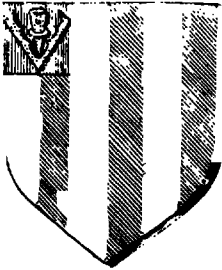


Pedigree of Cardinal Langley.

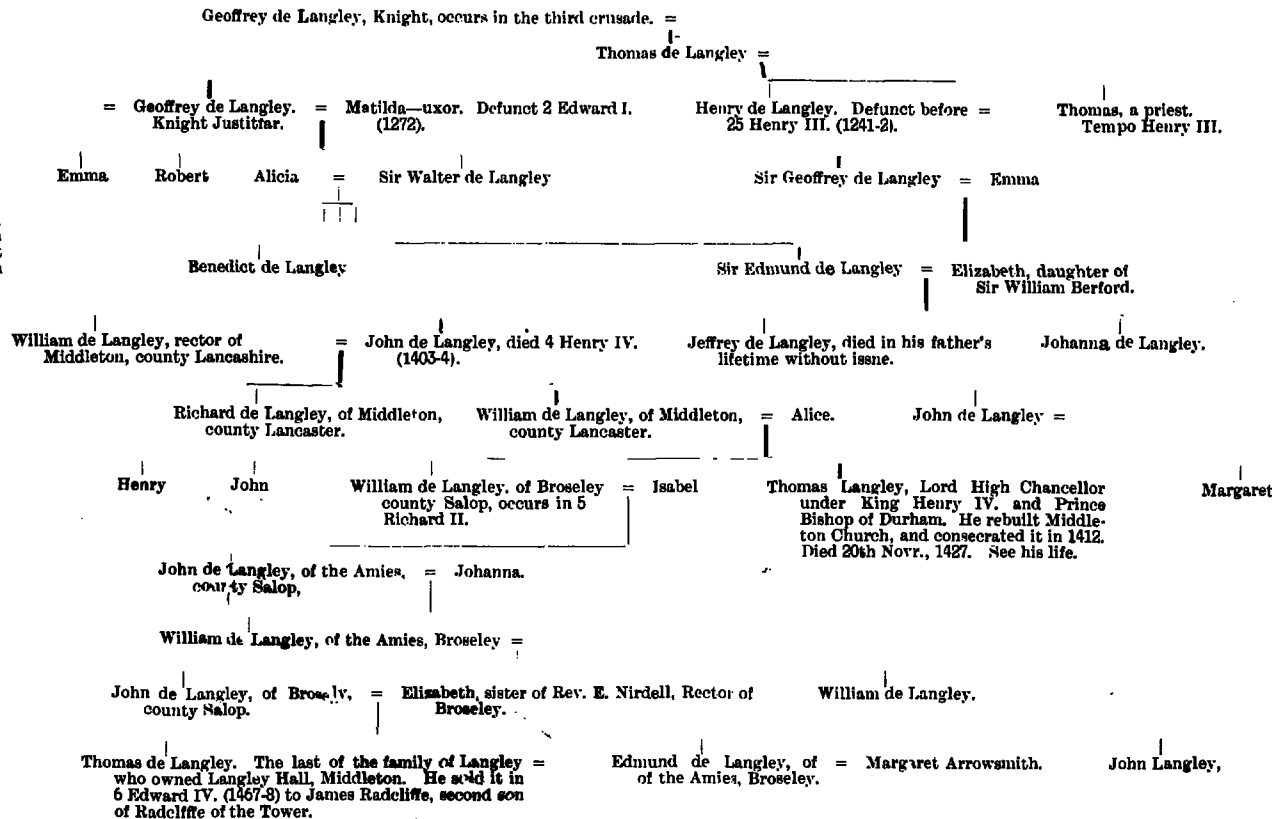
From "*Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*,"
2nd Series, Volumes 2 and 3 (1886-9).



ARMS OF LANGLEY,

Pale of six argent and vert,
On a canton gules
a pheon or,

Note.—The Cardinal's own arms,
as carved on his tomb in Durham
Cathedral, are: Pale of six, a mullet
in the second partition, the canton
being omitted.



The family is still flourishing in various parts of the south and west of England, as at Ashford, in Kent, and near Cardiff, in Glamorganshire.

