

## THE ALFORDS OF SUSSEX, LONDON, AND HERTFORDSHIRE.- I

The connection of the Alford family with the county of Sussex is of very early date, Richard, lord of Aldford in Cheshire, in 1200, having "held the Manor of Newton in the county of Sussex"; while the *Sussex Archaeological Collections* mention Adam Alford among the "armigeri" of that county who fought at Agincourt in 1415; but the line now to be traced came into the county at a later date, being descended from the second of Thomas Alford and Jane Salisbury his wife, of Holt. See Table I.

We therefore commence with:

1. Robert Alford, of London, and of Erbistock in Flintshire, not far from Holt and Aldford (which property he purchased from his uncle Richard Alford), was the stockfather of the Sussex and Hertfordshire families. He married Anne, daughter of Edmund Brydges of Sudeley, Gloucestershire, thus forming a connection between the Alfords and that well-known and distinguished family of Brydges of Gloucester and Somerset. (A pedigree of "Brydges, with descents of Alforde" is given in the British Museum MS, Harl., 1160, 101b, and in 1156, 49 and 49b; and it may be observed that the living of Weston Zoyland, in Somersetshire was in the gift of Brydges family, and was afterwards held by the Somerset Alfords, who also had a connection with Brydges through the Somerset and Gloucestershire family of Symes.)

Robert Alford had four sons:

- i. Roger, through whom this branch continued, and of whom next (2).
- ii. Francis [information follows later].
- iii. Edward [information follows later].
- iv. Launcelot [information follows later].

Robert Alford died in 1546, leaving his lands in Flintshire to Anne his wife. His will in abstract follows:

Robert Alforde of London, 1546, January 14. "Hole of mynde but sicke of bodie thanks be unto Almightye God. . . . To be buried in the Parishe Church of St. Swithyne in London. . . . Goodes and Cattalls" to be divided into three equal portions, one portion to his wife Anne, sole executrix. "My landes and tenements, meadowes and pastures in the parishes of Norton Madok and Tyrby Stoke [i.e. Erbistock], in Flintshire, bought of Richard Alford, to Anne my wife." . . . "My brother William Sumner." . . . "Brother William Dummer, overseer." —P.C.C., 26 Alen.

In the "examination of William Seth before the Lord Great Master, the Lord Privy Seal", etc., mention is made several times of "Anne Alford of London, widow of Robert Alford, and daughter of Edmund Brydges of the Chandos family". —Cecil MSS., Part I, p. 83, etc.

2. Roger Alford, of London, and of Hitcham, Buckinghamshire, was the oldest son of Robert Alford and Anne Brydges. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Ramsey, esquire, and widow of John Clarke, esquire, of Hitcham, Buckinghamshire. By this marriage he had two surviving children:
  - i. Edward, of whom hereafter (3).
  - ii. Anne, who married Sir Edmund Fettyplace, the head of a prominent Berkshire family. She had no less than twelve sons and seven daughters.

Roger Alford entered into political life as Secretary to Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burleigh, who was made Secretary of State by Queen Elizabeth immediately after accession in 1558, being added, with others, to the former Catholic Ministry of Queen Mary, as "known to be inclined to the Protestant Communion," and was actually called "a heretic" by his Roman Catholic opponents. We may therefore conclude that Roger Alford was of similar views, and his career must have been one of deep interest.

The Cecil MSS., Part I, p. 485, refer to a letter from Roger Alford to Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burleigh, respecting Lady Jane Grey. Dated 13 Nov. 1573.

*Letter from Roger Alford to the Lord Treasurer." (Lansd. MSS., xvii, 26):-*

*My Verie good Lorde,*

*You maye see I am here still to trouble you for the consideration of my brother's [Launcelot Alford, who was "Clerk of the Hanaper" in Dublin, and now became "Teller" in accordance with the request of this letter] cause in his absence. His suit is to have the Office of the Tellership of Ireland granted to him by My Lord Deputy, in consideration of his long service there, these 25 yeares past, etc., etc.*

*Your Lordship's ever to command,*

( SIGNATURE )

Roger Alford's signature appears also in the State Papers, 102, Foreign, Eliz., 1564 to 1565, no. 791, p. 243.

