

NOTES ON  
THE MANOR OF KNIGHTON, I. OF W.,  
AND THE EARLY MANOR LORDS,  
A.D. 1066—1343.

*(Continued from page 7, vol. VI., Supplement).*

BY JOHN L. WHITEHEAD, M.D., L.R.C.P. (Lond.), &c.

Lady Elena survived her husband many years, and several references are entered on the Rolls relating to her in connection with her Island estates. In the feodary, 8 Edward I. (1280), giving a list of the Knight's fees belonging to the Castle of Carisbrooke, claimed by the Countess Isabella de Fortibus, lady of the Isle, it is shown that: "Lady Elena de Gorges holds three fees of the Countess in capite, whence she holds in demesne the Manor of Kingtheton."<sup>1</sup> In the Close Rolls for 1280 there is entered:—"An acknowledgment of a debt of 400 marks owing to John Mantravers, to be levied, in default of payment, on her goods and chattels in Dorsetshire."<sup>2</sup> Matthew de Columbars, related by his marriage with Maud, daughter of Eudo de Morville, is mentioned as surety for payment. At an earlier date when "grave anxiety was felt as to an invasion of the Isle of Wight, the King was pleased, in the year 1267, to appoint our beloved and faithful servants, Matthew de Columbars, Ralph de Gorges (and others), to well and truly guard the aforesaid island."<sup>3</sup>

Lady Elena died in 1291. The royal mandate to the

<sup>1</sup> Worsley Appendix, No. xxx. <sup>2</sup> Cal. Cl. 1279-1288, 60.

<sup>3</sup> Pat. R. 51, Henry III., m.gd.



*Seal of Ralph de Gorges A.D. 1336.*

**MANOR OF KNIGHTON.**

escheator to take possession of her lands is dated, at Portsmouth, on February the 8th.<sup>1</sup> At the inquisition taken with respect to her Hampshire estates, the jurors say—that she died seised of the Manor of Knighton. Also, that Ralph de Gorges is son and nearest heir of said Elena, and was, at the time of her death, aged thirty-six years and more. A like return, held for the county of Dorset, gives Ralph's age as thirty-five. Ralph was born by 1254, and was 19 years of age when his father died. "He equalled in arms the distinction of his father, taking a prominent part in almost all the wars of Edward I. In Gascony, he acted as marshall of the Royal Army." "A notification to the treasurer and barons of the exchequer" states—"that the King has pardoned Ralph de Gorges for his good service the sum of twenty-four pounds in which he is indebted for the debts of his father for the time when he was sheriff of Dorset."<sup>2</sup> A year and a half later, in the month of September, the King further pardons him "the sum of one hundred shillings in which he was amerced by the justices of Windsor."<sup>3</sup> In connection with the Isle of Wight estates he is first mentioned—8 Edward I. (1280)—in a plaint concerning the levying of scutage. He appears to have inherited this dispute with the Crown—as to whether tenants, who held of the honour of Carisbrooke, were liable for the usual aids of the Crown—from his father. In connection thereto, a petition, presented by Ralph de Gorges and Peter D'Evercy for themselves and the Island generally, stated:—"That James de Norton and Richard Borhunte had, in the 38-39 Henry III. (1255), unjustly distrained on Ralph de Gorges" (no doubt the father of the petitioner). The petitioners further state:—"They discharged such services to the Lord of the Island, and the Lord paid scutage for the Island to the King." It was ordered that:—"The Treasurer and Barons

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt e Rot. Fin. 20, Edw. I. m. 12.    <sup>2</sup> Cal. Cl. R., 1279-1288, 260.  
<sup>3</sup> Idem 337.

of the Exchequer call the collectors before them, and if the allegations are true to do justice."<sup>1</sup>

