

ART. I.—*Analysis of the Denton Pedigree.* By T. H. B. GRAHAM, M.A., F.S.A.

Read at Carlisle, March 21st, 1933.

THE political status of the district known as Denton is apt to be puzzling. From the moment when William the Bastard acquired the soil of England by conquest (not by descent) all that soil became vested in him as lord paramount, because the feudal law did not recognize any adverse title to the same. Consequently the then occupants of Denton became in theory feudal tenants of William and his heirs.

But Henry II found it convenient to delegate the rule of Gilsland, that is to say the whilom land of Gille son of Bueth, including *inter alia* Over and Nether Denton, to a Norman named Hubert de Vallibus, or de Vaux, who thus became his tenant *in capite*, or in chief, and so the descendants of Gille son of Bueth no longer held their land immediately of the king, but mediately of Hubert de Vallibus and his heirs.

The same Gill' filius Boed was one of the jury at the inquisition held in 1820-1 by David earl of Cumbria concerning church lands (*Register of the Church of Glasgow*, Bannatyne Club, no. 77, vol. i, p. 5).

In 1177 Robert son of Bueth, last male descendant of Gille son of Bueth was guilty of rebellion, but was pardoned on payment of a fine (*Pipe Roll, Vict. Hist. Cumb.*, I, p. 347) and on his death without issue his lands were, as a matter of course, partitioned between his two sisters as co-heiresses.

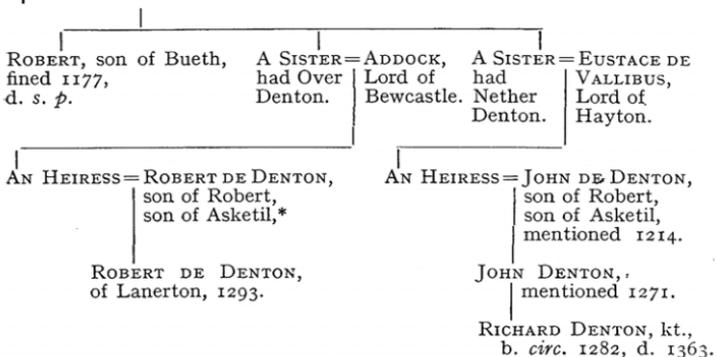
John Denton the historian records the incident in an oft-quoted but cryptic passage.

The first possessor that I read of was one Wescop, to whom Hubert de Vallibus, lord of Gilsland, gave Denton in or about Henry II.'s time. Wescop gave it to one Gille Bueth or Bueth Barn, otherwise that Gille Bueth and Bueth Barn was but one person. He (Bueth Barn) had issue Robert son of Bueth who died without issue. His sisters were married to Addock lord of Bothcastre (Bewcastle) and to Eustace Vaux, lord of Hayton in Gilsland, the one had Over Denton and the other had Nether Denton, which was the two moieties then by partition. Hayton's part was given to John son of Robert son of Asketil de Denton, and Robert, brother to the said John, married the heir to the other part. Robert son of Bueth was their mother's brother (*Accompt*, edit. Ferguson, p. 139).

Can anybody interpret this riddle, comparable to those asked by the Sphinx herself? The following tabular arrangement of the names may prove of assistance.

FEOFFEES OF DENTON,
according to the *Accompt*.

1. Hubert de Vallibus, tenant *in capite*.
2. Wescop, sub-feoffee of Hubert.
3. Gille Bueth, sub-feoffee of Wescop.
4. Buethbarn.



The author of the *Accompt* alleges that the entire district known as Denton, sometime enjoyed by the aforesaid Robert son of Bueth, was partitioned at his

* Robert, son of Asketil was witness to the Lanercost Foundation charter, 1169.

death into two shares, namely, *Over Denton* and *Nether Denton*. Those shares are not at first sight equal in extent, but a much later State record (*Cal. of Escheats*, 22 Richard II, p. 229) supplies the belated information that *Over Denton* included *Lanerton* in *Gilsland*.

The history of *Over Denton* is so exceedingly meagre and vague, that it is idle to pursue it. *Nicolson* and *Burn* merely state that *Over Denton* in 7 Edward I (1278-9) was in the possession of *Richard Stonland*, who in that year, together with *Helena* his wife, granted the same to *John Witherington*, in whose family it long continued, and from them it came to the *Tweedales*.

But the history of *Nether Denton* is comparatively plain sailing.

