

property; and by Patrick de Southayk 12 acres of land and four acres of meadow (*Ibid.*, p. 488).

A plea was pending on November 14, 1334, between Joan, widow of Patrick de Southayk and Clement and Matilda concerning her dower in 10 messuages and 90 acres at Skelton (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 274).

Clement and Matilda, after the holding of an inquisition *ad quod damnum*, obtained in 1340 letters patent enabling them to found a chantry at the altar of the Virgin Mary in Skelton church (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 7).

On January 29, 1342-3, a writ was issued for an inquisition concerning the death of William son of John de Skelton because a messuage and 17 acres at Skelton lately held *in capite* by John (the father) for service of 7d. cornage had remained in the king's hand since John's death. The jurors found that William son and heir of John was dead, and Clement, brother of the said William, was the next heir and of full age (*Cal. inq. p.m.*, 17 Edward III, p. 279).

By charter dated June 10, 1343, Clement de Skelton and Matilda, his wife, granted in mortmain to the altar erected in honour of the Annunciation, in the parish church of Skelton, and to Robert de Castro, the chaplain, and his successors, lands of which the grantors had been enfeoffed by Patrick de Southayk and Walter de Kirkbride, knights, that is to say *the capital messuage at Skelton in which the grantors dwelt*, a water mill for corn, a fulling mill, and land at Unthank and elsewhere in the common field of Skelton; and other lands at Skelton purchased by John Skelton, father of Clement the grantor, from the same two vendors;* also the messuage within Bochard's gate, Carlisle, *in part of which the grantors*

* As to the date of these purchases Walter de Kirkbride acquired the Twynham share of Skelton in 1318 and sold it in 1335. Patrick de Southayk came of age *circ.* 1318-19 and was dead in Jan. 1332-3. See pedigrees, *Trans.*, n.s. xxx, pp. 27 *et seqq.*

dwelt, opposite to the chapel of St. Wulfrid; another messuage within the gable of which was situate the said chapel; and another messuage by Caldewgate. All the premises were held *in capite* of the king, who had granted licence for the alienation of the same in mortmain, for the benefit of a chantry to celebrate for the good estate of the king, the grantors, and their souls after death, and for the souls of Ranulf de Dacre* and Patrick de Southayk and their relations therein specified.

The grantees, namely, Robert de Castro and his successors, were to maintain the altar together with *the little chapel built beyond the said altar* at Skelton; to keep them and all vestments, vessels, books and ornaments given to the said altar, without waste; to repair the same and find another chaplain at the altar; to provide a lamp to burn before the altar, and oil for the same, at all masses celebrated there and at the parochial high mass of the said church on Sundays and double feasts; to provide two pounds of wax every Christmas and every Annunciation, and one pound of wax at all other feasts of Our Lady, to burn in wax lights at the altar; and to pay the expenses out of rents belonging to the chantry.

On a voidance, the prior of Carlisle or, if the priory should be void, the chapter was to nominate a new chaplain.

The parish priest of Skelton and the priests of the chantry were to assemble every Sunday and festival at high mass and canonical hours.

By letters patent of November 16, 1343, John Kirkby, bishop of Carlisle, confirmed the gift and granted an indulgence of 40 days to those who should preserve the rights of the chantry; and ratified every indulgence to that effect granted by any catholic bishop. The king

* The Multons of Gilsland were lords of Barton, Westmorland, Ranulf de Dacre by his marriage with Margaret de Multon became lord of the manor of Barton (Nicolson and Burn, i, 407).

ratified the transaction on December 1st following (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 17 Edward III, p. 146).*

The escheator was ordered on December 1, 1343, to take fealty of Clement, son and heir of John de Skelton, he being too ill to do homage, which the king had respited until Easter next, and to deliver to him the lands of his father (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, p. 352).

There was an order on February 20, 1349-50, to take into the king's hand the land late of Sigreda, widow of John son of Hugh de Skelton (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, p. 209) and it was found by inquisition that she died on the morrow of St. Martin (November 12), 1349, seised of a messuage and 20 acres at Skelton, held of the king *in capite* for service of 7d. cornage and Thomas son of John son of Hugh de Skelton, of full age was her heir (*Cal. inq. p.m.*, 24 Edward III, p. 368).†

On August 1, 1350, the king granted the bailiwick of Penrith Ward in Inglewood Forest to the same Thomas son of John son of Hugh de Skelton for life (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 556).

