

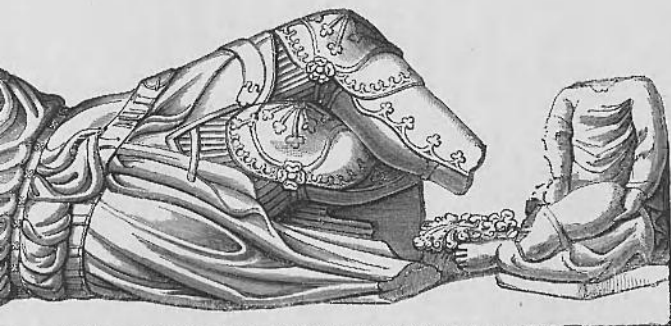
EFFIGY IN ALDWORTH CHURCH, BERKS, WITH SOME NOTICE OF
THE DE LA BECHE FAMILY OF THAT COUNTY.

ALDWORTH is a small village in Berkshire, about four miles south-east of East Ilsley. The church is of the Decorated period, but without any architectural pretensions. It consists of a nave and chancel, with a south aisle to the former ; at the west end of the nave is a dwarf tower, covered with a modern gable roof. The tracery of the windows is simple. The arches between the nave and aisle are moulded, and rest on octagonal piers with moulded capitals and bases. Little attractive as is this church, it is by no means devoid of interest ; for it contains no less than nine effigies of a peculiar character and superior execution. Though all of them are more or less time-worn, defaced, and mutilated, and some almost destroyed, the taste and feeling, as well as the skill, of the sculptor are still evident. Seven of them represent knights, and are remarkable, not only for artistic treatment, but also for some rare details of military costume : the others are ladies in ample drapery. They are all of stone, on raised tombs, and apparently referable to about the same period, the second quarter of the fourteenth century. Three of them occupy as many arched recesses in the north wall of the nave, and three more the same number of recesses in the south wall of the aisle, of which two are arched like those in the north wall, but above the third is a window : the other effigies are under two of the arches dividing the aisle from the nave, a knight and a lady being on one tomb. The arched recesses in the north and south walls have richly ornamented canopies in the Decorated style, and are, it is believed, coeval with the church itself, as if originally designed to receive such monuments ; as was also probably the recess under the south window.

The effigy, of which a woodcut is given on the opposite page, from a drawing, for which we are indebted to the faithful pencil of Mr. Blore, who kindly placed it at our



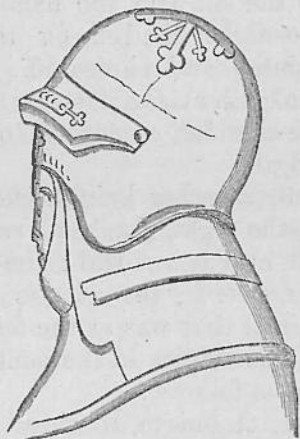
40. 290.



UTTING 62

Effigy at Aldworth, Berks.

disposal, lies in the most easterly recess in the north wall. As will be seen on reference to the cut, it reclines on its right side with the head on a block of stone, evidently not originally there. The right arm, which is said to have supported the head, is wholly gone, and also the fore-arm and hand of the left. It represents a knight habited in a loose surcote, girded at the waist, and reaching a little below the knees; immediately under which is either a hauberk or haketon (there being no appearance of either mail or quilting), divided a short distance in front on a level with the hips; while under the legs is seen the inner side of a quilted garment, apparently somewhat longer than the hauberk or haketon as shown in front. The defences of the head and neck are so remarkable that we are glad to be able to give another view of them in the margin, from a drawing, also obligingly contributed by Mr. Blore. On comparing the two cuts it will be seen that the head is covered by a round-topped helm, having a small vizor attached, which might be brought down so as to protect the eyes and nose. Under this is another defence, probably a semi-globular bascinet, with a small camail, showing no trace of mail; and over the latter falls, from under the helm, a very unusual addition, which may be a mantling, though a kind of bar running horizontally gives it a rigid appearance; for on referring to the cut of the effigy it will be seen to be of a yielding material on the right side. The part of the left arm that remains is protected by a richly ornamented rerebrace, the thighs by a quilted defence, the knees by enriched genouillères, and the fronts of the legs by demi-jambes. The last two, as well as the rerebrace, may not have been of plate, but of cuir bouilli, which the amount of ornament makes rather the more probable. The left foot was supported by a human figure that has lost its head. Besides the belt at the waist, which confines the surcote, there is a barred sword-belt, the end of which is returned



over the left thigh ; the end of the waist belt is seen on the right thigh, a portion being gone. Though no mail now appears on any part of this effigy, it by no means follows that such was originally the case ; for the mail of the hauberk, camail, and back parts of the legs may have been expressed by colour that has wholly disappeared ; such a mode of representing it on stone having been at that time in practice. This figure is above life-size, being, according to Lysons, 7 feet 2 inches in length.