*Letter (Cecil MSS., II, 124) from Roger Alford to Lord Burghley:*

*Mr. Redeman, the bringer of this, married my cousin on my mother's side. The gentleman is thought in this Shire of as good fame as any of his calling in it. He is desirous that, by your Lordship's favour, he may try out the practise, wherein I pray you to let him have your aid. Hitcham, DEC. 14, 1575.*

Roger Alford's connection with Hitcham, near Maidenhead in Buckinghamshire, was evidently through his marriage. He retired thither, and at his death in 1580 was buried there. His monumental inscription in Hitcham Church reads thus:

Arms:—Gules, six pears, three and three.

"Here lieth buried

Roger Alford of London,

and late of Hitcham, Esquire,

who married Elizabeth Clark, widow,

and daughter of Thomas Ramsay, Esquire.

He died the 16th of July, 1580."

The British Mus. Addit. MSS., 22,583, f.52b, contains the following Latin Verses in memory of Roger Alford, 16th century, by William Cager, Student of Christ Church, Oxford:

"In obitu Rogeri Alfordi

"Rogerus tumulo Alfordus sepelitur in isto:

Quid? tantam cohibet tantula terra virum!

Non jacet hic totus, passim bona fama vagatur

Libers, nec modica contineatur humo.

Altera para meliorque sui jam vivit in astris,

Sic tantum corpus jam brevis urna capit."

Roger Alford was a member of parliament for Bletchingley in 1558, and for Preston in 1559.

The following is a brief abstract of his will:

Roger Alford of Hitcham, Bucks, 1580. To be buried at Hitcham. Mr. Bridge my grandfather, brother of Sir John Bridge. My wife Elizabeth. Edward Alford my sonne. My daughter Anne. Estate at Weston, Oxford. Houses in Fleet Street London which descended to me from my father, to Thomas Alford and his son. Launcelot my brother, Francis my brother. —P.C.C. 38 Arundel.

The Burghley MSS., temp. Elizabeth, 1580, Lansd. 109, 99, p. 217, contain the following in continuance of his will:

*The wordes of Mr. Alfordes Wyll conveying his desire to have his sonne Edwarde Alford placed in service with my Lords Treasurer. Item. I wyll that my sonne Edward contynu his studie at Oxforde untill he be 17 or 18 years of age; and then I would have him sitte in Lynncoln's Inne. . . . Also my desire is when he shall growe to twentye yeares of age, that he should seek my Lorde Treasurer, my olde Mr., who I truste wyll accept hym, and notwithstanding permitte hym to contynue his studye at the Lawe.*

A letter (Lansd. MSS., lxxx, 209) from Elizabeth Alford, widow of Roger Alford, is preserved concerning a "cause between Matthewe Lowe, plaintiff, and Elizabeth Alford, defendant, about certaine groundes called the Marshes in the Manor and Parish of Hitcham." June 28, 1596. It bears her autograph.

( Signature )

Her will follows in abstract:

Elizabeth Alford of Hitcham, Bucks, widow, 1598. "To be buried near my husband Roger Allford, esq., in the chancel of the parish Church of Hitcham. Lands in Hitcham . . . and Taplow . . . Little Marlow. Sir Wm. Clarke Knt. my eldest Sonne. . . My sonne Edward Alford. My daughter Lady Russell. . . my daughter Fettiplace. . . my cousin John Alford. . . my Godson John Alford." —P.C.C. 103 Lewyn.

Before continuing the direct line of Robert Alford it will be convenient to deal with the three younger sons in succession.

