

Mr. URBAN,

April 26.

THERE is a material mistake in Mr. Gibbon's Memoirs of his own family, lately published by lord Sheffield, which, had he lived a little longer, he would certainly have corrected. I received a letter from him on the subject in the August preceding his death, of which I will send you a copy as soon as my return home enables me to search for it amongst my papers. Mr. Gibbon, in the Memoirs, states his great grandfather Matthew to have been son of Robert Gibbon, citizen of London, and brother of John Gibbon, Bluemantle. (See Gent. Mag. Vol. LXII. part I. p. 523.) The fact is, that Matthew Gibbon was one of the younger sons of Thomas Gibbon, of Westcliffe, near Dover, gent. of a totally different and more distant branch of the Rolvenden family, who was a man of considerable landed and personal property; by Alice, his second wife, sister to Jane, the wife of Sir John Maynard, knt. serjeant at law, and to Deborah, wife of William Codd, of Watringbury, gent. (See Gent. Mag. Vol. LVIII. part II. p. 699.) Matthew was baptized at Westcliffe, Feb:

Feb. 23, 1642. His half-brother, Thomas, the eldest son, born 1621, a country gentleman, married Mary, sister of Sir William Rooke, father of admiral Sir George Rooke. His second brother was a physician. His whole-brother, Edward, married Martha, daughter of Sir John Roberts, knight. His sister Anne married John Coppin, of Wootton, gent. and his sister Elizabeth married Thomas Foche, of Wootton, gent. son of Thomas Foche, by Joan Finett, his wife, maid of honour to the queen, and sister of Sir John Finett, a noted wit and poet of James I's time, whose family lived at their mansion of Southton, adjoining and partly in the parish of Westcliffe. (See Wood's Fasti, i. 270. Warton's Sir T. Pope, 411-12.)

Thomas Gibbon, the father of Matthew, was born in the reign of queen Elizabeth, in 1590, and was buried at Westcliffe, Nov. 19, 1671, aged 81. The purchaser of Westcliffe manor and estate was Thomas, the grandfather of this man, a wealthy and illiterate yeoman, in whom Mr. Gibbon's ingenuous mind would not have disdained to confess an ancestor, because he seems to have founded the riches of the younger branch * of an ancient family on the labours of the plough. He died in 1596.

If proof be wanted as to the father of Matthew Gibbon, I refer to the will of Mrs. Deborah Bradford, of St. Andrew, Holborn; widow in 1712, coupled with a deed in my brother's possession. The deed, dated 1709, recites, that the said Deborah Bradford, and Philip Gibbon, gent. are the only surviving children of Thomas Gibbon and Alice, sister of Dame Jane Maynard, deceased, and, as such, being entitled to an estate in certain lands in Romney marsh, under the entail of lady Maynard's will, they release the same to their niece, Jane the wife of John Bridges, esq. the grand-daughter of Thomas and Alice through their son Edward. Mrs. Bradford's will, amongst bequests to a variety of relations, gives legacies to her niece, Jane Bridges, widow her sister, Hesther Alton, widow her nephew, Edward Gibbon, esq. son of her brother Matthew; to Edward, son of her brother Edward;

Thomas, son of her brother Matthew; to Thomas, son of Thomas, &c.
SAMUEL EGERTON BRIDGES.

* For this see the testimony of Philip in his Will. Cant. and the arms in Vis. Kent, 1663.

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hastened to a place where there were no buildings to obstruct my view of the hemisphere: here I found that the phenomenon was no other than a *lunar rainbow*; the moon was truly "walking in brightness," brilliant as she could be, not a cloud was to be seen near her; and over-against her, toward the North-West, or perhaps rather more to the North, was a rainbow, a vast arch, perfect in all its parts, not interrupted or broken as rainbows frequently are, but unremittedly visible from one horizon to the other. In order to give some idea of its extent, it is necessary to say, that, as I stood toward the Western extremity of the Parish of Stoke Newington, it seemed to take its rise from the West of Hampstead, and to end, perhaps, in the River Lea, the Eastern boundary of Tottenham; its colour was white, cloudy, or greyish, but a part of its Western leg seemed to exhibit tints of a faint, sickly green. I continued viewing it for some time, till it began to rain; and at length the rain increasing, and the sky growing more hazy, I returned home about a quarter, or 20 minutes past nine, and in ten minutes came out again, but by that time all was over, the moon was darkened by clouds, and the rainbow of course vanished.

As it is a very rare and uncommon phenomenon, I have taken the pains to copy what is contained in the new edition of the Cyclopædia on the subject, thinking it may be agreeable to some of your readers, and perhaps be the means of producing some farther information.

Yours, &c. E.

