it was recorded that he had a wife, Isabella, and a son Robert, aged three. (Planché, pp. 310-11.)

Robert de Septvans, fifth of that name, was born 1250, being only three years of age at his father's death. On Fine Roll, 37 Hen. III. (1253), m. 17, it is stated: "The Sheriff of Kent is ordered to take into the King's hands the Manor of Meleton, which was held by Robert de Sevanz, father of said Robert . . ." And on Fine Roll of the same date, m. 16: "The King, for twenty marks . . . grants to Reginald de Cobeham the wardship of the heirs of Robert de Sevanz, and of all the lands . . . which he held of the King in *capite*, with all other lands and tenements which were the said Robert's on the day he died, of whomsoever he held them; to hold to the said Reginald and his heirs and assigns till the lawful age of the heirs of the said Robert; together with the marriage of the said heirs, and of Isabella the widow of the said Robert, if she chooses to marry.", Robert married (before 1281) Joan, widow of Richard de Wallies, without the consent of the King. This is recorded on Fine Roll 22 Edw. I. (1294). Joan may have been the daughter of Hawisia de Beseville but, according to Planché,

¹ In Wingham, now Walmeston.

this fact is uncertain. Joan died 1294. On the other hand, Philipott, in his pedigree marked Annulet, p. 25, marries Robert to a daughter of — Aldon.

The fifth Robert is mentioned among the knights of the shire for Kent, 18 Edw. I. (1290) as follows: "Robertus de Sevaunz, miles, of Milton, near Canterbury, and also of Aldington in Thurnham, to each of which Manors the name of Septvans is attached." He was created banneret by Edward I. for gallantry at the siege of Caerlaverock in 1300.

In the Register of Archbishop Peckham (printed by the Canterbury and York Society, June 1908), Robert de Septem Vannis, on October 4, 1279, at Chartham, did homage and swore fealty to Archbishop John Peckham for a knight's fee and a half in Romenale (Romney), (p. 15).

Hasted, in his *History of Kent*, vol. II., p. 15, says: Robert was Constable of Rochester Castle in 3 Edw. I. (1275).

According to the Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edw. I., vol. 1301-7, Robert de Septvans was one of a Commission *de wallis et fossatis*, in June, 1302, and again in January, 1303, by the seacoast in Kent and Sussex (p. 185). In April, 1304, he was relieved because infirm (p. 276).

He died the same year, 1304, and was buried in Chartham Church, where his brass remains. This brass was formerly in the centre of the Church, but is now in the north transept.

Sir Robert's brass is thus described in Griffin and Stephenson's *Monumental Brasses in Kent*, 1923:

"Effigy of a man, 74 x 20, cross-legged, in chain mail with leather knee-pieces, bare-headed and with bare hands, his hood and mittens slipped off and hanging down, surcoat, ailettes and shield, charged with winnowing fans, elaborate belt and sword with richly ornamented scabbard, lion at feet; left foot and head of lion mutilated." The brass is reproduced in the same book, Introduction, p. 20, and in W. D. Belcher's *Kentish Brasses*, p. 28.

The sister of the fifth Robert, Joan, one of the co-heirs of Rose, widow of Stephen de Penchester, married John de

Cobham, circa 1258. Her tomb is in the chancel of Cobham Church, with a brass inscription :

Dame Joan de Cobham lies here.
 God be merciful to her soul and
 to those who pray for her soul.

(*Arch. Cant.*, vol. XI., pp. 56-8.)

The fifth Robert de Septvans was succeeded by his son William, who, having been born in 1281, was about twenty-three years of age at his father's death. He was already married to Elizabeth, daughter of Philip Pympe of Nettlestead. Sir William Septvans—for he was knighted—was Sheriff during part of 13-14 Edw. II. (1320-1). According to Hasted, vol. I., p. lxxxiii, "he gave for his Arms, azure, three wheat fans or skreens, or, as the same are carved on the roof of the cloysters in Canterbury." Planché states (p. 314) that, as soon as William succeeded to his father's estates, he had a settlement with a Robert de Septvans about a messuage and two carucates of land in Lydd and Bromhill. Planché finds no clue to the relationship of this Robert to Sir William.

Sir William died 1323, leaving four sons, William ; John ; Simon (or Symkin) ; and Robert.

William, eldest son of Sir William, was born 1301 and succeeded at the age of twenty two. According to Philipott's Pedigrees, he is set down as the husband of Maud, sole daughter and heir of Sir Theobald de Twitham, Lord of Twitham in Ash ; but, according to Planché, no actual authority can be quoted for this marriage. On the other hand, Planché adds, (p. 315) : "we have official documents showing that he left a widow named Elizabeth" (? daughter of — Darell).

It does not appear that William was ever knighted, though he is described in the pedigrees as Sir William. He was summoned as "Wilhelmus de Setzvans, man-at-arms, to attend the Great Council at Westminster on Wednesday next after Ascension Day, May 30, 17 Edw. II. (1324) and as William de Sevanns was appointed with others to blockade

the seacoast from Bromhill to Dengemarsh¹ for the purpose of preventing the landing of emissaries from France, 19 Ed. II." *vide* Parliamentary Writs of that date. (Planché, p. 315, n.)

William is recorded as having been present with the Earl of Huntingdon at Caen and Calais, *circa* 1346. (See *Probatio ætatis* of William de Septvans in *Arch. Cant.*, vol. I, pp. 124 *et seq.*)

When Edward, Prince of Wales, son of Edward III., was knighted in 1346, and each knight's fee contributed an aid of 40 shillings, William de Septvans, miles, paid 40 shillings for one fee which Robert de Septvans (his grandfather) held at Milton, near Canterbury from the Earl of Gloucester (*Arch. Cant.*, vol. X., p. 115); also 40 shillings from the fee in Thanington which Robert de Septvans and John de Valoynes formerly held from the Archbishop of Canterbury; also 40 shillings for the one fee in Wyelmeston which Robert de Septvans held from the Archbishop of Canterbury (*Ibid*, p. 124). Reginald de Cobham and William de Septvans paid £4 for the two knight's fees that Henry de Cobham held at Aldington next Thurnham from the King. (*Ibid*, p. 143.)