The author of the *Accompt* concludes (p. 140) that the famous *Sir Richard Denton* succeeded to *Nether Denton*, and that he was grandson of the aforesaid "John son of *Robert* son of *Asketil*," and our great authority, the late *Chancellor Prescott*, appears to have arrived at the same conclusion (*Wetherhal*, p. 221, note).

There are some definite records, by which the chronology of the *Accompt* may be tested.

In 1214 (*temp.* John) *John de Denton* gave to *Wetheral Priory* 8 acres in *Denton* in exchange for other 8 acres, which my uncle *Robert* son of *Bueth* gave to them. It is witnessed by the sheriff, "Thomas son of John" (*Wetherhal*, p. 220). The charter is witnessed by a certain *Robert de Denton*.

On June 29, 1271 (*temp.* Henry III) a later *John de Denton* witnessed a charter of *Matilda de Vallibus*, lady of the barony of *Gilsland* (*Wetherhal*, p. 306).

In 1293 (*temp.* Edward I) *Robert de Denton* had a chapel at his manor of *Lanerton* (*Wetherhal*, p. 322).

In 1295 the same *Robert de Denton* of *Lanerton* held of the barony of *Gilsland* £10 of land by service of one-sixth of a knight's fee (*Cal. inq. p. m.* 23 Ed. I, p. 186).

And lastly in 1338-9, William de Dacre, *chevalier*, had free tenants in the vills of Over Denton and Denton (see *Calendar of escheats*, 22 Richard II, p. 229).

The approximate date of Sir Richard de Denton's birth may be ascertained from the following record.

On January 30, 1351-2, Sir Richard de Denton had exemption for life from certain duties in consideration of his good services to the king's grandfather and father and to the king himself, and because he had passed the age of 70 (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 26 Ed. III, p. 226).

He was therefore born *circ.* 1282, and may therefore have been the son of the John de Denton, who witnessed the above-mentioned charter of Matilda de Vallibus in 1271 (*Wetherhal*, p. 306).

And here Heraldry comes to our aid.

There is in existence a list of knights,* who served during Edward I's reign (1272-1307) in Scotland and elsewhere. It includes the surnames:—

1. Denton, *argent*, 2 bars *gules*, in chief 3 martlets *gules*.

2. Denton *alter* (a second Denton) *argent*, 2 bars *gules*, in chief 3 cinquefoils *sable*.

As this narrative proceeds, it will become abundantly evident that the second knight whose shield was charged with 3 cinquefoils in chief was Sir Richard Denton; and that the first, whose shield was charged (for difference) with three martlets in chief was his younger brother Sir John Denton, who in Edward II's reign acquired Ainstable and Cardew; and whose lineal descendants lords for the time being of those two manors, continued to bear upon their shield the same distinctive charge, 3 martlets in chief.

* It is printed in *Glover's Visitation of Yorkshire*, 1584-5, edited by Joseph Foster and appears at p. 40 of that work. Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, was deputy to William Flower, Norry king of arms.

A.—MANOR OF NETHER DENTON.

The succession of Sir Richard Denton to this manor is the commencement of a new epoch in the history of the family, because upon him hinge the titles to the manors of (B.) Ainstable and (C.) Thursby, while from Sir John Denton, whom for the sake of argument, we here suppose to be his younger brother springs the title to the manor of (D.) Cardew, so we will pause here, for a moment, and investigate those other items of family property.

B.—MANOR OF AINSTABLE.

Edward II granted Ainstable to Sir Richard Denton of Nether Denton, as a reward for his assistance in arresting the rebel Andrew de Harcla* (Nicolson and Burn, vol. ii, p. 429). From him it came to *John Denton of Cardew*,

“ whose posterity, William and John Denton, enjoyed it as lords thereof successively from father to son, until Thomas Lord Dacre extorted it from the last John Denton in the time of Henry VI, for that the said John Denton was towards the party of King Edward IV ” (*Accompt*, edit. Ferguson, p. 118).

Laid in the pavement at the foot of the altar steps of Ainstable church is a fine grave-slab, adorned with a long cross-flory, a sword and a helmet surmounted by the Denton crest (a bird rising) and four shields: the first shield *argent*, two bars *gules*, in chief three martlets *gules* (Denton of Ainstable) impaled with *argent*, a cross engrailed *vert*, the arms borne by the Kirkbride, who fought for Edward I at Carlaverock in 1300 (Nicholas, *Siege of Carlaverock*, p. 76). The second shield Denton of Ainstable impaled with a bend indented, which indicates a second marriage. The said John de Denton did in fact marry a second wife, namely Joan, widow of Thomas de Skelton, as appears by the following record, dated February, 1374.

