

INTRODUCTORY.

Our labor upon the American history of the Munsons has been so engrossing as to preclude effectual inquiry into their transatlantic connection and history.



The English Monsons belonging to the peerage have a recognized history extending through five centuries. According to Burke's *Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire*,* John Monson was "living in 1378, [*temp.* Richard II, Chaucer and Wycliffe,] and denominated of East or Market-Rasen, co. Lincoln; from him lineally

sprang William Monson, Esq.," who died in 1558, the year in which Queen Elizabeth came to the throne. We present William's posterity in the line of high titles:—

William¹, Esq., *d.* 1558; was of So. Carlton, Lincolnshire.

John², of So. Carlton.

Robert³, bro. of John², *d.* 24 Sept. 1583. Began study at Cambridge Jan. 1545–6. In parliament, he "distinguished himself by boldness of speech, particularly in the autumn of 1566, when he offended the queen by the persistence with which he pressed for a direct answer to a petition of both houses praying her to marry and nominate her successor in the event of her death without issue." He is said by Burke to have been an eminent lawyer and one of the judges of the Common Pleas, *temp.* Elizabeth. He was buried in Lincoln Cathedral. His epitaph, quoted in *The Judges of England*, is curious and interesting:

Quem tegit hoc marmor si forte requiris, Amice,
Lunam cum Phœbo jungite, nomen habes.
Luce Patrum clarus, proprio sed lumine major;
De gemina merito nomina luce capit.
Largus, doctus, amans, aluit, coluit, recreavit
Musas, jus, vinctos, sumptibus, arte, domo.
Tempora læta Deus, post tempora nubila misit;
Læta dedit sancte, nubila ferre pie,
Et tulit, vicit; superat sua lumina virtus;
Fulget apud superos, stella beata facit.

Sir John³, Knt., manor at So. Carlton, *d.* in 1593.

✓ Sir Thomas⁴, Knt., 1564–1641. He was at Oxford, but left without a degree. He was created M.A. 30 Aug. 1605, when he accompanied James I on a visit to Oxford. He was knighted the year of the Armada (1588). He became a favorite of James I, who made him his master-falconer early

* The information in this sketch is derived mainly from Burke, from Cokayne's *Complete Peerage*, and from the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. xxxviii.

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in his reign, "such a falconer," says Weldon, "as no prince in Christendom ever had." In June 1611, he was appointed master of the armory at the Tower. June 29, 1611, he was created

*First Baronet.**

Sir William⁴, Knt., 1569-1643, bro. of Sir Thomas. He was of So. Carlton, "where his family had been settled for many generations." He was in Oxford at 14, but off to sea at 16, without the knowledge of his parents. In 1588 he was lieutenant of the Charles, one of the fleet which opposed the Armada. In 1594 he took the degree of M.A. at Oxford. He was vice-admiral in 1602. In July 1604 he was appointed admiral of the narrow seas, a position which he occupied twelve years. His distinguished naval career, 1588-1635, imparted lustre to the reigns of Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I. He was knighted. He retired to his seat at Kinnersley in Surrey where he occupied himself with preparing his famous *Naval Tracts*.

Sir John⁵, 1600-1683, K.B., M.P. for co. Lincoln, m. Ursula dau. of Sir Robert Oxenbridge, was *Second Baronet*. He drained the low-lying lands along the river Ancholme in Lincolnshire, and was rewarded with 5827 acres of the reclaimed region. His legal acumen had been noticed by the King, and he offered Charles much useful advice during his disagreements with the parliament (1640-42). He was not a University man, but was made D.C.L. by Oxford in 1642. His estate was sequestered by the Commonwealth in 1648, but the sequestration was removed in 1651, and in Dec. 1652 he signed the engagement to the Commonwealth. He built and endowed a free school in South Carlton, and a hospital in Burton.

Sir William⁶, bro. of the preceding, d. 1672 unc. Charles I raised him to the peerage of Ireland as VISCOUNT MOUNSON† of Castlemaine, co. Kerry, in Aug. 1628, and he was knighted in Aug. 1633. Though concerned as late as 1646 on behalf of the King at Oxford, soon after in the House of Commons he took the side of the rebels; he was a "committee man" for the county of Surrey; he was nominated one of the King's judges, and attended on the 20, 22 and 23 Jan. 1649, though he did not sign the death-warrant.