William de Septvans died 1351, and his widow Elizabeth on October 28th, 1356. On Saturday, after the Feast of St. Andrew (Nov. 30th) 30 Edw. III. (1356) was held at Canterbury the enquiry after the death of Elizabeth de Septvans in that year.

William, the third of that name, was born about 1346. In 40 Edw. III. (1366) an inquisition (*Probatio ætatis*) was granted on the petition of William de Septvans, who had been "led away and counselled by Sir Nicholas de Loveyne of Penshurst and others named in the petition, to alienate his lands and tenements to them," he not being at that time of full age, as had been falsely represented. It was shown by the enquiry, held before John de Cobham, Thomas de Lodelow and William Waure at Canterbury, that the petitioner was not even then of age, and would

¹ This would mean the mouth of the Rother.

be easily "twenty years and no more on the feast of St. Augustine the Doctor next coming."¹ (Planché, p. 317.)

In the year 1380, Sir William was Sheriff of Kent. It is recorded that, on the outbreak of the insurrection in 1381, the insurgents acted "by commission of John Rakestraw and Watte Tegheler (Wat Tyler) of Essex" their first act being to seize William de Septvans, the Sheriff, whose books and rolls touching the King's Crown, they promptly burned, and released the prisoners in Canterbury Castle. (*Arch. Cant.*, vol. III., p. 67.)

Under the hundred of Whitstable, the jurors reported that malefactors . . . feloniously broke open the castle of our Lord the King in Canterbury and took there William Septvantz,² the Sheriff of Kent, and dragged him away with them and compelled him to deliver, to them the books and writs of our Lord the King which, being delivered to them, they immediately burned. (*Ibid*, pp. 85-6.)

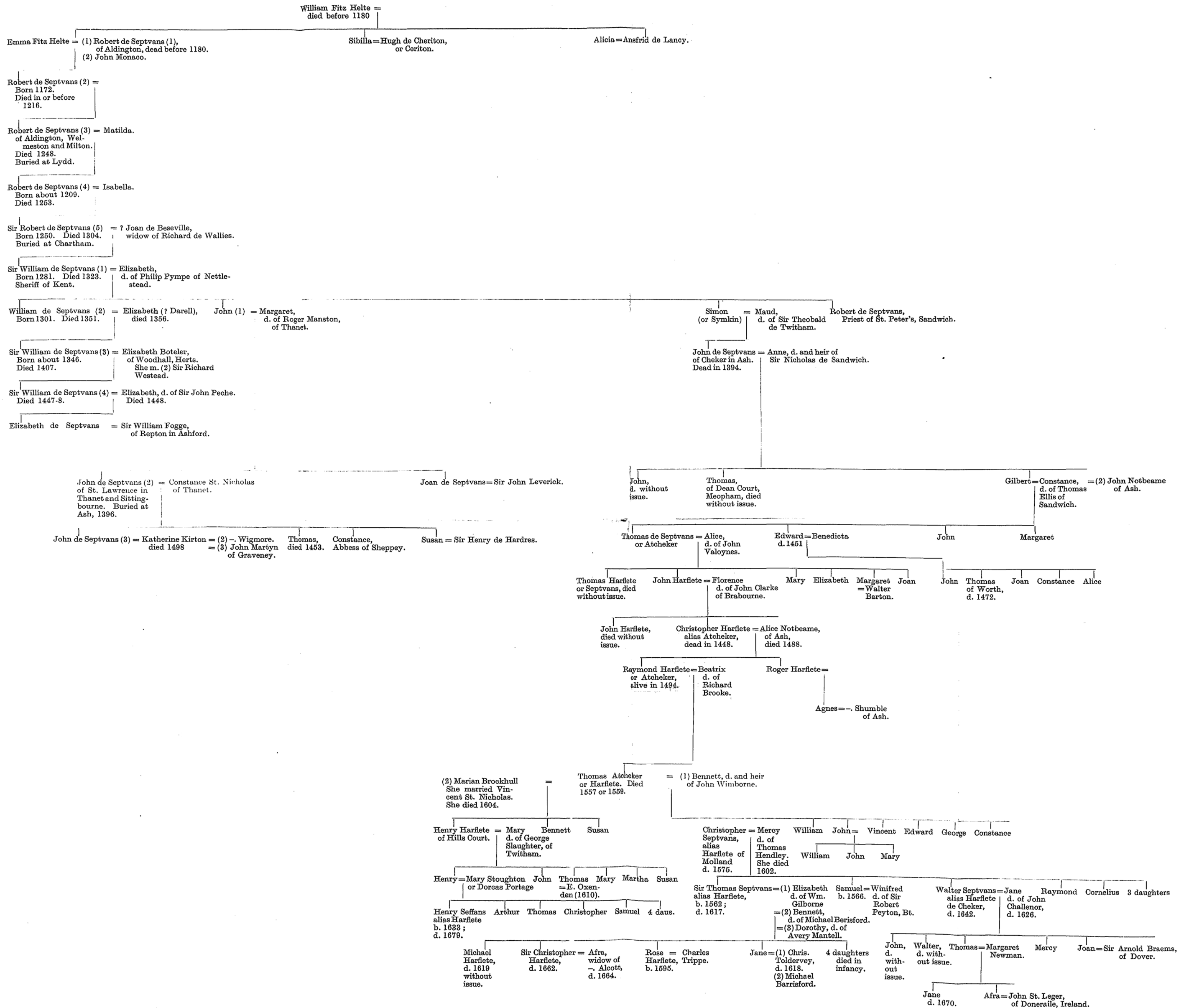
Under the hundred of Faversham, the jurors reported that the malefactors made assault on William Septvantz, Sheriff of Kent, and dragged the said Sheriff to prison and forced the said Sheriff to go to his Manor of Milton . . . (*Ibid*, p. 92.)