* Executed for high treason March 3, 1323 (*Trans.*, n.s. xxix, p. 130).

The pope orders the bishop of Carlisle 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 ago*, 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 are to be declared illegitimate (*Cal. Papal Registers*, vol. iv, p. 200).

The third and fourth shields are adorned with the arms of Denton of Ainstable *per se*. Upon the margin of the slab is the inscription *Hic jacet Johannes de Denton dominus de Ainstapli*. See illustration Lysons' *Cumberland*, p. cxcv and Canon Bower's sketch *Trans.*, N.S. ix, p. II.

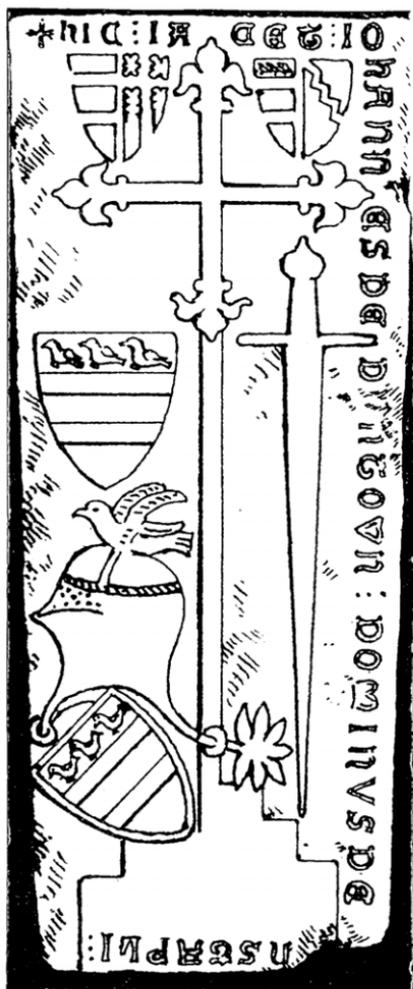
A photograph of the grave-slab is here appended.

Nicolson and Burn, writing in 1777, state (vol. ii, p. 429) that the same grave-slab was "near the middle of the church." Jefferson gives an illustration of it and says (*Leath Ward*, published 1840, p. 251) that it was in the church-yard, so it has undergone many vicissitudes. It is submitted that this ornate stone commemorates John, brother and successor at Ainstable of Sir Richard Denton.

The following document certainly refers to William Denton, penultimate lord of Ainstable.

An agreement written in Norman-French dated in October of 17 Richard II (1393) and made at Millom, Cumberland, between Richard de Coupland of Bolton, of the one part, and Jonett de Denton, Richard de Skelton and William de Denton, of the other part, by which the said William de Denton agrees to take to wife Katherine daughter of the said Richard de Coupland, within 15 days after the feast of St. Martin in the winter next (*Catalogue of ancient deeds*, vol. iv, p. 529).

The same William de Denton is witness to a charter dated January 25, 1404-5, and noticed in the *Accompt*, edit. Ferguson, p. 176.



John Denton's Monument at Ainstable, after the Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, Vol. 4.

Facing p. 6.

At the present day two melancholy stone effigies* are placed, apart from one another, upon the pavement at the north and south sides respectively of the altar of Ainstable church.

They formerly reposed side by side upon an altartomb in St. Cuthbert's church, Carlisle, and undoubtedly represent the William and Catherine of the above record, because the effigy of the knight bears upon its breast the three martlets in chief *gules* denoting Denton of Ainstable, while that of the lady bears the now partly defaced legend—*Orate pro anima Katarine Denton que obiit anno domini mccccxxviii (1428)* as Bishop Nicolson observed and noted in 1703 (*Miscellany Accounts*, p. 101).

St. Cuthbert's church was rebuilt in 1778, and the two effigies were preserved and removed probably through the exertions of Mr. Christopher Aglionby of Nunnery (see *Trans.*, n.s. xxxiii, p. 32) and were subsequently deposited in Ainstable church—a fitting resting-place for those interesting relics.