Regarding the effigy just described as the *first* in order, reckoning from the east, of those in the north wall, the others there are as follows :—

2. A knight also cross-legged, and reposing rather on the right side, the head resting on a double cushion ; a shield is on the left arm, the hand being on the pomel of the sword ; the right hand is on the breast. The feet are sharply pointed and elongated. The right arm and left leg are broken ; at the feet is a lion. This may also be above life-size, for, according to Lysons, it is 6 feet 4 inches in length.

3. Another knight, once also cross-legged, and inclining to the right, the head resting on a single cushion ; on the left arm is a shield ; the right hand rests on the pomel of the sword ; the arm is gone, and also both legs, and the animal that was at the feet.

The effigies in the south wall, commencing from the east, are as follows :—

1. A knight, the head resting on a double cushion ; the bascinet is pointed, with a vizor raised ; the right hand is drawing the sword ; on the left arm was a shield, which is gone. The body is slightly inclined to the left ; both legs are gone, and it is otherwise much mutilated. At the feet is a lion. A rude drawing, made by Ashmole, represents the legs crossed.

2. A lady, gracefully draped in ample folds, with a veil and wimple, and the remains of angels by the head ; the left hand rests on the breast, having long delicate fingers ; the right is gone. The body inclines slightly to the left.

3. A knight, so much defaced as to render the details scarcely intelligible. The head and arms, and also the legs, which appear not to have been crossed, are gone ; a fragment of a lion at the feet remains.

On the two altar tombs between the nave and aisle are as follows :—

1. On that to the east are the effigies of a knight and a lady. His head, which is much mutilated, rests on a helm. The quilting, or more probably folds, of a garment commence from below the sword belt, descend to the knees, and are represented under the legs. There is a lion at the feet, and a dog couchant under each of the legs. There was a sword on the left side ; the hands are in an attitude of prayer ; both arms, and the lower part of the legs are gone. The body of the lady reposes gracefully on one side, and the drapery is so arranged as to show the figure to advantage ; the left hand holds the cordon of a mantle, the right rests on the body. The head is gone. At the feet is a fragment of a dog.

2. A knight, the head resting on a helm. The lacing of the cyclas, or jupon, is beautifully shown ; also the joints of the armour on the arms ; the hands are in an attitude of prayer ; there was a sword on the left side. The legs and the animal at the feet are gone.

All the above-mentioned tombs are plain, and so are the shields. There is neither heraldry nor inscription of any kind. The head-pieces that remain of the several knights, except that given in the wood-cuts, are pointed ; and there is no indication of mail remaining on any of the effigies ; but, as before-mentioned, that may have been represented in colour that has disappeared.¹

In addition to the effigies already noticed, some church notes of a Mr. Sheldon of Berkshire, dated 1678, state, that “on the outside of this church, under an arch of very ancient work, against the south wall, lies the statue of a man in armour, cross-legged, at this present almost even with the ground.”² This effigy has been either removed or concealed by masonry.

It is worthy of remark that four of these knights were cross-legged. It is not likely that they were all crusaders, or had even made vows to assist in an endeavour to recover the Holy Places, seeing the period to which the sculpture is referable ; and when we observe the manner in which the

¹ For most of the particulars respecting the church and the above-mentioned effigies we are indebted to

some notes obligingly furnished by Mr. Blore.

² Bibl. Top. Brit., No. 16, p. 152.

legs of the knight that is engraved are crossed, and some of the others are not very dissimilar, it may admit of question, whether such a disposition of the legs had any significance. It may have been only a matter of artistic arrangement. Nor is it to be overlooked, that when an effigy reclines on one side, a crossing of the legs is a natural, though not a necessary, consequence. The reason for inclining these figures a little to one side was, in all probability, to present a better view to the spectator.

