THOMAS DE QUINCEY AND HIS SUPPOSED DESCENT FROM THE EARLS OF WINCHESTER.

By JOSEPH BAIN, F.S.A.Scot.

In *Harper's Magazine* for last February, there is an interesting paper styled "Nights and Days with de Quincey." Mr. Hogg (the author), at the close of it, makes the following remarks which drew my attention, being quite new to me :—

"FAMILY RESEMBLANCES."

"On one of my visits to the Houses of Parliament, whilst passing through one of the corridors, I was startled by the features of a sculptured figure quite unknown to me. The thought flashed, how strikingly that face resembles Miss Florence de Quincey! (afterwards Mrs. Baird Smith). She was always remarkable for her pale statuesque beauty. On reading the inscription, I found that the figure was actually that of her ancestor, Saher de Quincey, Earl of Winchester."

"When I returned to Edinburgh, I reported to de Quincey this singular resemblance of the effigy of the old earl to his daughter over a gap of some five centuries."

'This led to a critical estimate of Saher de Quincey and the part he played in the history of his time, which I remember was summed up in the pithy remark "*A very turbulent personage indeed he was.*"

"Thereafter I had a charming disquisition on "Family Resemblances" (or "Heredity") which would have delighted Captain Galton, illustrated by humorous examples ancient and modern. This same Saher (or Seyer) de Quincey is to be remembered in connection with the capital versified performance by "Delta" in *Blackwood* entitled "De Quincey's Revenge," in three "Fyttes." It appeared about forty years ago."

On reading the first paragraph, one pauses to ask—Does the writer really think that the sculptured figure of Saher de Quincy, Earl of Winchester, placed in the House of Lords[1] as one of the Magna Charta Barons, was done from an authentic likeness of him? As he died in the Holy Land in 1219, it is improbable to the last degree that any likeness ever existed. How then can a resemblance between a lady of this nineteenth century and a fancy portrait of a baron of the thirteenth, prove their relationship?

Mr. Hogg's complacent assumption on the point shows how rootedly the belief lingers in this country, that persons who bear a similar surname are all descended from a common ancestor, than which there can be no greater delusion. For the "Opium Eater" himself thought he descended from the Earls of Winchester, as appears in his *Autobiography*,[2] though there is no proof whatever to establish it. In this belief probably, he prefixed the "de" to his surname, for Professor Masson says in a note, "De Quincey's father called himself simply 'Thomas Quincey,' without

[1] Not now in a corridor, whatever may have been its original place.
[2] Prof. Masson's Edition, 1889, vol. iii.

any prefix of *de*, and was known by that name from about 1779 to 1793, by the business world of Manchester."

De Quincey in the *Autobiography*, refers to "Delta's" poem, which being mere romance, proves nothing. Where he discovered that the De Quincis emigrated from Norway early in the eleventh century, does not appear; the belief, hitherto, is that they came from Gascony in the twelfth. The *Autobiography* says they continued to flourish in England through nine or ten generations . . . and had a perilous share in the Barons' war under Henry III. Before they came to grief, they threw off "asteroids," [1] some of whom found themselves abreast of Henry VIII in the sixteenth century. He then refers to the Quinceys who emigrated to America [to be noticed presently] and concludes by an account of the last of the "asteroids" in England, who enjoyed any relics of the ancient Winchester estates; an elder kinsman of his father, who died during the American war, a squireen as he (de Quincey) had been told, in a village belonging either to the counties of Leicester, Nottingham or Rutland. Could any thing be more vague than this hearsay story?

The mention of America in the *Autobiography* reminded me that the Quincy family, whose founder Edmund Quincy emigrated to Boston, in 1633, became noted there, a descendant John Quincy Adams, having been President of the United States. There are two books giving their family history which I have seen.[2] The second of them, in two very handsome quarto volumes, is an expansion of the slight notices of the American Quincys contained in the earlier work. The author employed the late eminent genealogist, Colonel J. L. Chester, to examine the English records. There is a very interesting report by that gentleman on the results of his enquiries, at the close of which he says:—"I do not discuss the question of the arms claimed and used by the later descendants of Edmund Quincy. [3] It is of course possible that he descended lineally from the arms-bearing De Quinceys, but even if such were the case, I think the position in which he is found, would preclude the possibility of discovering evidence to substantiate such descent. London 28 Jany. 1881." (Signed) "Joseph Lemuel Chester."

