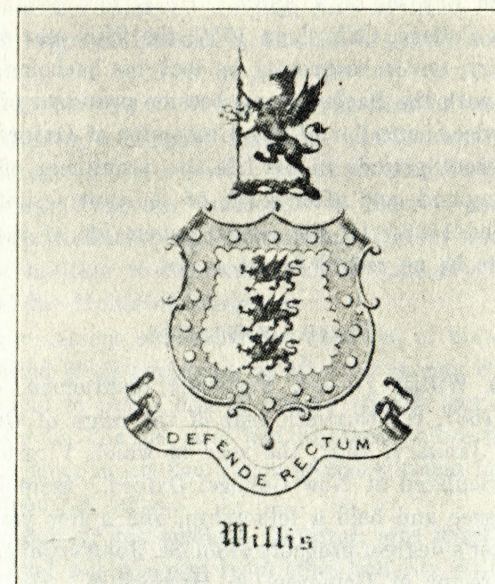


natural, therefore, that the wife's sympathies in the pending struggle should be with her husband and child. For many years she was a great invalid and rarely left her couch. Sick and tortured with conflicting emotions, her days were days of trial. It is said she would smilingly agree with her husband in the hope that the armies of the United States would gain victories over the troops of the South, and then into a thousand pieces dash all former arguments by shaking her head and saying: "But after all they can't whip Robert." It was the triumph of ties of consanguinity over all other bonds. Mildred, the youngest daughter, married Mr. Edward Vernon Childe, of Massachusetts, who removed to Paris and lived there, where she died and where her children were brought up and educated. The eldest son, Edward Lee Childe, possessing an excellent education, fine literary ability and a love for the memory of his great uncle, wrote a life of him in French, which has been well received by the people of that country, and was translated into English in 1875 by Mr. George Litting, of London.

CHAPTER IX

WILLIS FAMILY.



WILLIS COAT-OF-ARMS

The Knights are dust.
 Their good swords rust,
 Their souls are with
 The saints, we trust.

On the records of the great University of Oxford, in England, for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, may be seen the names of seven members of the Willis family, who matriculated during the period from 1557 to 1681. All appear to have distinguished themselves in the university, no one of them having taken less than two degrees, and they seem to have been equally prominent in subsequent life, especially in the church. Five of them received

the degree of bachelor of arts, and later that of master of arts. One became a doctor of divinity; one a bachelor of civil law; one a bachelor of medicine; one a doctor of medicine, and three of them held fellowships. Besides this as church dignitaries, three of them became vicars; two became rectors; one was a dean, and one was a canon.

The oldest of these, Francis Willis, is believed to be the progenitor of the Willises of Virginia. He is recorded as a scholar of St. John's College, Oxford, in 1557, the fifth year of the reign of Queen Mary, and subsequently he took his bachelor's and master's degrees with the Bagley prize; became president of St. John's College and vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford. He also held for different periods in his life five prominent offices in the Church of England, and after a life of constant activity and usefulness he died 1596. Of the second generation of these Willises there seems to be no record found as yet.

THIRD GENERATION.

III. John Willis³ (—², Francis¹), gentleman, of Oxford, England, b. 1587, the thirtieth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and in January, 1607, the year in which Virginia was settled, he matriculated at New College, Oxford. Here he took his bachelor's degree and held a fellowship, and a few years later he took his master's degree, probably from St. John's College, Oxford, and became rector of Orington, in Hampshire. He had a son, Hugh, and two daughters, Frances and Elizabeth.

FOURTH GENERATION.

IV. The New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Volume XLI, p. 257, contains the will of Francis Willis, made in 1689, proved in 1691. In this he makes bequests to various relatives and refers to his cousin, Hugh Willis⁴ (John³, —², Francis¹), deceased. The term *cousin* at that time was applied also to nephews and nieces, and his cousin Mary Herren is mentioned as "the daughter of my brother, Henry Willis, deceased." His cousin Hugh Willis is not described as a son of a brother or sister, and hence we may infer he was a first cousin, and that the fathers of Hugh and Francis were brothers. Now, Hugh Willis,

according to Foster's Oxford Matriculations, b. 1625, was the son of John Willis, gentleman, of Oxford, b. 1587.

John Willis, therefore, was uncle of the Francis who made the will in 1689. This was the well known Col. Francis Willis, who came from England to York County, Va., early in the seventeenth century. This Francis Willis, as far as known, is the first of the family who emigrated to Virginia, or who became prominent in the affairs of the colony. We find him in 1642, the eighteenth year of the reign of Charles I, holding a patent for the land in York County, and in 1640 he held the important office of clerk of Charles River (York) County. It is said he was a friend of Sir John Harvey, who about that time (1640) was removed from the government of the colony. The new administration, headed by Sir Francis Wiot, was unfriendly to Harvey, and Willis, who was a high-spirited man, espoused warmly Harvey's cause. Indeed, he did not hesitate to denounce publicly the new governor, his council and the House of Burgesses.