In the total absence of inscriptions and heraldry, nothing positive can be confidently affirmed as to whom these effigies represent. The tradition in the village has long been, that they all represent members of the De la Beche family, who had a residence in the parish, the site of which is now occupied by a farm-house and homestead, called Beche Farm. One of them is said to have built the church ; an act that has been generally ascribed to Sir Nicholas de la Beche, who was the most distinguished among them ; and the two effigies on one tomb are reputed to represent him and his wife. When Captain Richard Symonds, or Simons, visited the church in 1644, he was told by Mr. Grace, the vicar, that "in the east end of the south aisle did hang a table, fairly written on parchment, of all the names of this family of De la Beche ; but the Earl of Leicester, coming with Queen Elizabeth in progress, took it down to show it her, and (it) was never brought againe."³ This pedigree must have confirmed and continued the tradition ; and there may be some truth in it ; for the state of the family at the period referred to would account for the number of knights and ladies represented within the church, even if none of the tombs be cenotaphs, as has been sometimes suggested. This branch of the De la Beche family seems to have risen into notice at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and was extinct in the male line about 1364, the last having been a priest. As its history has been involved in considerable obscurity, some account of it here may not be out of place.

Sir Philip de la Beche, whose parentage is unknown, but possibly Robert de la Beche was his father, held estates in the counties of Berks and Wilts, and could hardly have been born later than 1270. In 9th Edward II., he was certified

³ See Lysons' Berks, 233.

as one of the lords in the township of Compton, Berks.⁴ He was Sheriff of Wilts 14 Edward II., and was sheriff again, and also knight of the shire for the same county the next year.⁵ He was in arms with Thomas Earl of Lancaster against the King at Boroughbridge, 16th March, 1322; and having been taken prisoner, was committed to Scarborough Castle,⁶ and his estates were forfeited for treason. He was, however, soon at liberty again, as we shall see when we come to speak of his son John. In 1 Edward III. he was pardoned, and his estates restored to him; at which time he was again Sheriff for Wilts;⁷ and in 4 Edward III. for Berks.⁸ He was living in 9 Edward III.; for we then find him associated with Nicholas de la Beche, no doubt his son presently mentioned, in a grant of free warren over their lands in Aldworth and other parishes in Berks; and also in a licence to impark certain woods at "La Beche" and Yat-tendon, in the same county; but he probably died shortly after. He had five sons, namely, Philip, John, Nicholas, Robert, and Edmund. Nothing is known for certain of his wife.

Philip, who was either the eldest or second son, was also in some manner implicated in the insurrection under the Earl of Lancaster, and imprisoned in Pontefract Castle.⁹ We hear little more of him; and with the exception of a few acres of meadow in Wandsworth, Surrey, which he had of the grant of his brother John, we find no mention of his having had any estates. What he had was most likely forfeited for treason; but his name does not occur in the extensive enumeration of the followers of the Earl of Lancaster, whose estates were restored to them on the accession of Edward III.¹ He died in the lifetime of his father and brothers, and probably before that act of restoration, leaving his brother John his heir, as appears by the Inquisition taken in Surrey after the death of John.² He therefore left no issue, and nothing appears of a wife.

John, if he were not the eldest, was the second son of Philip the father. In 6 Edward II. (1312) he was about to attend the King abroad; when he must have been a very

⁴ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, p. 357.

⁵ Id., pt. 1, pp. 228, 242, 243.

⁶ Id., pt. 2, pp. 200, 213.

⁷ Rot. Parl., ii. p. 422 a.

⁸ Id., p. 43 a.

⁹ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, pp. 172, 214.

¹ Rot. Parl., ii. p. 422.

² 2 Edw. III., No. 51.

