

A heraldic and physiological curiosity : thirty-nine children of one father and one mother (seven sons and thirty-two daughters), amply proved / by Geo. Grazebrook.

Contributors

Grazebrook, George, 1831-1917.
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

London : Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, [1904]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/f9pn7q8e>

Provider

Royal College of Surgeons

License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The Royal College of Surgeons of England. The original may be consulted at The Royal College of Surgeons of England. where the originals may be consulted. Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

A

6

Heraldic and Physiological Curiosity.

THIRTY-NINE CHILDREN

OF

ONE FATHER AND ONE MOTHER

(SEVEN SONS AND THIRTY-TWO DAUGHTERS),

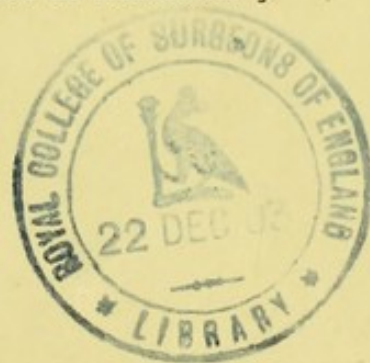
AMPLY PROVED.

BY

GEO. GRAZEBROOK, F.S.A.

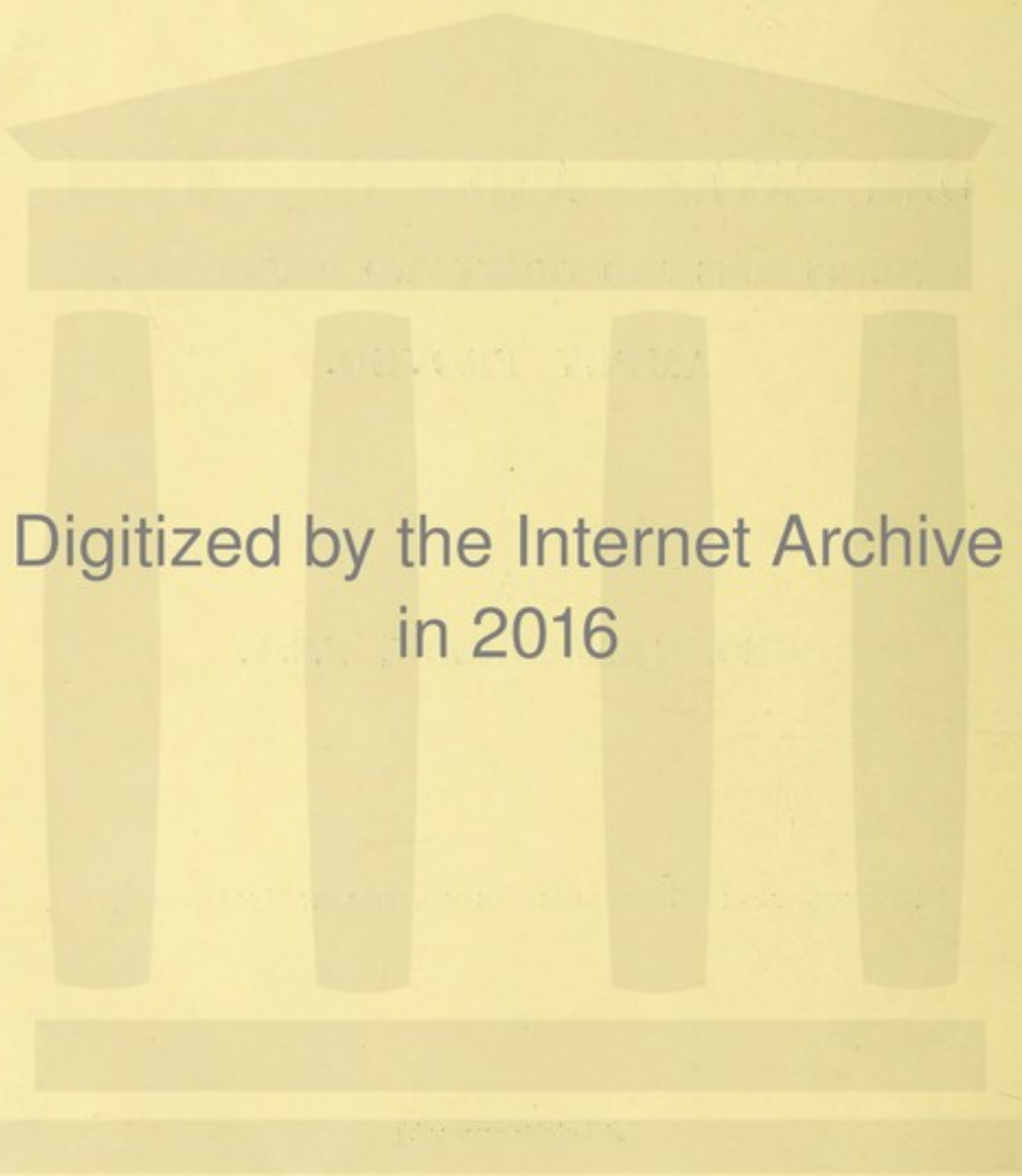
[REPRINTED FROM "MISCELLANEA GENEALOGICA ET HERALDICA."]