It appears from *Knights of Edward I*, recently compiled and edited by our member the Rev. C. Moor, D.D. (*Harleian Socy's. Publications*, vol. lxxxiv) that John de Denton was knight of the Shire for Cumberland, and commissioner of array in Eskdale and Gilsland, in 1307; and that Sir Richard Denton of Nether Denton was his contemporary. The remarkable similarity of their coats of arms suggests close relationship and the circumstance that John de Denton succeeded to the manor of Ainstable (being unsettled property) upon the death without male issue of Sir Richard Denton raises a presumption that they were brothers.

C.—MANOR OF THURSBY.

Edward II gave to Sir Richard Denton in fee simple all the land in Cumberland which Andrew de Harcla

* See illustration, *Trans.* o.s. xv, at p. 417.

(the rebel) had acquired from Edmund de Boyvill, which said land had escheated to the king for rebellion: and all the land which Sir Richard Denton and Agnes his wife held in dower of the land of John de Boyvill, former husband of Agnes, of the inheritance of the said Edmund de Boyvill: and all the land held for life by Joan, widow of William de Boyvill: and *Edward III* declared that all the above-mentioned lands should remain to Sir Richard Denton in fee simple (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1335, p. III).

By means of two final concords made in 1344, between Robert de Ogle, plaintiff, and Sir Richard Denton and Agnes his wife, the manor of Thursby was vested in Sir Richard Denton and Agnes his wife for their lives, and after their deaths it was to remain to the said Robert de Ogle in fee simple. Agnes died in 1356, and her husband Sir Richard Denton died in 1363, so the manor of Thursby was thenceforth held by the family of Ogle in fee simple (see *Trans.*, N.S. xxxii, p. 7).*

D.—MANOR OF CARDEW.

Cardew in the barony of Dalston belonged of old to a family which derived its surname from the locality. The last of the de Carthews conveyed, the property to a chaplain named Berrington, and there followed a curious transaction, which seems tantamount to a family settlement. Berrington granted the same property to the bishop of Carlisle, to the use of John Burdon, who in turn granted it to the use of his son John Burdon junior and the heirs of his body, and in default of such issue (which event happened) to the use of *John Denton, lord of the manor of Ainstable, and Joan his wife* and the heirs

* Our member Mr. H. Ince Anderton states that Sir Richard de Denton, kt., died on March 29, 1363, and kindly supplies the following reference *Ogle and Bothal* by Sir Henry A. Ogle, bart., printed privately, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Andrew Reid & Co., Ltd., 1902, page 384 and Appendix p. xxi, No. 175.

of their two bodies. That entail still remained in force when John Denton the historian wrote his *Accompt*.

John Denton, husband of Joan, was steward for the Baliol family of all Annandale, and when Baliol was banished from Scotland, John Denton still kept the principal house there, until it was set on fire and ready to fall, so in memory of that event his heirs assumed the crest—out of a turret *sable*, enflamed, proper, a lion *or*, holding in its paw a sword proper (*Accompt*, edit. Ferguson p. 94). That was of course a Scottish crest.

For the earlier genealogy of the Dentons of Cardew, we have to rely solely upon Nicolson and Burn, who state (vol. ii, p. 317) that they derived their information on the subject from a version of the *Accompt* lent to Bishop Nicolson by Mr. Bird of Brougham in 1708, which relates that:—

1. John de Denton* and his wife Joan de Kirkbride who was daughter of Walter de Kirkbride by his wife Alice (daughter and heiress of William de Burdon kt. brother of John de Burdon senior) had a son:—

2. William de Denton, 1 Hen. VI (1422-3).
3. William de Denton, *temp.* Edward IV.
4. John de Denton, *temp.* Edward IV.
5. Henry de Denton, *temp.* Henry VII.
6. William de Denton, *temp.* Henry VIII.
7. John de Denton, *temp.* Henry VIII.
8. Henry de Denton, *temp.* Elizabeth.
9. John Denton the historian, lord of Cardew, whose name stands as the head of the Visitation Pedigree next exhibited.

* This is Sir John Denton, assumed in the present article to be brother of Sir Richard Denton, from whom he inherited Ainstable. He and his issue continued to be lords of the manor of *Cardew* until 1686.