young man.³ In 9 Edward II. he was Knight of the shire for Hants ; ⁴ and in the same year he was certified as lord of the township of Yattendon,⁵ and obtained a grant of free warren over his lands in Basildon, Ashampsted, and Aldworth, Berks, and in 11 Edward II., a grant of the like in Yattendon, Everington, Hampsted, Bodenhamsted, and Compton in the same county, and also a grant of a market and a fair at Yattendon.⁶ As early as 1318 (12 Edward II.) he probably was one of the adherents of the Earl of Lancaster, and in that year, though called John Beek', knight, (a form in which the name is sometimes found) obtained, with the consent of Parliament, a pardon for all felonies, &c. committed up to the 7th August preceding,⁷ they having been in arms against the King. In 13 Edward II. he and three others were sent abroad before the King to provide accommodation for him.⁸ He was opposed to the King at Boroughbridge, and being made prisoner was committed to the Tower.⁹ Yet he was soon at liberty ; for we learn that, after his estates were forfeited by that act of rebellion, in the 15 or 16 Edward II., most likely in the latter year, he, assisted by his father and others, with considerable violence dispossessed Aubyn Clinton of divers valuables at Yattendon, estimated by him at 200*l*.¹ It seems probable that this person had obtained possession of John's residence there, and that an attempt was made to oust him. He was pardoned, and his estates were restored to him in 1 Edward III.² His wife's christian name was Isabella, but neither her parentage nor her maiden surname has been discovered. He died in 2 Edward III. (1328), seised of an estate at Compton, Berks, which he held of his father, and of estates at Basildon, Yattendon, and Bodenhamsted also in Berks ; but Aldworth is not mentioned, for the estate in that parish, and also estates in Ashampsted, Colrugge, and Compton, had been settled on Philip the father for life, with remainders to Nicholas, Edmund, and Robert successively in tail male.³ Sir John left two sons, Thomas and John, and three daughters ; and his wife Isabella, who was jointly seised with him of some of those estates,

³ Rymer, ii. p. 212.

⁴ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 1, p. 153.

⁵ Id., pt. 2, p. 356.

⁶ Dugd. Bar., ii. p. 127.

⁷ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, p. 126.

⁸ Rymer, ii. p. 417.

⁹ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, pp. 200, 239.

¹ Rot. Parl., i. p. 409 b.

² Id., ii. pp. 421 b, 422, 423.

³ Inq. p. m. Edmundi de la Beche
38 Edw. III., No. 9.

survived him.⁴ Thomas was his heir, then aged fifteen years; he died without issue in 5 Edward III., leaving his brother John his heir, then sixteen years of age. Though Thomas was not more than eighteen years of age, he is called "miles" in one of the Inquisitions taken after his death, implying that he had been knighted.⁵ His brother John did not long survive him, but died without issue in 10 Edward III., leaving the three sisters his co-heirs, namely, Joan aged twenty-eight years, wife of Andrew Sakeville, Isabella, aged twenty-four years, wife of William Fitz Ellys, and Alice, aged twenty-two years, wife of Robert Danvers.⁶ But it should seem that the estates of which John died seised had been settled in the male line; for they did not descend to the sisters, but passed to Sir Nicholas de la Beche their uncle. The position, which John the father occupied in the life-time of his father Philip, suggests that he may have been advanced by his marriage.

Nicholas, the third son of Philip, was the most eminent of the family. The earliest notice, that has been met with of him, is in 5 Edward II. (1311), when he appears to have been in the service of the King, young as he must have been, and was commanded to repair, with several others, to Peter de Gavaston, Earl of Cornwall, to assist him in transacting some affairs.⁷ In 9 Edward II., he had a grant of free warren in divers lordships in East Sussex.⁸ How these came to him does not appear; they are not likely to have been derived from his father, or, at that early period of his career, from the crown. In 15 Edward II. he was governor of Montgomery Castle, and about the same time of Plessy in Essex;⁹ but being, at least, suspected of having favoured the partisans of the Earl of Lancaster, he was ordered to be arrested.¹ His estates were forfeited, but he had them restored to him on the accession of Edward III.;² by whom he was soon after taken into favour. In 9 Edward III. (1335), he was constable of the Tower, an appointment that he held for several years;³ and he obtained, with his father, licence to impark their woods of La Beche and Yattendon,⁴ and a grant of free warren at La Beche, Aldworth, Colrugge,

⁴ Inq., p. m. 2 Edw. III., No. 51.

⁵ Inq., p. m. 5 Edw. III., No. 49.

⁶ Inq. p. m., 13 Edw. III., No. 17.

⁷ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, p. 49.

⁸ Dugd. Bar., ii. p. 127.

⁹ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 1, p. 554; Dugd. Bar., ii. p. 127.

¹ Parl. Writs., ii. pt. ii. p. 224.

² Rot. Parl., ii. pp. 420 b, 422 a.

³ Patent Rolls, 9 Edw. III., pt. 2 m.

18; Rymer, ii. pp. 958, 1102.