[*All rights reserved.*]

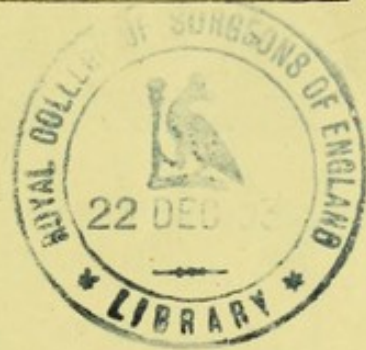


LONDON:

MITCHELL HUGHES AND CLARKE, 140 WARDOUR STREET, W.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016



A

Heraldic and Physiological Curiosity.

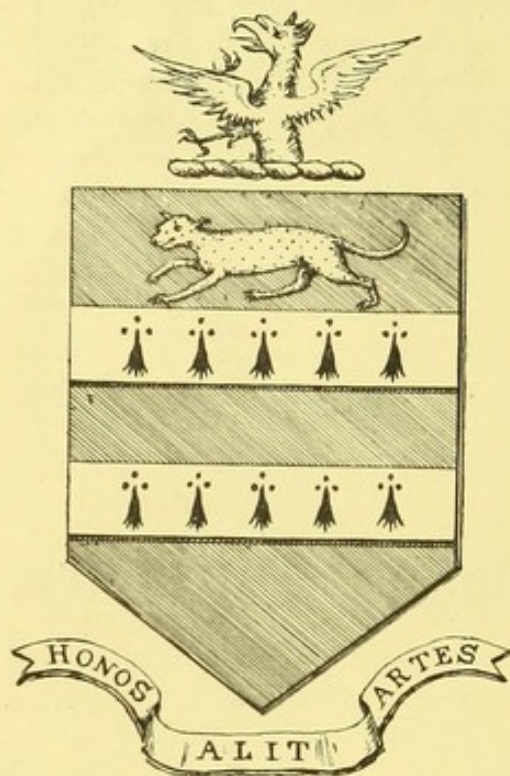
IN July 1698 Thomas Greenhill, chirurgion of London, petitioned the Earl Marshall, that, being the thirty-ninth child and seventh son of one father by one mother, he might be allowed a difference in his Arms to be borne by him in commemoration thereof.

This was transmitted by the hands of Blanche Lyon, who was at this time the Duke's private pursuivant.

At the College of Herald's [Original Grants, vol. iv., fols. 276-9] is the grant which resulted and in these words:—

“To all and singular to whom these presentes shall come Sir Thomas S^t George Knight, Principall King of Armes, and Sir Henry S^t George Knight, Clarenceux King of Armes, send Greeting. *Whereas* Thomas Greenhill of the City of London, Chirurgion [thirty-ninth child and seventh son of William Greenhill of Greenhill in y^e County of Middlesex by his only wife Elizabeth Daughter of John Jones of London], has made application to his Grace Henry Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshall of England, y^t the Arms born and used, under the hand of William Ryley, by his said Father—scilicet, Vert 2 Barrs Argent, in chief a Leopard passant or—may be allowed and confirmed to be born by him wth y^e Alterations of y^e Barrs from Argent to Ermine, and whereas they have borne for their Crests in seals and otherwise a Demi-Griphon, he may be allowed to bear y^e same Gules, powdered with thirty-nine Mullets or. *And* forasmuch as y^e said Earl Marshall, being well satisfied of the Qualifications of y^e said Thomas Greenhill, and in consideration of

his Services to his Grace and his Family, did by Warrant or Order under his Hand and Seal of his Office of Earl Marshall, bearing Date y^e Eight day of August last past, Order and appoint Us to Grant Allow and Confirm y^e said Arms and Crest so



differentiated as abovesaid. *Know* ye therefore y^t We y^e said Garter and Clarenceux, in Pursuance of y^e said Earl Marshall's Order, and by Virtue of y^e Letters Pattents of o^r Offices, to each of us respectively Granted, under y^e Great Seal of England, have allowed and confirmed and by these Presents do Grant allow and Confirm unto the said Thomas Greenhill y^e said Arms and Crest with the Alterations and Additions abovesaid, as in y^e Margin hereof is more plainly depicted. To be borne and used for ever hereafter by him the said Thomas Greenhill and y^e Heirs and other Descendents off his Body lawfully begotten, in Shield, Coat-armour, Penon, Seal, or otherwise according to y^e Law of Armes, withoutt Lett or Interruption of any Person or Persons whatsoever. *In Witness* whereof We y^e said Garter and Clarenceux Kings of Armes have to these Presents subscribed our Names and affixed y^e Seals of our Respective Offices y^e first Day of Septem-

ber, in y^e Tenth year of the Reigne of o^r Sovereigne Lord William y^e Third, by y^e Grace of GOD King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Annoque Domini 1698.