This is the only conclusion to which this honest and able investigator could come. Col. Chester found that Edmund Quincy, father of the emigrant, instead of being a "landowner living on his estates at Achurch, near Wigthorpe, Northamptonshire," as stated in these family histories, was merely a 'husbandman,' or tenant farmer, "and there was no evidence that he owned an acre in fee simple," and stated these plain facts in his report, with the inevitable inferences from them. His client, who naturally enough, wished to establish a descent from the great territorial De Quincis, observes with evident dissatisfaction that "the depreciating and half patronizing tone of the report is both distasteful and out of place"; consoling himself with the lucubrations in an opposite direction of T. C. Banks (a strange personage who was 'created' a

[1] Cadet branches are probably meant by this odd epithet.

[2] (1) *A brief account of the De Quincy family of Boston, Mass.*, 1875, 8vo.
(2) *Family Memorials of the Salisbury, Quincy,* [and several other American] families, by E. E. Salisbury, privately printed, 1885.

[3] They used in 1698, the seven mascles of Roger, second Earl of Winchester, quite undifferenced!

baronet by the *pseudo* Earl of Stirling), who asserted, "that the younger sons of Saher de Quincy were very numerous, and as the lands and property were divided, they went into different employments, and became part of the yeomanry of England, but yet lawfully retained the arms and the tradition of their Norman descent." Banks also "considered," on what ground is not said, that the emigrant was descended from one of the younger sons of Margaret, wife of Earl Saher.

Another person of the same complimentary turn of mind—the anonymous author of *The Norman People and their existing descendants in the British Dominions and the United States of America* (London, 1874), appears to have assured Miss Quincy, an American lady, that "this earldom was still extant and might be claimed," a somewhat rash statement regarding an extinct territorial dignity of the days of King John.

The facts regarding the great and short lived house of De Quinci, are pretty well known to those conversant with our public records. The first of them who occurs in England was Saher de Quinci of Buckby, a Northamptonshire landowner in 1158.[1] He disappears in 1162.[2] Robert de Quinci his son appears but little in the English records, probably for the reason that he married Orabilis, daughter of Nes son of William, a great Scottish heiress, acquiring with her the lands of Leuchars and others in Fifeshire, East Lothian, and elsewhere. By 1192, he had gone to Jerusalem, and possibly died abroad.[3] Saher de Quinci II, the son of Robert and Orabilis, first appears in 1197-8,[4] and was a magnate of the first rank in both countries—in Scotland in right of his mother, and in England in right of his wife, Margaret, younger sister and co-heiress[5] of Robert, Earl of Leicester, with whom he obtained the half of that Honour. He was the first Earl of Winchester, created, some say in 1207, certainly before July, 1210,[6] and died in the Holy Land in 1219. Of his three sons, (1) Reginald the eldest, who was a hostage in 1213 for William the Lyon, died young; (2) Sir Robert, his third, of Colum-Quinci, made a great marriage with a Welsh princess, Helena widow of John "le Scot," earl of Chester and Huntingdon, nephew of William the Lyon, and died before his brother Earl Roger, leaving two daughters and co-heiresses, Johanna wife of Sir Humphrey de Bohun, and Hawysia, a minor in 1264. Earl Saher had also two daughters, Lora, wife of William de Valoines, lord of Panmure, Chamberlain of Scotland, and Hawisa, contracted by her mother the Countess Margaret in 1223, to Hugh de Vere, heir of the Earldom of Oxford.[7] She survived him as Countess of Oxford for fifty years.[8]

(3) Roger de Quinci, the second son of Earl Saher, and the last Earl of Winchester, was even a greater man than his father. His first wife (mother of his three daughters,) was Helen, eldest of the three daughters and co-heiresses of Alan lord of Galloway,[9] in whose right he became Consta-