IV.

CARDINAL LANGLEY.

It may perhaps be interesting now to give some particulars concerning the life of Cardinal Langley, his family, and the place of his birth. With regard to his birthplace, we learn from "Notitia Cestriensis" (Chetham Series, vol. xix., p. 99) that Langley Hall, the ancient seat of the Langleys in the time of Edward II., was bought by James Radcliffe, of the Radcliffes of Fox Denton (though another authority states that he was the second son of Radcliffe of the Tower), from Thomas Langley, of Essex, in the sixth year of Edward IV. (1467-8) Langley passed by sale, in the year 1631, from Gabriel Tudor, gent., and Mary, his wife, daughter, and heiress of Owen Radcliffe, Esq., to Mr. Henry Wrigley* of Manchester, and was conveyed in the year 1740, in marriage, by Betty, daughter and heiress of the Rev. Henry Wrigley, B.D., to the Rev. Michael Ferebee, B.A.† by whose descendants the estate was sold in the year 1846, for £30,000, to Mr. James Collinge of Oldham.

It is stated in the "Dictionary of National Biography" that he was descended from a Yorkshire family, but this is an evident error. It would seem to be based on a statement in Surtees' History of Durham, but all leading genealogists now agree that the Cardinal sprung from the stock of the family of Langley Hall, in the parish of Middleton.

Thus it is stated by Canon Raines, speaking of the Cardinal: "This great prelate was not born at Agecroft, near Manchester, nor was he descended from an honourable family in the county of York, but from a family long resident at Langley, in the parish, and probably descended from the feudal house of Middleton. This family held the Manor of the Earls of Lancaster, and the Langleys and Hopwoods and Ashworths of Ashworth bore almost the same

* Wrigley, dated 1709, is buried in front of, and outside of the choir. † Henry Wrigley Ferebee, dated 1784, in the same grave.

The hall was pulled down in the year 1886, when a plaster shield, with the arms and quarterings of a branch of the Radcliffe family was taken down, and afterwards presented by the architect, Mr. Edgar Wood, to the Technical School at Middleton.

arms, with a difference of tincture, both holding their lands within the same manor and by the same tenure."

And according to the "Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica" (vol. 2 and 3, 1886-9), he was seventh in descent from Sir Geoffrey de Langley, of Middleton, a knight who is mentioned as a follower of Richard the Lionheart in the third crusade.

It has been well remarked by a former writer, Mr. J. C. Richardson, that "It is difficult now, standing on the site of the ancient mansion of the Langleys, to imagine its surroundings when the future Chancellor of England and Cardinal Bishop of Durham was a child, and roamed amidst these scenes in the freedom and joyousness of boyhood, heedless of the great world which lay outside his lonely Lancashire dwelling-place. Nothing that Smiles has written could be half so interesting as the biography of this Middleton lad, who rose to the highest office in the kingdom, and as Cardinal Bishop had much more than spiritual sovereignty over the extensive and rich domains of St. Cuthbert, belonging to the Abbey and Castle of Durham. The sweet memories of his childhood remained with him through all his remarkable career, and he dearly loved Middleton and that ancient church on the hill, whither he had often been led on Sundays and holydays. And that love of his native place manifested itself in a strong desire and practical effort, for the spiritual and material welfare of his kindred and friends, and his example remains to this day to encourage and stimulate our prosperous and generous townsmen, after the lapse of well nigh five hundred years, to like deeds of charity and benevolence. Far too little is known of the life of Thomas Langley as relates to his connection with Middleton. Unhappily, too, the Durham records are very scanty, but what little has been handed down to us is of exceeding interest."

The Cardinal was the founder of the chantry on the north side of the chancel in Middleton Church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Cuthbert, but now commonly known as the "Rector's Chapel." He was the original founder of the Middleton Grammar School, and he endowed the above mentioned chapel in order not only that the priest might chant masses for the souls of the dead benefactor, but that he might also teach and educate the living children of Middleton. The endowment of the chapel that the priest might teach the children of Middleton was the original foundation of the Grammar School. The endowment amounted to £6-13s. 4d., of which £5 10s. 8d. is still paid by the Duchy of Lancaster to the headmaster.

