



WATERTON is mentioned in Domesday Book, as having a hall and one carucate of land, the property of Fulcheri; and it is also stated that, at the time of making the survey, it was waste. Together with all the wastes in the soke of Croule, it became,

[p.446] became soon after the Conquest, the property of the Abbot of Selby; and, between the years 1160 and 1179, when Gilbert was Abbot of that monastery, it was called a vil, and given by him to Reiner, the son of Norman de Normanby, he paying the yearly rent of twelve shillings on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary(1). What equivalent was given for this grant does not appear; nor has any other notice of this Reiner been found.

Waterton remained in this family for many generations, and seems to have been, like High Melwood and High Burnham,

what Hunter terms, in his History of the Deanery of Doncaster, "a Gentlehomery, having peculiar privileges and jurisdiction." Like these places, however, it is now degraded into a common farm house. The present owner is Sir John Webb.

Reiner took the name of Waterton. This family is equal, if not superior, in a long line of ancestry, to most of the commoners of England : for there is strong reason to suppose that they were of Saxon origin. It appears, in the survey made by the Conqueror, in 1086, that one Liyulf held lands in Normanebi, in the North Riding of Yorkshire; that Norman had lands in Newuetime; and amongst the clamores, or claims, noticed in the same survey, it is stated, that Norman de Andrecci claimed three oxgangs of land in Normanbi. These persons were all of Saxon descent; and there is strong presumption to believe, from Gilbert's deed, before alluded to, and which is stated to be transcribed from the original, in the possession of Edward Plumpton, of Plumpton, in the county of York, that the family of Waterton is descended from one of them. Between the date of Domesday Book and this deed, one generation must have passed away; it is, therefore, more than probable that Reiner, the son of Norman de Normanbi, was the grandson of the person alluded to in the survey. This Reiner had three sons and a daughter, of whom also nothing is known ; for it appears, from another deed, dated the 12th of Edward the First(2), 1284, that William, son and, heir of Reiner de Waterton, granted to Simon, son of Thomas de Kynton, of Wyton, who had married his sister Agnes, a piece of land and meadow, called the Morefield of Waterton, and also several other pieces of land between Amcotts and Waterton,

[p.447] Waterton "to hold as freely as his father held the same;" and to Richard de Halberge, who had married his daughter Agnes, he gave one bovate and a half of land.

We learn from other documents(3) that John de Waterton acquired the messuage and lands at Walton and Cawthorne Park by marriage with Catherine daughter and heiress of Thomas de Burge, of Walton. William Waterton married the daughter and heiress of Thomas Methley, of Methley near Wakefield, by which marriage he obtained that lordship. Sir Hugh, his cousin, also married Ellen, the daughter of Thomas Mowbray, by which he became possessed of more extensive possessions in the Isle of Axholme.

In the celebrated controversy between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor, respecting their right to the coat of arms-azure a bend or; wherein many of the most eminent warriors of the age were examined, this noble knight(4) was a witness on behalf of Scrope. His evidence was taken on the 10th of June, in the 9th year of Richard the Second, A. D. 1386, at the palace of John of Gant, King of Castile and Leon, in the Friars Carmelites at Plymouth(5) Previous to this transaction he had been knighted, and was retained in the service of John of Gant(6). He had also the office of attorney to

Henry Duke of Hereford, during the Duke's absence from England(7). In the year 1401 he was one of the custodes of the King's son, Thomas of Lancaster,

[p.448] Lancaster, then a minor, going on the King's service as Lieutenant to that country(8). He was a Commissioner to negotiate the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the daughter of the King of Denmark(9). And King Henry the Fourth placed such confidence in him that he was appointed Keeper of Birkhamstead, and Governor(10) of his Majesty's two daughters, Joan and Philippa, as well as of their cousins the Earl of March, and his brother, who were to remain there until the King's return from Wales. In November, 1403, he was a Commissioner for deciding a question relative to the unjust detention of an hostage of the Count de Denice, late prisoner of Robert Hawley, Esq.(11) He was a member of the Privy Council: and, in the second year of Henry the Fourth he was joined in commission with the Chancellor, the Bishops of Hereford and Rochester, to examine into the matter of a complaint made to the Council, concerning certain evil doers in the County of Gloster and Worcester, and in the Forest of Dean. At one period of his life, however, he seems to have fallen under the royal displeasure, and to have been dismissed from the Council Board; for we find that he was re-appointed in the eighth year of this reign.(12)

Sir Hugh Waterton died in July, 1409; when, on an inquisition having been taken, he was returned as seized of the Manor of Wroot, and two parts of the Manor of Epworth.(13) He left two daughters, by Ellen his wife, daughter of Robert Mowbray, Esq. co-heiresses, Blanche, who was living in 1420, and was then the wife of Sir Robert Challons; and Elizabeth, who married John ap Harry, of Paston, in Herefordshire. Elizabeth ap Harry had two sons, Hugh who died without issue, and Richard who made proof of his age in the 9th of Henry the Sixth; but it appears, from the inquisition on the death of Katherine, wife of Sir Roger Leche, in the 8th of Henry the Fifth, that the said Katherine was widow of the deponent; and she is stated to have

[p.449] have married first John Bromwich, and secondly Hugh Waterton. It is not mentioned who were her heirs.