For this audacious act Willis was deprived of his office of clerk, and prohibited from appearing as attorney in any court. He was also compelled to pay a fine of twenty pounds sterling and eight pounds more for charges, and had to stand before the courthouse door with a paper in his hat, which probably stated his offences and his punishment in detail.

The triumph of his enemies, however, was short lived, for in two years Wiot was removed from office and Sir William Berkeley, who represented the Willis party, was appointed Governor of Virginia.

Francis Willis now had his disabilities removed and filled in succession a number of high and honored positions in the colony. In 1648 he was the justice of York County, and when Gloucester was cut off from York he and Walter Gwin, in 1652, were the first delegates from Gloucester to the House of Burgesses.

He was chairman of the committee that revised the laws of the colony in 1657-'58; member of the House of Burgesses in 1658-'60, and then was a member of the governor's council continuously until 1675, the year before Bacon's Rebellion.

That year he returned to England in company with his wife, Jane. Why he left Virginia is not now known, but it is evident that they intended to reside permanently in England, for they

carried with them the family plate and a large quantity of household goods. They resided thereafter in East Greenwich Parish, in the county of Kent, where he died in 1691.

The date of his birth is not known, but his will shows that he was born in the parish of St. Foules, alias St. Algato, in Oxford, England. A family tradition says that he inherited his name, Francis, from his father and grandfather.

He left no issue, but mentions in his will his brothers, Henry and William, and his sister, Grace, who married Mr. Fielder, and had a son, Charles. This Col. Francis Willis, after giving legacies to his numerous kinsfolk, bequeathed the most of his property including his large estates in Ware River Parish, Gloucester Co., Va., to his nephew, Francis Willis, son of his brother, Henry, deceased.

Henry Willis⁴, nephew of John, of the third generation above, and brother of Francis, just described, d. before 1689, and left five children:

- I. Francis Willis⁵.
- II. William Willis⁵.
- III. Susanna Willis⁵.
- IV. Mary Willis⁵. Married Mr. Herren.
- V. Alice Willis⁵.

FIFTH GENERATION.

V. Francis Willis⁵, the son of Henry⁴, inherited from his Uncle Francis, who made his will in 1689, large estates in Ware River Parish, Gloucester Co., Va., and also one thousand pounds sterling, together with the cattle, chattels, etc., etc., on the Gloucester lands, and all other property of his uncle that was not bequeathed to others. He had a brother, William, who was sole executor of his uncle's will, and three sisters, Alice, Mary (married Mr. Herren) and Susanna. He left two sons, Col. Francis Willis, Gloucester Co., Va., who married Lady Anne Rich, and Col. Henry Willis, who founded Fredericksburg, Va.

SIXTH GENERATION.

VI. Francis Willis⁶ (Francis⁵, Henry⁴, —³, —², Francis¹), the son of Francis of the fifth generation; b. Ware River Parish, Gloucester Co., Va., 1690, the third year of the reign of William

and Mary. Married (1715) Lady Anne Rich, daughter of Edward Rich, and niece of Elias Rich, Esq., of Saint Paul, Covent Garden, Middlesex, whose will, dated January 29, 1719, was served in London, February 11, 1719. (See New England Historical and Genealogical Magazine, Vol. XLIX, p. 506.) This Francis Willis was a member of the House of Burgesses in 1748 (Burke's History), and was living in 1749, the date of a deed recorded in York Co., Va.

Anne Rich Willis, b. 1695; d. 1727. One of her ancestors was — Rich, high sheriff of London and Middlesex about 1440. His grandson was Lord High Chancellor of England, whose son, Richard, b. 1498, was made Lord Rich in 1547, and was the first of the family to be ennobled. His descendants were afterwards Earls of Warwick and Holland, but about 1758 the titles became extinct for want of male heirs. When Oliver Cromwell was installed as Lord High Protector of England, Lord Rich led the procession, and his grandson, Robert Rich. Married (1557) Frances Cromwell, the youngest daughter of the Protector. She had been at one time affianced to Charles II, but Oliver forbade the bans, saying that Charles could never forgive him for the death of his father, King Charles I. It is said that Lord Robert Rich visited Virginia in company with his brother, Sir Nathaniel Rich.

The Rich coat-of-arms is described as follows:

Gules, a chevron between three crosses, bottomnée or. Crest on a mount vert a wyvern argent. Motto: Garde la Foy.

Anne Rich Willis is buried in the chancel of Ware Church, Gloucester Co., Va., and the gravestone could be seen in 1897, upon which is inscribed the Willis and Rich arms empaled. Mrs. A. Willis d. June 10, 1727, 32 years old.