We learn from Raires' History of the Chantries, that he was educated at Cambridge, and that in early life his name frequently occurs in connection with south Lancashire families, who appear to have entertained the highest opinion of his virtues, talents, and habits of business. On the 12th February, 1395, he was made Rector of St. Alphage, London, an office which he resigned in the following year. On the 24th, September 1398, he was instituted to the Rectory of Castleford, in the county of York, on presentation of John, Duke of Lancaster, and obtained a license for non-residence for three years, with permission to let out his benefice to farm. On the 4th March, 1400-1, he was collated to the prebend of South Newbold in York Minster, and in the following year was appointed Dean of York, when he vacated his stall of Gretton in Lincoln Cathedral.

In the year 1405, on Archbishop Scrope's death, he was elected by the chapter Archbishop of York, and obtained the royal assent to his election, on the 8th August, 1405, and the King (Henry IV.) wrote letters commendatory of him to the Pope, who notwithstanding, set aside the election, and he was not installed. In February 1405-6, he succeeded Cardinal Beaufort in the office of Chancellor of England, and filled that high office under three successive sovereigns.

On the 17th May, 1406, he was elected Bishop of Durham, and consecrated by Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, on the 8th of August, following. He resigned the Great Seal on becoming Bishop of Durham, but received it again on the 23rd May 1417, and was confirmed in his high office by parliament 1st. Henry VI. In 1411, Pope John XXIII, raised him to the rank of Cardinal, and he was "gratified by wearing the red hat." He took his place in the Sacred College, but did not visit Rome.

The following year, 1412, was a memorable one in the annals of Middleton, when, as Cardinal, Prince Bishop of Durham, and Lord High Chancellor of England, he came by permission of John Bourghill, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, in which diocese Middleton then was, to consecrate the new church which he had erected at his own cost. This is definitely stated in the license for consecration which it was necessary to obtain from the Bishop before the ceremony could be performed. The license was dated 22nd August, 1412, and in it the Bishop refers to the new church in the following words, viz. :—"Quae tam in opere lapideo, quam in tectura arte mirifica et perpolitata, vestris sumptibus de novo totaliter constructa est" ("Which

in its well hewn stone as well as the wonderfully artistic and well finished roof, has been newly and completely rebuilt at your own expense"). He also consecrated at the same time two altars in the nave, one dedicated to the B. Virgin Mary and St. Cuthbert, before mentioned, and the other to St. Chad and St. Margaret. After the Reformation and the dissolution of the chantries this chapel became the manorial chapel, and was for many generations known as Sir Ralph's Chapel, from the fact that the last four lords of the Ashton family of Middleton were named Ralph, and although the last Sir Ralph died in 1765, the chapel is still known among the old natives by the same name. It seems probable that this latter chantry was founded by Ralph Barton, who held the Manor of Middleton, and died in the year 1406, or if not founded by him, that it was founded in his honour, but not permanently endowed.

In one of the windows formerly on the north side of the church, but now in Sir Raphe's Chapel, is a fine artistic head of an ecclesiastic, with a mitre and crozier, supposed to be a portrait of Bishop Langley, but more probably of St. Cuthbert, whom he honoured with many honours. On the 1st June, 1436, he prayed to be excused from attending the Parliament at Lincoln, on account of his age, infirmities, and episcopal duties. His will was dated at his manor of Auckland on Friday, being the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, 21st December, 1436, and was proved the 17th December, 1437, the bishop having died on the 20th November, 1437, being the feast of St. Edmund the King and martyr. His body was conveyed the next day, with great solemnity, to Durham in a car drawn by four horses, and was received by the Prior of the Cathedral in his pontificals, and by the monks of the said church with great honour and reverence. The body was buried in the Chantry Chapel, which he had founded in the Galilee in his lifetime.