During the period in which Sir Hugh Waterton flourished, a Sir Robert Waterton was no less distinguished for the offices of trust he held and the confidence reposed in him by Henry the Fourth and his successors. He was appointed Master of the Horse(14), and was one of the Commissioners(15) appointed to receive the homage of the Duke of Gueldres; and to treat with him as to his retainer to serve the King in his wars. He was also sent by the Privy Council abroad, to treat of the marriage between the eldest son of the King of the Romans and the King's eldest daughter, and that he should receive, while so occupied, £13. 4s. per day.(16) Two years afterwards he was employed to raise men in the counties of York and Northumberland, for the purpose of crushing the rebellion of Henry Earl of Northumberland; and the King's writ was directed to him to arrest the person of Elizabeth, the wife of Sir Henry Percy deceased, and to bring her to the King; and he was also empowered to settle such fines as were imposed on the persons engaged in the rebellion.(17) In the ninth year of Henry the Fourth, he was commissioned to treat with the ambassadors of France, as to the prolongation of a truce (18) and in the following year, he received, as a compensation for his services, the Manor of Walwich Grange, within the Liberty of Tynedale (19) and all the lands and tenements in Fangfoss, in the county of York, which had belonged to the Earl of Northumberland. The King also granted to him in fee the Manor of Dubaldyke, and the advowson of the church of Gosberkerke, and other lands in Lincolnshire, which belonged to John Bushy, knight, who

[p.450] who was attainted; and which, together with Wath, in Yorkshire, he shortly after exchanged with the Warden of the Hospital of St. Nicholas, at Pomfret, for the Manor of Methley, in the county of York, and Merchdene in the county of Lancaster.(20) He was also Chief Steward of the Duchy of North Trent(21), and a Commissioner of Array for the West Riding of the county of York; and served, in the 12th of Henry the Fourth, the office of High Sheriff for the county of Lincoln; and in the 19th of the same king, he held that office for Yorkshire.(22) Henry the Fourth appointed him one of the executors to his last will and testament.

In the following reign of Henry the Fifth, we find him employed as an Ambassador to France; and he was one of those persons who had the custody of the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, when the King wrote to the Bishop of Durham and the Chancellor, desiring them to take safer measures for the securing these noblemen, especially of the Duke of Orleans, hinting that Waterton, in whose charge the Duke then was, might be seduced by Orleans' flatteries and promises, into neglect of his duty. In consequence of this letter, the Council ordered the Duke to be removed to the care of Nicholas Montgomery; and the Duke of Bourbon to be placed in Waterton's charge.(23) In the 10th of Henry the Fifth, he had the charge of the Lord de Gaucost, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Agincourt. In the reign of Henry the Sixth, he was a Commissioner to treat with the Scotch Ambassadors concerning the release of James, King of Scot land, and settle a final peace between the two kingdoms;(24) and as he still retained his office of Constable of Pomfret Castle, the Sheriff of Yorkshire was directed to deliver to him one-third of the Scotch hostages. In this and the preceding reign he received out of the Exchequer, £276. 6s. 10½d ; having before been paid in advance the sum of £150.(25).

The following letter written from Methley, about five miles from Pomfret, occurs in the Collection of Letters, illustrative of English History, published by Mr. now Sir Henry Ellis. "Ryght