William, the Sheriff, was member of a Commission (July 10th, 1381) to assemble and array all the lieges of the King in Kent against the insurgents of that county and punish them for their rebellion. (*Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 5 Rich. II, vol. 1381-5, p. 72.) He was also a member of a Commission, September 2nd, 1381, to preserve the peace in Kent, with power to arrest and imprison all persons inciting insurrection, to put down unlawful assemblies and to appoint deputies for the same purpose. (*Ibid*, p. 77.) On December 14th in the same year he was member of a Commission to put down the rebels with armed force, if necessary. (*Ibid*, p. 84.)

¹ By the custom of Gavelkind he would have been "of age" at fifteen years.

² June 10th, 1381.

TREE OF THE FAMILY OF SEPTVANS, 1172-1679.



In the same volume of Calendar of Patent Rolls, mention is made, under date November 1st, 1382, of a pardon to William Septvans, late Sheriff of Kent, for the escape of certain insurgents in prison under his custody, whilst he was busy elsewhere in the execution of his office in the late insurrection.

Hasted, in vol. IV., p. 531, n., quotes Weever, p. 234, that this Sir William Septvans, whose residence was at Milton-Septvans near Canterbury, served in the wars with France under Edward III. Sir William died August 29th, 1407, and was buried in Christ Church, Canterbury, near Thomas Fogge. By his Will he enfranchised his slaves in the following terms: "Item lego Adam Standerd, Thomae Hammonde, Roberto Standerd, Roberto Chirche and Johanni Richesforde, servis et nativis meis, pro bono servitio mihi ab eisdem facto, plenam libertatem, et volo quodquilibet eorundem habeat cartam manumissionis, sigillo meo signatam, in testimonium hujus modi meae ultimae voluntatis" (*Arch. Cant.* vol. XII., p. 285; *Consistory Court*, vol. I., fol. 16).

R. Furley, in his *Weald of Kent*, vol. II, p. 360, n., says: "It is worthy of notice, and shows that this rebellion must have convinced him, at least, that the continuation of serfdom could not be justified¹ that Sir William de Septvans, by his will, emancipated certain slaves born on his land for their good conduct, from which we may infer that they were faithful to their master and took no part in this rebellion."

On the gravestone of Sir William in the Nave of the Cathedral was the following epitaph in Norman French: "Icy gist Gulian Sepvans chevalier qui morust le Darnier jour d'Aust L'an de Grace MCCCCVIJ de quele alme Deux eit pite et mercy Ame." (Planché, p. 319; Somner Appendix, p. 32.)

In the Obit Book of Christ Church Monastery is commemorated "William Sevance, miles, our brother" on August 30th (p. 214, Lambeth Palace Library).

¹ Considering how frequent were such acts of manumission throughout the duration of slavery, Furley is in all probability wrong in attributing any particular motive in the case of Sir William Septvans.—[Ed.]

Sir William had married Elizabeth, daughter of — Boteler of Woodhall, Herts, and had a son William. The widow subsequently married Sir William Westead, Knight.

The next heir, William, was the fourth of that name. Little is known of him. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Peche, and died in 1448-9. His widow died in the same month, as is shown by the epitaph, formerly in Christ Church, Canterbury where they were buried close to his father, the Sheriff.

The epitaph reads thus :

“Sub hoc marmore jacent corpora Willi Sepuans, militis, qui obiit quarto die Martij, Anno Dni 1448, et Elizabethae uxoris ejus filiae Johannis Peche militis qui obiit 28 die mensis Martii quorum animabus propitietur Deus, Amen.

Sum quod eris, volui quod vis, credens quasi credis
Vivere forte diu mox ruo morte specu
Cessi quo nescis, nec quomodo, quando sequeris
hinc simul in coelis ut sinus quoque preceris.”

(Somner, Appendix, p. 33, and *The Antiquities of Canterbury*, Wm. Somner, 1640, p. 182.)

The position of the two graves, as above, is shown in a Plan of the Nave of the Cathedral before the removal of the gravestones in 1787. (*Memorials of Canterbury Cathedral*; by Woodruff and Danks, p. 195.)

The fourth Sir William and his wife Elizabeth had an only child Elizabeth, who married Sir William Fogge or Fogg of Repton, near Ashford. This ended the name of Septvans in the eldest line of the family.

In Le Neve's *Church Notes*, it is stated that in the windows of St. John's Hospital at Canterbury, there were the figures of a lady and a knight kneeling on cushions, with an inscription “Orate p. anima Wm. Septuan Militis et Eliz. uxr. ejus.” The lady wore a mantle azure, a lion rampant crowned or. Further, in St. Alphege Church, Canterbury, at the same period were similar arms in conjunction with those of Septvans. (Planché, p. 316, n.)

Somner in his Appendix 69, records the existence of a gravestone in the Church of St. Peter, Canterbury, bearing

a Latin inscription to the following effect: "Pray for the soul of William Septvans and Elizabeth his wife." This is also mentioned by Weever, 1631, in *Ancient Funeral Monuments*, p. 238.

Considering that the first, second, third and fourth William had each a wife called Elizabeth, it is a matter of conjecture to which of them the above quoted inscriptions refer.

It has been already stated that the first Sir William Septvans had four sons, William; John; Simon or Symkin; and Robert. The descent of the second and third sons, John and Simon, will now be briefly traced; Robert was a priest of St. Peter's, Sandwich.

(a) John Septvans, described as "of St. Lawrence in Thanet and Sittingbourne," married the daughter of Roger Manston of Thanet and had issue a son John and a daughter Joan (who married Sir John Leverick of Ash).

In the Calendar of Patent Rolls, 11 Edw. III. (1337), p. 531, "John de Septem Vallibus accompanied Henry, Bishop of Lincoln, beyond the seas on the King's service."

