

ART. VI.—*Rockcliff*. By T. H. B. GRAHAM, M.A.

Communicated at Carlisle, April 19th, 1923.

ROCKCLIFF is a corrupt spelling of the old name Rodclive, or Routhelive (red cliff) applied to the precipitous bank of the river Eden upon which the village stands. Sedgefield suggests (*Place-names*) a derivation from O.N. *raudr klif*, which has the same meaning. The cliff was, no doubt, a landmark familiar to sea-faring people of the olden time. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the manor was held of the king *in capite* by Hugh de Morvill, who was also tenant *in capite* of the barony of Burgh, situate on the other side of the tideway. Hugh de Morvill's immediate tenant was Radulf de Bray (see accompanying pedigree) and the occupants of the vill were members of a family which took its surname from the place.*

In 1185, Reginald de Rockcliff (*Rodcliva*) paid 100s. for an unjust disseisin, and Walter de Bonekill paid 3 marks for recognition of his wife's dower against Reginald de Rockcliff. The same Reginald paid 100s., in 1188, for distraint of land contrary to assize, and William de Rockcliff (*Rudeclive*) was amerced in 1197 (*Pipe Roll*).

Hugh de Morvill, tenant-in-chief of Rockcliff, was dead in 1202 (*ibid.*). His two daughters, Ada and Johanna, were his heirs.

In January, 1202-3, William, priest of Rockcliff (*sacerdos de Redeclive*) in consideration of six marks of silver quitclaimed to Radulf de Bray † a carucate of land at Rockcliff, and Radulf agreed to pay to William two

* The local family must not be confused with another, connected with Routhelive-by-York (see *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 33 Edward I, p. 307).

† John Denton read "Bray," Hunter read "Brus," and Parker could not decipher the surname.

marks of silver and 12 skeps of oatmeal every year, as long as the latter lived (*Pedes Finium*, edit. Hunter, vol. ii, p. 6). William was probably rector of Rockcliff.

William de Carlisle rendered account, in 1203, of two marks, for having by replevin a carucate of land at Rockcliff, which he held to farm for a term of 15 years from William de Rockcliff, and which was taken into the king's hand for the default of William de Rockcliff against Reginald Berfot (*Pipe Roll*).

In 1204, Richard Gernon had married Johanna, younger daughter of Hugh de Morvill, late tenant-in-chief of Rockcliff (*ibid.*). Their only daughter and heiress was Helewisa, wife of Richard de Wernune (Vernon).

There was final concord, on May 6th, 1204, between Radulf de Bray, plaintiff, and John, prior of Carlisle, tenant, concerning the advowson of Rockcliff. Radulf, in consideration of 18 marks of silver, acknowledged that the advowson belonged to the prior, and quitclaimed the same to him and his successors for ever (Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 7).

In the same year, there were proceedings between Radulf de Bray, plaintiff, and William, son of John de Rockcliff (Routheclive), tenant of the vill, and by final concord, made in August, 1204, William, in consideration of 100s. sterling, acknowledged that the whole vill of Rockcliff belonged to Radulf, to be held to him and his heirs, of the heirs of Hugh de Morvill, by the service due for the same, and Radulf agreed that he and his heirs would pay to William de Rockcliff two marks of silver and 12 skeps of meal every year, as long as William de Rockcliff lived. Reginald de Carlisle was present at the final concord, and, in consideration of 100s., surrendered to Radulf the charter concerning land at Rockcliff, which William de Rockcliff had given him, and quitclaimed all his right in the premises to Radulf and his heirs for ever (Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 8).

On May 6th, 1215, the church of Rockcliff was void, and in the king's hand, and in his gift, because the priory of Carlisle was vacant. The king gave the church to his clerk, Odo de Leddreda, to hold in pure and perpetual alms (*Cal. Charter Rolls*, edit. Hardy, 16 John, p. 206).

There was a plea, in 1215, between Odo, then styled "de warderoba, clerk," and the prior of Carlisle, concerning the church of Rockcliff (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 16 John, p. 203).

Dispute had arisen between the prior of Carlisle and the abbot of Holm Cultram, concerning tithe of fish caught in the Eden, and, about 1234, Walter, bishop of Carlisle, made an award, by which the prior, as rector of Rockcliff,* was to have tithe of all fish landed within that parish, paying to the abbot two shillings a year for ever (*Register of Holm Cultram*, quoted by Nicolson and Burn, ii, p. 223).

Richard de Bray, in 1235, attorned Henry de Tarraby against Richard de Levington, to make division between his own land at Rockcliff and Richard de Levington's land at Levington, that is to say West Linton (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 19 Henry III., p. 182) and, in 1237, attorned Radulf de Waleys against Adam, son of Reginald,† plaintiff, concerning the manor of Rockcliff (*ibid.*, 21 Henry III., p. 576).

Thomas de Rockcliff (Rouchclive) was witness to a charter *circ.* 1240 (*Wetherhal*, p. 265). It appears from the sequel that Richard de Bray left a daughter and heiress Matillis, wife of William de Hardredeshull.‡ She granted her mesne manor to an undertenant, John le Fraunceys.