[p.451] "Ryght excellent, high, and ryght myghty Prynce and most dreddeSoverengne Lorde, I recommede me to your highnes, as lowly as any symple trewe liege man and subgette, kan best thynke and devyse, thankyng all mighty God of your graciouse spede and right grete conquest, wythe the prosperite of your own persone, my lorde of Clarence, my lorde of Exetre, and all my lordes beyng there in your worshipfull servyce, with all the remenaunt of your ryghte worshipfull oste. As I have conceyv'd by your ryght honorable letters wrytten at your cytee of Rowen, the 11th day of Marche, the whych I have receyved ryght late syth Pask, wythe other your lettres under your pryve seale, charging me to assaye by all the menesse that I kan, to exyte and styre sych as bene able gentlemen wythin the shyre and the contre that I dwell in, to kome ovyr to yowe at your wage, armyd and arayde as langys to thair estate, to do youre servyce; and for to certifie als well to yowe as to your Counsell of their answeere and their will. The whyche your high comaundement I have bygunne to laboure upon, and sall trewely for thee dayly wyth all my myghte till I have perfourmed your forsayde comaundement. And upon Wedynesdaye next sall your Justice sitte at Yorke, upon the deliverance of the gaole there and a cession of the peese, also at whyche tyme I propose to speke with many of the gentylys there, and als soon aftyr as I may be answerd, I shall certifie as you have lyked to comaunde me wyth all the haste possible. Ryght excellent, high, and ryght myghty Prince and most dredde Sovereigne Lorde, I beseeche the blessed Trinity to spede yowe and keep yowe, and all your worshipfull oste, and send yowe soon into your wralme of Englande, with a joyouse maryage and a good pees, for his mykill mercy. Written at your owne logge of Methley, the xii day of April. Your trewe liege man and subgette,
ROBT. WAT'TON."

Sir Robert Waterton married Cecilie, daughter and heir of Mr. Robert Fleming, of Woodhall, in Methley, and had two sons, Robert and John, and one daughter Jane, who married Sir Pyonell Wells, knight. He died in the third of Henry the Sixth, A. D. 1424. At the time of his decease he was seized of the Manors of Methley Woodhall, in Methley, Barley and Houghton

[p.452] Houghton, certain lands in Potterton, near Barwiche in Elmet, in the county of York, and of other manors, lands, tenements, rents, services, hereditaments, with the appurtenances in Clareburgh, Welborne, Aunton, Scalsworth, Grin ley, Walesby, and Doughton, in the county of Nottingham ; of the Manor of Dobledeyke with other lands, tenements, and services in Gosburton, Pinchbeke, Spalding, and Quadringe, in the county of Lincoln; and other lands, tenements, rents, and services in Adlingfleete, Garthorpe, Luddington, Amcoates, and Westwode, in the Isle of Axholme.

Contemporary with these two gallant knights, Sir Hugh [d. 1409] and Sir Robert [d.1424], was John Waterton, who was an esquire of the body to the Prince of Wales. It appears that succeeded Sir Robert Waterton, as Master of the Horse to the King, for he accompanied Henry the Fifth to the invasion of France, with a retinue of sixty persons, and was present at the battle of Agincourt (26),

after which, the King pledged to him certain gold cups for the payment of his wages. He(27) was also Steward of the lordship of Kirketon Soken, in the county of Lincoln; and the King granted him all the lands and tenements which belonged to William de Bowes(28), within the city and suburbs of York, of the yearly value of ten marks, which had been in the possession of Ralph Delve, attained. He held also the following offices of trust and importance, - ambassador to treat with the Duke of Burgundy, upon secret affairs concerning our Lord the King and the good of his whole realm, for which service he received as his wages £40(29); Commissioner to treat for a personal interview or convention between the King and John Duke of Burgundy; and he was appointed to(30) treat of all matters which had been declared by Hertonk Van Clux, on behalf of the King of the Romans(31). He was one of the persons empowered to grant letters of protection to the French ambassador coming to Calais to treat for peace(32). John Waterton was Comptroller to the Royal Household in the reigns of Henry the Fifth and Sixth, and died in the 9th year

[p.453] year of that reign. He married Eleanor, daughter of John Lord Clifford, and had issue only Eleanor, a daughter, who married Sir John Bapthorpe. During the reign of Henry the Seventh I have not been able to trace the members of this family, as taking a prominent part in public affairs; but in the reign of Henry the Eighth, we find that the office of Master of the King's Horse was still held by a Sir Robert Waterton: for, on his refusing to acknowledge the supremacy, that tyrant wrote to him the following laconic letter, "Waterton, I will take thy estate, but I will save thy life. Henry Rex", a threat which was immediately executed. After this time, the family continuing firm in their attachment to the See of Rome, were not employed in any office of trust or emolument, except during the reign of Philip and Mary, when Thomas Waterton was High Sheriff for the county of Lincoln and for the county of York, and one of her Majesty's honourable Council established in the north parts. They suffered severely under the Stuart family, from penalties and fines. Like many other Catholics, however, during the great rebellion, this family continued loyal to the Crown; and Robert Waterton was killed in the battle of Marston Moor, and brought in a sack to be buried at Methley. Shortly after which, that active servant of the devil, Oliver Cromwell, sat down before Walton Hall, with a small force, and with his own hand fired a musket(33) at the widow, as she indignantly shut the gates in his face. He remained six days, destroyed the draw-bridge, drove off the horses; but the place was so strong and well defended that he was obliged to retire without having reduced it. On the Pretender's expedition, in 1745, Waterton took arms, and for the better security of the remaining part of his estate, he deposited, before he set out

[p. 454] out, some portion of his title-deeds with a neighbour. After the defeat of Prince Charles, at Culloden, he was sent prisoner to York, his house was ransacked, all his arms taken away, and he was compelled to send his valuable horses to Wakefield, to be kept there at his own expense, during the pleasure of Government, and was sentenced to pay double taxes. Owing to these troubles, the deeds were never returned, and the loss to the family was irreparable.

