

Henry Jones, M.A., Mr. Joseph Arnall, Leicester; Mr. W. Maxfield, Leicester; Captain Pearson, South Kilworth; Mr. Montague South, Leicester.

The CHAIRMAN and MR. BELLAIRS each exhibited coins.

MR. HUNT exhibited drawings of ancient incised stones found built up in the Norman portion of the walls of Thurnby Church, in this county.

The REV. J. H. HILL laid upon the table the following Paper on the family of Bassett, with pedigrees of the Bassetts of Sapcote, Weldon, Drayton, &c.

THE BASSET FAMILY.

THE Bassetts, Lords of Drayton in Staffordshire, derived their descent from one Thurstane who held five hides of land in Drayton at the time of the Conqueror's Survey, and who bore for his arms, three Bars undé, Gules. He was the father of Ralph Basset, who was raised from a humble position by Henry I, King of England, and was favoured by that monarch with large possessions, and made superior to Earls and other illustrious subjects. That he was of inferior extraction, seems however, rather to enhance than diminish his merits, when it is considered how much respect was paid in that age to nobility of birth. (*Ord. Vit.* 805—13.)

He held the office of Justice of England, the authority annexed to which was then so great that the Justiciar presided in whatever Court he pleased for the administration of Justice. (*Ord. Vit.* 629.) He had three sons, the eldest was Geoffrey Ridel, whose son resumed the surname of Basset, and whose posterity were Lords of Weldon, who bore for their arms, Paly of six Gules and Or, within a bordure Azure, bezante; the younger was William Basset, ancestor of the Bassetts of Sapcote, Leicestershire; Cheadle and Blore, Staffordshire; Langley, Derbyshire, and Rushton and Haddon, Northamptonshire. The Basset of Sapcote family, bore for their arms, three piles Gules, and Or.

Ralph Basset aforesaid, was possessed of Colston in Notts., and gave the Abbey of Eynsham in Oxon. for the support of an additional monk in that convent, a carucate of land in Kinalton (Notts.), parcel of his manor of Colston Basset in that neighbourhood, with ten oxen, and having designed to end his days as a monk in the Abbey of Abingdon, was taken ill at Northampton before he commenced the execution of that plan; he called for the habit of a monk to be placed upon him, and died soon afterwards; and was buried in the Chapterhouse at Abingdon, to which monastery he sent a considerable sum of money when he was dying, and gave four hides of land in Chidelsworth. (*Dugdale Reg. de Abingdon in Bib. Cotton.*)

Richard Basset, son and heir, held the office of Justice of

England, after his father, in the latter part of the reign of Henry I, and during the whole of Stephen's reign, and being very wealthy, he built a strong castle upon his inheritance at Mosterol in Normandy. (*Ord. Vit.* 905.) He served the office of Sheriff with Alberic de Vere, for the Counties of Leicester and Northampton, in the 5th year of King Stephen, and in the same year he gave £40. to the King for the custody of the lands of Geoffrey Ridel, Nicholas his brother being dead; and he gave two hundred marks and six light horse for the livery of lands which Nicholas held of the King *in capite*. (*Rot. Pip.* 5. *Stephen*). He married Matilda, the only daughter and heir of Geoffrey Ridel, by Geva his wife, daughter of Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester. This Richard Basset, and Matilda his wife, founded the Priory of Launde in Leicestershire, and endowed it with the villages of Lodington, (in which the Priory was founded) and Frisby with their churches in this county, and the churches of Weldon, Weston, Welham, Pitesle, Esseby, Warleie, Kettleby, Oadby, Coleston, Adersage, Stonton, Thatcham, Patingham, Widerley, and Walshull, which foundation and endowment were confirmed by King Henry I., in the time of William, Archbishop of Canterbury, High Sheriff of Leicester, and others, between 1123 and 1125. (*Monast. Anglic.* 11. 90.) They also gave to the Canons of Launde, the churches of Holt and Brinton, the church of Ernhall, half of Grimstone with the church, Salterford, Fleckney, and Peatling; eleven bovates of land in Dalby, five virgates of land in Norton, one carucate in Holwell, and one in Walcote and Upetun. (*Mon. Ang.*)