⁴ Patent Rolls, 9 Edw. III., pt. 2, m. 5.

Ashampsted, Compton, Bodenhamsted, Basildon, Yattendon, and Beaumys in Berks.⁵ In 11 Edward III. he was sent on business to the King of France,⁶ and in the ensuing year he had licence to embattle his houses at La Beche, Beaumys, and Watlington;⁷ and about the same time received several grants of estates from the crown.⁸ For some time, according to Holinshed (iii. p. 360,) he had the care of the Black Prince in his boyhood. In 13 Edward III., the King, on his return from Flanders, being displeased with him and some others whom he had left in charge, committed them to the Tower.⁹ Nicholas, however, soon found himself restored both to liberty and favour. In 14 Edward III., he purchased the Manor of Bradfield, Berks,¹ and the next year he served in Britany,² and the following year he was summoned to Parliament as a Baron, but only on that one occasion.³ Shortly after, in 17 Edward III., he was appointed Seneschal of Gascony; and was one of the Commissioners to treat with Alfonso, King of Castile, for the settlement of some disputes which had arisen between some subjects of Alfonso, chiefly seamen, and the citizens of Bayonne.⁴ Though commonly stated to have been a Commissioner, in 18 Edward III., to treat with the same King on the subject of a marriage of his eldest son with a daughter of Edward III., he is not named in the commission for the purpose which is given in Rymer's *Fœdera* under that year. In the following year, 19 Edward III. (1345), he died without issue, seised, jointly with Margery his wife, of estates in Bradfield, Basildon, Ashampsted, Benfield, Herewell, Lechampsted, Yattendon, and Bodenhamsted in Berks; and seised in tail male of a capital messuage and a carucate of land in Aldworth, in a certain place called La Beche, which were held by the service of 10s.⁵ of the abbot of Dorchester; and the jury, who made the Inquisition, found the house to be worth nothing above the reprises (outgoings).⁶ From which it would seem, that he had changed his residence, and this had been neglected, and

⁵ Dugd. Bar., ii. p. 127.

⁶ Rymer, ii. pp. 966-7.

⁷ Patent Rolls, 12 Edw. III., m. 25.

⁸ Dugd. Bar., ii. p. 127; Cal. Rot. Pat., pp. 121 b, 125 b, 131 b, 137 b.

⁹ Dugd. Bar., ii. p. 127; Holinshed, iii. 360.

¹ Rot. Parl., ii. p. 176.

² Dugd. Bar., ii. p. 127.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Rymer, ii. pp. 1229, 1241.

⁵ Some words may be accidentally omitted in the Inquisition after *servicium*, for in the Inquisition after the death of Edmund, this messuage and land are stated to be held by the 20th part of a knight and (10?) shillings.

⁶ Inq. p. m., 19 Edw. III., No. 32.

probably little had been done to it under the licence he obtained to embattle it and two other houses. He and his wife were also jointly seised of estates in Wilts and Sussex. His heirs general were found to be his three nieces, the before-mentioned daughters of his brother John, and his heir male his brother Robert.⁷ Neither the parentage nor the maiden surname of Margery, the wife of Nicholas, has been discovered. She was the widow of Edmund Bacon, who had estates at Hatfield Peverel and elsewhere in Essex; by whom she had a daughter Margery, who was her heir;⁸ or, according to Morant, two daughters, Margaret and Margery;⁹ but if so, it should seem Margaret had died without issue in her mother's life-time. She was left amply provided for; which may have led to her being, on Good Friday, 1347, forcibly carried away before daybreak from her manor at Beaumys near Reading with many valuables, and married to Sir John de Dalton. The abduction was attended with so much violence, that several persons were wounded, and two, Michael de Porynges and Thomas le Clerk, were killed.¹ She is said, by Dugdale, to have married Sir Thomas de Arderne, but in the writ in Rymer, requiring Dalton to produce her before the council, she is described as married (*matrimonio copulatam*) to Gerard del Isle; and in the warrant to the constable of the Tower, directing him to receive the offender and his accomplices, we find "Thomam Dardern Chivaler" named as one of them.² Though not mentioned in either of the writs given in the *Fœdera*, Thomas de Litherland, Prior of Burscogh (Lancashire), is found to have been another accomplice in the abduction and homicide.³ She died on the 2nd or 3rd of October, 23 Edward III. (1349), as is proved by the Inquisitions taken after her death.⁴

Robert does not appear to have been one of the fortunate members of the family. Of him we know but little. He obtained, in 12 Edward II., a pardon as one of the adherents of the Earl of Lancaster;⁵ and was, like his father and brothers, a participator in the subsequent insurrection under that Earl, and its consequences, so far as regarded the for-

⁷ Inq., *ubi supra*.