The Long Parliament, in May 1659, was obliged, in order to form a quorum, to send for Mounson from the Fleet prison, where he was confined for debt. At the Restoration, he was excepted out of the bill of pardon as to pains and penalties, and upon surrendering himself on 21 June 1660 was recommitted to the Fleet. July 1, 1661 he was degraded of all his honours and

* This honor was hereditary, while that of knight was personal. Both baronets and knights were entitled *Sir*. The baronets ranked next below the peers.

† That Mounson was the recognized orthography at that period, is apparent from the title of a contemporary publication, to wit: "The Traytor's Pilgrimage from the Tower to Tyburn, being a true relation of the drawing of William Lord Mounson, Sir Henry Mildmay," etc.

titles, and deprived of his property. He was also sentenced to be drawn from the Tower through the city of London to Tyburn, and so back again, with a halter about his neck, and to be imprisoned for life. In petitioning the House of Lords on 25 July 1661 to remit what was most ignominious in his sentence, Mounson declared that his design in sitting at the King's trial was, if possible, to prevent "that horrid murder." The ignominious part of the sentence was duly carried out each year on the anniversary of the King's sentence. Pepys, in his *Diary*, under date of Monday, 27 Jan. 1661-2, wrote: "This morning . . . called on several ships, to give orders. Going to take water upon Tower-hill, we met with three sleddes standing there to carry my Lord Mounson and Sir H. Mildmay and another, to the gallows and back again, with ropes about their necks."

Viscount Castlemaine had the same arms and crest as those which have been used by the line of Monson barons. His widow was restored to her title of Viscountess of Castlemaine.

[John⁶, *d.* 1674; son of the 2nd baronet and father of the 3d and 4th baronets.]

Sir Henry⁷, *d.* 6 April 1718, was *Third Baronet.*

Sir William⁷, *d.* 1727, was *Fourth Baronet.*

[George⁷, brother of 3d and 4th baronets and father of the fifth.]

Sir John⁸, *b.* about 1693, *d.* 18 July 1748, was *Fifth Baronet.*

In the first year of George II, 28 May 1728, he was elevated to the peerage as *FIRST BARON.**

Lord Monson was appointed, in June 1737, first commissioner of trade and plantations. The town of Monson, Mass., incorporated in 1760, was named in his honor.† He was made a privy councillor 31 July 1737.

Henry⁸, bro. of the first baron, *d.* in 1757; he was a graduate of Oxford, regius professor of civil law, and LL.D.

John⁹, *b.* 23 July 1727, *d.* 23 July 1774, was *SECOND BARON.*

He was made LL.D. of Cambridge in 1749. He was offered an earldom on a condition which he declined.

Lewis⁹, bro. of the second baron Monson, was created *BARON SONDES*, co. Kent, 1760; his latest successor was advanced to an earldom 4 May 1880. Sondes has not the Monson Arms. (Motto—*Esto quo esse videris.*)

George⁹, bro. of the two preceding, was an Indian officer, an opponent of Warren Hastings, and Lieut.-General 1775 or '76.

John¹⁰, *b.* 25 May 1753, *d.* 20 May 1806, was *THIRD BARON.*

William¹⁰, Col., 1760-1807, bro. of the preceding, was an Indian officer, and was M.P. for Lincoln; was father of the sixth baron.

* Above the barons, in order, are viscounts, earls, marquises and dukes. † Probably.

John-George¹¹, *b.* 1 ^{Feb.}_{Sept.} 1785, *d.* 14 Nov. 1809, FOURTH BARON.
Graduate of Oxford.

Frederick-John¹², *b.* 3 Feb. 1809, *d.* 7 Oct. 1841, FIFTH BARON.
Graduate of Oxford, and D.C.L.

William-John¹¹, son of Col. William and grandson of the second
baron, *b.* 14 May 1796, *d.* 17 Dec. 1862, SIXTH BARON.
Graduate of Oxford.

William-John¹², *b.* 18 Feb. 1829, was SEVENTH BARON.