Geoffrey Ridell, son of Richard Basset and Matilda, in the twelfth year of King Henry II., made a return unto the King of the Knights fees of the Barony, in which it was stated that Richard Basset, his father, held at the death of King Henry I, 184 carucates of land, and one virgate, for fifteen Knights' fees; that the wife of Ralph Basset, held eight carucates in dower in Ragdale and Willowes, and that Ralph Basset held of him seven and a half carucates of land in Dunton Bassett; that he had twenty-four carucates in Weston by Welland and Weldon, and that the aforesaid Ralph held Colston, which was of the honor of Wallingford, for the service of one Knight. In 1177, Geoffrey was nearly fined for trespasses committed in the King's forest of Rockingham, near Weldon. He had two wives, by the first of whom he had a son Richard, who resumed the name of Basset, and by the second, Sybil, sister of William Maudit he had two sons, Hugh Ridel of Wittering, and Alan Basset of North Luffenham, Rutlandshire, and a daughter. (*Rot.* 32. *Hen.* II.) Richard Basset, the eldest son, lived at Weldon, and had a son Ralph Basset, whose posterity continued at Weldon in the male line, until the time of King Henry IV., when the inheritance of the family became divided between the heirs general. But though the Bassets of Weldon, who were the eldest branch of

the family held their lands of the King *in capite* by Barony, not one of them appears upon record ever to have had summons to Parliament amongst the Barons of the realm. (*Test. de Nevill*, 34).

Ralph Basset, younger son of Richard Basset and Matilda Ridell, is mentioned in the Charter of Canwell Priory as one of the heirs of Geva Ridell (6 and 7 Henry II., *Rot. Pip.*). He was High Sheriff of Leicestershire and Warwickshire in 1163; his younger brother, William Basset, served for him in 1164. He died in 1165, when his widow held eight carucates of land in Ragdale and Welles, under Geoffrey Ridell, her husband's brother (*Lib. Nig. in Scacc.*, f. 89, p. 210). This Ralph, in the time of Hugh, Archdeacon of Leicester, about 1151, for the health of his soul and Alice his wife, and of their sons, granted to God and the Church of St. Giles, of Canwell, and the monks there, the Church of Ragdale, with all the appurtenances, and the Church of Dunton, and four virgates of land in his demesne in Dunton, and one virgate there, which was given to them by Osbert, the Chaplain, and two mills and the land of Stickerslea, etc.

Ralph Basset, son of the last named Ralph, in 1165 had seven carucates and a half of land in Dunton Basset, of the Barony of his uncle, Geoffrey Ridell, Lord of Welden (*Lib. Nig. in Scacc.*, 89, p. 210).

Ralph Basset, son of the last, in 1234 was summoned to send a Knight to Portsmouth, prepared with horse and arms, to serve the King under the Earl of Brittany (*Rym. Fœd.* I. 331). He held lands in Ragdale and Wylles, Dunton, Weston, Acthorpe, Goadby, and Colston (*Testa de Nevill War. et Leic.*). In 1242, after the breach of the truce between the Kings of England and France, he was summoned by King Henry to attend him with horse and arms for his support in the approaching conflict (*Rym.* I. 405).

