

HOW TO TRACE A PEDIGREE

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How to Trace a Pedigree by H. A. Crofton

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H. A. CROFTON

HOW TO TRACE A PEDIGREE

FOR THE GENEALOGIST.

BY WILLIAM H. WHITMORE, A.M.

ANCESTRAL TABLETS.

A Collection of Diagrams for Pedigrees so arranged that Eight Generations of the Ancestors of any Person may be Recorded in a connected and Simple Form.

Royal 4to, Quarter Roxburgh, gilt, 3/6 post free.

"A difficult plan to explain on paper, but is fascinatingly simple when actually handled, as an American critic truly remarks—'No one with the least bent for genealogical research ever examined this ingeniously compact substitute for the family tree without longing to own it.'—*Reliquary*."

LONDON: ELLIOT STOCK,
62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

PREFACE

I HAVE endeavoured in this little book to give the amateur pedigree-hunter the benefit of what I have personally found to be the most valuable documents to search, and full instructions as to where he can consult them, also the various steps to be taken in tracing a pedigree, without unduly crowding his attention with names and classes of documents which he may need to consult.

I have, however, added most of these in a later part of the book, so that sufficient information should be obtainable within its pages to meet the requirements of the average genealogical searcher in the British Isles.

H. A. C.

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INTRODUCTORY

VARIOUS authorities have derived the word "pedigree" very differently, and it is impossible to say anything definite as to its origin. One of the most picturesque and possibly the most probable derivation is from *pied de grue*—crane's foot. Evidently this was intended as a word-picture, the claws dividing from a bird's foot being suggestive of the different branches issuing from the parent stem in a pedigree. When speaking of stems and branches, our thoughts are naturally directed to trees—hence, of course, the expression a "family tree."

Many nations have preserved the records of family genealogy in their national archives; indeed, all have done this more or less, and all honour to those who have been keenest in the matter, for a nation is composed of families,

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and family or individual history or biography helps to make the history of that nation, while heredity perhaps more than environment tends to explain the complex character with which each individual member of it is endowed.

The study of genealogy, therefore, is a useful one; but, apart from such considerations, there are many who are personally interested in their own ancestry, and would like to be able to trace pedigrees and learn more of their family history; but the probability is that they have not the slightest idea how to set about the work. Others may think (however interested they might be in *results*) that the details they would have to master must be necessarily dry as dust, and that the search itself would run away with a great deal of money.

Well, though it is quite possible to expend large sums in pedigree-hunting, it is by no means necessary to do so; and, though some dry records may have to be plodded through, searches are in general replete with interest. The reader may possibly be reassured on both these points before laying down this little book, the especial aim of which will be to show the amateur how he may become a successful pedigree-hunter.

CHAPTER I

FIRST STEPS IN PEDIGREE-HUNTING

THE reader being anxious to trace his own or a friend's pedigree, or to look for some missing link in an ancestry—how should he set about the work?

To do this the more efficiently, and to save unnecessary expense, he should first ascertain and set down whatever *is already known* on the subject or can be discovered, before proceeding to record-searching.

We will suppose that he is interested in ascertaining the ancestry of a certain man, whose father's name is known and, perhaps, his grandfather's; but he cannot trace the pedigree farther back.

Also, presumably, he may know where this individual and, possibly, his father and grandfather lived. From such data, however slight they may be, his future knowledge is to spring—for he must work from the known to the unknown. This is necessary in all genealogical searches.

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Friends of the family can give him some little particulars—all of which should be carefully noted down—and a visit to the place where he locates the earliest known member of it, if practicable, might be very advantageous.

If this is not possible at the moment, he should write to the vicar of the parish, who, from the parochial entries, would supply information at a moderate cost. There might also be tombstones, with names and dates on them, which would help materially.

Some parish registers have been printed. The searcher should ascertain whether the parish in which he is interested is among the number, and, if so, whether the published entries have been brought down to the date he requires, as in that event he might obtain the necessary information in some large library free of cost. But he is scarcely likely to be so exceptionally fortunate at the start, so will probably have to make the requisite inquiries.

Before doing so, however, our pedigree-hunter should carefully consider the *surname* of the individual in question. If he boasts of an uncommon one, as say, for instance, *Vandeleur*, the chances are that all the Vandeleurs mentioned in the same parish books will belong to his family. If, however, he is a *Smith*—well, the Smiths are not a very small tribe, and several of the name

unrelated to each other might appear in the same parish. To obviate the difficulties which this would entail, our pedigree-hunter should be clear as to the district in the parish or name of the house in which his ancestor lived. But, if he does not know this, how is he to ascertain it?

Well, he probably *will* know it in the case of the latest of his ancestors, say, his father or grandfather, and let him work from that point. Failing this, a study of the family names in each district should reveal the secret.

The *surname* itself, especially if the searcher has been able to trace the ancestry some way back, should be carefully noted with regard to the different forms in which it may appear, for in early days there was a quite delightful variation in the spelling of names; so a somewhat similar sounding name, if spelt differently, should not be ruled out of court as having necessarily nothing to do with the matter, the *odds* being generally on the other side.

Even if parochial registers supply no additional details to those which friends have been able to give, their testimony may be of great importance, for the recollections of old friends are more or less traditional, and the golden rule to be most carefully observed by genealogists, is

Verify your Information.