

By: Compton Reader, M. A.  
**THE SMITH FAMILY**

making of the West, and incidentally of its notable manufacturers, the Smiths.

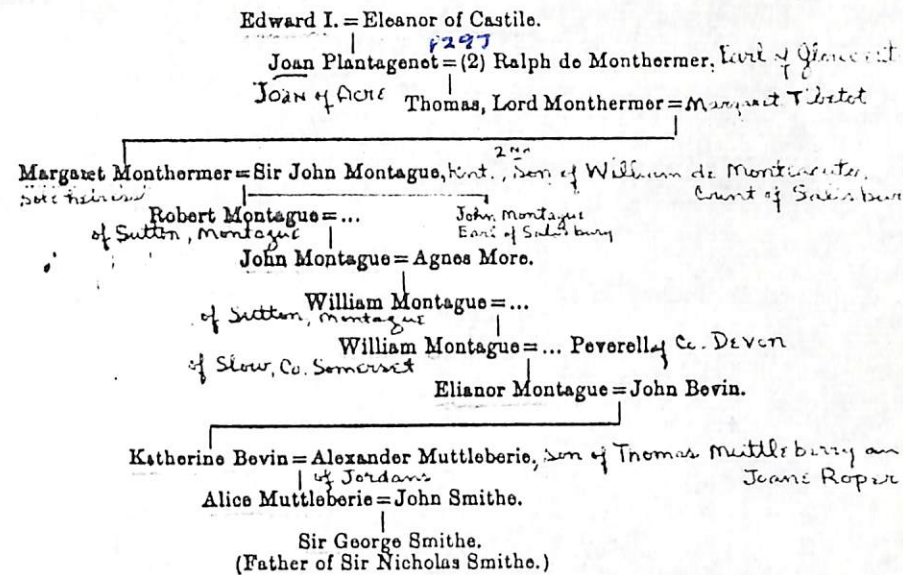
Robert Smith, the Mayor of Exeter, had the honour of entertaining Edward IV. with his consort; and Isacke, in his "History of Exeter," states that in return for his hospitality the King presented a sword to be borne ever after before the Mayor and his successors. Inasmuch as the little western city had propitiated His Majesty with a *douceur* of 100 nobles, the royal favour represented no more than so much discount off, but the Devonians must have felt flattered, for they further presented the Queen and Prince with £20 apiece in gold. The Mayor, however, was not accorded the honour of the accolade, which his largesse and liberality would seem to have honestly earned. *Autres temps, autres mœurs!*

In his pedigree of the family Mr Arthur M. Smith, whose researches deserve high praise—albeit he elects to be severe on the human fallibility of the Heralds—makes Robert the Mayor prime ancestor. But although thus formulating his pedigree, in the text of his work he states that the link (query, links?) between Robert the Mayor in 1469 and William, Mayor in 1553, is wanting—in other words, two generations rest upon the basis of hypothesis, a very dangerous foundation in any case, doubly so in that of a family bearing a name so widely diffused as that of Smith.

This line boasts a royal descent, which, like most others, *teste* Mr Foster, is a trifle circuitous—e.g. through the families of Monthermer, Montague, Bevin, and Muttleberie. Other royal descents—or connections—might probably be traced as satisfactorily. The following appears to have been compiled by, or for, Sir Nicholas Smithe of Larkbear, *circa* 1624, possibly as the result of the Heralds'

**THE WEST COUNTRY SMITHS** 5

Visitation of Devon. I may add that "Muttleberie" is the local phonetic of "Myrtleberry"—a form of nomenclature as prettily poetic as "Muttleberie" is the reverse.



Of the above, Sir John Montague, who died 12 Rich. II., was son of William Montague, Earl of Salisbury. Robert was the second son, and John Montague, the elder, succeeded his uncle as Earl of Salisbury. Their son Thomas, Earl of Salisbury, married Elianna, daughter of Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent, and their daughter and heiress married Richard Nevill, who became, *jure uxoris*, Earl of Salisbury, an arrangement which would not now be sanctioned without a fresh patent.

For the early items in the pedigree which commences with Smith of Borage, the reader is referred to the Visitation of Devon 1623. Here, however, we find a *crux in limine*, for Mr A. M. Smith denies that John Smith, from whom the descent starts, was of Borage, but styles him of Holdich in Thorncomb,