The descendants of Col. Francis Willis and Anne (Rich) Willis will henceforth be styled the Gloucester branch of the Willis family, and the descendants of Col. Henry Willis, of Fredericksburg, will be styled the Fredericksburg branch.

The William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. V, p. 172, gives the children of Col. Francis Willis and Anne (Rich) Willis, as follows:

- I. Francis Willis⁷.
- II. John Willis⁷.
- III. Mary Willis⁷. Married Lewis Burwell, President of the Virginia Council in 1736. They had issue:

- I. Lewis Burwell, of Gloucester, member of the House of Burgesses, and of the Convention of 1775-'76. Married Judith, daughter of Mann Page.
- II. A daughter. Married Peter Whiting.
- III. A daughter. Married Armistead Lightfoot.
- IV. Rebecca Burwell, b. May 29, 1746. Married (1764) Jaquelin Ambler, the Treasurer. She was the "Belinda" of Thomas Jefferson's college days.

MAJOR LEWIS BURWELL, THE EMIGRANT.

A discovery which probably interested the largest number of Mr. Keith's Virginia readers was that of the ancestry of Major Lewis Burwell, the emigrant, who now has almost innumerable descendants throughout the United States. It was not the intention of Mr. Keith to present a full genealogy of the family, which has been already quite fully and with a few exceptions accurately done in the *Richmond Standard*. A careful examination of the evidences in the case leads us to believe that Mr. Keith is right in his belief that Lewis Burwell, of "King's Mill," was a son of the second marriage of Lewis Burwell² (with Martha Lear). One point in which there is some confusion in the various published accounts of the family is as to the descendants of President Lewis Burwell. He was appointed to the council, during the session of 1743-'44 (when a Burgess); became acting governor in 1750, and died in a short time. He certainly married, in 1736, Mary, daughter of Col. Francis Willis, and had, says Burke, the historian, three daughters as stated above. President Lewis Burwell¹ had certainly one son, Lewis Burwell², who studied law in the Inner Temple, where his name appears matriculated as son of Lewis Burwell, Esquire, of Gloucester, Va., and who was, as Lewis Burwell, Jr., sheriff of Gloucester in 1767; Burgess in 1769-'74, and member of the Conventions of 1775-'76. His name appears frequently in the *Gazette* as having horses in races, and he was probably the Lewis Burwell, of Gloucester, who is announced by that paper in the spring of 1779 to have died. Nathaniel Burwell and Elizabeth Carter were certainly the parents of Lewis Burwell (President), but the latter married, as has been stated, Mary Willis, and certainly had children, as has been stated.

Rebecca Burwell was left an orphan at the age of ten years. President Nelson and his wife, Elizabeth Burwell, took charge of her. They had no daughter.

Major Nathaniel Burwell was eldest son of Major Lewis Burwell, who by well regulated conduct and firm integrity justly established a good reputation. He died in the forty-first year of his age, leaving behind him three sons and one daughter by Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Robert Carter, Esq., in the year of our Lord Christ 1721.

Of these the daughter, Elizabeth Burwell, married President William Nelson and was the mother of General Thomas Nelson.

One son, Lewis Burwell, was the grandfather of the late Lewis Burwell, of Richmond, etc., etc., and father of Mrs. P. B. Whiting.

The second son was Carter Burwell, of "The Grove." Married Lucy Grymes, the sister of Alice Grymes, wife of Mann Page, and daughter of the Hon. John Grymes. He was the father of Col. Nathaniel Burwell, of Carter Hall, in Frederick Co., Va.

The third son was Robert Carter Burwell, of the Isle of Wight, the father of Nathaniel Burwell, of the same county, whose children were Robert C. Burwell, of Long Branch; Frederick Burwell, and his four sisters.

Fanny Burwell was the first wife of Col. John Page of Rosewell, since Governor of Virginia.

Bishop Meade visited the old seat of the Burwells, about two miles from Rosewell, on Carter's Creek, and in full view of York River. It was formerly called Fairfield, and is so marked on Bishop Madison's map of Virginia. It has for some time past been called Carter's Creek only. The house, as appears by figures on one of the walls, was built either in 1684 or 1694. A portion of it has been taken down; the rest is still strong and likely to endure for no little time to come. The graveyard is in a pasture lot not far from the house. Being unenclosed, it is free to all the animals which belong to a Virginia farm. There is a grove of a few old trees overshadowing it. The place is a favorite resort in summer. The tombs are very massive. The slabs on which the inscriptions are engraved are the same heavy ironstone or black marble with those at Rosewell, Timberneck and Bellfield. The frame work beneath them has generally given way and they lie in various positions about the ground. A large honey-locust, around which