He was succeeded by his son John, the second of that name, who married Constance St. Nicholas of Thanet, by whom he had two sons and two daughters, viz. John, Thomas, Constance and Susan. John the second died 1396, and was buried at Ash "in angulo occidentali" of the Churchyard. By his Will he left his residue to Constance his wife and Thomas Rolling and Gilbert Alflet. Probate 5th September 1396 by Prior and Chapter *Sede vacante* after the death of Archbishop Courtenay (July 31st, 1396), (Register G., fol. 272).

John the third succeeded his father. He joined the insurrection of Jack Cade in 1450. His name appears in the list of those pardoned for that offence. (*Arch. Cant.*, vol. XXVIII., p. 213.) He married Katherine, daughter of Jefferay Kirton. Their effigy is in the Molland Chancel of Ash Church, he wearing the S.S. Collar and she dressed as a widow. Katherine Septvans married again twice, first — Wigmore, Esq., and second John Martyn (or Martin),

of Graveney. John the third died 1458, and Katherine Martyn died 1498.

By the Will of Katherine Martyn, proved January 19th, 1498-9, she expressed the wish to be buried in the Parish Church at Ash "in the same tomb where the body of John Septvans, formerly my husband, resteth. The Chantry of the Upper Hall, which my husband founded, shall have perpetually 20 thillings from the lands which joineth the next unto the Chantry, that there be kept for ever yearly in the Parish Church of Ash an obit for the souls of my father and mother, Jefferay Kirton and Juliane his wife, and my son John Wigmore. Also the Vicar or Parish Priest of Ash shall have yearly 16 pence to pray for the souls of the above every Sunday in the Bede Roll for ever." (*Con.* 4, fol. 206.) (Also *Arch. Cant. Testamenta Cantiana*, 1907, extra vol., pp. 5-6.)

In *Arch. Cant.*, vol, XXXVI., pp. 54-5, the same Will is reproduced and marked Probate 19th January, 1498-9. (*Con.*, vol. IV., fol. 196).

The alabaster effigies of John (3) and Katherine deserve further mention. The following description is given by Planché, pp. 219-21 :—

"The male figure is in the full military costume of the middle of the fifteenth century, consisting of a complete set of plate armour, with elegantly designed knee and elbow pieces ; the thighs protected by *tuelles*, fastened by straps and buckles to the taces or tassets ; horizontal bands of steel forming a sort of skirt to the breastplate, over which, at this period, was worn a tabard of arms, with sleeves nearly to the elbow, and open at the side from the hips. Round his neck is a collar of S S, denoting his rank as Esquire of the Body to the Sovereign. The hair is cut close above the ears, a fashion introduced at the beginning of the fifteenth century ; and the head, represented partly bald, reposes on a tilting helmet supported by angels and surmounted by the torse, or wreath, out of which issues the crest of this branch of the family, the head of a fish erect or *hauriant* ; those of the Harfleet line bearing an entire fish ' a bream in its proper

colours' (Vinot, 145, *Coll. Arms*), in a horizontal position, or *naïant*, that is, swimming. The feet of the effigy, in pointed sollerets, rest upon a couchant lion. The cuffs of the gauntlets and the edges of the jambs, or leg pieces, have a richly ornamental border. The openings between the jambs and the sollerets are protected by gussets of chain; and a thick gorget of chain protects the neck. The sword, somewhat mutilated, is on the left of the figure; and the dagger, the hilt of which is gone, as well as the belt, by which it is suspended, lies on the right. The lady is represented in the dress of a noble widow, 'barbed above the chin,' with an ample veil and wearing a kirtle with tight sleeves buttoned at the wrist, over which is a very full-skirted surcoat, reaching in graceful folds to the feet, and itself surmounted by a mantle of state, with cords and tassets dependent. At her feet are the remains of a small headless animal, probably a dog. The lady's head reposes on two square cushions, tasselled at the corners, the upper one placed anglewise, and supported by angels. On each side of the recess in which the tomb stands are places, formerly occupied by shields of arms."

In Philipott's Church Notes, Harl. 3917, fol. 39, occurs the following :

"In Sittingbourne Church :—

'On a fair alabaster tomb :—

'Pray for the soul of John Septvans Esq of the Isle of Thanet, son of John Septvans of this parish, Esq, and for the soul of Katheren his wife, which John died 28 Dec. 1458.'"

From this is deduced the supposition that the effigy now in Ash Church was removed from Sittingbourne.

No male heir descended from John (3) and Katherine his wife, and John (3) had only one brother Thomas, who appears to have died in 1453 without issue.

(b) It remains to notice Simon or Symkin, the third son of Sir William Septvans and Elizabeth (Pympe) his wife.

Simon de Septvans married Maud, daughter of Theobald de Twitham.¹ They had issue a son John, described as "of Cheker in Ash," who married Anne, daughter and heir of Nicholas de Sandwich. This portion of the genealogical tree is most confused and perplexing. The authorities, Philipott, Hasted and Planché, differ widely on the subject, the essential being that three males—either sons or grandsons of John Septvans and Anne (de Sandwich)-named respectively John ; Thomas ; and Gilbert, were living early in the 15th Century. Of these the two eldest died without issue, and Gilbert de Septvans (of Cheker), who was living in 1416, married Constance, daughter of Sir Thomas Ellis of Sandwich, founder in 1392 of St Thomas' Hospital at Sandwich.

Gilbert had inherited from his father the Manor of Chequer in Ash, from the possession of which his descendants were for some time called Atcheker, and more generally Harfleet. This surname is supposed to have been assumed in consequence of some eminent service rendered by Gilbert Septvans, alias Atcheker, at Harfleur in Normandy under King Henry V.

Gilbert de Septvans, above named, and Constance (Ellis) his wife had three sons and a daughter, the eldest son Thomas de Septvans, or Atcheker, married Alice, daughter of John Valoynes, and had a numerous family, all of whom bore the name of Harflete.

