

PROGER PROGERS, PRODGER, family,

claiming to be a branch of the Herbert family - in Blome's *List of Gentry* (1673) the surname ' Herbert ' is attached to several of the persons named in this article. Its original seat was Wern-ddu in Llandeilo-bertholau, Monmouth, but a younger branch is associated with Gwern-vale (in the 14th century, ' tir Gronw Foel'), Crick-howell, Brecknock. The pedigree is given by **Theophilus Jones**, **G. T. Clark**, and **Sir Joseph Bradney** - they disagree in places, but as **Theophilus Jones** depended on **H. T. Payne**, who had a large collection of family documents and deeds, it seems safer to follow him where differences arise.

A. THE WERN -DDU BRANCH.

We begin here with WILLIAM PROGER, sixth of his line, who was alive in 1483. His sons were JOHN PROGER and Lewis Proger (for whom see B below); and John Proger's son was WILLIAM PROGER, Member of Parliament for Monmouthshire in the 1588 Parliament. William had two sons, DAVID PROGER and Philip Proger (for whom see B); David's grandson was that colonel CHARLES PROGER ' of the Guards,' who had to redeem his estate at £330 for siding with the king in the Civil Wars, and was probably (though not certainly) the 'Col. Progers' who took part in recapturing Monmouth for the king in 1644 (**J. R. Phillips**, *Civil War in Wales*, ii, 217); he was at Court in 1673. He should not be confused with the Charles Proger named under B below. His great-grandson WILLIAM PROGER, who sold Wern-ddu and died c. 1780, brings this line to a close - he left only a daughter, who became a nun.

B. THE GWERN -VALE BRANCH,

more interesting. Gwern-vale was occupied by several successive families. In 1530 the mansion and half the lands were bought by Meredydd ap Meredydd ap Morgan; this Morgan was a son of **Dafydd Gam**. The Meredydds ran out in an heiress, Elizabeth, who (according to **Theophilus Jones** and **Bradney**) married LEWIS PROGER, second son of the William Proger named under A. Lewis was succeeded by his son EDWARD, whose son WROTH PROGER sold Gwern-vale (1668) to the Sir Henry Proger noticed below, who was the son of PHILIP PROGER, second son of William Proger, M.P. (see under A). Philip Proger was equerry to James I, and was granted a pension of £50 in 1625. He had four sons, all fervent Royalists and all Roman Catholics. Their chronological order is variously given, but the present account follows **Theophilus Jones** :

1) Sir HENRY PROGER (died 1686),

(who in 1668 bought Gwern-vale (as stated above) from Wroth Proger. He appears to have been the ' Lieut. Progers ' who was in Raglan castle when Fairfax took it in 1646 (**Phillips**, op. cit., ii, 323). He then fled to Spain, and was in Madrid among the entourage of Cottington and Hyde when they were ambassadors there. In 1650, Cromwell sent an envoy named Ascham to Madrid. Ascham was murdered by some of the English Royalists, of whom Henry Proger was one; Proger took sanctuary in the Venetian embassy, and thence escaped to France. After the Restoration, he was knighted. He lived at times at Gwern-vale, but mostly in London, where he died; his will was proved in 1686. His son, CHARLES PROGER, a spendthrift, sold Gwern-vale to his uncle Edward (below).

(2) VALENTINE PROGER

- ' Capt. Valentine Progers ' in the list of prisoners taken at Raglan. **James Howell** names him, too, as one of the murderers of Ascham, adding that he was ' in close prison.' Nothing more is known of him.

(3) JAMES PROGER

- ' corp. Jas. Progers ' in the Raglan list. He too went to Spain. A letter from Cottington to Edward Proger (1651) avers that James was doing very well in Spain, yet was ready to swear that there was no place like Wales. He did indeed return to Wales, and is last heard of as constable of Abergavenny castle in 1665.

(4) EDWARD PROGER (1618 - 1714),

the most famous of the family - if indeed it were fame. **Clark** makes him the second of the brothers, but it seems better to follow **Theophilus Jones** and regard him as the youngest. Born in 1618, he was page to Charles I, and groom of the chamber to the young prince Charles, afterwards Charles II, whose intimate friend he became - Charles called him ' Ned Proger,' and **H. T. Payne** possessed many letters from Charles to Proger, and letters written to Proger by magnates like prince Rupert, who evidently thought that Proger had much influence over Charles. He was with Charles in Scotland in 1650, but the Scots banished him, as ' an evil instrument and bad counsellor ' of Charles and of his father; he shared Charles's exile in France, and a chance reference by Pepys shows that he was also in Spain at some time. After 1660, the sun shone upon him; true, some of the 'favours' showered upon him were illusory (e.g., the 'gift' of extensive lands in Virginia, which he never actually got), but over and above his £500 salary as groom, he was keeper of Hampton Court (with an official residence), forester of Bushey Park, keeper of the royal palace at York, etc. Still, he was not of good repute, for it is fairly clear that his chief duty was to minister to the king's pleasures. The duke of Buckingham satirized him in verse; one serious man told Pepys that Proger was ' one of those who led the king astray '; Andrew Marvell has a dig at him in lines 173-5 of his ' Last Instruction to a Painter.' He was Member of Parliament for the county of Brecknock from 1662 till 1679. His fortunes waned after Charles's death, and he is found complaining to queen Anne that his salary had not been paid for years; but in 1702 he was granted a pension of £200 as ' the oldest servant of the Crown now alive.' He died 31 December 1713 or 1 January 1714, from ' cutting four new teeth ' at 96. Of his children, four daughters survived him; the eldest, Philippa, inherited his lands in Brecknock; in 1717 she married the not uninteresting cleric and writer Samuel Croxall (see *D.N.B.*), who lived from time to time at Gwern-vale, and rebuilt the house.

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Sources

Theophilus Jones, Edwin Davies, Joseph Russell Bailey, *History of the County of Brecknock* (1909-1930), iii, 134-6, iv, 273

G. T. Clark, *Limbus Patrum Morganiae et Glamorganiae* (1886), 252-3

Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire*, ii, 197-200

Clarendon, *The history of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England begun in the year 1641* (Oxford 1888) (ed. Macray), v, 138-9, and consult index

James Howell, *Epistolae Ho-Eliaanae the familiar letters of James Howell* (London 1892) (ed. Jacobs), ii, p. lxxxix

Pepys, *Diaries and letters of Philip Henry, M.A. of Broad Oak, Flintshire, A.D. 1631-1696* (London 1882) (ed. Wheatley) - eight references, consult index

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1701 and 1702

and the other references given above

Images

Peter Lely, **Edward Proger of Gwerndee (1621-1713)**

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