⁸ Inq. p. m., 23 Edw. III., No. 89.

⁹ Vol. ii. p. 129. See also Kennett's *Par. Antiq.*, 461.

¹ Rymer, iii. pp. 114-15; Rot. Parl., ii. pp. 176, 208.

VOL. XIV.

² Rymer, iii. p. 119.

³ Patent Rolls, 21 Edw. III., pt. 3, m. 13.

⁴ 23 Edw. III., No. 89.

⁵ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, p. 127.

feiture and restoration of his estates.⁶ Of what these consisted is not known ; but from the writ for their restoration having been addressed to the Sheriff of Berks, they may be assumed to have been in that county. In 17 Edward II. (1324), he was returned by the Sheriff of Berks as a man at arms that had been summoned by general proclamation to attend the Great Council at Westminster on Wednesday after Ascension-day.⁷ At a later period he should seem to have been knighted ; for we find him called “ dominum Robertum de la Beche,” in the memorandum as to the delivery of a new great seal to John Archbishop of Canterbury in 14 Edward III. (1340) ; where he is mentioned as having been sent with that seal to the Archbishop.⁸ He died without issue male, in the life-time of his brother Edmund, as we learn from the Inquisition taken on the death of the latter, and most likely without issue of either kind. Nothing is said of any wife.

Edmund, the youngest of these brothers, was an ecclesiastic ; yet his employments were sometimes such as might have been quite as consistently undertaken by a layman. Even he was in some way implicated in the Lancastrian insurrection, for which he was fined 200 marks, and required to give sureties.⁹ He also had occasion for a pardon in consequence of the part taken by him against the Despencers,¹ and was committed to Pontefract Castle for being concerned in the escape of Lord Berkley and Lord Audley from Wallingford.² He was taken into favour by Edward III. ; in the 8th year of whose reign we find him keeper of the King's great wardrobe.³ In the 12th year of that king he was appointed to arrest the Lombards and some other foreign merchants, and to seize their goods.⁴ He became Archdeacon of Berks, and, having survived his brothers, he succeeded to the family estates in Berks for his life or in tail ; for from the Inquisitions taken after his decease,⁵ it appears that nearly all of them had been settled in the male line, and on failure of issue male of him and his brothers above named, the estates in Ashampsted, Colrugge, Aldworth,

⁶ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, pp. 165, 172 ;
Rot. Parl. ii. p. 422 a.

⁷ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 1, p. 657.

⁸ Rymer, ii. p. 1129.

⁹ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, p. 204.

¹ Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, p. 165.

² Holinshed, iii. p. 333.

³ Patent Rolls, 8 Edw. III., m. 1.

⁴ Id., 12 Edw. III., pt. 2, m. 5.

⁵ 38 Edw. III., No. 9 ; 44 Edw. III.,
No. 7.

and Compton were limited to William, son of William de la Beche in tail male, and then to Edmund, son of John de Langford⁶ in tail male, and then to Robert, another son of John de Langford, in tail male, and then to his (Robert's) right heirs: while the Bradfield estate, on failure of issue male of Edmund and his brothers, was limited to a John de la Beche in tail male, and then to William de la Beche in tail male, and then to Thomas de Langford in tail male, and then to the right heirs of Sir Nicholas de la Beche, who, we have seen, purchased this estate in 14 Edward III., several years after the deaths of his brother John and his sons. The relationship of the John and Williams, mentioned in these settlements, to Sir Nicholas does not clearly appear; possibly the elder William was the father of John as well as of the younger William, and a cousin of Sir Nicholas. There was a William de la Beche of Essex, Herts, and Suffolk, who died in 7 Edward III. leaving a son John, aged ten years, by his wife Euphemia, and on her death in 35 Edward III., her heir was a daughter, implying a failure of male issue;⁷ but we are not able to connect this William with the Aldworth family. We learn also from the Inquisition on the death of Edmund, that John and William the younger, named in the above limitations, died without issue male, and that on the death of Edmund without issue, which took place on the 4th November, 38 Edward III., (1364), Thomas de Langford succeeded to the Bradfield estate under the limitation to himself, and to the other settled estates under the last limitation as brother and heir of Robert. That document does not show how the manor of Yattendon and some other Berkshire estates were settled after the death of Edmund de la Beche who held them for life, but it states that they ought to remain to the right heirs of Sir Nicholas. These were no doubt the same as the heirs of Edmund, who were found to be Andrew Sakeville junior, aged 24 years and upwards, son of Joan, daughter and one of the heirs of John de la Beche, Knight, brother of Edmund; Edmund Danvers junior, aged 22 years and upwards, son of Alice, daughter and another of the heirs of the said John; and John Duyn aged three years on St. Valentine's day then last, son of