Ralph Bassett, son of the last, in the 42nd of Henry III., had summons, with other great men of that age, to attend the King at Chester, prepared with horse and arms, to oppose the incursions of the Welsh (*Claus.* 32, *Henry III.*). In the 47th Henry III., he appears to have entered into a treaty to serve Prince Edward (*Rym. Fœd.* I., 773). In the 48th Henry III., he was in arms with Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, and the Barons, against the King (*Rot. Fin.* 48 *Hen.* III.); and in the next year, after the success of the Barons at Lewes, he was appointed Governor of the castles of Salop and Bruges, and was, on the 16th of September of that year, prohibited by the King from attending the tournament appointed by the Barons to be held at Dunstable (*Pat.* 49, *Hen.* III., 101.), but fighting valiantly in the same cause at Evesham, when the Barons were discomfited by Prince Edward, he there lost his life; and the historian of that age tells us that though Simon de Montfort, when he discovered the power and

disposition of the army of the Prince with which he had to contend on that memorable occasion, he recommended Ralph Basset and Hugh le Despencer to save themselves by flight, that their services might be reserved for better opportunity, they nobly disdained to sacrifice their fame to the security of their persons, and resolved to share the same fate of their heroic companion and leader.

Margaret, his widow, the daughter of Roger de Someri, Baron of Dudley, humbly representing her sad condition to the King, soon after the death of her husband had the lordship of Patyningham, Staffordshire, Whatton, in Leicestershire, and Exton, in Rutlandshire, granted to her by the King during his pleasure, for her support (*Pat. 50, Hen. III., 46*). She took the habit of religion, previous to which she enfeoffed her son, Ralph Basset, with the lands she held of the King *in capite*. Ralph had summons (5 *Edw. I.*) from the King to attend him at Worcester (*Claus. 5 Edw. I.*), with horse and arms, to march against Llewellyn, son of Griffin, Prince of Wales (*Rot. Wal.*) and in 10 *Edw. I.*, he was called to provide horse and arms against the Welsh, and in 11th Edward I., he was commanded to be at Shrewsbury, to consider the judgment to be passed on David, son of Griffin, Prince of Wales, then a captive (*Rot. 11 Edw. I.*). In the 22nd Edward I. he was summoned to Portsmouth, with horse and arms, to proceed into Gascony (*Rot. v. 380, 22 Edw. I.*), and in 25th Edward I., he was with the King in Flanders. He was called into Scotland 26th Edward I. He was summoned to Parliament as a Baron by writ, 23rd Edward I. He had two wives, Helewise was the first, and the second was Johanna, daughter of John de Grey, Justice of Chester.

Ralph Basset, son and heir of the last Ralph, had a charter for free warren in his Manor of Ragdale, Leicestershire, 29th Edward I., and was in service of the King, in Scotland, in the same year; and in the 34th Edward I., attended the King in his expedition against Scotland (*Rot. Scot. 29, Edw. 1*).

In the 10th Edward II., he was in the service of the King in Scotland, in the retinue of John de Warren, Earl of Surrey (*Rot. Scot. 10, Edw. II.*). In 11th Edward II., he was made Governor of Stafford Castle (*Rot. Tin.*). In 14th Edward II., he was made Governor of Northampton Castle (*Ib.*). In 15th Edward II., he was joined in a commission with John de Someri, to seize the Castle of Kenilworth, for the King, by reason of the forfeiture of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, and was appointed steward of all the Castles and lands of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, in the Counties of Leicester, Stafford, and Derby. In the same year he was appointed Seneschal of Gascony, and had a grant for his faithful services of Buckby, Northants., late belonging to the Earl of Lancaster (*Dugdale de Scacc., Edw. II., Rot. 104*). In the 16th Edward II., he was a commissioner for degrading the Earl of