“THOMAS S^r GEORGE, Garter,
“Principall King of Armes.

“HENRY S^r GEORGE,
“Clarenceux King of Armes.”

I would draw attention to several interesting points: The William Ryley mentioned was called Norroy by the Parliament, and advanced to be Clarenceux on the death of Arthur Squibb in May 1646, after which Edward Byshe, who was named Garter in 1646, and Ryley seem to have constituted the whole staff of the Heralds' College and took all the fees they could make. The proclamation 4 September 1660, addressed to Sir Edward Walker (he had been deposed in 1645 and was recreated Garter 1660), declares, “Whereas Edward Bish, Arthur Squibb, and W^m Ryley have for divers years usurped,” etc. It then enacts that all grants of Arms made by them be null and void, and orders them to be destroyed and defaced. (The original is at the College—see my “Earl Marshal's Court in England,” pp. 58-9.) Therefore Thomas Greenhill's father's grant was null and void! Among the Papers at the Heralds' College there is a note that a drawing on

vellum of the Arms, as altered and sought for, had been submitted by Thomas. No doubt this was the work of his friend Blanche Lyon ; and the wording, "in consideration of his services to his Grace and his Family," shewing that Thomas was and had been for some time their medical attendant, readily accounts for the friendly relations of these two—Thomas Greenhill and Blanche Lyon—who put forward and aided Greenhill's application. I think it is extremely rare to get so strong a concurrence of proof. We have (1) Thomas declaring the most unusual and startling fact of the family in which he was thirty-ninth, and on that plea asking its heraldic recognition! (2) Blanche Lyon, the Earl Marshall's own Herald, who had ready means of verifying that extraordinary statement, risks his future career in placing before his Master a statement which the Medical profession declares to be now impossible. (3) The Earl Marshall knew him as his medical attendant, and was willing to testify to such an extraordinary event by ordering the thirty-nine Mulletts as desired to be placed on the Crest in demonstration thereof. (4) The Kings of Arms, jealous of the honour of the Earl Marshall and their own dignity, must have satisfied themselves by evidences—before they would carry to completion what, if not exactly true, would have been a transparent and conspicuous farce—easily disproved, and entailing disgrace and shame on all implicated! I would not have considered all this as at all necessary, except to prove that whatever limit to the extent of families may *now* prevail, we have here an indisputable case in 1698, and physiological changes must have come since!

Among the Papers preserved at the Heralds' College is a volume of much later date, entitled "Pingo MSS.," where, at fols. 276-9, are collections for the Greenhill Pedigree—from William Greenhill of Greenhill, the father of Thomas—after whose name appears "39 children, 7 of which were sons," but only the names of the six sons who survived are entered; all the rest died young. William, the father, is described as Secretary to General Monk (created Duke of Albemarle in 1660; died 3 January 1670) and of Hyde in Abbots Langley, Herts, as well as of Greenhill in Harrow, Middlesex. Cussans, in his "History of Hertfordshire," helps us here, as he notes (vol. iii., p. 88) the conveyance of the Manor of Hyde in 1612 by Lawrence Greene of London to Henry Greenhill of Greenhill Grove in the parish of Harrow, from whose son* William it descended to another William, the father of our Thomas, "chirurgion." Henry, the eldest son of this William and brother of Thomas, sold the Manor in 1714 to Edward Strong, a noted Mason of London. Cussans, when writing his work, had never seen the original grant to Thomas; at p. 97 he gives the date 1698, but quotes from an incorrect copy among the Stow MSS., No. 670, in British Museum, fol. 73.

It is mentioned (Pingo MSS.) that the children were all at single births except one, and that seven only of the thirty-nine were surviving in 1698.

In "Gent. Mag." for 1805, Part I., p. 405, "Chris. Johnson" communicates that a small portrait of Mrs. Greenhill—at Wallingwells, the residence of Sir Thomas Woollaston White, Bart.—has a MS. note on the back: "she had 39 children by

* It is not within the scope of this paper, but I think it likely that if Mr. Cussans had consulted the will of Henry Greenhill of Greenhill in the parish of Harrow, proved at P.C.C. 21 August 1630 by his *brother* William Greenhill, he might have hesitated to write *son*. The reference is 69, Scroope.

one husband. They were all born alive and baptized, and all Single births save one. The last child, who was born after his father's death, was a chirurgion in King Street, Bloomsbury, and wrote *Νεκροκηδεια*.