In Philipott's Church Notes, Harl. MS. 3917, fol. 39, reference is made to a window of the South Chancel of Sittingbourne Church, with a Latin inscription as follows:—

"Pray for the soul of Thomas Septvans and Constance his mother." (This also bore the Arms of Ellis.)

The family of Thomas Septvans or Atcheker, and Alice (Valoynes) his wife were:—(1) Thomas, who died without issue ; (2) John Harflete who married Florence daughter of John Clarke of Brabourne. This John had two sons : John, who died without issue ; and Thomas Harflete, alias Atcheker

¹ Harris, in his *History of Kent*, p. 27, says that it was Maud, sole daughter of Alanus, son of Theobald Twitham, who married Simon Septvans.

who married Alice Notbeame of Ash. Both were dead in 1488.

Planché quotes the Will of the widow Alice, dated 16 October 1488, beginning :—" Y^e Dame Alice Septvans, the widow of Christopher Septvans Esq, late of the parish of Ashe beside Sandwich." It appears, however, that the true entry is "Y^e Dame Alice Septvans, the widow of Thomas Septvans Esq." (*Arch. Cant.* vol. xxxvii, pp 44-5.) From all available evidence, it can only be surmised that the word "Thomas" was inserted in error for "Christopher" in the Will.

Christopher Harflete and Alice (Notbeame) his wife had two sons, Raymond Harflete or Atcheker, who married Beatrice, daughter of Richard Brooke; and Roger Harflete or Cheker, who married and had one daughter.

The Will of Roger Harflete is found amongst Philipott's proofs, as follows :—

"I Roger Harflete, otherwise called Roger Cheker, son and one of the heirs of Christopher Harflete, otherwise called Christopher Atcheker, and Alice, formerly his wife, release Raymond Harflete, also called Raymond Atcheker, my brother, in all the lands and tenements in Ashe. Dated 3rd of May, 24th year of the reign of Henry VII (1508)."

By the Will of another Thomas Harflete, described as "of Staple," dated February 16, 1493-4, he left his lands and tenements for life to his wife, Isabella, and then to Raymond Harflete and his heirs, paying to Roger, his brother, £10 within four years after the death of Isabella his wife. This Thomas Harflete has not been identified, but was presumably a near relation of Raymond and Roger.

The eldest son of Raymond Harflete and Beatrix (Brooke) his wife was Thomas Atcheker or Harflete, who married 1st, Bennett, daughter and heir of John Winborne, by whom he had several children, as shown on the Tree annexed, viz. Christopher, William, John, Vincent, Edward, George and Constance; and 2nd, Marian, daughter of Edward Brockhull, by whom he had one son, Henry Harflete, and two daughters, Bennett and Susan.

Thomas Atcheker or Harflete died possessed of Molland Ash, and was buried at Ash, in 1557 or 1559. His Will, dated July 2, 1557, gives such a wealth of information not only about his children, but of the localities where he held land etc., that a full abstract is reproduced :—

“ Thomas Atcheker or Harflete, Will dated July 2, 1557. To be buried in Churchyard on north side where my father lieth, and the tombstone be laid over my father with his name and day of death and without pycure. And another tombstone be laid over me with my name and day of death.

To my cousin, Thomas Paramore, 10 ewes, and to Thomas Paramore, my godson, 5 ewes when Thomas is 21. Residue of goods after paying debts etc., to my son Christopher, paying my wife yearly for 4 years £20 ; and to each of my daughters Susan and Bennett 100 marks when 21 or their day of marriage.

Executor, son Christopher, with William Gybbs of Elmstone, gent., and John Broke of Ash, overseers, each to have 40 shillings. Son Christopher, my lease and interest in the Manor of Flete next Sandwich, being of the inheritance of the Earl of Oxenford, and my lands, tenements in Ashe, Woodnesborough and Staple. Son Christopher, my messuage of Molland with all lands, tenements, except one piece of land at Whytstone ; also all lands late purchased by my father Raymond Harflete from Jerom Aldye ; and the lands etc which I bought at sundry times from William Qwylyter, William Safferey, Robert Southouson, Richard Mayhew, William Gibbes, gent., and William Biggs esq., deceased in Ashe. The lands and rents purchased of Adam Aldye, gent., in Ashe and Woodnesborough ; lands and tenements, late called Obit lands, of Sir John Saunders, otherwise called *droves*, which I bought from William Hylde¹ and Henry² Cartwright, gents., And the same chief messuage and nine pieces of land of 14 acres in Ash, which late did appertain to the late Chauntrye of our Lady in Ash, which I late purchased of Richard Moninges and

¹ i.e., Hyde.

² ? Hugh.

Thomas Wotton, esquires—except one rod of land at Nell between lands of late Oliver Wrothe, gent. Also Christopher have 3 acres of land at Gredrove in Warefield which I with John Gason and Stephen Hougham jointly purchased of Sir Thomas Wrothe, knight. Also one acre and a half—the acre at Corking in Ash, which did appertain to the Chapel at Overland, also my house, lands, tenements in Ashe street which Joan Harflett, widow deceased, lately held for her life. Also 3 acres purchased of John Gason, gent., a piece of land in Overland felde of half an acre; 4 acres beside the three bridges and 18 perches of land late bought from Oliver Wrothe, gent.; and to lawful male heirs of Christopher, in default to my son William and his lawful male issue; in default to my son John: in default to Edward my son . . . in default to Henry my son.

Son William my messuage at Eche and all lands bought from Sir Thomas Rotherham, knight, in Ashe and Woodnesborough, and to heirs of William for ever, in default to Christopher my son and his heirs, in default to Vincent my son, in like tail to Edward, to George, to Henry.

Son John my messuage at Chapman's, with all lands in Ashe bought from Richd Moninges and Thomas Wotton, esquires, and to heirs of John for ever; in default entail to Christopher, William, Vincent, Edward, George, Henry.