Gilbert son of Patrick de Southayk obtained licence on March 3, 1350-1, to alienate in mortmain one-tenth part of his one-third share of the manor to Roger de Skelton, chaplain, to celebrate daily at the altar of St. Mary in Skelton church, for the good estate of the king and Clement de Skelton and of their souls after death (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 51).

And now there appears upon the scene a certain Thomas de Skelton, who was actively engaged in buying up land. He had already, in January, 1349-50, acquired from Richard de Kirkbride the elder (lately deceased) one-third of Unthank-in-Skelton, for life, subject to a charge of 20s. yearly to Adam Parving, during the life of Isabella, widow of Sir Robert Parving (*Cal. inq. p.m.*, 23 Edward III p. 219).

* Clement and Matilda were still living in 1365 (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 115).

† So his elder brother Clement was not Sigreda's son.

The same Thomas de Skelton received the royal pardon on February 25, 1352-3, for having acquired, without licence, the following particulars of property:—

1. From Richard, son of Richard de Kirkbride, 20 acres of land and 12 acres of meadow at Skelton, in fee.

2. From Emma, widow of John de Scaleby, and Joan, widow of John Pacok (sisters and heirs of Sir Robert Parving) their reversion in fee of one-third part* of the manor of Skelton, subject to the life estate of the doweress, Isabel widow of John de Kirkby, Isabel having surrendered to Thomas de Skelton her estate therein.

3. From the same, their reversion in fee of two bovates at Skelton, subject to the estate for life of Thomas de Hoton of Ellonby, since deceased (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1353, p. 407).

With the above document one may compare *Chancery Inq. ad quod damnum*, file 351, no. 7.

The escheator was ordered on July 4, 1354, to take fealty of Thomas, son and heir of Sigreda, widow of John son of Hugh de Skelton, and deliver to him the land of which his mother died seised *in her demesne as of fee*, on the day of her death, as the king, for half a mark paid by him, had respited his homage for three years (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, p. 399).

Again, on November 14, 1364, Thomas de Skelton received further pardon for having acquired, without licence, from Richard Shepherd of Unthank, a messuage, 15 acres of land and one acre of meadow at Skelton in fee, which the vendor acquired from Nicholas de Skelton, and he from Clement de Skelton.

And on that occasion the same Thomas de Skelton obtained licence to settle the several particulars of property above mentioned upon himself for life; with remainder to Richard, his son, and the heirs male of his body; remainder to John (brother of Richard) and the

* *Tercia pars tercie partis* in later inquisitions.

heirs male of his body; remainder to the heirs male of the bodies of the settlor and *Joan his wife*; remainder to the settlor's right heirs (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1364, p. 36). Bearing those details in mind one is enabled to peruse the ill-preserved inquisitions relating to the same matter.

On October 8, 1365, the escheator was ordered to take into the king's hand the land of Thomas de Skelton "of Cumberland" and to make inquisition concerning the same (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, p. 322) and on October 20th following the sheriff was ordered to cause a new verderer to be elected in place of Thomas de Skelton, who was dead (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 142).

Inquisition taken at Wigton on April 21, 1366, showed that Thomas de Skelton died seised of the above mentioned particulars of property; that he held for life seven messuages, . . . acres of land and four acres of meadow, by feoffment without licence, of Richard son of Walter de Kirkbride; with reversion to the heirs of Richard de Kirkbride; but they were in the king's hand by the said transgression; and that the said Thomas de Skelton died on Wednesday after the Assumption of Blessed Mary (August 15) and that Richard, son of the said Thomas aged xii years (*sic*)* was his heir (*Chancery Inq. p.m.*, Ed. III, file 181, no. 33).

However, on June 1, 1367, the escheator was ordered to take the fealty of Richard, son of Thomas de Skelton, and to deliver to him the above-mentioned lands at Skelton, which his father held for life with remainder to Richard in tail male (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 41 Edward III, p. 337).

And lastly, at a further inquisition, taken much later on September 19, 1375, it was found that the same Thomas de Skelton had formerly held the land wrongfully purchased from Richard son of Walter de Kirkbride for life only and that his son Richard, aged xxx years and more

* The age as stated in such documents is sometimes unreliable.

was his heir (*Chancery Inq. p.m.*, Edward III, file 351, no 15).

By papal mandate, issued in February, 1374, the bishop of Carlisle was ordered to grant dispensation to John de Denton,* *donsel*, and Joan relict of Thomas de Skelton, *donsel*, both of noble parentage, to remain in the marriage, which they had contracted about seven years previously, in ignorance that they were connected in the third degree of affinity. Joan de Kirkbride, the former wife of John, having been related to Joan de Skelton in the third degree of kindred, and all past and future offspring were to be declared illegitimate (*Cal. Papal Registers*, vol. iv, p. 200).