1287.—“Protection for Ralph de Gorges going abroad with the King till Michaelmas,” is entered on the Patent Rolls.<sup>2</sup> A period of three years elapses before a further reference to Sir Ralph is made. In September, 1290, a “Commission of Oyer and Terminer to Nicholas de Leygrave, ‘the elder,’ respecting complaints against Ralph de Gorges and others by the Abbot of Merivale,”<sup>3</sup> is entered, but the nature or gravity of the offence does not appear. On his mother’s demise, in February, 1291, Sir Ralph—now a Knight—succeeded to her extensive estates, “and doing his homage,” early in the following month, “had livery of the lands of her inheritance.” In this same year Sir Ralph was engaged in the Scottish wars, and “Protection with clause volumus” was granted “to Ralph de Gorges and others, until Christmas, staying in Scotland on the King’s service.”<sup>4</sup> He was actively engaged in the French wars, where he obtained such favour from the King that on his returning again to those parts the following year he obtained from him the following boon, the particulars of which are enrolled as follows on the Gascon Roll:—“1294, July 5. Grant to Ralph de Gorges going to Gascony on the King’s service, that if anything shall happen to him there, the executors of his will shall have free administration of his lands and goods for three years after his death, and also free administration of his mother’s will, whereof he is said to be executor.”<sup>5</sup> Evidence is forthcoming that he started on this unfortunate expedition before the month of September, when “the Sheriff of Gloucester received an order, at the request of Ralph de Gorges, who has set out on the King’s service to Gascony, to cause Matthew de Gorges, imprisoned at Gloucester for a trespass, &c., to be released.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rot. Parl. 8 Edw. 1. <sup>2</sup> Cal. Pat. R., m.g. <sup>3</sup> Cal. Pat. R. m. 7d.

<sup>4</sup> Idem m. ii. <sup>5</sup> Cal. Pat. R., 1292-1301, 78.

<sup>6</sup> Cal. Cl. R. 1288-1296, 367.

Dugdale<sup>1A</sup> alludes to the grant made in favour of the executors:—"This Ralph, in 21st Edward I, marshall of the King's army in Gascoigne, and in 22 Edward I, went again to those parts, where he obtained such favour from the King, that in case he should depart this life, before his return, his executors should receive the profit of all his lands, from the time of his death, until the end of three years, and likewise the free administration of all his goods, for the performance of his will. . . . But in that year, Charles, brother to the King of France, invading Gascoigne with a great power, laid siege to Risune, whereof John de Britaina was Governor, who, forsaking his charge, exposed those in the garrison to the mercy of the enemy. Amongst which, this Ralph being one, was carried prisoner to Paris."<sup>2</sup> Two years pass, and a commission was issued on the 18th of March, 1296, to "Adam Gurdun, and three others, on complaint by Ralph de Gorges touching the persons who had, during his absence in Gascony, on the King's service, burned his house and the goods therein, at Knyghton, Isle of Wight, and wounded his men."<sup>3</sup> It is improbable that the complainant was present at the enquiry, for it is conjectured that Sir Ralph died soon afterwards, being still in captivity. The usual writ, *ad diem clausit extremum*, dated at Portsmouth, the 23rd of May, was issued, but was shortly afterwards quashed:—"Quia Radulphus de Gorges, qui de Rege tenuit in capite, diem suum clausit extremum, ut Rex accepit, mandatum est Malculino de Harlee, esc. . . . quod omnes terras et tenementa de quibus idem Radulphus fuit seisitus in dominico suo ut de feodi, . . . sine dilacione capiat in manum Regis. Teste Rege, apud Portesmuth, xxiii. Mai.<sup>4</sup> "Vacat." It may be inferred from the closing word "Vacat," that the customary writ had been issued in ignorance and

<sup>1A</sup> Baronage.

<sup>2</sup> Tour 2-3, 55.

<sup>3</sup> Cal. Pat. R. 1292-1301, 217, mem. 16d.

<sup>4</sup> Excerpt e Rot. Fin. 25 Edw. 1 mem. 13.

was quashed, when it was discovered that the King, in consequence of the grant, had no interest in Ralph's lands and no right to seize them. Evidence of Sir Ralph being married is supplied in the following excerpt:—" June 27, 1297. These lands (in Essex) were assigned to Maud, late the wife of Ralph de Gorges, as her dower, for a third of the lands that belonged to Ralph de Gorges, by the assent of Robert son of Payn and of the other exors. of his will of the one part, and John Lovel of the other, in place of Maud . . . the manor of Bradepol, . . . the manor of Ludeton, &c. Memo, this assignment was made, at Westminster, on June the 27th, 25 Edward I."<sup>2</sup> The foregoing document is of more than ordinary importance in that it clearly shows that in the year 1294 a. Ralph de Gorges was recently dead, leaving a widow Maud surviving. This Ralph must be " the marshal," lord of the manors of Knighton, Bradpole, Ludeton, in 1294, and father of (not identical with) the Ralph who died in 1323. Dugdale, and later writers following him, have clearly rolled two people in one. Attention may further be drawn to the fact that the date of Ralph " the marshal's " demise, here given, is at variance with that generally assigned, viz., that he died in 1323.

<sup>2</sup> Cal. Pat. R., 1296-1302, 114.

*To be continued.*

---