There was final concord, after Midsummer, 1249, between John le Fraunceys, plaintiff, and William de

* The church had therefore been appropriated to the priory.

† Probably Adam de Levington, undertenant at West Linton of Richard de Levington (see Denton, *Accompt*, p. 150).

‡ The family belonged to Warwickshire (Dugdale, *Warwick*, p. 777).

Hardredeshull and Matillis, his wife, defendants. William and Matillis, on receipt of 60 marks of silver, acknowledged that they had given the manor of Rockcliff to John, to hold to John and his heirs, of William and Matillis and her heirs for ever, rendering therefrom, every year, 100s. sterling at Pentecost, in the church of St. Peter of York, for all service, and performing for William and Matillis and her heirs, to the chief lords of the fee, forinsec service pertaining to the manor. William and Matillis agreed that all the land at Rockcliff, which John de Ludbroke and Johanna, his wife, held in dower of the inheritance of Matillis, and which ought to revert, after Johanna's death, to William and Matillis and her heirs, should remain, after Johanna's death, to John le Fraunceys and his heirs, to be held, together with the manor, of William and Matillis and her heirs for ever.

John and Johanna were present in court and released to John le Fraunceys all their claim to dower (*Feet of Fines, Cumberland, C.P. 25, case 35, file 4, No. 55*).

There had already been final concord, after Easter, 1249, between John de Ludbroke and Johanna, his wife, plaintiffs, and John le Fraunceys, deforciant, concerning the 100s. of land which the plaintiffs claimed as Johanna's dower, out of the free tenement in the vill of Rockcliff which belonged to her late husband, Richard de Bray. The plaintiffs, in consideration of 60 marks of silver, quitclaimed to the deforciant and his heirs all their right in the premises (*ibid.*, no. 56).

By deed dated August 1st, 1257, and made between the same John le Fraunceys and Richard de Vernon, Richard gave his niece, Hawys (daughter of his brother Robert) in marriage to John's nephew, Gilbert (son of his brother Adam) and John gave some land at Rockcliff as a provision for Gilbert and Hawys. That important evidence is furnished by Mr. Ragg (these *Transactions*, n.s. xvi, pp. 167-8). John le Fraunceys had no children, and, when

he died, the manor of Rockcliff devolved on Gilbert as his heir-at-law.

Helewisa (*née* Gernon) widow of Richard de Wernune, died before Lady Day, 1270, seised as tenant *in capite* of the share of the barony of Burgh which included the rent due from Rockcliff. Her under-tenant at Rockcliff was Gilbert le Fraunceys, who paid her a rent of 2s., or a sparrow-hawk (*Cal. Inq. p. m.*, 54 Henry III., p. 235). She left no issue, and the said share passed to her sister, Ada.

Gilbert le Fraunceys was dead in March, 1277-8. He was seised at his death of Rockcliff, including a fishery and mill, all held of William de Hardredeshull and his heirs, rendering 2s. a year. William in turn held it of Thomas de Multon, then lord of the entire barony of Burgh, for 2s. a year rent and 14d. for cornage at the exchequer of Carlisle. Gilbert's heir was his son, Richard, aged 15 on St. Dunstan's day following, who, with his father's consent, affianced the daughter of Michael de Harcla, and married her immediately after his father's death. Michael was attached to answer for the offence (*ibid.*, 6 Edward I., p. 144).

Richard's wife was named Isabella (these *Transactions*, n.s. xii., p. 328).

Custody of the land at Rockcliff lately belonging to Gilbert le Fraunceys, "tenant-in-chief," was granted, in August, 1280, to William de Garland, king's yeoman, during the minority of the heir (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 8 Edward I., p. 395). Michael de Harcla, knight, came into the chancery at Carlisle, in the following month, and acknowledged that he owed the king £36 a year, for having custody of the land and heir of Gilbert le Fraunceys, and ought to pay that sum to William de Garland, to whom the king had given it during the heir's minority (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 8 Edward I., p. 62).

A second inquisition, concerning the land late of Gilbert

le Fraunceys, was held in 1283, when the heir, Richard, came of age (*Cal. Inq. p.m.*, 11 Edward I., p. 272). Richard le Fraunceys obtained seisin of his father's land in August of that year (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 11 Edward I., p. 215). He assumed the surname "de Vernon" (these *Transactions*, n.s. xii, p. 331), and enfeoffed his infant son, Richard the younger, and the latter's wife, Eleanor, daughter of Giles de Fiennes, of land elsewhere. Custody of that land, during the minority of the feoffees, was granted by the king in January, 1291-2, to Giles de Fiennes (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 20 Edward I., p. 470).

On August 18th, 1294, the manor of Rockcliff was in the king's hand, "on account of the gift and feoffment of Richard de Vernon the elder," and, by letters patent of that date, the king granted it to Richard de Vernon the elder for life, with remainder to his son, Richard the younger, and his wife, Eleanor, daughter of Giles de Fiennes, and their heirs, or to the right heirs of Richard the elder (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 22 Edward I., p. 84). Those royal letters patent did not constitute the grantees tenants *in capite*, because the interest of the chief lords of the fee remained unaffected thereby.

