

On a Portrait of Col. William Strode.

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IN 1884 I gave a paper on two of the Strode family, contemporary, both famous in history and both named William. One of these was shown to be a Devon, the other a Somerset man. To avoid repetition of printed matter reference to this paper must be made when fuller notes than here given may be required. Annexed to the paper is a short pedigree of the Somerset family, and with this a knowledge of the armorials of the two families may help enquirers sometimes, as both coats may be met with in Somerset. The Somerset and Dorset shield is a simple one—*Erm* on a canton *sa* a crescent *arg.* The Devon coat bore—*Arg* a chev between three conies courant *sa.* There is thus a marked difference easily noted.

Our Somerset William was born at Bowlsh in Shepton Mallet, spent his early years in Spain, and inherited from his father a considerable fortune for those days. To this he added by his marriage. His wife died in 1649, and it would be interesting to determine if the portrait of the man in armour on the well known brass to her memory in Shepton church could represent her husband.

Armed thus with wealth Strode bought landed properties and became known as of Street and Barrington. His first public act was in 1636 when he appeared and was recorded as "Mr. Strode the merchant" in opposition to the tax known as Ship money. Matters having advanced somewhat, in August, 1642, he was the first to appear at Shepton against the



COLONEL WILLIAM STRODE,
OF BARRINGTON AND STREET.

Marquess of Hertford, the king's commissioner, who, we are told, was met by "Mr. William Strode, a D.L., with his son, armed." The Civil War proceeding, Strode, having raised a "valiant band," became, in 1643, a colonel in the now Parliamentary army, and, after a troubled and eventful life, died in 1666, and was buried at Barrington, 20th December, in that year. His eldest son, William, continuing in the same political groove, received the Duke of Monmouth in his peaceful progress through Somerset, in 1681, and would have done the same on the Duke landing at Lyme in warlike form in 1685 had not he been arrested a few days earlier.

Another son was Edward, of Downside, in Shepton, whose daughter Jane married Joseph Browne of Bowlish. The pedigree noted above mentions the will of Joseph Browne as dated 1732, but does not say where the will is to be found nor whether death followed soon or late after that date. Roberts, in his "History of the Duke of Monmouth" says that Browne had two daughters who each married a Bayly. He then tells, writing in 1844, that Col. Sir Henry Bayly, K.H., of Burlay villa, Lyme Regis, "has a fine miniature of Colonel Strode, of Bowlish, one of the members who withstood the encroachments making by Charles I, upon the constitution." Here he shows the then usual confusion exploded by my paper of 1884, already referred to. Colonel Strode certainly withstood the encroachments, but he was not the member, not "one of the members" implied in this paragraph.

These few notes may help to revive and to show the reason for any interest in the portrait now to be noticed.

Following up the Shepton connection we have another mention of Joseph Browne but it must be supposed as referring to another, the next generation. This occurs in the catalogue of the sale by auction in 1791 of the museum of curios, paintings, etc., etc., of Joseph Browne, of Shepton Mallet, clearly a great, important, and interesting sale of a wealthy man. The museum, etc., occupied March 16th and three

following days; the china 15th April and following day; paintings, coins, etc., 23rd May and five following days; and 5th June came ancient and modern coins, manuscripts, etc. The catalogue describes the prints and paintings as—consisting of a remarkably fine and curious collection of prints of the Italian, German, Flemish, Dutch, English, and French schools, comprehending the best works by or after Albert Durer, Goltzius, Elsheimer, Hollar, Rubens, Vandyck, Jordaens, Teniers, Rembrandt, Berghem, Ostade, Visscher, Walker, Faithorne, Loggan, Vertue, Le Brun, Edelinck, Masson, Balechon, etc., etc. Together with a few capital pictures and drawings by Rubens, Berghem, Wouvermans, Brughell, Potter, Knyp, Both, Ostade, Ferg, etc., and a beautiful marble bust of Alex Pope by Roubillac.

Among or in the list of the paintings appears, on page 21,—lot 16—a fine original portrait of “William Strode, one of the five members.” This was sold for £31 10s.—but as the purchaser is not named, what became of this portrait cannot be exactly given. The late Colonel Chetham Strode of West Cranmore possessed, with other family portraits, one always considered and believed to be Colonel William and further with the usual confusion, that he was one of the Five. Under this impression and belief this portrait, here reproduced, was exhibited—No. 597—at the exhibition of National portraits, South Kensington, in 1866, and, under the same impression and belief was bought for the National collection in 1897. But by now the distinction between the two Williams being understood, on reflection and examination, finding this to represent the Colonel, who was not the historic member, it was rejected and sold to a picture dealer, who sold it to a private gentleman interested in the family, with whom it now rests in the west end of London. It represents a middle aged man with light brown moustache and imperial, light brown hair long and flowing, the complexion ruddy, eyes deep bluish grey. It is life size to the waist, the position three quarters to the

left, seated in a green armchair, the right hand resting on a light green covered table in front and holding a roll of paper, the left hand rests on the arm of the chair with the fingers spread out. Over the shoulders is negligently thrown a long loose grey cloak, a white shirt is visible only at the neck and left wrist, and a white cravat of plain material is loosely tied in the form of a bow. It is in oil on canvas, with a background plain grey, and is in good condition. The height, 3ft. 6ins., width, 2ft. 11ins. In the top right hand corner are the arms of Strode of Somerset, and underneath this is written Col. William Strode, 1635. It is attributed as the work of William Dobson.

But besides this portrait there is another likely to cause confusion and error. In a catalogue of a sale for the Misses Stephanoff, by Puttick and Simpson, Leicester square, on Tuesday, 4th February, 1902, lot 271 is described as "Colonel Strode, with armorial bearings in the corner and inscribed æt 42 anno 1625." It is a three-quarter length, wearing a breast-plate, in an oval formed by a surrounding band on which is the lettering of the name. It is ascribed as being the work of John Hoskins. It was bought by a dealer and by him sold to a gentleman in Surrey who is connected with the family. On being cleaned the name came out on the band clear enough as Sir George Strode of Leweston House, Dorset, and, under this name, it was again sold, now at Sotheby's, 4th Feb., 1907, lot 257, and was again bought by a dealer through whose courtesy I have inspected it. Since the cleaning the date 1625 as given in the catalogue has become 1652, a good instance of error or of the danger of interference. Except then to clear away the hasty tradition which has begun to grow around this portrait, because of the "Colonel" attached to it in the sale catalogue, it is clear it has nothing to do with Somerset or with the Colonel William of these notes.

As to the miniature mentioned by Roberts, all enquiries have been met with the kindest courtesy, but, so far, it seems not to have been found.

There is now one little puzzle to be noted. The Chetham Strode portrait, as may be seen, bears a label painted on the canvas under the shield, "Col. Wm. Strode, 1635," but gives no age. As already mentioned, in the Ship money business of 1636 our William is "Mr. Strode, the merchant," and in the Shepton emeute in 1642 he is D.L. and J.P. The soldier rank came to him with the necessities of the Civil War when leading his "valiant band," not until the spring of 1643. How then came this label on the portrait dated 1635?

A few words may be added on other family portraits. On the death of Col. Chetham Strode the property was sold, and so it came to pass that the portraits in the house were sold, some at Foster's in Pall Mall, 20th May, 1903, others at Christie's, 12th Dec., 1903. In the Foster sale, lot 111, was a full length of Edward Strode of Downside. This was he who received Monmouth there in 1685 on his march, and again after Sedgmoor, he who afterwards turned loyal, his neighbours said, to save his neck, and so became sheriff. This was bought by one of the family and now rests at Kensington.