⁶ This John de Langford was, in all probability, the husband of Joan de la Beche, sister to the archdeacon and his

brothers. See Harleian Charters, 52, I. 19.

⁷ Inq., p. m. 7 Edw. III., No. 34; 35 Edw. III., No. 43.

Margery, daughter of Isabella, daughter and another of the heirs of John, the elder brother of Edmund and Nicholas.⁸

Having taken a view of the state of the Aldworth family of De la Beche, let us now advert again to the church and effigies. The church, we have seen, is such as might have been and probably was built in the reign of Edward II., and it really has the appearance of having been designed for a family burying-place. It may very likely have been erected by Philip the father and his sons John and Nicholas for such a purpose. The effigies within it are seven of males in knightly costume, and two of ladies in a costume that would well accord with their having been widows. All are nearly of the same date, about the second quarter of the fourteenth century. Within that space died Philip the father and all his sons and grandsons, except his son Edmund; and possibly Robert may have died a little later than 1350, the exact date of his death not being known. As there is no ecclesiastic among the effigies, Edmund is not represented by any of them. He may have provided for his interment in some holier spot. Philip and his sons, Philip, John, Nicholas, and Robert, and John's two sons, most probably all knights, would furnish the exact number of males required, and are, exclusive of Edmund, all the known males of the family; sons of daughters being usually regarded as males of their father's family only. Of the two ladies one would represent Margery, widow of Nicholas, and the other not improbably Isabella, the widow of his brother John; for she seems to have been a more important person than their mother. If the male represented by the figure under the external arch were a De la Beche, he, we may presume, was less nearly related to the founders. It would be in vain to attempt to assign the respective effigies to the several individuals, but if one of them represent Isabella, most likely it is the female figure in the middle recess in the south wall; and if so, probably she lies between her husband and one of her sons; and the other son, and Philip the father and Philip the son, occupy the three recesses in the north wall. The beautiful effigy of which we have given a wood-cut can hardly represent one of the least important of the

⁸ As to the arms of this family of De la Beche there is considerable discrepancy. Comp. Roll. t. Edw. II., p. 27,

Roll. t. Edw. III., p. 39, and the Borough-bridge Roll, Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 2, p. 198.

family, and may therefore commemorate Philip the elder. Nicholas and Margery his wife we may reasonably suppose to be represented on the altar tomb under the most easterly arch between the nave and aisle, and Robert, the last survivor, under the arch next adjoining towards the west.⁹

In September 1845, when the area of the church was cleared for the purpose of its being re-pewed, some one having suggested that the bodies were buried in front of their respective effigies, the ground was opened in front of the female in the south wall, at about five feet from it. A few fragments of a coffin were dug up, also a rough ill-shaped handle, and some large nails. Bones were found, all of very large size, a great under jaw full of fine teeth, and a skull to which a quantity of box leaves adhered. There were other masses of such leaves, but none in equally good preservation. It was thought by those who witnessed the opening, that the body had been laid in them. No other graves were disturbed, and it was concluded from the size of the bones, which were considered to have belonged to a skeleton 6 feet 4 inches in length, that these were not the remains of the lady. It is more probable that they were to be found in some coffin or grave under the effigy. Other persons may have been buried in the aisle at a later date, who were commemorated by slabs or brasses that have long disappeared. The practice of placing evergreens in graves or coffins will be found noticed in Brand's *Popular Antiquities*; and it is mentioned by Durandus, who says, "*hedera quoque, vel laurus, et hujusmodi, quæ semper servant vigorem, in sarcophago corpori substernuntur; ad significandum quod qui moriuntur in Christo, vivere non desinent.*"¹ But the custom is traceable to Roman times.