Graduate of Oxford, Treasurer of the Royal Household 1874, Capt. of the Yeomen of the Guard (St. James Palace) 1880-1885, one of the Speakers of the House of Lords 1882, created VISCOUNT OXENBRIDGE of Burton 13 Aug. 1886, Master of the Horse to the Queen 1892; he retains the Monson Arms. (Motto—Prest pour mon pays.) The family estates in 1883 comprised 8,100 acres in Lincolnshire, and 2,034 in co. Surrey; gross annual value, £7,247. Seat, Burton Hall (near Lincoln), co. Lincoln. (Town Residence, 29 Belgrave Square, S. W., London.)

Sir Edmund-John¹², bro. of the preceding, *b.* 6 Oct. 1834, graduate of Oxford, minister to Uruguay 1879-84, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Argentin

Republic, etc., 1884, 5, at Copenhagen 1885-8, and at Athens 1888.

✓ We have outlined the successive generations of this illustrious English family because of the rational presumption that our pioneer-ancestor, Capt. Thomas, sprang from it. His generation would have been that of the second baronet, the son of Sir Thomas⁴.

Dating at the British Legation, Copenhagen, 10 March 1888, Sir Edmund Monson wrote: "To your Trans-Atlantic relatives in the Old World, the multiplication of the posterity of your famous ancestor is a very curious circumstance, when we look around us and see how the English branch of the family is limited to very few members indeed." This distinguished gentleman had written under date of 24 July 1886: "When I was appointed Attaché to the British Legation at Washington in 1858, my Father, Lord Monson, . . . was very anxious to know the subsequent career of that branch of the Monsons which had emigrated to America in the Seventeenth Century."

Lord Monson, writing from Burton Hall, Lincoln, 10 July 1886, said: "My Father passed a great portion of his life in genealogical

researches and has bequeathed to me most valuable M.S.S. on our family history. It was a matter of great disappointment to him that he was never able to collect information respecting the Monsons or Munsons of the United States or connect that branch upon any authentic data with his Lordship's Ancestors in the Mother Country."

As his Lordship expresses his "best wishes for the welfare of my Transatlantic Cousins," so the Honorable Sir Edmund extends his congratulations to "all my American Cousins of the Clan Munson" on the brilliant success of their Reunion in 1887.*

The latter writer expresses the opinion that our common ancestor was a Dane. That por-

I have little doubt that our common ancestor was a Dane. The family can be traced back to the fourteenth century, at which period they were settled in East Lincolnshire. As you are aware all that portion of England was originally over-run by the Danes.

Very truly yours,

Edmund Munson

Burton Hall. Lincoln.

24. Oct. 1886.

Dear Sir

I regret that at present I am unable to afford you further information as to these Thomas Munson's connection with my Branch of the family. I shall however continue my researches and will communicate with you any facts which may hereafter be discovered.

Yours faithfully
Oxenbridge

Edmund Munson

Munson

tion of England where the Family was dwelling at the date of our earliest knowledge, in the fourteenth century, he reminds us, had been overrun by the Danes. "Many names of families and places in that locality are clearly Danish. The name of Mosen is very common to this day in Denmark."

Writing from Massachusetts Bay in September, 1629, Higginson said: "Many families are expected here the next spring out of Lincolnshire."† The principal town of the county of Lincoln was Boston. According to the *Memorial*

* Five hundred members of the family convened in New Haven Oct. 17th, listened to addresses, etc., in the First Church, dined together in Lincoln Rink, enjoyed toasts and after-dinner speeches, with music, and spent the evening in social festivity. (See pamphlet of "Proceedings.")

† Mr. Samuel Whiting, a native of Lincolnshire who had also "exercised his ministry" in that county, reached this hemisphere in May 1636. "When he came ashore," says Mather, "his friends at the New-English Boston, with many of whom he had been acquainted in Lincoln-shire, let him know how glad they were to see him."

History of Boston, Mass., "When the Boston [Eng.] men joined the Massachusetts Company, . . . their superior wealth and standing gave them the ascendancy in its councils," and thus a name precious with Lincolnshire associations was applied to the Tri-Mountain settlement.