Son Vincent my messuage at Nell, with all lands bought from Thomas Powte and John Powte, William Powte; also 3 acres of land late bought of John Broke; also 5 acres of pasture beside Nell late bought from Richard Turner; also 2 pieces of brokeland near the messuage between the waye and the watercourse, of 7 rods, and to heirs of Vincent for ever, if no issue, entail to Christopher, William, John, Edward, George, Henry.

Son Edward the messuage at Nell with all lands bought from Oliver Wrothe, gent., except lands before given; also Edward a rod of land at Nell which did belong to the late Chantry of Our Lady in Ash bought from Richard Moninge

and Thomas Wotton. Also to Edward one and a half acre of arable on the north side of the way leading to the same messuage, which I had by exchange with Richard Omer and to heirs of Edward for ever, but if no issue to my son Christopher and his heirs, in default to William my son and his heirs, in default to John, my son, and his heirs, in default to my son George and his heirs, in default to Henry and his heirs.

Son George have my house in St. Peter's Parish, Sandwich, against the conduit in the Fishmarket; also one little garden at Motesole; one tenement at Ashe with its lands at Ashe and Woodnesborough, lately bought from John Broke of Ashe; also 20 acres of marsh at Pynnok Wall¹ in Woodnesborough which Raymonde Harfiete my father, bought of Edward Oxenden, gent., deceased, to George and his heirs for ever, in default to Christopher, or William, or John, or Vincent, or Edward, or Henry.

Son Christopher to have the rule and custody of his brethren and messuages etc., of William, John, Vincent, Edward, until the several ages of 21, keeping same in repair, and finding his brothers to scole or occupation, from income of same.

Son Henry all lands, tenements in Ashe and Staple, lately bought from Richard Covert, esq., and to heirs of Henry for ever, in default to Christopher, or William, or John, or Vincent, or Edward, or George.

Wife have part of my household stuff, other part to sons equally, remaining in custody of my Ex'or until sons are 21 or at their marriage.

Wife have 6 of the best kine, and 30 shillings yearly for life out of lands etc., given to my son John; also 30 shillings yearly from lands given to my son William, with right to distrain if not paid.

Witnesses, Wm. Gibbes of Elmestone; Henry Brockhull; Wm. Syme of Sandwich; Richard Riths, grocer. Probate 29th Jan., 1559-60. (*Con.*, vol. 28, fol. 20-24.)

¹ This is clearly an error, as the Pynnok Wall is at Worth and Sholden.

Thomas Atcheker or Harflete=Bennett Wimborne.
died 1557.

Christopher
William
John
Vincent
Edward
George
Constance

= (2) Marian Brookhull
(2) Vincent St. Nicholas
died 1604. died 1589.

Henry Harflete Susan Bennett

(Planché, p. 340.)

Christopher Septvans, alias Harflete, as he styled himself in his Will, was the eldest son of Thomas Atcheker or Harflete by his first marriage with Bennett (Wimborne). Christopher died 1575; his widow 1602.

By his Will, dated September 6th, 1575, Christopher Septvans, alias Harflete, of Ash-next-Sandwich, left "all my right, title and interest in the Manor of Flete . . . to son Thomas Harflete . . . wife Mercy to have and enjoy for life my Manor or messuage of Molland and all those lands, tenements, etc., in Molland, Guildenton, Chilton and Pedding, according to one feoffment made." (*Con.*, vol. 32, fol. 194.)

Christopher and Mercy his wife are commemorated in Ash Church by a large slab with brasses 39" by 14". The brass fillet on which was the description of the persons represented has been partially destroyed. It reads at present as follows:—

"Hic jacent corpora Christopheri Septvans alias Harflete de Molland in Ash, Armigeri qui natus fuit xx die Julii . . . Hendley de Offam^s Armigeri quae nata fuit xxix die Septembris 1530 et obiit die xxvii Maii 1602."

Christopher is depicted in armour, but bareheaded with ruff and looking towards the lady. She wears the peculiar cap known popularly as "Mary, Queen of Scots," and a

¹ ? Otham.

large ruff and covering for the neck called a partlet, a peaked stomacher, an ample gown with turnover collar, open in front and displaying a richly embroidered petticoat. An engraving of the brass is given in Planché's *Corner of Kent*, to face p. 226. It is described in Griffin and Stephenson's *Monumental Brasses of Kent*, p. 52, and a full-page rubbing is given in W. D. Belcher's *Kentish Brasses*, p. 5.

Christopher and Mercy (Hendley) had eight children, of whom the eldest was Thomas Septvans, alias Harflete, knight, who was born 1562 and died 1617. He married thrice, first, Elizabeth, daughter of William Gilborne; second, Bennett, daughter of Michael Berisford, of Squerries (she died 1612); and third, Dorothy, daughter of Avery Mantell, and widow of Thomas Menvil or Manfield of Faversham. By his second wife, Bennett Berisford, Sir Thomas Septvans, alias Harflete, had two sons and five daughters. The elder son, Michael Harflete, died without issue 1619, and the younger, Christopher Harflete, afterwards knighted, married Afra, widow of — Alcott. Christopher inherited Molland in Ash, but moved to St. Stephens, Canterbury, where he died 1662. This Sir Christopher Harflete is included in the "list of suspected persons" from Hackington, Canterbury. The list is now in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 34, 011-17) where they are described as "Returns made by various Major Generals and their deputies presiding over the military districts into which the Protector Cromwell divided the country in 1655. (*Arch. Cant.*, vol. XXIII., p. 68 *et seq.*)

By the will of Sir Thomas Septvans, alias Harflete, of Mollon (Molland) in Ash, knight, proved October 29 1617, he left to his third wife, Dorothy, "my coche and coche horses wholly furnished," and the residue of his lands to his eldest son Michael Harflete. (*Con.* vol. 44, fol. 258.)