"RAINBOW, *lunar*. The moon sometimes exhibits the phenomenon of an iris, or bow, by the refraction of her rays in the drops of rain in the nighttime. Aristotle says, he was the first that ever observed it; and adds, that it never happens, i. e. is never visible, but at the time of the full-moon, her light at other times being too faint to affect the sight after two refractions and one reflection. The lunar iris has all the colours of the solar very distinct and pleasant, only faint in comparison of the other [how can a man that ever learned the first rudiments of the Latin tongue use the article *of* after the word *comparison*?] both from the different intensity of the rays, and the different disposition of the medium. In that mentioned, Phil. Trans. No. 331, Mr. Thoresby observes, the largeness of the

arch was not so much less than that of the sun, as the different dimensions of their bodies, and their distances from the earth, should seem to require; but as to its entireness, and the beauty of its colour, it was admirable. This continued about ten minutes before the interposition of a cloud hindered its observation."

Mr. URBAN, August 20.

I N wandering about the romantic country of Dover (as I am used to do wherever I happen to be) in search of deserted mansions and mouldering monuments, I visited the other day Westcliffe, about three miles off, between Dover and Deal. It was the ancient seat of the Gibbons; and, as I knew this family to have produced Mr. Gibbon the historian, and, by the female line, Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, I saw the ruinous mansion with veneration. I sought for memorials in the church, but in vain; and I pored with avidity over the parish register, where the births, marriages, and burials of this family are numerous. Those which immediately regard the two well-known characters beforementioned will, I trust, together with a few other minutæ from books and oral information, be acceptable to you. The antiquity of this family is considerable, particularly for a county, of which Lambard remarks, "the gentlemen be not of so ancient stocks as elsewhere, especially in the parts neerer to London, from which citie (as it were) from a certeine rich and wealthy seed-plot) courtiers, lawyers, and marchants, be continually translated, and do become newe plants amongst them. Yet be their revenues greater then any where else," &c. Philpot, in his Vill. Cant. p. 296, speaking of Hole, in Roseenden, says, "For many descents last past it hath been the patrimony of Gibbons, who

* However, all the counties equally near London are at least in a similar predicament. Five families of illustrious antiquity in this county have become extinct in this century: Ancher, Culpepper, Digges [did West D. elder brother of the player, who died at Corke, in Ireland, about Nov. 1786, leave any male issue?], Hardres, and Roberts of Glassbury. The St. Legers, as illustrious as any, have emigrated to Ireland. A few families of considerable antiquity yet remain, and a great number moderately ancient, beyond what can be found, as I suspect, in other counties no farther from the capital.

held land in this parish in 1326, and was the seminary, or original seed-plot, whence all of that name and family in Kent primitively sprouted forth; and though Sir William Segar did assign to Mr. Gibbon of Westcliffe, a lion rampant between three escallops, and to this family, a lion rampant between three egrasses, as their coat armour, yet in ancient coloured glass at Hole, now the inheritance of Col. Robert Gibbon, the paternal coat of this family is represented to have been, Or, a lion rampant, Sables, charged with an escarbuncle pomettée & flourettée of the first, which I mention, that this family now at Hole might receive no prejudice by his mistake or inadvertence." Phyllips Gibbon, esq. who sat the greater part of a long life in parliament*, and was well-known in the world, died possessed of this seat at Rolvenden some years ago. I have seen his death in an old volume of your Magazine, but I forget the date now. Of the younger branch, which which were settled at Westcliffe, Tho. Gibbon, esq. was the first. He bought it of Thomas Lord Borough, early in the reign of Q. Elizabeth, and was buried in the church, Jan. 15, 1596. He left at least two sons, of whom Matthew, the second, is the only one of the family who has any memorial remaining in the church †. Philip Gibbon, esq. the eldest, married, in 1585, Elizabeth Philpot, an heiress ‡, who was buried Sept. 16, 1647, aged 80, surviving her husband many years, who was buried Aug. 24, 1629. He considerably repaired, if he did not build, the house, of which the ruins are now standing,

* He was born Oct. 11, 1678; was elected M. P. for Rye in 1707, and again in every parliament till 1741. EDIT.

† On a small flat stone in the chancel— "Here lieth the body of Matthew Gibbon, the elder, son of Thomas Gibbon. He deceased the 12th of Oct. 1620, aged 72." His widow Isabel (Austen, whom he married 1584) was buried June 3, 1643, aged about 90. Par. Reg.

‡ The arms she used, as quartered by her descendants the Gibbons on haichments, &c. were, Gules, a cross between four swords, Argent, pomell'd Or, a crescent for difference. If she was entitled to these, as it is to be presumed she was, she must have been descended from Sir John Philpot, knt. lord-mayor of London, 1378 (Rich. II.); a man famous, among other things, for being instrumental in the destruction of Wat Tyler, whereupon he had a grant of this as an augmentation coat. See Philp. Vill. Cant. under the Grange, in Gilligham, p. 167.

since the date 1627 appears in several parts of it. Of his sons, Matthew, the second (baptized Nov. 26, 1596, and buried Nov. 13, 1648), had many children, of which, Richard Gibbon, gent. maternal grandfather of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, was, as I conceive, one. Thomas Gibbon, esq. of Westcliffe (elder brother of Matthew), was born in 1590, and was buried Nov. 19, 1671, aged 81. By his two wives (of whom the first was Dorothy Best, an heiress of St. Lawrence, near Canterbury, whom he married Mar. 24, 1614, and she was buried Jan. 27, 1634: the second was Alice Selherst, sister to the wife of Lord Keeper Maynard) he had a numerous family.