"His will proves that he was not unmindful of his Lancashire relatives and friends, nearly all of whom may be identified. He bequeathed £100 in addition to what he had already given to purchase lands and tenements for the dotation of two chaplains at the altar of B.V. Mary, founded by him in the Galilee of Durham Cathedral to celebrate divine service there for ever, and which he gave to John Newton and John Thoraby, priests. He gave to his sister Margaret £40, and to Henry de Langley one pot of silver gilt; to Thomas Holden, for his good and faithful services, over and above what he was entitled to, XX.'s, one pair of flasks silver-

gilt and one bowl silver gilt, with a cover chased with the flower columbine. To Dom. Nicholas Hulme, for his good and faithful services, XX. marks and my third bowl silver gilt with a cover of the same (columbine) form. To Sir John Radcliff, treasurer of my house, for his good and faithful services, XXX. marks and one little cup of silver, gilt on the outside. To James Greenhalgh, for his good and faithful services, XX. marks and my second best bowl with a cover, silver gilt. To Mr. Thomas Leys, rector of Weremouth, my better cup, with one little cruet and one pax bread. To John Bury, one silver cup. To Dom. Richard Buckley, XV. marks. Amongst his numerous legacies of books he gives to John Radcliffe, his treasurer, a Commentary upon St. Paul's Epistles. To John Newton, rector of Brethry-super-Wiske, Diocese of Yorke, a book called Pupilla Oculi. To the College of Manchestre a book called Flores Bernardi. To Master William Blackburn a Commentary on Isaiah. To Peter Shakerly a horse valued at 40s.; the same to Richard Meadowcroft and William Langton. To James Chorley, Edward Prestwich, John Ireland, William Heighfeld, &c., each a horse value at XXVI^s. VIII^d." He also was a benefactor to the public libraries of Cambridge, Oxford, St. Mary's (Leicester), York, and Durham; and all his benefactions were liberal and numerous. He enjoined his executors to dispose of the residue of his estate in masses, alms, and works of charity, for the good of his soul, and nominated for that office William, Bishop of Norwich, William, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, the noble and puissant Lords Richards Earl of Warwick and Richard Earl of Salisbury, the illustrious James Lord de Audley, his beloved in Christ James Strangways senior, Mr. Thomas Leys, Rector of Weremouth, Dom. Nicholas Hulme, Canon of the Collegiate Church of Darlington, and Dom. Richard Buckley, Rector of St. Nicholas in the City of Durham, Thomas Holden, Esq., James Greenhalgh, Esq., Robert Strothe, Esq., Dom. Richard Corston Chaplain, and Thomas Jobur, of London, Clerk.

With regard to Langley's foundations in Middleton, it is stated in "Raines' Hist. of the Chantries" (Note on p. 123) that "Thomas Mawdsley was the Master of the Grammar School founded by Cardinal Langley, and also the Incumbent of his Chantry. It is not improbable from a legacy being left by him to 'Maister Nowell' that the Dean of St. Paul's and his learned brother Robert had been educated by him at Middleton."

On the 24th November, 1534, Thomas Mawdesley, Clerk, was presented by Robert Earl of Sussex and Viscount Fitzwalter to the Rectory of Radcliffe, vacant by the death of Richard Bexwycke, which benefice he resigned on April, 1537, when the same patron presented Robert Assheton, A.B., an acolyte. On the 28th May, 1549, he made an entry in the register book of Middleton, and again on the 30th April, 1551, from which it appears that he still officiated at Middleton.

His will is dated 12th March, 1554: Thomas Mawdesley, of Myddleton, Clerk, "My sawlk to Almyghtye God. His blessyd Moder and Maydoure Ladye and all the blissyd cumpany of heven and my corpe to be beryed afore the awter on the northe syde in the Chappell of Seynt Cudbert under the blew stone and nere my Maister Claydon."

Cardinal Langley was a great statesman and a great builder. He finished the Galilee in the west end of Durham Cathedral, and assisted in completing the cloisters. He founded schools, one for grammar and the other for music, at Durham, and also a chantry. At Howden he erected the western gateway and a lodge adjoining. As his arms—paly of six argent and vert—were on the tower of the old church of Doncaster, he had obviously been a benefactor, and Middleton now recognises in him her greatest son and a forgotten friend. He was the wise and moderate reformer of all religious and charitable foundations within his diocese, and seems to have possessed the confidence, which he never abused, of all classes. He was an executor or supervisor of the wills of John of Gaunt in 1393, of Bishop Skirlaw in 1403 of Henry IV. in 1408, of Edward Duke of York in 1415, and deserves the character of a pious, learned, and munificent prelate.