This ancient and honourable family can boast of ten belted knights, and has furnished three ambassadors to the court of France. They have also, as is evident from this brief sketch of their history, held many offices of great trust and importance under the Crown. While we regret that the country should, under any circumstances, have been deprived of their services, we cannot but admire the fervour and sincerity of that piety which has led them to make such sacrifices, and to endure such losses and privations, for the sake of their religion. Nor is it easy to conjecture by what other motives they could have been actuated. Many families complied with all the changes in ecclesiastical affairs, made by Henry the Eighth and during the reign of his son Edward the Sixth, enriched themselves out of the spoils of the Religious Houses, and afterwards, in the reign of Queen Mary, were reconciled to the Roman Catholic Church. No such stain, however, can be cast on this honourable house, whose members have always been "Bold and true, Who fraud and falsehood never knew."

Notes

1. Harleian MSS. No. 381, folio 171.
2. Harleian MSS. 381.
3. Harleian MSS. 4680
4. Grosvenor Roll, 4to. 1832.
5. The Commissioners appointed to receive this evidence, by the Constable of England, were Lord Fitz Walter, Sir John Marmion, and Sir John Kintwode. Sir Hugh's evidence was as follows. — "Hugh Waterton, Esquier, p'ductr pr. lap'tie Mons. Richard Lescrope, jurez etexamanez, dit qil ad vewe et conu le dit Mons. Richard estre armeez, et le chaump d'azur ove un bende d'or, et autres de son lynage armeez en mesmes les armes, ove differences en div'sez irages et jo'nes et unqs devant le debate comence navoit vewe ne conu la cont'arie mes q' les ditz armes ount totdys este au dit Mons. Richard et ces auncestris, come il ad oy pler de veux prs chivallers et esquires, et come coe et publicke vois et fame laboure en cest p'cie. Et content de Mons. Robert Grovenour unqes ne vist ne orast pier qil portast navoit tielx armes dagur ove une bende dor tanq' la darrein irage en Escoce ove n'rep le Roy.
6. Regist. Ducis Johannis Lancastrian.
7. Foedera. iii, pt. IV, p.149.
8. Foedera, iv, pt. i, p. 16.
9. Foedera, iv, pt. i, p. 28.
10. Foedera, iv, pt. i. p. 32.
11. Foedera, iv, pt. i, p. 58, 62.
12. Sir H. Nicholas' Proceedings of the Privy Council.
13. Testa de Neville.
14. In the Parliament held at Westminster, in the 1st of Henry the Fourth, the Duke of Aumerle having been accused by the Commissioners of having, among other offences, removed the officers of the Crown, and appointed his own favourites, he declared that he had removed no officer except Sir Robert Neville, in whose place he had appointed Robert de Waterton. Rot Pat. iii, 149.
15. Foedera, iv, pt. i, p. 2.
16. Cot. MSS. Cleopa. F. iii, fol. 22.
17. Foedera.
18. Foedera.
19. Cal. Pat. 256.
20. Patent Rolls.
21. Patent Rolls, iii, 630.
22. Drake.
23. Foedera, vol. ix, p. 801.
24. Rot. Scac. ii, 240.
25. Issue Rolls of the Exchequer.
26. History of the Battle of Agincourt, by Sir Harris Nicholas.
27. Rot. Normaniae.
28. Cal. Rot. Pat.
29. Issue Rolls of the Exchequer.
30. Rot. Franc.
31. Gascon Rolls.
32. Rot. Norm.
33. This bullet is still in the massive oak door in the gateway, which part of the ancient fortifications are still preserved. The besieged had a swivel which carried an iron ball; during the attack, a man from Oliver's band, was seen to go up a path through an adjoining wood to the village, with an empty keg on his shoulder, to be filled with ale; one of the defenders conjecturing that he would return by the same rout, levelled the swivel with such an accurate aim that, as soon as the man reached the spot, he fired, and hit him, and broke his leg. Tradition from father to son did not fail to point out the spot where the ball entered the ground. The father of the present Charles Waterton dug for it, and found it, and it is now preserved in the Museum at Walton Hall,

The History and Topography of the Isle of Axholme, Being that Part of Lincolnshire Which Is West of Trent.
Rev. William Brocklehurst Stonehouse, M.A. 1 January 1839, pp. 445 – 454.

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