

THE TOWNLEY ESTATE.

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For more than half a century the reputed descendants of an English nobleman named Lawrence, who was supposed to have married Mary, a daughter of Sir Richard Townley, have been endeavoring to prove their line of descent from the parent stock, *Lawrence-Townley*; and even at the present time, records are being searched to complete a chain which, it is asserted, will establish a valid claim to these celebrated estates, situate principally in Lancashire, England, and variously estimated, with the personalty, to be worth from \$100,000,000 to \$800,000,000.

Having visited these estates in 1885 at the urgent request of maternal relatives (Lawrence), it may be interesting to give some information relative to the pedigree of this notable family of Townleys and their estates.

The Townleys hold a very ancient and prominent position in the history of the county of Lancashire; as far back as the 11th century, Henry de Tunlay appearing to be the first who occupied the "Villa de Tunlay," which name seems to have undergone a succession of changes, being denominated successively, Tunlay, Thonlay, Touneley, Towneley, and Townley, which latter seems now to prevail.

From information acquired by means of historical and Church records, old manuscripts and traditions current at Burnley and other places adjacent to the Townley estates, it appears that the original site of Townley was a tall and shapely knoll, situate southward from the present mansion and adjoining the farm called "Old House," on the eastern and precipitous side of which are remains of trenches, which alone would indicate the former existence of a castle of some old feudal chieftain.

History informs us that in very early times the "Villa de Tunlay" was the residence of one of those independent lords, before the Conquest, who presided over a village and held immediately from the Crown. Neither from written evidence nor tradition does it appear when this elevated situation was abandoned, but the mansion subsequently