It is remarkable that there should exist at Chew Magna,

⁹ As might be expected a group of effigies, so numerous and excellent as these, has not been wholly overlooked in time past, mutilated even as they are. They are noticed in *Gent. Mag.*, vol. xxx. p. 458, and briefly described in vol. lxxviii. p. 1095, with a view of the interior of the church, and again in vol. lxxix. p. 274, with a plan of the church; this communication expresses great admiration of them. There is also a short account of them, with engravings of five from rude drawings by Ashmole, in *Bibl. Top.*

Brit., No. 16, p. 149, but the engravings so little resemble the effigies that it is not easy to recognise them. They are also described in *Lysons' Berks.* and again, with some rough prints, in a *History of Newbury and its environs, Speenhamland, 1839.* But in all these there are great inaccuracies, and much discrepancy among themselves. Without a good representation of at least one of the effigies, no description can do anything like justice to them.

¹ *Rationale*, lib. vii. de off. mort.

Somersetshire, an effigy in several respects so similar in treatment and costume to that at Aldworth, which we have engraved, as to lead to the supposition that it may have been by the same artist. Since it serves to explain some points in the costume and posture of that, and affords another example of a rare style of effigy, we give on the opposite page a woodcut of it from a drawing which we also owe to the kindness of Mr. Blore. It will be seen to recline on one side, with the legs crossed in a singular manner, the left foot raised and resting against a lion in an unusual attitude. The position of the arms, with the head on one hand, exemplifies, in all probability, how the missing arms of the Aldworth effigy were disposed of, so that the head was supported by the right arm instead of a cushion. The defences of the head and neck in this effigy closely resemble those of the other ; and there is a similar full surcote girded, with rich folds above and below, and open in front, so as to show the hauberk or haketon (most likely the former though no mail appears on it) falling between the legs, and forming graceful folds under the left knee, over a portion of the surcote ; a very unusual feature in the arrangement of military costume. There is a guige passing over the right shoulder, that was continued to the shield on which the body rests. The sword belt is plain and not of needless length. The legs would seem to be more completely armed than those of the Aldworth effigy. The spurs have probably disappeared.

This effigy is of wood, and may be ascribed to the early part of the reign of Edw. III. It lies in a window in the south aisle, evidently not its original place : from the compressed form of the lion at the feet the effigy should seem to have been designed for a recess. It is said to have been brought from a destroyed church at Norton Hauteville, and is generally supposed to represent one of the Hautevilles, a family from which Norton Hauteville, a township in Chew Magna, derives part of its name. Collinson¹ mentions a Sir John Hauteville (temp. Henry III.) who took the cross to accompany Prince Edward to the Holy Land, and that Sir Geoffrey was his successor, and was 25 Edw. I. summoned to attend the King abroad ; to whom succeeded William, and

¹ Somersetshire, ii. p. 107.



El Hay at Chew Magna, Somerset.

to him another Geoffrey, but he adds, "the name seems to have ended about the commencement (*sic*) of the reign of Edw. II., or the beginning of that of Edw. III." As he gives no authority for these descents, the statement is very unsatisfactory. The name is found in the various forms of Hauteville, Hauuill, and Hauvill, and is often misprinted Hannill and Hanvill. There was a Sir Geoffrey who was summoned to a Council, 9th May 1324, for the counties of *Somerset*, *Wilts*, and *Berks*:² he may have had some acquaintance with the De la Beches of the last named county; but we have not been able to connect him with Chew Magna. There was a John, hardly the one mentioned by Collinson, who was lord of the township of Norton Hauteville in 9. Edw. II. (1316):³ it does not appear when he died, or who was his father. A Geoffrey died 34 Edw. I., seized of estates in Rutland and Northampton, leaving a son John his heir;⁴ still it has not been found practicable to identify either of these with any of those before mentioned. About that time, and for some years earlier, the name of Hauteville not unfrequently occurs, though not in any way connected with this village, except in the case of John in 9 Edw. II. The effigy may represent him or the Geoffrey of Somersetshire and Berks, whose connexion with the latter county may account for its similarity to the Aldworth effigy, and even for the employment of the same sculptor.

W. S. W.

² Parl. Writs, ii. pt. 1, pp. 653, 656.

³ Id., pt. 2, p. 376.

⁴ Inq., p. m. 34 Edw. I., No. 19.