LETTER OF QUITTANCE FROM SIR RHYS AP THOMAS, K. G., TO THE TENANTS OF EDWARD STRADLING, ESQ. A.D. 1494.

Communicated by G. G. Francis, Esq. F.S.A., Honorary Librarian of the Royal Institution of South Wales.

Sir Rhys ap Thomas, the lineal ancestor of Lord Dynevor, was the personal friend of Henry VII. and essentially contributed to his obtaining the crown. His memoirs were written in the reign of James I. under the title "A short view of the long life of that ever wise, valiaunt, and fortunat commander Rice ap Thomas, knight, Constable and Lieutenant of Brecknock, Chamberlaine of Carmarthan and Cardigan, Seneschall and Chauncellor of Haverfordwest, Rowse, and Buelth, Justiciar of South Wales, and Governour of all Wales, Knight Bannerett, and Knight of the most honourable Order of the Garter, a Privie Councillor to Henrie VII. and a favourit to Henrie the VIII." printed at page 49 of vol. i. of the Cambrian Register.

" Right trusty and welbeloved I grete you well And where as my son Edward Stradlyngs londs ben in my warde duryng his nowne age[a] It is so that I have remytted relessed and geve to hym all that to me apperteyneth or belongeth of his londes by reson of his seid nowne age from this day forward Wherfore I will by this my writyng that ye attorne tennauntes to my seid son and pay to hym all your rentes growyng & paiable Michelmesse next & so furthe And this my writyng shalbe to you & every of you sufficient discharge in that behalfe.

Yeven at Kermerdyn[b] the vjth day August the ixth yere of Kyng Henry the vijth.

Res ap Thom's Knyght.

To the tenauntes of Edward Stradlynge in Seint Donetts, Est orchard, Lanfey, Merthyr mawr,[c] Hallijwey, & Cwmhawy,[d] & to every of them."



[a] Non-age, or minority. [b] Carmarthen.

[c] These four estates are all in the county of Glamorgan.

[d] Hawey (anciently written Halseway) and Combe Hawey, co. Somerset. The

This document is in good preservation and fairly written on parchment, with a seal in red wax affixed in a very unusual manner; which, with the rarity of any deeds executed by Sir Rice, induced me to forward it to the Society of Antiquaries for inspection; it was returned with the following remarks by Mr. Way, the Director of that learned body:

"The document addressed by Sir Rhys to the tenants of Edward Stradling, was laid on the table on Thursday. I could not learn that any one had seen any deed to which the seal was attached in a similar manner; but, as this document is more properly a letter of quittance than a deed, the usual modes may have been neglected, or it may have been a matter of local or personal usage. It was suggested, and I think with some shew of probability, that it might have been desirable to preserve the seal,[e] which, possibly, would have been more authority to the tenants than the writing itself, in case this document was destined to be carried about by the Receiver of Rents, and exhibited as an authority. It is obvious that the wax being of a softer nature than usual, so as to be moulded round the slip of parchment to which it is attached, could not readily have been affixed to the surface; placed as it is, it is far better protected from injury than if it had been affixed by any of the more usual modes."

I have since presented this curious document to Colonel the Hon. George Rice Rice-Trevor, son of Lord Dynevor, the descendant of Sir Rhys ap Thomas.

Sir Rhys calls Edward Stradling his son, having married Elizabeth widow of Thomas Stradling, Esq. who was the daughter of Sir William Thomas, of Ragland Castle, Knt. and mother of the said Edward: though this marriage is not noticed in the "Cambrian Register." Sir Rhys and his Lady were both buried in a sumptuous tomb[f] in the church of

Rev. E. Gamage, writing in 1726, says, that the two manors, called Cwm Hawey and Hawey, with that of Caer Gorwy in Dorsetshire, called Compton Hawey, were brought to the Stradlings by a marriage with Johanna (? Juliana) daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas Hawey, Knt. temp. Edward I. See also Glamorganshire Pedigrees, edited by Sir Thomas Phillipps, p. 26.

[e] This is admirably effected by the way in which the parchment is folded.

[f] The knight lies recumbent, in attitude of prayer, in mail and chain armour, armorial bearings on breast, with cloak and collar of the order of the Garter; the head resting on a pillow; shield, helmet, and lambrequin; crest broken off just above the wreath; pillow, &c. curiously supported by a dragon (the emblem of Wales) lying on its back clasping the shield, his head issuing out of the wreath; at each top corner of the slab the arms are repeated. The feet of the effigy rest against a lion couchant, whose head is twisted back. From the strong individuality, I have little doubt the face is a portrait. The tomb being placed in the north-east angle of the chancel two sides are destroyed, or rather unseen, though, I imagine, from the jumbling of the parts, that the south and west sides are constructed from such portions as remained entire upon its removal. A Catharine wheel, with the Rhys arms in its centre,

the priory at Carmarthen, which was removed at the dissolution of that monastery to the church of St. Peter's in the same town, where I have often seen and regretted its indifferent condition.

The will of Sir Rhys ap Thomas was proved July 5, 1525. (Phillipps's Glamorganshire Pedigrees, p. 16, where he is married to the wife of his grandson, Lady Katharine Howard.) His widow died at Picton, co. Pembroke, Feb. 5, 1535. (Inscr. to her first husband at St. Donat's.)

At Rhyd ar Wen, [g] about five miles from Llandilo, which is supposed to have been one of the manors of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, his arms remain carved amidst figures and foliage in the spandrils of the Tudor arches over the parlour and closet doors; with other coats, the correct blazonry of which has been defaced by painting:

1. A chevron between three ravens, encircled with the Order of the Garter, for Sir Rhys ap Thomas, K.G.

2. Dexter quarter; a chevron between three spear's heads, for Blethin. Sinister quarter; on a cross five crescents, for Sir Griffyd ap Elydr. In base; a chevron between three stag's heads cabossed, for Traherne of Rōs.

3. Baron and femme; a chevron between three stag's heads cabossed, for Traherne of Rōs. A chevron between three ravens, for Urien Reged.

4. Baron and femme; a chevron between three stirrups buckled and strapped, for Scudamore? A wolf saliant, for Meinch Goch.

5. A chevron between three pheons, for Cadwallader ap Gronwy.

6. Two lions passant guardant, for Camber?

At Dynevor Castle there are two ancient chairs, in good preservation, carved with the arms of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, surrounded with a Garter: and his Garter Plate remains in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in a stall on the Queen's side. It bears his arms, Argent, a chevron between three ravens proper: the crest a raven, and motto,

"Secret & hardy."

(Still the motto of Lord Dynevor.) His badge of a raven also forms a boss in the vaulting of the choir. (Willement's Account of the Restoration of the Collegiate Chapel of St. George, Windsor, 4to. 1844, p. 32.) The standard of his son Sir Griffith ap Rhys was, Per fess murrey and blue; the device, repeated twice, a quatrefoil slipped and barbed argent, charged with a raven proper; Motto (from the 9th verse of the 147th Psalm), PULLIS CORVORUM INVOCANTIBUS EUM. G. G. F.

evidently once formed one of the ends; several figures remain, the coat of Sir Rhys is often repeated; but there is no inscription existing upon it. The female on the sinister side is of small proportions, in act of prayer, robes and cap temp. Hen. VII., no animal at her feet.

[g] It is now the property of Mrs. Gwyn, of St. Ishmael's, as the daughter and heiress of the family of Price (ap Rice); and the residence of her aunt Miss Williams.