

In Gordano.

BY THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP HOBHOUSE.

THIS term, which still lives as an affix to four parishes near Bristol, has long been a riddle.

Collinson, Vol. iii, p. 147, solved it by attributing it to a family called de Gardino, or Gordein, one of whom, Emeric, lived in or soon after the reign of Henry III ; but he fails to show that their property was ever large enough to designate the six parishes anciently included in the term, and he overlooks the force of the preposition "in," which implies a region, not a family. The family is more likely to have taken name from the region than the region from the family.

The fact of there being such a region, and that, too, before the date of Emeric de Gardino, has been brought to light by the research of Sir Walter Morgan, ex-Chief Justice of Madras, who, whilst renting Naish House in 1884, was kindled by the spirit of enquiry, which carried him into the public records, printed and unprinted. His transcripts have been kindly lent for the present paper.

This is the list of those which bear directly on the term

IN GORDANO.

Extracts from records of thirteenth century onwards, throwing light on the term :—

I. In a schedule in French of charters affecting the property of Easton, belonging to the De Clares, Earls of Gloucester, the manor is described as "*Eston Gordeyne jouste (juxta)* Crockerespulle,*" and again "*E. Gordeyne.*"
July, 1278.

Additional MSS. 7041, fo. 84.

II. July 27. 55th Hen. iij, 1271. Charter Rolls m. 2.
Grant by King to Ralph de Bakepuz of a fair for three days in his manor of *Weston in Gordenlond*.

III. Before the 12th of Edw. j, 1283. Addl. Ch. 7772.
Grant by Thomas Lord Berkeley, Lord of Porebury, to John Fitzjohn, of *Eston Gordeyne*, of Wede, between Failand and highway from P. to Bristol, with rights on the Down (Duna).

IV. 20th Edw. ij, 1291-2.

Inquisitio ad quod damnum. No. 23.

Verdict—That Maurice de Berkeley was enfeoffed 12th Edw. j by his father, Thomas, Lord B., with the manor of *Portbury in Gordenū* and the hundred and 3rd part of advowson, also the manor of Kingston Seymour, and that Maurice held it till it was seized by the king.

V. 1st Edw. iij, 1327-8. Add. Charters 7799.
Thos. atte Hope, of †*Porebury in Gorden*, conveys some parcels of land to the vicar of P.

VI. 1st Edw. iij. Add. Charters 7182.
Transfer of Thos., Lord Berkeley, of land in *Eastone in Gordano*.

VII. 1st Edw. iij. Add. Charters 7784.
Quit claim by H. de Middleton to Thomas, Lord Berkeley, of all property in *Porebury in Gordene*.

* The estuary or "Pill" of a small stream running into the Avon, where the pilot boats lie, now called "Crockern Pill," or more usually "Pill" only.

† This is the present local pronunciation.

VIII. 4th Edw. iij, 1330-1. Add. Charters 7802.
Conveyance by Agnes Howell of small parcel, and (inter alia) of a small holding in *Eston in Gorden*.

Dated at *E. in Gorden*.

IX. 6th Edw. iij, 1332-3. Add. Ch. 7806.
Transfer by Thos., Lord Berkeley, of a lifehold in "villâ de *Weston in Gordoñ*."

X. 6th Edw. iij. Add. Ch. 7807.
Transfer by same of lifehold in *Weston in Gordene*.

XI. 14th Edw. iij, 1340-1. Add. Ch. 7818.
Quit claim to Thos., Lord Berkeley, of lands, etc., in villâ de *Portesheved in Gordene*.

XII. 25th Edw. iij, 1351-2. Add. Ch. 5455.
Grant of land in Nailsea by *De la more, of *Wroxhale intra* (or *juxta*) *Gordeyn*.

XIII. 13th H. IV, 1411-2. Add. Ch. 7856.
Quit claim to Thos., Lord Berkeley, by Widow Alice Halle, of Bradford, of Goreacre in *Porteshevede in Gordene*, and of the advowson of the Church of *Do. Do*.

To these may be added, from other sources, the following evidences :—

XIV. In the will of James King, Jan., 1531, published in Weaver's *Wills*, p. 192 (Kegan Paul, 1890), James King is described twice as of *Weston in Gorden*.

XV. In Vol. vi *Som. Rec. Soc.*, p. 229, is found the record of a fine passed in the King's Court A.D. 1270, touching the manor of *Weston in Gordeneslond*.

