

THE LANYONS OF LANYON, MADRON

AN INCIDENT IN THE FAMILY HISTORY

IN the fourteenth century there dwelt in the Manor House of Tregaminion a family bearing that name. This house was some four miles from Lanyon Manor. Joyce Tregaminion and his wife Joan had three children, Richard, the only son and heir, and two daughters named Sibyl and Isabel. The latter married John Robyn als. Luky, said to be a "bond tenant to the Princess of Wales" and this act—"the marital subordination of a free woman to an unfree husband"—resulted in later years in the loss to the family of much of their estates. But that is another story.

Sibyl married a John de Lynyen of Lanyon Manor, and either at the end of the year 1344 or beginning of 1345 she visited her old home. As the word "late" is used in speaking of her mother, Joan, she might have just died. When returning to Lanyon Manor, and for some reason we are not given, Sibyl took "some goods and jewels" of her mother's and "carried" them away to her home. It may be that Sibyl's husband, John, knew nothing of his wife's wrong conduct until she was charged with this felony—by whom we are not told—but, whether ignorantly or knowingly, he was bound by both love and chivalry to give her his protection and the shelter of his home (though the law deemed him an "accessory to a felony") and to face the penalty of his lands becoming forfeit, and he himself outlawed, should the Courts' verdict go against him.

As anticipated, John de Lynyen's indictment followed; his offence, the "receiving" of his wife, Sibyl. Against this charge John appealed to a higher court, and then left Cornwall to join the Earl of Lancaster's army in France, in a very disturbed state of mind we may be sure, little knowing that the good fortune waiting him in his new venture was to give him the opportunity of wiping out this undeserved stain on his honour and good name.

We may be certain that all ranks of the Earl of Lancaster's army would try to emulate their beloved warrior's brave deeds and chivalrous conduct. A Patent Roll of 24 Edward III, which explicitly records John's domestic tragedy, does not disclose what he did in the Earl's presence nor the nature of his "good service in Gascony"; sufficient for us to know that on the army's return to England the Earl of Lancaster, at Westminster on June 3rd 1350, himself gave personal testimony to this good service, which witness obtained the Royal Pardon for our Cornishman and enables him to return, a free man, to his own country. We can only wish we could have been present on John's arrival home and seen the astonishment and joy of wife and friends when he showed them the deed that confirmed the wonderful story he had to tell them.

The Madron Lanyon Coat of Arms, placed in the College of Arms by the King's Herald in 1531, pictures an old tradition relating to the above-mentioned hero, John de Lynyen.

These notes are abstracted from a paper in the Nance collection at the Royal Institution of Cornwall, sent to him in 1929 by Janie V. Mitchell.