Thomas Gibbon, esq. eldest son, baptized July 10, 1621, married a sister of Sir William Rooke, knt. of St. Lawrence, near Canterbury, and had several children born at Westcliffe; but of him or his posterity, who are no doubt extinct, there are no farther traces in the Parish Register of this place. The mansion and principal estate of Westcliffe is said to have been sold by the family the beginning of this century, and was afterwards in the possession of Lord Aylmer, who sold it to Lethe, who sold it to Pecke.

Rich. Gibbon, M. D. (2d son) bapt. June 12, 1623, was an ingenious and rising physician, of St. Olave, Hart-street, London, and died Oct. 1652, at the early age of 28. His father gave him the manor and advowson of Kingston in this county, which his descendants of the female line still enjoy, in lieu of part of the sum of 4000l. with which he had engaged to portion him. As there were at least eleven younger children who lived to be portioned, this proves the affluence of the family; since, at this rate, 44,000l. was allotted to the younger children; a large sum in those days.

Edward Gibbon, esq. (the eldest son by the second wife), baptized Nov. 19, 1637, married, 1st. Martha, daughter of Sir John Roberts of Cranbroke and Canterbury, knt.*; by whom he had an only daughter and (afterwards) heir,

* This was a family distinct from those of Glassenbury in Cranbroke. Their ancestor, Thomas Roberts, esq. owned, in the reign of Edw. III. the mansion, where, for some descents, has been the seat of a branch of the Boys's, of which the present possessor, Samuel Boys, esq. has been sheriff of the county. Their arms were, Parti sur pale, Azure and Gules, three pheons, Or.

married about 1704 to John Brydges, esq. of Wootton, in this county, whose male descendants now reside there. His second wife was Elizabeth, daughter of his cousin Richard Gibbon, gent. who, surviving him, re-married Philip Yorke of Dover, gent. who died June 18, 1721, leaving issue, by her, Philip, Earl of Hardwicke; &c.

Matthew Gibbon (third son of the second wife) was baptised at Westcliffe, Feb. 23, 1642, and was brought up to Merchandize in London, by which he acquired an handsome fortune, and left issue Edward Gibbon, esq. a South-sea director, &c. who sat in several parliaments (I think for Petersfield and Southampton, or one of them). He purchased a seat and manor at Buriton, by Petersfield, in Hants; but whether it was that which belonged to the Bilsons, and came by an heiress to the Legges, I know not. Here he settled, and left it, with other large estates, to his only son, the present Edward Gibbon, esq. the historian (born in 1737), who still enjoys them. He is, as far as I can trace, the only one of the male line (at least of the Westcliffe branch) of this ancient, and once numerous, family, remaining. Westcliffe stands behind St. Margaret's bay, and though in open, yet not flat, country, is prettily wooded, and, while it continued a seat, was, I doubt not, well timbered. The mansion makes but a ruinous farmhouse; yet the bare walls of a good-sized hall, with a skreen, and a room of the same dimensions over it, remind us of the hospitality of the ancient country gentlemen.—The church is uncielled and ruinous. It is a perpetual curacy, with duty but 12 times a year. There was another ancient seat in this parish, called Bere, for very many generations, even to the beginning of this century, the residence of the elder branch of the Tokes. The present respectable-looking farm-house appears to have been the original mansion. There are numerous entries of the Tokes in the Parish Register. These are the only two houses in the parish.

Inscriptions in St. James's Church, Dover.

On a flat stone.—“Here lyeth interred the body of Thomas Kitchell, the elder, gent. who, being of the age of 97 years, departed this life, Dec. 11, 1641.

“Here lyeth the body of Richard Gibbon, gent. who married Deborah Stratfold, granchild to the above-named Thomas Kitchell, by whom he had

three daughters. He died Aug. 2, 1679, aged 52 years.

“Here lyes the said Deborah Gibbon, who died July 2, 1719, aged 81 years.”

On another flat stone.—“Here lyeth the body of Philip Yorke, gent. * who married Elizabeth, the only child of Richard Gibbon, gent. and had issue three sons and six daughters, of whom one son and two daughters † are surviving; the other six lye interred near this place. He died June 18, 1721, in the 70th year of his age. Here lyeth also the body of the said Elizabeth, wife of the abovementioned Philip Yorke, who died Oct. 17, 1727, in the 69th year of her age. ‘Quos amor in vita conjunxit, non ipsa mors dividit.’—Arms on the stone, Yorke impaling Gibbon. The same on the hatchment above, viz Argent, a saltier, Az. impaling, Sable, a lion rampant gardant, Or, between 3 escallops, Argent. N. S.