XVI. And in p. 291 of the same volume a record of a fine touching property in *Eston in Gordon*.

These documents show—(1) That in the thirteenth century there was an area called Gordenland, or some equivalent name.

* This family were of what is now known as "Birdcombe Court," on the edge of Nailsea Moor.

(2) That it comprised the following manors or parishes :—

Weston	} in Gordano, still so called.	Portishead
Easton		Portbury
Walton		perhaps Wraxall, or that portion of it which lies on the top and N. W. side of the ridge enclosing the Gorden Valley on the S. E.
Clapton		See No. XII, where Wraxall is described as either “intra” or “juxta” Gordeyn.

(3) That the form of the name has varied largely.

(4) That the forms nearest to Gorden preponderate.

The variations are thus classified—

Gordeyne	} 4 times.	Gorden, 4 times.
Gordeyn		In Gordano, 1.
Gordenland	} 2.	Gordene, 5.
Gordenesland		Gordoñ=Gordoniâ } 2.
Gordenñ=Gordenniâ	} 1.	Gordon
<i>i.e.</i> , Gorden latinized		Total—19 times.

THE AREA OF THE REGION.

The only doubt about the area is whether it included Wraxall or, if not all, some part of it. It turns upon the indistinct word in No. XII. If that be “juxta” the whole of Wraxall is outside. If “intra,” it is inside, or at any rate some part of it, probably the Failand and Charlton portions on the top and north-west sides of the ridge which encloses the Gorden valley on the south-east.

The area is one plainly marked by natural features, viz., two ridges diverging from Walton enclosing a level marsh and forming a rude triangle, with the river Avon for its very irregular base.

ANTIQUITY OF NAME.

Of the antiquity of the name there is no record known earlier than 1270-1 (see No. II), but the name was then a known name used for official description, and must have acquired its currency by long continued use in six parishes.

It is not found in Domesday, which hardly ever notices second names, nor, in Pope Nicolas' Valor, *circa* 1290, though at that time the affix was fully established.

With the meaning of the name this paper is not concerned, but the fact of the heart of the region being a valley suggests the similarity of Taunton Dean, the valley of the Tone. Dean has, however, another meaning in Saxon, viz., that of a waste or swine-run, the origin, probably, of the name of Dean Forest in the adjoining shire.*

Having been convinced that Gorden or Gordenesland was a region, I venture to add a few remarks on the use of regional names in our county. The use of them was sparing, contrasting markedly with their use in Northern England. Our rivers, it is true, are very insignificant in volume and length, but their valleys are geographical features quite pronounced enough to have claimed regional names. Had the shire been farther north it would have had its Avondale, Exdale, two Axedales, Bruedale,† Parretdale, Iveldale, as well as Taunton Dean, but it was plainly not the habit of Wessex to make much use of natural features in place-naming.

REGIONAL NAMES.

There are nevertheless some such names chiefly derived from the moors, *i.e.*, marshes of the county, and the dry lands which

* Professor Earle allows me to add that Gore, in A. Sax. *Gâra*, was a triangular piece of land shaped into a gâr or spearhead. Such a piece, let into a garment, is called by seamstresses a "gore."

† Brucombe was used in the forest records to describe the walk or ward of Selwood Forest above Bruton.

emerged from them like islands. They are as follows :—

1. Wedmoreland. The island of sound land surrounded by the levels of the Brue and Axe.
2. Zoyland. The island surrounded by King's Sedgemoor, the Cary and Parret moors, bearing on it the villages of Middlezoy and Westonzoyland.
3. Normarsh. The whole country between the west end of Mendip and the Avon. The name, fifty years ago commonly used, is now rarely heard, though carried by a troop of Yeomanry.
4. Wring-marsh. The moor named, like Wrington, from the stream now called the "Yeo."
5. Brentmarsh. The moors of the lower Axe.
6. Blackmore Vale. The broad valley below Wincanton, drained by the Cale and Stour, and stretching westward into Dorset.
7. The Wint. The valley in which Winscombe stands, with Winterhead, Winterstoke, Wint Hill, testifying to its original name, now out of use.

Besides these names, only one of which is in popular use, viz., Blackmore Vale, thanks to its being a popular hunting-ground, there is no use made of our geographical features, with this exception, that the names of hill ranges are often used to describe the whole region around the range. Exmoor, Quantock, Mendip are virtually used as regional names.