Carlisle from his dignity of Knighthood, preparatory to his execution, for corruptly betraying the English army to the Scottish invaders (*Pat. 16 Edw. II.*). When Governor of Gascony, he offended the King of France, by resenting and punishing the insolence of the inhabitants of a town under his government, belonging to the latter, whose houses he destroyed, killing some of the rebels, for which he was summoned to the court of France, and disobeying the command he was banished. He took refuge at Monpesade and defended himself there, and although the King of France demanded his surrender, King Edward refused to deliver him up (*Thos. de Wals., 1324*). He was recalled from his Governorship, 17th Edward II., but was reappointed the next year, and during his continuance there he was joined with Edmund, Earl of Kent, in a commission to treat of a marriage between Prince Edward and the daughter of the King of Arragon (*Rot. Vasc., 18 Edw. II.*). In the 19th Edward II., he was appointed Constable of Dover Castle and Warden of the Cinque Ports, and was that same year commanded to array forces to oppose the attempts of the Queen and Mortimer (*Claus. 19, Edw. II.*). In 1st Edward III., he was summoned to Newcastle on Tyne, prepared with horse and arms, to march into Scotland against Robert Brus, and in 6th Edward III., he joined in a commission for concluding a general treaty with the Regent and great men of Scotland (*Claus., Edw. III.*).

In 7th Edward III. he attended the King at the siege of Berwick, and was one of the English Barons who sealed the treaty then entered into with Patrick de Dunbar, Earl of March, etc. (*Rot. Scot. 7 Edw. III.*). In the 8th Edward III., he was appointed Justice of North Wales during the King's pleasure (*Pat. 8 Edw. III.*). In the 11th Edward III., he was one of the Commissioners to explain to the county of Stafford the endeavours which had been used by the King to avoid a war with France (*Claus. 11 Edw. III.*). He was called again to Newcastle upon Tyne, with fifty men-at-arms, to repel the invasion of the country by the Scots, and for the defence of the realm (*Claus. 15 Edw. III.*). In the 16th Edward III., he was summoned to attend the King in Brittany. Having been a benefactor to the Abbey of Launde, in Leicestershire, which house was his ancestor's foundation, the Canons thereof founded a perpetual Chantry, for one Priest to celebrate divine service daily in their Conventual Church, for the health of his soul, and the soul of Johanna his wife (*Dugdale, Bar., I. 380*). This Ralph, Lord Basset, was summoned to Parliament as a Baron, from the 28th Edward I. to 16th Edward III., inclusively.

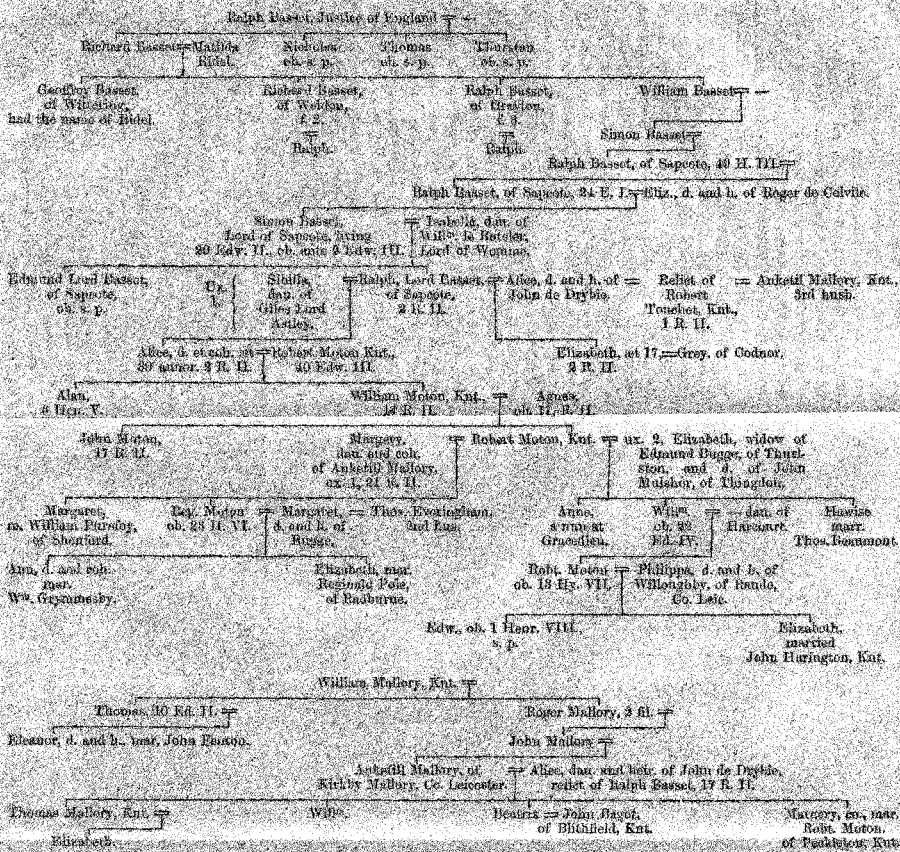
Ralph Basset, grandson of the former, was contracted in marriage at four years of age, to Johanna, daughter of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. He attended the Prince of Wales in his ex-