10 ANALYSIS OF THE DENTON PEDIGREE.

Cumberland Ward,

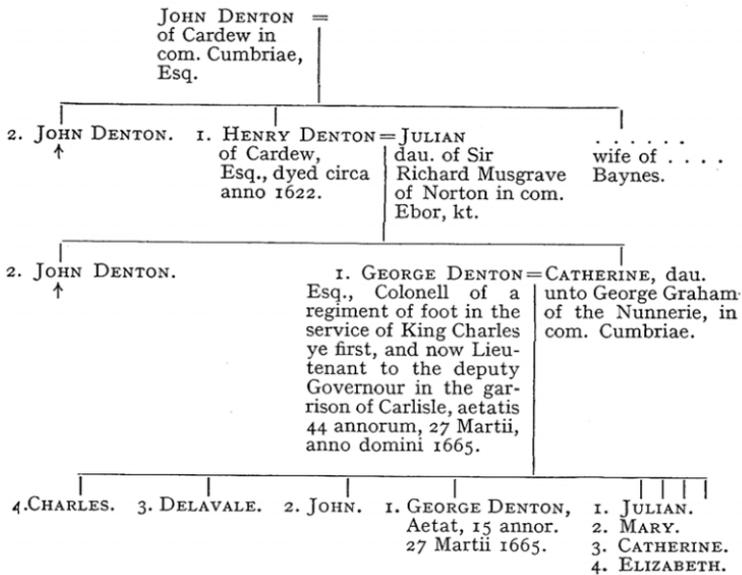
Carlisle.
27 Martii, 1665.

DENTON OF CARDEW.

edit. Joseph Foster.

Arms. Quarterly 1 and 4, *Argent*, two bars, in chief three martlets *gules*.
2. per pale *gules* and *argent*, six martlets three and three counter
charged. 3. *vert* a lion rampant *argent*.

Crest. Out of a turret *sable* enflamed proper, a lion *or* holding in its paw a
sword proper. No proof made of these arms.



Certified by Colonell George Denton.

In 1672, the last-named George Denton, then lord of the manor of Cardew, enfranchised his tenants, reserving only some quit rents and his royalties. In 1686, he sold all his remaining interest in the manor to Sir John Lowther (Hutchinson, vol. ii, p. 448).

A.—MANOR OF NETHER DENTON (continued).

Our earliest account of Nether Denton is that preserved by John Denton the historian, who died in November, 1617.

Nether Denton descended from John son of Robert son of Anketin to John and to Richard Denton, knight, his son's son, whose daughter Margaret, wife to *Adam Copley (sic)* of Batley in Craven had it in marriage,* 17 Ed. II (1324). John son of Adam had issue Richard Copley, whose daughter, Isabel wife to Adam Denton (son of Thomas del Hall) had Denton from her father in marriage in Henry IV's time, Thomas Denton, esquire, now of Warnell,† the son of Thomas son of John holds Warnell in exchange for Denton, which exchange was made in 23 Hen. VII (1508) by the said John and Thomas with the Lord Dacre, which John Denton was son to Richard, son of Thomas, son of Adam, son of Thomas del Hall as aforesaid (*Accompt*, edit. Ferguson, p. 140).

The account may be described as *oracular*, that is to say, it requires the aid of an interpreter to explain its true meaning. The would be interpreter is Thomas Denton, sometime Recorder of Carlisle, who retired from that office in 1679 and died in 1695. He was the author of the document known as *Thomas Denton's MS.* still preserved by Lord Lonsdale as Lowther Castle.

His portrait and that of his wife, Lettice Vachell, are in the Town Hall at Carlisle (*Accompt*, edit. Ferguson, p. vii).

To the world *Thomas Denton's MS.* is a sealed book, but the Lysons, who published their History of Cumberland in 1816, had seen it and make several interesting allusions to its contents.

For example, at p. lxxi, the Lysons state

The male line became extinct in the elder branch after five descents (*sic*)‡ by the death of Sir Richard Denton, whose heiress married Adam Copley (*sic*) Richard Copley grandson of Adam had a daughter and heiress married to Adam del Hall, who took the name of Denton and had a grant from his father-in-law of the arms of Denton as borne by his maternal ancestor Sir Richard Denton (*Thomas Denton's MS.*) where there is a copy of the grant in French).

* As to the nature of an estate *in maritagio* see Holdsworth, *History of English Law*, 3rd edn, vol. iii, p. 111.

† Cf. Visitation Pedigree of Denton of Warnell, 1665, *infra*.

‡ There were, in fact, only three descents.

And again at p. 98 they state

Thomas del Hall, father of Adam, had purchased Denton Hall* of Sir Richard Denton, who in the deed calls him *Consanguineus* (*Thomas Denton's MS.*). The heiress of Sir Richard Denton married Copley of Yorkshire (*sic*) and the heiress of Copley in the third generation married Adam del Hall, who took the name of Denton, and had from his father-in-law a grant of the arms of his maternal great-grandfather Sir Richard Denton.