In order to illustrate his character, and to show the esteem in which he was generally held, I may add to the previous extracts from the writings of Canon Raines, the following testimony from the historian of the Manchester foundations:—

From Dr. Hibbert Ware's "Church of Manchester, and why it was Collegiated," p. 197: "Before this history is brought to a close, it would be unpardonable to lose sight of a personage to whom the religious interests of Manchester became so much indebted. On the death of Henry V. (1422), Cardinal Langley was appointed feoffee of the King's will. Soon afterwards, at the request of Parliament, he resumed the seals. This very munificent Churchman was a great favourer of learning. He is re-

corded to have been one of the first poets of his age. His epigrams were inscribed to the Bishop of Norwich, and have been republished with commentaries by Blake. He wrote a book "De Variis Carminibus," as well as several works on pontifical law and jurisprudence. The public encouragement which he gave to learning is extraordinary. He founded two schools at the Palace Green of Durham, one for grammar and the other for plain song. Amidst the legacies which he left to various public libraries, as at Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Leicester, and York, it is added that the College of Manchester received from him a donation of books. He died November 20th, 1437, and was buried at Durham, within his own chantry in the Galilee."

The scene on the occasion of Cardinal Langley's visit to his native village to consecrate the new church, and the two chantries, must have been a striking and magnificent one. It was on the 22nd August, 1412, that the license for consecration was obtained from Bishop Bourghill and when the Cardinal and his staff came to Middleton to perform the function. It requires a thorough acquaintance with the fashions and customs and costumes of the period, and of the pomp and ceremony which the Roman church introduced into their services, aided by a vivid imagination to picture in one's mind the scene in Middleton Church, during the ceremony of consecration. The Cardinal, dressed in the gorgeous robes which the dignity of his office required, would head the procession, and probably accompanied by high dignitaries, knights, nobles, yeomen, and the common orders of the priesthood from far and near. The tramp of Knights in armour who had waged their country's battles on many a well fought field, would resound on the pavement, as the procession went to the church. Arrived there, the scene of splendour would be enhanced if that were possible by the heraldic display of banners "Yellow, glorious, golden," which this, the period of chivalry, would produce, and these, with all the solemn rites and ceremonies which the church of Rome so well understood how to display, must have combined to produce such a scene of ecclesiastical pomp and splendour, as had never before been witnessed in this curious ancient town. It must indeed have been a memorable day in Middleton, and such a scene, and such a day, can never be witnessed again.

The list of good works, previously given is a long way from exhausting the number of benefactions of this munificent prelate, who was alike an honour to the age he lived in and to the place of his birth, but if we only add to

the catalogue of beneficent deeds the fact that he was the original founder of Middleton Grammar School, that he founded the chantry in Middleton Church, and that he rebuilt the church at his own expense, ("vestris sumptibus de novo totaliter constructa est") we have surely a motive strong enough to cause the birthplace of Middleton's greatest son and greatest benefactor, Langley Hall to be held sacred and treated tenderly. There is reason to think that this would have been the case had the then owner of the hall, or his architect, been aware of the historical value of the place. But in the course of the many changes of ownership to which the Manor had been subjected, it had at last fallen into the hands of a gentleman* who was indeed highly respected, but who knew little or nothing of the subject of this article. It adds one more case to the long list of places of priceless historical value which, instead of being repaired and preserved, are sacrificed to the spirit of improvement through ignorance of our local history. This spirit of mischief would seem to have then been abroad, and to have asked the question, "Why cumbereth it the ground?" and to have swept the ancient structure away destroying at the same time one of the milestones or landmarks of our island history.

The consequence is that the younger generation will not have even a memory of the place, and they will lament it, as we ourselves have never ceased to lament the incredibly wanton and ignorant vandalism which in the year 1845 destroyed the even more interesting and memorable building which had for many generations been the home of warriors and statesmen in which had dwelt for unknown centuries the families of Assheton, of Barton, and of those Saxon de Middletons from whom Langley was descended, the historic pile of Middleton Hall.

* The late Mr. Robert Ascroft, M.P., for Oldham.