pedition to Gascony, having Robert de Baieaux of his retinue (29 *Edw.* III.). He was in France and Normandy with King Edward the following year, and was in the Holy Land in the succeeding year. He was at the coronation of Richard II., and in that same year was in the service of the King in France, and was nearly shipwrecked upon his return the year following. In the 3rd Richard II., he was appointed one of the four chief Captains sent with Thomas of Woodstoke, Earl of Buckingham, to the aid of the Duke of Brittany, and had two hundred men-at-arms, and two hundred archers, and nine knights, included, being then a Banneret (*Pat. 3 Rich. II.*, 3-11).

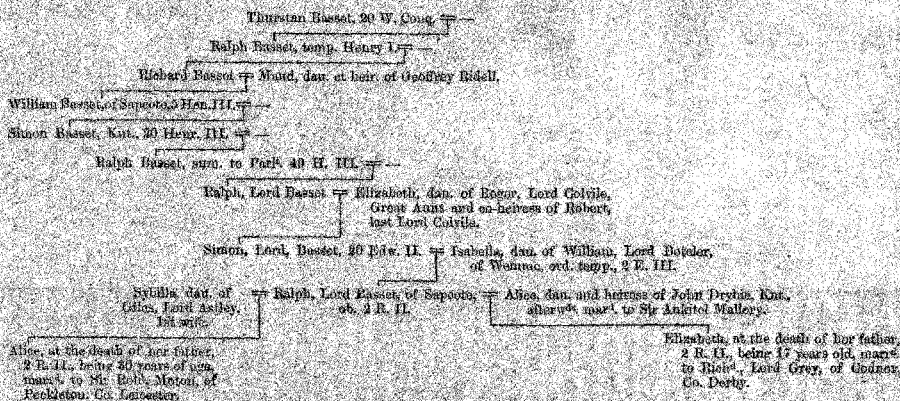
In the 9th year of Richard II., he attended John, Duke of Lancaster, with a great army, into Spain, for the recovery of the inheritance of Constance of Castile, the Duke's consort. He was one of the persons who highly disapproved of the King's attachment to the Duke of Ireland, and when the King feared public commotion, and asked the citizens of London for their support, this Lord Basset being present, he said "that he had ever been and ever would be true and faithful to his monarch, and would ever enter the field for him in a just cause, but that he would not risk a broken head for the Duke of Ireland" (*H. Knighton*, 2698). This Lord Basset was a K.G., and succeeded to the state of Lionel, Duke of Clarence (*Rot. Claus.*).