Eleanor disappears from view. "Richard son of Richard de Vernon," who is presumably identical with Richard the younger, died in 1323 (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 16 Edward II., p. 662) leaving a widow named Matilda (*ibid.*, 17 Edward II., p. 197). The records do not state the name of his immediate successor at Rockcliff, but, twenty-five years later, the inheritance of the mesne manor had become vested in Isabella, wife of Thomas Danyers.

By final concord made in January, 1347-8, between Thomas Danyers, *chivaler*, and Isabella, his wife, plaintiffs, and Henry de Gretenhale, chaplain, deforciant, the plaintiffs acknowledged that they had given "two parts of two parts" of the manor of Rockcliff to the deforciant and, in consideration of that acknowledgment, the deforciant,

being present in court, restored the same two parts to the plaintiffs, to be held by them and the heirs of their bodies of the chief lords of the fee, by the service pertaining to those two parts. And the deforciant further granted that the one-third part of the manor, which Isabella widow of Richard de Vernon, *chivaler*, held in dower; and the one-third part of the said two parts, which John de Molyneux, *chivaler*, and Clementia, his wife, held in dower, of the inheritance of the deforciant, and which, after the deaths of Isabella and Clementia, respectively, ought to revert to the deforciant and his heirs, should remain, after such respective deaths, to the plaintiffs and the heirs of their bodies, to be held, together with the two parts which they acquired by the action, of the chief lords of the fee, by the service pertaining to the said one-third parts, respectively. And in case it should happen that Thomas and Isabella should die without heir of their bodies, then, after their deaths, the manor should remain to John, son of Thomas Danyers, and his heirs (*Feet of Fines, Cumberland*, C.P. 25, case 35, file 10, No. 48).

Isabella, doweress of the entire manor, was the aged widow of Richard de Vernon the elder. Clementia was probably widow of the unnamed successor at Rockcliff of Richard de Vernon the younger. The premises are described as the "inheritance" of the deforciant, because they had been conveyed to him and his heirs for the purposes of the fictitious action.

In July, 1348, Thomas Danyers was pardoned for having acquired from Robert de Colvill, lord of Bitham, the manor of Aikton and some 200 acres at Burgh, held in chief "as it was said" (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 22 Edward III., p. 112). John Denton remarks enigmatically (*Accompt*, edit. Ferguson, p. 72) that Isabella Danyers was "heir of Colvill."

An inquisition concerning the land of Thomas Danyers, otherwise Daniel, made in February, 1349-50, shows that

he held the manor of Rockcliff, including a fishery in the Eden, jointly with Isabella, his wife, *as of her inheritance*. They held the premises of Margaret, widow of Ranulf de Dacre and Lady of the barony of Burgh, by homage and service of 7s. 8½d. yearly for cornage and suit at her court of Burgh every three weeks. Thomas died on the feast of St. Bartholomew (August 24th), 1349. Isabella survived him, but had since died in another county, the jury did not know where. The heir was their daughter, Margaret, aged 3 years and more (*Cal. Inq. p. m.*, 24 Edward III., p. 175).

In April, 1350, wardship of land late of Thomas Danyers, knight, and land late of the inheritance of Isabella, his wife, was granted by the king to Thomas de Lucy; and the marriage of Margaret, the infant heir, was given to John de Wynwyk, king's clerk (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, 24 Edward III., p. 234).

There was an order, on November 5th, 1362, to cause John, son of John de Radcliff, and his wife, Margaret, daughter and heir of Thomas and Isabella Danyers, to have the land of which Thomas and Isabella were seised in their demesne as of fee, and which by their deaths had come into the king's hand, because Margaret had proved her age (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 36 Edward III., p. 362).

By final concord, made after Michaelmas 1366, between Robert de Redich, chaplain, plaintiff, and John de Radcliff and Margaret, his wife, deforciant, the manor of Rockcliff (Rauclif) was limited to John and Margaret and the heirs male of the body of John, to be held of the chief lords of the fee, by the service due for the same. But if the said John should die without heir male of his body, then, after the decease of John and Margaret, to Richard,* son of John de Radcliff, for life, with remainder to Robert, son of the same Richard, and the heirs male of his body. (*Feet of Fines, Cumberland*, C.P. 25, case 35, file 11, No. 67).

* The settlor was John, son of John de Radcliff, and the context shows that Richard was the settlor's brother.

The land purchased by Thomas Danyers from Robert de Colvill was also the subject of the same action.

Rockcliff was not, strictly speaking, parcel of the ancient barony of Burgh, but was held as of the barony. There was no castle at Rockcliff during the period under review. The church was appropriated, early in the 13th century, to the priory of Carlisle, and was served by a stipendiary chaplain (*V. H. C.* ii, p. 136).

Hutchinson, writing in 1794, says:—

The church is small, without side aisles. The whole is in length, 54 feet 9 inches, and in width, 13 feet and a half. The dedication not known. One small bell. (*Cumberland*, ii, 526).

Rockcliff church has been rebuilt, and its parish boundaries have been greatly altered in recent times.

MANOR OF ROCKCLIFF.—PEDIGREE.