By the Will of Michael Harflete, proved March 10th, 1618, he left all his property to his brother Christopher and his heirs for ever. (*Con.*, vol. 45, fol. 26.)

The third son of Christopher Harflete and Mercy his wife was Walter Septvans, alias Harflete de Cheker, who

married Jane Challoner. They had three sons, Thomas, Walter and John, and three daughters. Thomas married Margaret Newman and they had two daughters, Jane and Afra, the latter of whom married John St. Leger of Doneraile, Ireland.

In Ash church is a brass to Walter Septvans and his wife Jane. The inscription reads as follows :

“Hic jacet corpus Walteri Septvans alias Harflete de Cheker in Parochia de Ash Armigeri qui natus fuit die Sct. Michaelis A.D. 1567 & obiit 4 die Junii 1642 & Jand uxor ejus filia Johannis Challoner de Fulham Armigeri quae nata fuit 23 Julii 1567 & obiit 4 die Decembris 1626.”

In *Monumental Brasses in Kent* by Griffin and Stephenson the following description is given, p. 53 :

“Effigies of a man, $24\frac{3}{4} \times 13$, in a civil dress with cloak, holding book in right hand and W. $24\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$ in calash, bands and gown, holding book in right and handkerchief in left hand, both side face, rect. pl. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 9$, with three daughters, all with names below.

A full-page rubbing is given in Belcher's *Kentish Brasses*, p. 6.

Other mural monuments to members of the family are on the south wall of Ash Church in the Molland Chancel. Over the effigy of Sir John Laverick (who married Joan, daughter of the first John Septvans, and sister of the second John,) is a monument to Sir Thomas Harflete, the eldest son of Christopher and Mercy, and his second wife Bennett, daughter of Michael Berisford. This bears the following inscription :

“Here lyeth y^e bodies of Sr Thomas
Septvans al's Harflete of Molland in
this P'ishe Knight who died y^e
(blank left for date) .
and the Ladye Bennet his wife
daughter of Michael Berisford of
Westerham in y^e county of Kent
Esquier which Lady Bennet
dyed y^e 2^d daye of July A^o Dni
1612 being of the age of 46 years.”

Another mural monument on the same wall is to Christopher Toldervey, and his wife Jane, daughter of Sir Thomas and Lady Harflete. They were married 1617, and Christopher died April 25th, 1618.

It has been shown that Thomas Atcheker or Harflete married as his second wife Marian, daughter of Edward Brockhull. Marian married, after her husband's death, Vincent St. Nicholas, and died in 1604. Three children were born to Thomas and Marian, viz., Henry Harflete and two daughters. Henry, known as of Hills Court, Ash, married Mary, daughter of George Slaughter of Twitham, Ash, and they had four sons and three daughters, viz.: (1) Henry, who married Mary, daughter of George Stoughton of Ash; (2) John, born 1584, died 1599; (3) Thomas Harflete, born 1587, married Elizabeth Oxenden; (4) Edward, born 1590, died 1599; and daughters, Mary, Martha and Susan.

Of these, Thomas and Elizabeth (Oxenden) had three sons, Christopher, John and Thomas, and two daughters.

Planché, p. 348, says that Henry, eldest son of Henry Harflete of Hills Court, married Dorcas, daughter of Joshua Pordage, of Sandwich, and had six sons, Henry, Arthur, Thomas, Christopher, Samuel, Samuel, besides four daughters. Of these the eldest son, Henry, married Dorothy, daughter and heir of Anthony Combe of Greenwich, and had issue Henry and Samuel and two daughters. The eldest son Henry, known as Henry Seffans, alias Harflete of Ash, was born 1633 and was buried at Ash in 1679, when the line appears to have become extinct. At all events no further trace of any descendants in the male line is found in the locality which had been the home of the family for four centuries.

It seems hardly necessary to continue the foregoing detailed narration of the different collateral branches of the family. Perhaps an exception should be made in favour of Edward, second son of Gilbert de Septvans and Constance (Ellís) his wife. Edward married Benedicta—to whom there are frequent references. Edward left instructions in his Will, dated September 9th, 1451, "to be buried in the

cemetery of the Monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury, against the hawthorn near the Charnell." (*Con.*, vol. I., fol. 56.) (See also *Arch. Cant.*, vol. XXXI., p. 48.)

Edward left to his wife *Benedicta* all lands and tenements, etc., called *Felderland Courthead* for life, then to John, his son and his heirs, but if none remain, to Joan, Constance and Alice, his daughters and their heirs, but if none, then to Thomas Septvans (i.e., his eldest brother). (*Con.*, vol. I., fol. 56.)

Edward left two sons, John, who has been already mentioned, and Thomas, described as "of Worth." Thomas died, 1471, and was buried in the Church at Worth before the altar of the Blessed Virgin there. In his Will, after legacies, he provided: "That *Benedicta*, my mother, have and enjoy during her life those 6 marcs which *Dna de Septvans in ferre* (? jointure, settlement) was wont to have for the tenement called the *Cheker*, and land to same belonging. Also *Benedicta* have for life a messuage in parish of *Newenton* . . . Residue to *Benedicta* my mother to dispose for my soul as thought best. Probate February 18, 1471-2. (*Con.* vol. II., fol. 225-6.)

The third son of Thomas *Harflete* and *Bennett* (*Winborne*) was John *Harflete* of *Ash*, who died 1581. In his Will, proved 1581, he left money to his daughter *Mary Harflete* and residue to his two sons *William* and *John* equally, who were also named *Executors* "with my brother *Henry Harflete* (i.e., half-brother) overseer and guardian of my two sons till 14, to be trained in husbandry or some other trade." (*Con.*, vol. XXXIV., fol. 158.)

During the period covered by the above sketch, the members of the *Septvans* family resided in turn at the following places:

(1) *Aldington-Septvans*; (2) *Milton-Septvans*; (3) *New Langport, Lydd*; (4) *Chequer*; (5) *Molland*; (6) *Twitham Manor or Twitham Hills*; (7) *Hills Court, or Helles Court*; (8) *Ripple*.