Francis Alford, the second son, was born about 1530. He passed through the University of Cambridge, taking his B.A. degree, and then migrated, in 1550, to Christ Church, Oxford, "for the study of the law." Here he took his M.A. in 1552. He was a proctor in the Vice-chancellor's court in 1554, and a "clerk of the market," which office he resigned in February 1555. He qualified for the D.C.L. in October 1560, but there is no record of his admission to the degree. In 1568 and several succeeding years he had a seat in the House of Commons, sitting in 1585 and 1588 as representative for East Grinstead, co. Sussex. In the Record Office State Papers he is mentioned in 1570 as "of Salisbury Court, Fleet Street." In 1571 a Bill in Chancery was entered by "Francis Alford of London" concerning the conveyance of the manor of Ashton-sub-Edge, Gloucestershire, and after a long law-suit he was successful. In 1557 there is mention of the "conveyance" from Francis Alford to his brother Roger Alford of this manor of Ashton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire.

In 1581 "some lands at Burton Lazar, forming part of the Manor of Melton Mowbray, were demised to Francis Alford." In 1587 he was a Justice of the Peace for York. In 1588, Francis Alford wrote to Lord Burghley. His kinsman John Alford solicits the Collectorship of St. Mary's York.

"Deed of sale from Francis and Edward Alford (his brother) to Nicholas Portar, of the mansion house of Ashton-sub-edge." Francis Alford is afterwards described as of Lambourne, Berks, esquire, and was trustee and supervisor of an almshouse at Lambourn in 1589, being succeeded in that office by Henry Alford of Wokingham, doubtless his son. "The hospital or almshouse at Lambourne, Berks, is for ten poor men." In 1589 it was determined that Francis Alford, esq., his heirs and assigns, should have the management of the estates as the representative of the founder. In 1619 Henry Alford of Wokingham conveyed the Supervisorship to Richard Organ.

(The Wokingham Registers unfortunately only go back to 1660.)

The State Papers of 1590, August 12, record the grant of presentation to Francis Alford of the dignity of Preceptor, with the Prebend of Empringham, in Lincoln Cathedral.

Many letters of Francis Alford, from 1573 onwards, are extant, mostly addressed to Lord Burghley.

In the *Reports of the Historical MSS. Commission*, vol. xci, p.126, is given part of a speech in Parliament of "Sir Francis Alford" probably in 1568, with reference to an "Acte concerning Marie, daughter of James V", i.e. Mary Queen of Scots.

"I think of her to be as vile and naughtie a creature as ever the earth bare, yet can I not see howe it can stand with the honor of England either to condemne her unheard, or to towche her in life, for that she never knew of."

Some references in the volume of Parliamentary History may be noted:

3 Eliz., Oct. 30, 1568. A committee of both houses appointed to petition the Queen (Elizabeth) "That it would please your Majestie to dispose yourself to marry" included Sir William Cecil [Lord Burleigh, whose Secretary was Roger Alford], and Mr. [i.e. Francis] Alford. "Her Majestie commanded the committee to make their appearance before her. . . and gave them a smart reproof." —Vol. I, 709.

April 14, 1571. Debate on a Bill against Licenses and Dispensations. "Mr. Alford spoke against the Bill, and endeavored to prove that Licenses for Marriage in some case might be needful, and that Dispensations for non-residence might upon some occasion be of great necessity", etc. —Vol. I, 747.

April 19, 1571. Debate on a Bill for the Validity of Burgesses not reslant. "Mr. Alford reasoned to this effect, that above all things necessary care ought to be the chusing and having of fit men to supply the place, that there be not imperfection. . . He would that none should be of that house not of 30 years of age at the least. And for the choice of townsmen, he was of his mind that Moses and Aaron should be conjoined together, and that there should be one of their own, or some gent. near them, who had knowledge of the state of the country, and the other man learned and able to utter his mind and opinion; so that he seemed to conclude that the law should be in force for the one Burgess, and at liberty for the other." —Vol. I, 754.

Strype's Annals. VOL iii, pp. 465 and 625, speak of Francis Alford, who in 1587 was J. P. for York, and is presumably to be identified with this Francis Alford. His mother was, in 1580, summoned before the Recorder of London for having mass performed in her house in Salisbury Square.