

NOTES ON THE BUSLINGTHORPE BRASS.

By the Rev. John Sansom, B.A.

(READ 14TH JANUARY, 1858.)

+ "Issy gyst Sire Rychard le Fiz Sire John de Boselyngthorp del alme dery
Deus eyt mercy."

Such is the inscription round the slab, in which the Buslingthorpe Brass is fixed. The stone and brass are described by Boutell, (*Christian Monuments*, 1854, p. 146,) who fixes the date at c. A.D. 1280. Boutell also supplies the arms, (the shield, on which they were originally engraved, having been lost,) as "*Or, a chevron, sable.*" These arms, however, supplied from a contemporary roll of arms, differ slightly from the Buslingthorpe arms, as described in the roll, temp. Ed. II., published in the Parl. Writs by Sir Francis Palgrave, and also by N. H. Nicolas, Esq., (Pickering, 1829,) where they stand as follows:—

"Sire Richard de Boselingthorp, de argent, od le chef endente de sable, e un cheveron de goules."

These latter were the arms of "Richard, son of Richard de Buselyngthorp, Knt.;" as (a gentleman, who has consulted the document, informs me) is the description given of Richard Buslingthorpe, the *younger*, in the copy of a deed of transfer, dated 1282, to be found in Add. MSS. 6118, in the Brit. Mus. It is observable, that this date goes far to bring back the death of the *elder* Richard, whom the brass commemorates, and the son's succession to the property, to Boutell's date of c. 1280. At all events, in the Parliamentary Writs, among the first summonses on record, as early as 1294, this second Richard appears as assessor and collector, in co. Linc., of the tenth granted in the Parliament at Westminster, 22 Edw. I. From this time he was regularly summoned to perform military service, &c., on account of lands in Notts., Derby, and Linc., down to 1324, when, dying

at an advanced age, he was buried (*I suspect*) at Wellingore,* where he held property apparently *jure uxoris*. John Buslingthorpe, who succeeded to his estates, was (like his father) connected with the Scotch wars under the Edwards. He is also mentioned in Parl. Writs, Rot. Scotiæ, Calend. Rot. Chart., &c. Dying without issue, temp. Ed. III., he was succeeded by his sister, Margaret Bracebridge.

The earliest mention, as far as I am yet aware, of the name of Buslingthorpe, occurs in the *Monasticon*, in a reciting charter of Hen. II., confirming a grant to the canons of Barlings Abbey :—

“Ex dono Walteri de Brisingthorp, et ex concessione Bertranni filii sui, unam bovatom terræ cum pertinentiis in Buselingthorp.”

There is a tradition, that an ancestor of the Buslingthorpes, having killed a dragon, in reward for his exploit received a royal grant of the pasture of Lissington. Now, as at the time of the Domesday survey there was no parish of Buslingthorpe, it seems not improbable that this dragon-slayer may have founded the Church, and parish of Buslingthorpe, within his new domain. He may have come originally from the place near Leeds, called Buslingthorpe, (Busli's-ing-thorpe ?) in which neighbourhood Roger de Busli had manors at the time of Domesday. It seems, however, more likely that the name and family of Buslingthorpe originated in Lincolnshire, and passed at a later period into Yorkshire. Thomas Hearne, in his *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, at the commencement of vol. ii., has published a very early account of some of the Lincolnshire manors ; in which document a person named *Buselinus* is mentioned as holding certain lands in *Esatorp*, in the same locality as the present Buslingthorpe. This *Esatorp*, where *Buselinus* was tenant, would come naturally enough to be called *Buselin's Thorpe*, to distinguish it from other places in the neigh-

* In the north aisle of Wellingore Church is an altar-tomb of alabaster, with the effigies of a knight in armour and his lady. It has neither arms nor inscription remaining ; but from the date assigned to it, and the probability of its representing the lord and lady of the manor, I conjecture that the persons commemorated by this monument are Richard de Boselingthorpe (the *younger*) and Isabella his wife ; who would seem to have made Wellingore their chief residence, as it is also described (in the *Inq. p. m.*) as their principal and most valuable estate, being placed before Buslingthorpe, Ludborough, or Bothumsell. This altar-tomb may have been erected by John de Buslingthorpe, or by his sister Margaret, wife of John de Bracebridge, both of whom succeeded to the property, the latter upon the death of her brother, s. p.

bourhood of the same name, as Estorp, Aistorp, &c.; and Walter, upon his succeeding to Buselin's property, would become known as *Walter de Buselin-thorpe*. Such would appear to be the most probable origin of the name. At all events, from the time of Walter—shortly after the Conquest—down to the time when the property passed by an heiress to the Bracebridge family, of Bracebridge, co. Linc., and of Kingsbury, co. Warwick, the Buslingthorpes had a residence here, viz., a moated manor-house, perhaps originally one of the *small castles*, so numerous and so much complained of during the reigns of our early Norman kings.

What is meant by the tradition of the ancestor of the Buslingthorpe family having killed a dragon, I will not undertake to say. That it had no allusion to Lincolnshire *drainage*, (which is the *received* opinion,) I am convinced, as well because there is no evidence of any *early* attempts at drainage in this locality, as because there are other localities, to which a myth of *dragon-slaying* is equally attached, where no such works could ever have been needed. Whether the fact of *founding a Church* for the overthrow of the "great dragon," or whether, supposing the Church to have been originally dedicated in honour of *St. George* or *St. Michael*, (both favourite saints with the Anglo-Norman knights), the circumstance of some *representation* of the patron-saint having been mistaken for the founder, may better account for the tradition, I leave as an open question, without hazarding an opinion: where evidence is wanting, we can conclude nothing by the mere weighing of probabilities.

Mention is made of several members of the family of Buslingthorpe in Rot. de Fin., Test. de Nev., Calend. Rot. Chart., Inq. p. m., Rot. Scot., Dodsw. MSS. (Bodl.), Thoroton's Notts., &c., &c.

The younger Richard had free warren in Staynton and Wraghby, as well as Beselingthorp. He married Isabella, (St. George?) in whose right he held a moiety of the manor of Bothumsel, co. Notts. He also held the manors of Ludborough, near Louth, and of Wellingore, near Temple-Bruern. Wellingore paid an assize to the Hospitallers at Temple-Bruern. And it seems not unlikely, that, before it passed to the Hospitallers, the Buslingthorpes were (more or less) connected with Temple-Bruern; and that Sire *John* de Boselingthorpe, (father of the first, and grandfather of the second *Richard*,) may have been a *Templar* belonging to that Pre-

ceptory, or otherwise connected with their order. His tomb in Buslingthorpe Church bears a recumbent effigy in stone *with crossed legs*. He probably died about the *middle* of the reign of Hen. III. His father, *William*, was either *son* or *grandson* of Bertram, the son of Walter de Buslingthorpe; which *Walter*, I suppose, founded the Church, temp. Hen. I. or Steph.*

Any further particulars relating to this family, or information tending to connect the Buslingthorpes with the place so called at Leeds, would be received as a favour by the compiler of this brief notice.

* The succession of the Buslingthorpes to the "lordship" was in this order:—Walter, Bertram, William, (*another William?*) John, Richard, Richard the younger, John,—succeeded by his sister, Margaret Bracebridge, who was succeeded by Robert Bracebridge, described as her cousin and heir.