Lord Basset made a testament at London in the 7th Richard II., by which he bequeathed his body to be buried in the Cathedral of Lichfield, if he should happen to die in England, and appointed a hundred marks to be bestowed on his funeral, and paid the cathedral two hundred marks for the keeping of his obit; he gave five hundred marks to the Friars' Augustines at Atherstone for the repair of their house and church, and two hundred marks to the Grey Friar's at Northampton, for the repair of their church, cloister, and refectory; three hundred pounds to the White Friar's at Coventry, and two hundred marks to the Hospital of our Lady at Bethlehem, without Bishopsgate, London. And he appointed that his whole stock of cattle upon all his lordship's lands should be distributed amongst his poor servants at the discretion of his executors. (*Dugdale, Bar. I.* 380.) But this was not his last testament for by another testament, dated 1389, he bequeathed his body to be buried in the cathedral church of Lichfield, near the Altar of S. Nicholas, and gave two hundred pounds besides certain tenements in Lichfield and Walsall, to the Priory of Canwell, for augmenting their convent with nine monks, and to find a priest perpetually to pray for his soul and the souls of his ancestors etc., and to keep his obit with certain lights, to make a wall round the water near the cathedral, and a new belfry; he also ordained that the person whomsoever it should be that should first bear his surname and arms, according to the appointment of his last will,

Pedigree of Basset of Drington



Pedigree of Basset of Sapote



In Sapote Church were the following Arms of Basset:—
 Or three piles, Gules, a canton, vary in every window.
 Or three piles, Gules, a canton, Ermine.
Barton's Leicestershire, p. 228.

should have the use of his great velvet bed during his life time; but not to be alienated from him who should bear his name and arms: and to the same person he also bequeathed four silver basins and two ewers, all graven with his arms; and a cup with a cover gilt bearing a ring on the side of it. And he appointed Walter Skyrlaw, Bishop of Durham, Richard Scrope, Bishop of Winchester, and Sir Richard Scrope, Knight, his executors. (*Courtney*, f. 233-8). The last of these testaments which relates merely to his personality, alludes to his last will, and such a will there appears to have been, for Dugdale says that this Lord Basset enfeoffed Walter Skyrlaw, Bishop of Durham, and others, on the 10th of January, 13th Richard II., of all the lands he held in fee simple, and by his will directed them to enfeoff his nephew, Hugh Shirley thereof, provided that he should bear the name and arms of Basset, with remainder to William de Stafford, brother of Edmund, Earl of Stafford. It seems however, that Sir Hugh Shirley did not perform the condition. An inquisition taken in Surrey on the 19th of July, 14th Richard II., finds that this Ralph died on the 10th of May then last, and that Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, Thomas, Earl of Stafford, and James, Lord Audley, were the next heirs. (*Esch. 14 Ric. 2. n. 9. Surrey.*)

Besides Johanna de Beauchamp, Ralph, the last Lord Basset had another wife also named Johanna, to whom it is probable he was married in 3rd Richard II., when he accompanied Thomas, Earl of Buckingham, to Brittany. This lady was daughter of John, Count of Montfort, and sister to John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany; (*Claus. 18. Rot. 2.*) in the 21st Richard II., she had a grant of the whole county, castle, and manor of Richmond in fee from the King, by the name of Johanna, the widow of Ralph Basset, Knight, and sister to the King's brother, John, Duke of Brittany, and Earl of Richmond, (*Pat. 21. R. II. 3. 10.*) By her testament dated at the Manor House of Cheshunt, Herts., March 27, 1402, she directed her body to be buried in the Abbey of Lavendon, near Olney, Bucks., and she died in the 4th Henry IV., at which time she held the manor of Radcliffe upon Soar, a fourth part of the manor of Barrow upon Soar, a third part of the manor of Ragdale and Willows, and Radcliffe upon the Wreke, with several other manors, all which were the inheritance of Ralph, last Lord Basset. Thorold and Dugdale both say that the feoffees of the last Lord Basset, in the 2nd Henry VI., gave up their interest in the manors of Radclyffe upon Soar, Ragdale, Willows, Barrow upon Soar, Dunton, and Watton, etc. (*Esch. 4 Henry IV. n. 38.*)

The history of this great family which has been left in much obscurity by all our genealogists, is involved in especial confusion as to the two or three last descents, for in a family where there is a succession of the same Christian names, it is often very difficult to distinguish the precise descents.