

## POWYS, LORD LILFORD

**T**HIS family of Powys, with a name which suggests that its members were Welsh emigrants from Powysland, is first found as burgesses of Ludlow, a Shropshire town on the Herefordshire border ten miles from the marches of Wales. In the nineteenth century the surname persuaded a genealogist to construct for it a pedigree from the princes of Powys, a genealogy which hardly calls for serious attention.

The first ancestor of the house for whose existence the records at our disposal will testify, is William Powys of Ludlow, who was bailiff of Ludlow in 1573. In the court rolls of Ludlow, a manor of the crown, he appears as a juror from 1547 onwards. In 1550 he is presented as having made an affray upon one John Long, and both are fined. The pedigree put forward by his descendants at the Shropshire visitation in 1663 gives the date of his birth as 10 Henry VII. (1494-95), a date which is at least a possible one. He is there said to have been son of James Powys son of John Powys of Meifod in Montgomeryshire, which John was son of Richard and grandson of Thomas Powys, whose mother Emme was living as widow of William Powys in 6 Edw. II. (1312-13). It is impossible to estimate the value of this pedigree, which remains for us a line of names unsupported by documents, and the fewness of the generations reckoned with would alone throw doubt upon its value. The same pedigree asserts that William, the bailiff of Ludlow, was twice married, and that from his first marriage descended a family of Powys of whose existence, at Abingdon in Berkshire, we have evidence. By the alleged second marriage he had five sons and two daughters, the eldest son of the five being **1** Thomas Powys of Snitton in Bitterley, with whom our detailed genealogy begins.

The younger brothers of Thomas Powys were yeomen and gentry of the lesser sort. His brother John Powys, first of Snitton and afterwards of Greet in the parish of Burford, made his will as a yeoman in 1618, giving as a legacy to his three younger children the sum of a hundred pounds, a debt which his brother Thomas of Snitton should have paid him twelve years before. Edward Powys of Ludlow, apparently another brother, made a will in 1630, in which he writes himself gentleman. Isabel, the elder of the two sisters, was wife of Richard Hall of Greet, whom Margaret Powys, a niece who had dwelled with him for two years and more, describes as a plain husbandman who used to hold the plough every day, and sometime a servant in livery to Sir Richard Hopton, whose badge he wore 'upon the sleeve of his blew cote.'

The beginnings of the advancement of Thomas Powys of Snitton may be seen in his chancery bill of 1583. He had come to London and was servant, barrister's clerk as we should now write it, to Toby Wood, a Lincoln's Inn lawyer. By this time he had already acquired a house and lands in

Worcestershire, and was suing for the discovery of certain deeds which had fallen into the hands of the defendants. It is probable that he prospered in some corner of the lawyer's calling in which his marriage would have advanced him, for his wife was the daughter of one Richard Smith, the son of a Herefordshire squire and an officer of the Exchequer. He died in 1639 and was buried at Snitton, where his sons set up a fair monument to their parents with their two shields of arms.

His eldest son, Thomas Powys of Henley in Bitterley, carried the family fortunes further than his father's mark. He was a bencher of Lincoln's Inn and a serjeant-at-law. His first wife was a daughter of Sir Adam Littleton of Stoke Milburgh, chief justice of North Wales, and his second wife was a daughter of the good Shropshire house of Cotes of Milcote, by a Bagot of Blithfield. Of the sons of the second marriage one was a chief clerk of the treasury and another a doctor of the civil law. The children of the first marriage are headed by two notable judges. **2**

Littleton Powys of Henley, heir of Thomas the serjeant, followed his father at Lincoln's Inn. A codicil to his will disinheriting any legatee who should become a papist is characteristic of the man who read the declaration of William of Orange in Shrewsbury, a bold act which assured his career under the protestant monarch, who made him a judge of the Chester circuit in 1689. Three years afterwards he was a knight and serjeant-at-law. In 1700 he became a judge of the King's Bench, from which he administered justice until 1726, when he retired to Henley with a pension of 1,500*l.* and a character for slow-witted respectability. He died in 1737, leaving a will which shows something of a side of his character which has escaped the judge's biographers. Its preface sums up his public life, relating that he had been second justice of the Chester circuit for seven years, and one of the twelve judges of Westminster Hall for thirty-one years (whereof seven as a baron of the exchequer). For twenty-four years he had been a justice of the king's bench, which office he had surrendered with the continuance of his salary by the grace and favour of King George. In the eighty-fifth year of his age he found himself 'in pretty good health (gout excepted).' At Henley Hall he had built a library for his books, 'being choice, numerous and valuable, and of my own collecting,' and he had embellished the garden walks with statues. Another evidence of liberal taste is shown in his legacy of twenty guineas to his 'very ingenious, very learned friend Doctor Edmund Halley the astronomer.'

His brother Thomas Powys was ancestor of the Lilford family. A Lincoln's Inn man like his father and brother, he rose to be solicitor-general and a knight in 1686. Burnet gives him the character of a 'compliant young aspiring lawyer,' and he was able to make his way under a govern-

**1. It is almost certain that Thomas was not the eldest son. The eldest was more likely to have been Edward who remained in Ludlow after his father William's death, inheriting his father's properties.**

**2. There is no evidence that Sir Adam Littleton had been chief justice of North Wales, though he had been a Royalist in the civil war and been given a baronetcy by Charles I.**