(Signed) "RICH. ASHBY, a clergyman."

As no family connection seems at all probable, I think this picture must have been purchased and hung up at Wallingwells as a curiosity in natural history (?).

In "Notes and Queries" for September 1852 (First Series, vol. vi., p. 303) is given a MS. note written in a copy of *Νεκροκηδεια* and sent by E. D.: "Mrs Greenhill, mother of the author, had 39 children," etc., just as above, and almost word for word up to "Bloomsbury."

"*Νεκροκηδεια* or the Art of embalming, wherein is shewn the right [*sic*] of burial, the funeral ceremonies, and the several ways of preserving the dead bodies in most nations of the world," etc., 4to, London, 1705 [British Museum Press Mark 454, A. 22], was written by our Thomas Greenhill. Among the subscribers are William Greenhill, Esq. (three copies), and Mr. John Greenhill (one copy). In an allegorical frontispiece, on the left hand top corner, is a curtain against which hangs a shield of Arms and Crest as granted in 1698, but the artist has failed to get thirty-nine mullets into the limited space on the Crest. The work consists of three letters, viz.: (a) To Cha^s Bernard, Serj.-Surgeon to her Ma^{ty} & present Master of the Surgeons Company & one of the Surgeons to St Bart^s Hosp^l; (b) To D^r John Lawson, sometime president of the Coll. of Physicians, London; and (c) To D^r Hans Sloane, Sec^y to the Royal Society and F.C.P., London. The second and third letters are quite interesting reading, and contain accounts of Egypt, the Nile, Pyramids, etc., with many illustrations, culled from the works of travel published at that date.

I would warn my readers against the inaccurate account given in the "Dictionary of National Biography," vol. xxiii., pub. 1890, of Thomas Greenhill (1681—1740?). The writer cannot have seen the original grant of Arms, 1698—"born 1681." Are we to suppose that a young surgeon ætatis 17 (if he could hold a diploma at that age) could venture to apply for such a distinction! and could thus, still an infant, have earned that the Earl Marshall should be "well satisfyed of his Qualifications," and "in consideration of his Services to his Grace and his Family," etc.? Such language could only apply to the experienced medical attendant upon such an illustrious household. Nor does it seem probable that a young man of 24 could have published the book in 1705 and addressed his letters to such distinguished heads of the profession. That may be possible. The other case pointed out is not. If William the father died in 1681, Thomas cannot have been a posthumous child! The grant is absolutely exact evidence, and was given to this Thomas and his descendants. Again, it seems to me that the, I am glad to say anonymous, writer never saw the original grant, or he would not have said that the lady's maiden name was White; she was daughter of John Jones.

The Greenhills have been at Harrow for many generations—I suppose they may be found even as early as the thirteenth century—and there were several branches. The Abbots Langley Registers of Births, Marriages, and Deaths from

1653 to 1680 have been missing for many years, as noted in the Register Census Act Report of 1830 ("Middlesex and Herts Notes and Queries," vol. iii., p. 11). But in the Subsidy Rolls for Harrow we find the following [see "Middlesex and Herts Notes and Queries," vol. iii., p. 136, and iv., p. 187] :—

1642. Subsidy Roll.

In Roxeth—Thomas Greenhill, in lands xx^s.

William Greenhill, in lands xx^s.

John Greenhill, in lands xx^s.

In Greenhill—William Greenhill, gent., in lands iij^{li}.

1675. Hearth Tax.

In Roxeth—William Greenhill pays for 7 chimnies.

John Greenhill, for 5 chimnies.

In Greenhill—M^r Greenhill, for 6 chimnies.

The last shews that Mr. Greenhill held his house in Greenhill ; had it been let the tenant's name would have appeared. I think it likely that the anonymous writer has given the date of the death of another William Greenhill and not the father of Thomas, who was of Greenhill and of Hyde in Abbots Langley.

I have given a picture of the Arms as in the margin, because there is much confusion as to the term "Leopard." In James Coat's "New Dictionary of Heraldry, 1739," is this explanation : French Heralds laid it down that Lions passant-guardant were to be called "Leopards," but English Heralds declined to follow so absurd a distinction. It is thus that we sometimes meet with "the Leopards of England"! Even Papworth, at p. 19, blazons the Greenhill Arms granted 1698 as "Vert 2 bars erm., in chief a lion pass. guard. or," and so it seemed desirable to give the original picture shewing the ordinary "Felis Leopardus."

I, too, found it impossible to get distinctly the important thirty-nine mullets on the Crest ! and so have left it, like the original office copy, merely an uncoloured sketch. It will be noticed that the gryphon is disposed with wings addorsed, so as to leave the greatest possible space for these mullets, but the artist abandoned the attempt to shew them there !