The sudden appearance at Skelton of the mysterious family, which assumed the name of that vill as its own peculiar surname, is a phenomenon, which the county historians do not attempt to explain, but it seems to indicate the first coming into prominence of a race of landed gentry.

Skelton of Skelton is not, at first sight, a family of much note, but during the period covered by this narrative other records, contained in the State Papers, relate to Skeltons bearing similar Christian names and holding high positions in the county, though their place of domicile and their relationship to one another are, strange to say, never mentioned. Who are the last-mentioned Skeltons? Are they identical with the individuals who form the subject of this article? Only a genealogist accustomed to weigh facts and probabilities can answer the question, so those other records are collected in the appendix to this article.

APPENDIX.

(a) JOHN DE SKELTON.

1307, July 24. John de Skelton, Adam de Skelton and Margaret, widow of Gilbert de Southayk, made a recognizance

* See pedigree of Denton, these *Transactions*, n.s. xvi, p. 40.

concerning a debt due to Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 42). The transaction took place in the presence of the king himself, at Carlisle, and evidently related to the capital manor of Skelton. For when Walter, son of Adam de Twynham, proved his age, he stated that he was born at Yanwath and baptized at Barton church, Westmorland; and that John de Skelton and Adam de Skelton had wardship of part of his inheritance by demise from the same earl. Again, when Patrick, son and heir of Gilbert de Southayk, proved his age, he stated that he was born at Carlisle and baptized at the church there; and that his mother, the said Margaret, had wardship of his inheritance by demise from the said earl (*Cal. inq. p. m.*, vol. viii, pp. 512 and 513). It had been alleged meanwhile that John and Adam de Skelton had committed waste of houses and gardens at Yanwath, lately belonging to Adam de Twynham deceased (*Abbreviatio Rotulorum Originalium*, vol. i, p. 189).

1316. John de Skelton was knight of the shire for Cumberland (see list of knights of the shire, *Vict. Hist. Cumb.*, ii, p. 320).

1324. He was again knight of the shire.

1327. He was appointed a commissioner jointly with Henry de Malton and Robert de Barton to enquire concerning Andrew de Harcla's lands (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 6); a commissioner jointly with Robert Parvyng to make inquisition (*Ibid.*, p. 80); and a justice of oyer and terminer (*Ibid.*, p. 133).

1328. He was again knight of the shire.

1329. There was commission of the peace to John de Skelton and Anthony de Lucy (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 430).

1344. John de Skelton had held a moiety of Gilcruix (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 259).

(b) ADAM DE SKELTON.

1303. Adam de Skelton acted as attorney for Adam de Twynham (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 92).

1307. He was party to the recognizance already mentioned.

1317. Adam de Skelton was appointed with Robert de Barton to make enquiry about Cockermouth Castle (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 496).

1318. The same two commissioners were appointed to hold an assize of mort d'ancestor (*Ibid.*, p. 78).

1318. Adam was knight of the shire for Cumberland. He acknowledged a debt to be levied on his lands in that county (*Ibid.*, p. 114; and *Parliamentary Writs*, vol. ii, division 2, p. 186).

1324. He was appointed keeper of certain lands in Cumberland and Westmorland (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 117).

1325. Adam was dead and John de Skelton was appointed in his place to keep the truce made with the Scots in Cumberland and Westmorland (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 116).

(c) CLEMENT DE SKELTON.

1332. Clement was appointed keeper of the county of Cumberland (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 292) and a commissioner to levy the 15th and 10th of moveables in Cumberland (*Ibid.*, p. 358).

1333. He was collector of customs on wool in Cumberland jointly with Robert de Barton (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 61).

1337. He was knight of the shire.

1338. He was commissioner of array in Cumberland (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 135).

1341. Clement was appointed with Robert Parvyng to deliver Carlisle gaol (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 322).

1342. Clement de Skelton described as ' bailiff of the liberty of Penrith ' was a witness (*Cat. Ancient Deeds*, vol. iii, p. 399).

1346. He was a commissioner (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 59).

1348. He was again a commissioner (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 449).

1358. Clement de Skelton and the prior of Carlisle were to advise concerning repairs at Carlisle Castle (*Cal. Close Rolls*, p. 463).

(d) THOMAS DE SKELTON.

1337-8. Thomas was knight of the shire for Cumberland.

1340. Thomas was appointed jointly with Clement de Skelton to make enquiry (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 504).

1341. The same two persons were appointed collectors (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 151).