(1) *Aldington-Septvans* (at *Thurnham, near Maidstone*). *Hasted*, vol. II, p. 497, says that *Roger de Septvans*

(? Robert the first) held this Manor in the reign of Richard I. (1189-1199) and died seised of it in 37 Hen. III. (1205). The property descended to William Septvans in 25 Edw. III. (1352), after which it passed into other hands.

(2) Milton-Septvans, near Canterbury. Hasted, vol. III., p. 587, says that the Manor of Milton was held from the Archbishop in grand sergeantry, by the eminent family of Clare, Earls of Gloucester and Hertford, as the one half of a knight's fee, and it was again held of them as lords paramount, by the family of Septvans as half a knight's fee, as of their honour of Clare. Sir Robert de Septvans held it in Rich. I.'s reign (1189-1199) and had his chief residence at this place, of which he died seised, as well as of Aldington-Septvans in Thurnham, 1253.

His descendant, Robert, resided at Milton-Septvans. This Manor was held by a Septvans in Edw. I.'s reign (1272-1307). William, the second son of that name, paid aid for it in 20 Edw. III. (1347) as one knight's fee, and Sir William kept his shrievalty at Milton in 4 Rich. II. (1381). Milton was, with Aldington and Whelmestone,¹ in the possession of the third Robert who died 1249 and was buried at Lydd.

(3) New Langport, Lydd, called likewise Langport Septvans, was for many descents the patrimony of that noble family. Robert de Septvans held it at his death 23 Hen. III. (1239), and after him his grandchild William Septvans or William Septemvannis, was possessed of it in 25 Edw. III. (1253) and so remained by the links of some descents fastened to the inheritance of this family, till William Septvans, this man's great grandchild, by sale translated his right in it to John Writtle about the beginning of Henry VI. (1422). (*Villare Cant.*, p. 219, second edition, 1776.)

¹ Welmestone, or Willmeston, situated partly in Ash and partly in Wingham. "Though it be now obscure, it was in elder times made more conspicuous by being one of the seats and residence of the noble family of Septvans. William de Septuans or Sepuans was in possession of it at his death 25 Edw. III. (*Rot. Esc.*, num. 5) and in this family did the title of this place, by the steps of the several descents, pass along until the latter end of Hen. VIII." (Philipott, *Villare Cantianum*, p. 49, second edition, 1776.)

In the map included in Hasted, vol. III., showing the hundreds of Worth, Langport, etc., Seavans Court is marked to the south-west of Lydd and not far from the coast.

Philipott also speaks of the family in these parts as follows :

“ Dimchurch (Dymchurch) in the hundred of Worth hath nothing to make it memorable but that it was formerly the inheritance of Twitham. Bertram de Twitham held lands here at his death. 3 Edw. III. (1330), and from him it came down to Theobald Twitham, whose daughter and heir Mawd was married to Simon Septvans, from whom descended John Septvans, whose daughter and heir was married to Fogge, who in her right was entitled to much land here at Dimchurch and in other places in the marsh.” (*Villare Cant.*, p. 131, second edition, 1776.)

(4) Chequer, written in ancient records Estchequer, came into the possession of the Septvans family through the marriage of Anne, daughter of Sir Nicholas de Sandwich, with Sir William de Septvans. By Will of Thomas, son of Raymond Harflete of Molland, he left Chequer to William, his son, and all the lands in that parish in tail male (1554). Sir Thomas continued to live at Molland till his death in 1617. His great grandson removed from Molland to Canterbury, where he died in 1662. The estate of Chequer passed to Afra Harflete, who married John St. Leger of Doneraile. It was sold in 1695 to the Rev. George Thorpe, Prebend of Canterbury. Mr. Thorpe also purchased the Manor of Chequer, and in 1716 bequeathed both to the Master and Fellows of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who are still the owners.

(5) Molland. Sir Nicholas de Sandwich died seised of Molland or Moland in the reign of Edw. III., and left an only daughter Anne, who carried it with other property to her husband, John Septvans, cousin of Sir William Septvans, Sheriff of Kent, 4 Rich. II. Chequer Manor was also in her inheritance, and both Manors—Molland and Chequer—descended to his son Gilbert. Gilbert resided at Chequer. Both these Manor houses are still inhabited at Ash.

(6) Twitham Manor or Twitham Hills. When Maud, daughter of Sir Theobald de Twitham, married Simon Septvans, third son of Sir William Septvans in the fourteenth century, the property came into the hands of the Septvans, who remained there till the reign of Edw. IV. (1461). It afterwards came to the Slaughter family and, together with Hills Court, returned to the family of Septvans. In 1795 the property came to the Tomlins, who still hold it.

(7) Hills Court, or Helles Court, was formerly the property of the Helles family and came about Henry VII.'s time into the possession of Mary, daughter of George Slaughter, who married Henry Harflete, of Ash, a younger son of Thomas Atcheker, alias Harflete, and he, by will, left it to his son known as Henry Seffans, alias Harflete.

(8) Ripple. The Manor of Ripple came to Sir William Septvans latter end of Edw. III., and he enjoyed it at his death, 49 Edw. III. (1376) and transmitted it to his son, William Septvans. (Philipott, *Villare Cant.*, p. 188, second edition, 1776.)

In conclusion, the compiler of these notes would like to express his special indebtedness to Mr. Arthur Hussey, who kindly put at his disposal many references which he had collected and of which copious use has been made. Whenever possible, the source of information has been acknowledged. If in any case this acknowledgment has been omitted, it is unintentional and a matter of regret. Planché's *Corner of Kent* is a mine of information and has been heavily drawn upon. In his capacity as Rouge Croix Poursuivant, afterwards Somerset Herald, Mr. Planché was enabled to obtain full and accurate details, genealogical and heraldic, of this remarkable family.