Increase Mather (1639-1723), President of Harvard College, wrote of the Rev. John Cotton, who for twenty years was minister in Boston, England, and for nineteen years minister in Boston, Massachusetts: "Both Bostons have reason to honor his memory; and New-England Boston most of all, which oweth its name and being to him, more than to any one person in the world." In the same ship with Cotton came Hooker, celebrated as a minister and as the founder of Hartford; and through Cotton's influence (in England), Davenport, celebrated as a minister and as associate-founder of New Haven,* became a non-conformist, and so an exile to the New World. But we need not press the item of locality, though it have significance; for Cotton Mather (1663-1728) wrote: "The ministers and Christians by whom New-England was first planted, were . . . picked out of, perhaps, all the counties of England, and this by no human contrivance, but by a strange work of God upon the spirits of men that were, no ways, acquainted with one another, inspiring them, as one man, to secede into a wilderness."

"It was for a matter of twelve years together, that persons of all ranks, well-affected unto church-reformation, kept sometimes dropping, and sometimes flocking," says the *Magnalia*, "into New-England, though some that were coming into New-England were not suffered to do so." Among those who were restrained were Oliver Cromwell and John Hampden!† "However," says Mather, "the number of those who did actually arrive at New-England before the year 1640, have been computed about 4000; since which time"—he was writing about half a century afterward—"far more have gone out of the country than have come into it."

The silenced, non-conformist ministers were at the head of this sublime migration. They had been "deprived not only of their *livings*, but also of their liberty to exercise their ministry, which was dearer to them than their livings." When the Bay-Colony was forty years old, it was computed that ninety-four ministers had come thither from England, chiefly in the first ten years: "thirty-one were then alive; thirty-six had retired unto heaven; twenty-seven had returned back to Europe." "Most, if not all, of the ministers who then visited these regions, were either attended or followed, with a number of pious people, who had lived within the reach of their ministry in England. These were now also become generally non-conformists."

* "There were then two famous churches gathered at New-Haven: gathered in two days, one following upon the other; Mr. Davenport's and Mr. Prudden's: and this with one singular circumstance, that a mighty barn was the place wherein that solemnity was attended." Thus the *Magnalia*. The New Haven and Milford churches were organized Aug. 21 and 22, 1639. In that barn, on the 4th of June previously, the "Fundamental Agreement" of the colony was enacted. Now this "mighty barn" stood on Elder Robert Newman's home-lot, and Newman's place became Thomas Munson's residence in 1662.

† March 30, 1638.

Does one inquire for a definite answer to the question—What banished scores of the ablest, most devoted, most spiritual ministers, with 4,000 of their fellow-Christians, into a wilderness peopled with savages? Hear then the answer: A conscientious refusal to practice certain ceremonies of human invention which had been added to the worship of God—unscriptural, unwarrantable, profane, as they believed; they could not conform to the requirements of the bishops and their courts in respect to these human inventions. That the silenced ministers might preach the Gospel, and that they and their fellow-Christians might have liberty to worship according to conscience, and that they might propagate Christianity among the aborigines, such were their primary motives in crossing the Atlantic.

Our Thomas Munson—the supposition is credible and unavoidable—was among those Four Thousand exiled servants of God. He may have voyaged hither with Higginson in 1629, with Cotton and Hooker in 1633, or with other brave and spirited colonists, loyal to God and to conscience. Whence he came, when he came, with whom he came, may some day appear.

We may justly feel interested in the story of Constantine, Columbus, Luther, Shakspeare, Cromwell, Lincoln; but there are tens of thousands who have occasion to feel a livelier interest in the story of THOMAS MUNSON; for without him they had not been. Add that he was a man of signal ability and high worth, that he lived in a stirring, formative period, and that his career was eventful, beneficent, distinguished, and we may appreciate how conspicuous in our esteem should be the portraiture of our Pioneer's life.

O God, beneath thy guiding hand,
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;
And when they trod the wintry strand,
With prayer and psalm they worshipped thee.

Thou heard'st, well-pleased, the song, the prayer;
Thy blessing came; and still its power
Shall onward through all ages bear
The memory of that holy hour.

Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God
Came with those exiles o'er the waves;
And where their pilgrim feet have trod,
The God they trusted guards their graves.