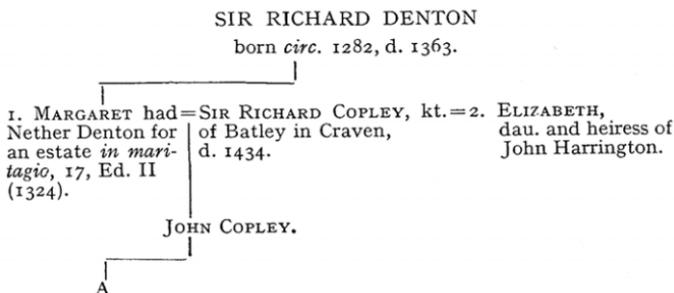
In the midst of the above conflicting statements made by the commentators on John Denton's *Accompt* it is refreshing to meet with some more reliable evidence.

Dugdale's Visitation of Yorkshire, edited by J. W. Clay, F.S.A., states, vol. i, p. 154, that Margaret, daughter and heiress of Sir Richard Denton, was the first wife of Sir Richard Copley, of Batley Hall, Yorks., kt., whose will was dated July 16 and proved September 28, 1434.

Again, the *Visitation of Yorkshire* made, in 1584-5 by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, and edited by Joseph Foster, states, at p. 10, that Margaret, daughter of Sir Richard Denton, kt., was the first wife of Sir Richard Copley of Copley (*sic*) Hall.

And lastly *Pedigrees of Yorkshire Families*, arranged in alphabetical order and compiled by Joseph Foster in 1874, vol. i, is to the same effect.

The following table of the *dramatis personæ* may help to test the credibility of the above statements, which are at first sight a paradox.



* Perhaps the seigniory or lordship of the manor.



THE DENTON MONUMENT IN SEBERGHAM CHURCH.

Facing p. 15.

One of the lords of the manor of Warnell mentioned in the above Visitation Pedigree, 1665, namely Thomas Denton who lived in Queen Mary's reign, was buried under an altar-tomb, standing in the choir of Sebergham church and described by Bishop Nicolson in 1703 (*Miscellany Accounts*, p. 10) but soon after 1774, when the Dentons sold Warnell Hall, the altar-tomb was considered an obstruction. It was pulled down and some stone slabs which had adorned its sides were affixed to the south wall of the sanctuary as Chancellor Ferguson noted when he visited the place in 1877-8. The said Thomas Denton was nicknamed, from a facial disfigurement, "Tom with the spots" and married two wives the second of whom, Ann Aislaby or Aslaby of Yorkshire, erected the altar-tomb to his memory (*Trans. o.s.* vii, p. 206). One of the slabs bears the following inscription.

Thomas Denton de Warnell arm. in artibus M^r et dignae memoriae, octingenta expletis an. feliciter obiit 1 die Aprilis ao dni 1616. Per me, A.D. uxor.

On the same wall is a helmet carved in stone with mantling and crest, a bird rising surmounting the escutcheon of Denton of Warnell.

Below it are affixed four other stone slabs emblazoned with coats of arms.

1. Denton of Warnell *per se*, argent, 2 bars *gules*, in chief, 3 cinquefoils *sable*, and above it a helmet with mantling surmounted by the crest, a bird rising.

2. The same design in duplicate.

3. Denton of Warnell impaling Aslaby of Yorkshire, namely, 1st and 4th quarters *azure*, a fesse between 3 martlets *argent*; 2nd quarter, an eagle displayed; 3rd quarter, a bend; and above two crests, namely, a bird rising and a morion.

4. The same design in duplicate.

The whole group is a well-executed example of heraldic art and is elucidated by the accompanying photograph.

The pedigree of the Dentons of Warnell, erstwhile of Nether Denton Hall in Gilsland, who are distinguished by the cognizance three cinquefoits in chief, is continued by Nicolson and Burn in vol. ii, p. 326.

(1) Thomas Denton son of the Recorder married Margery, daughter of Crackenthorpe of Newbiggin, Westmorland.

(2) Thomas Denton, their son, married a daughter of Pattinson of Penrith, and died in 1736.

(3) John Denton, their son, married Mary daughter of Thomas Wilkin of Brough Sowerby, Westmorland, and by her had issue Thomas and Barbara, but in 1774 he sold Warnell to Sir James Lowther, bart., afterwards Earl of Lonsdale, and thus the Dentons' ancient connections with all the premises was severed.