

A CLUSTER OF ROSES.

Were any of you to take a morning stroll, say to the banks of the little river which winds its tortuous way through the fruitful lands of this, our county, you might go with some definite object in view. It might be your intention to seek the uncertain site of Stephen Atkinson's fulling mill, to visit Rockford, the once beautiful home of Edward Hand, to climb to the summit of Indian Hill, or to cross the bridge with its thrice three arches, which Lloyd Mifflin claims to be in number like the Muses of mythology. Much is there of interest along this peaceful stream of ours, and as yet the story of the Conestoga remains to be written.

But, whatever the chief intent may be, at almost any moment something of unexpected interest may present itself. It may be a joyous, thrilling, bird-song which falls upon your ear; some gayly-hued butterfly which flits across your path some fair, wild flower which meets your eye, and you pluck it, desiring to share the pleasure it gives you with your friends. So it is with the treasures which lie hidden in our records. Like the gold in General Sutton's land, they await their discoverer. And so it was that, delving amid the old deeds at the Court House, in search of other matters, this cluster of roses was found,

and, in the hope that they may please you as much as they did me, they are laid before you this evening. So much by way of preamble.

Nearly two centuries ago, or, to be strictly accurate, 177 years ago, there lived a man in England named John Page. Of him little is known, beyond his name. He was "of Austin Pryors," or "Friars," which, in olden times, had been "a monastery of the Friars Eremite of St. Augustine, situated on the north side of Broad street, Old London, and founded by Humphrey Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex, in 1253 A. D." He is only a name to us, leaving but a passing trace upon our records.

In the Recorder's office, Book B, page 16: To this "John Page, of Austin Pryors, London," on September 17, 1735, there was granted by "John, Thomas and Richard Penn, Esqs., true and absolute Proprietaries and Governours in chief of the province of Pennsylvania, a certain Tract of Land situated on Tulpehocken creek of 5,165 acres, who by their Patent did erect it into a Manor, and named it the Manor of Plumton."

It has been suggested that this name was given on account of the many wild plum trees which grew within the borders of this manor. The deed continues: "Giving all rights save three full and 1-5 parts of all royall mines," "and do give to the said John Page, his heirs and assigns, to erect and constitute within the said Manor a Court Baron with all things whichsoever to a Court Baron do belong, and generally to receive, do, and use all things which to the view of Frank pledge do belong, and to receive all fines, Amorciaments and profits which to a Court Baron do be-

long"* "To be holden by the said John Page and his successors of the said Proprietaries of the Seignory of Winsor in free and common Soccage by Fealty only in Lieu of all other services, yielding and paying to the said Proprietaries, their heirs and successors, one Red Rose on the 24th day of June in every year forever." Patent Book A, vol. 7, p. 264, etc. Philadelphia.

Meantime John Page, gentleman, had, on February 17, 1736, empowered William Allen, William Webb, of Chester county, and Samuel Powell, Jr., merchant of Philadelphia, his attorneys, to act for him, and to sell portions of the manor at the best price to be obtained. Accordingly (B.16) on December 5, 1739, to "Erasmus Buggamier, of the Manor of Plumton," a tract of 216 acres, 45 perches, was sold for £86 10s 6p, subject to the payment every year to John Page, on the 23d of June, of one red rose. This deed was acknowledged before and recorded by Conrad Weiser, Justice of the Peace, July 10, 1742. (B. 21) 120 acres, 58 perches, were sold to George Unrew, subject to the same red rose rental. December 4, 1739. (B. 22) December 4, 1739, 275 acres, for £110 to Frederick Sheffer, and same rental; (B. 37) 52 acres for £21 1s to Conrad Weiser, same date, and same yearly rose rental.

(B.32) 178 acres to Michael Sheffer for £71; (B. 201) 141 acres 146 perches for £56 15s, to Michael Miller and Maria Catharine, his wife, (B. 330) 242 acres for £96 16s to Chris-

*A Court Baron was a Court composed of the tenants of each lord of a manor. It might decide on all real actions arising within the manor, and on personal actions below the value of two pounds, but subject to review by the Court at Westminster.—Chambers' Encyclopaedia.

tian Ruffty; (B. 331), parts to be granted to Peter Feake and Maria Cobelsin; (B. 565) 370 acres for £240, to Conrad Weiser, and in each and every case subject to the payment, "every year and forever," to John Page, Gentleman, the rental of one red rose on the 23d of each June.

What, perhaps, is most interesting is the fact that this precedes by thirty-five years Baron Stiegel's annual rent from Zion Church at Manheim, it having been built in 1779, and this probably is the first instance of such a rental being asked for in Lancaster county.

B. 625, December 5, 1739, recorded March 4, 1748, 120 acres were sold to Peter Feake for the same rental. He had water rights on "Tulpehocken Crook" for an "Oyl Mill," and, B. 625, June first, 1743, John Dieter and Catharine, his wife, sell to the same Peter Feake for £30 land granted to John Dieter by John Page, 263 acres. Feake to pay the same rental of one red rose, but this time on the 11th of each June. Attested by Conrad Weiser and recorded by Benjamin Longenecker.

With this last sale the "Manor of Plumton" or Plumtown, disappeared from our annals. Its later history may possibly be found in that of Berks county. But at the time of which this paper treats the land in question belonged to our own county. Berks was established by act of General Assembly on March 11, 1752. Its western part was taken from Lancaster. It is rather curious that in the list of Pennsylvania manors contained in the archives, there is no mention of Plumton Manor, and the only records concerning it seem to be those in existence in our own Court House.

In 1735 "Ruscombe Manor" was set

aside for the Proprietaries, containing 10,000 acres. Later on, after Berks county was formed, "Cow Pasture Manor," of 3,063 acres, was set aside for them, in 1763, and two years later, in 1765, "Tulpehocken Manor" of 7,510 acres, was granted to Richard Penn. Volume 4, Penn. Archives, 3d series, pp. 3, 4 and 5.

In consideration of the fact that it was always "a red rose" which constituted the rental to be paid, we cannot but wonder what prompted the selection of that particular flower. This much is certain: that, so far as we are concerned, the custom originated in Europe. Could it be possible that the name of our county suggested it, and caused the transplantation of the Red Rose of Lancaster to our borders? And, in our sister and daughter county of York, would the "White Rose" have played the same part? 'Tis only a fancy, yet history enfolds so much of beauty and romance that the idea may merit a passing notice; and with that thought bring to a close the brief paper in which it has been my pleasure and privilege to lay before you a heretofore ungathered cluster of red roses.

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