[1] Pipe Roll, 4 Henry II.
[2] *Ibid.* 8 Henry II.
[3] Pipe Roll, 4 Richard I.
[4] Pipe Roll, 9 Richard I.
[5] Amicia, the elder sister, married Simon de Montfort, father of the celebrated Simon, Earl of Leicester.
[6] Prestita Roll, 12 John.
[7] Fine Roll, 7 Henry III.
[8] Inq. p.m., 55 Henry III, No. 36.
[9] Her half-sisters were the famous Devorgilla, Lady of Balliol (mother of King John) and Christina Countess of Albemarle.

ble of Scotland, on her father's death in 1233, and added largely to his Scottish possessions. After enjoying his earldom for forty-five years, he died in 1264, and in him the direct male line of the De Quincis unquestionably ended. Unlike the Lindsays, Grahames and some other Scottish families, they put forth no junior branch.[1] Earl Roger left three daughters only, (1) Margaret, second wife of William de Ferrars, Earl of Derby, (2) Elena, wife of Alan la Zouche, Baron of Ashby, and (3) Elizabeth, wife of Alexander Comyn, Earl of Buchan, who in her right, though the youngest daughter, became Constable of Scotland in succession to his father-in-law.

The entire De Quinci estates, both in England and Scotland, were divided between these three ladies, as many inquisitions on record show beyond a doubt. Their descendants lost all their Scottish possessions during the wars of independence, having taken the side of their kinsman Balliol, against Robert Bruce.

The Lords de Ferrars, of Groby, retained many of the Leicester possessions of their De Quinci ancestors, now divided and held by their descendants the Lords Grey of Groby, the Earls Ferrars of Chartley, and the Marquises of Townshend.[2] Nor are the La Zouches unrepresented in the English Peerage. The assertion of Banks, "that Saher earl of Winchester, had numerous younger sons," who quietly subsided into honest yeomen, "still retaining their arms," &c. (a very likely thing in the thirteenth century!), is disposed of by the circumstance that he had only one, Sir Robert de Quinci of Colum-Quinci, before named, one of whose co-heiresses is probably represented by the premier Viscount of England, the descendant of the Bohuns.

All the references to records in this paper will be found in volumes i, ii, and iii of the *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, edited by myself, for the General Register House series, under direction of the Deputy Clerk Register of Scotland. These contain the chief facts regarding the *four* [not nine or ten] generations of the old De Quincis, from 1158 to 1264. They have been noted independently of *Dugdale's Baronage*, though in all essential points the result is the same. If any one can prove that male descendants still exist, the information will be acceptable to those interested in historical genealogy. But till then, people who prefer fact to fiction are not disposed to allow loose assertions founded on fancied resemblances, hearsay reports, and the like, of descent from and representation of long extinct surnames, to be gravely stated in the pages of well known publications, without challenge. Thomas de Quincey was too remarkable a man to need any fictitious halo around his name as the descendant of a Magna Charta baron, to which he appears not to have had a vestige of claim, if records may be trusted.

The American Quincys must also discard the dream of descent from the much coveted Earl Saher, and with it the peculiar and very distinctive

[1] Earl Saher had two nephews by a sister, Sir Roger, and Saher de Sancto Andrea. Both appear often in records, and one at least was a Fifeshire land owner.

[2] No one either in this country or elswhere, has a shadow of right to bear the seven mascles, the well known cognizance of the De Quincis earls of Winchester, except one or other of these three noble families. Their common ancestor Sir William de Ferrars of Groby, (lord of Leuchars as the eldest De Quinci co-heir), bore these undifferenced arms on his shield at the battle of Falkirk, in 1298. (*The Falkirk Roll of Arms*, by Henry Gough, Esq., 1888, p. 142.)

armorial insignia of the extinct earldom, which are the rightful property of his representatives in the female line, and of them alone. They have a very respectable list of ancestors, beginning with the father of the first emigrant of 1633, and may well rest content with it. As there are no parish records earlier than the time of Thomas Cromwell, in 1538, it is impossible to trace any surname *not a land owning one*, earlier than that year—if even so early.

In such absolute barrenness of material, the man who attempts to establish a connection between the obscure inhabitants of a Northamptonshire parish, living in the last half of the sixteenth century, and a magnate who died in 1219, thus bridging over a period of nearly 400 years, may rest assured that his labour will be in vain.

SELBY CHARTERS AND DEEDS.

Communicated by Mrs A. TEMPEST.

The following abstracts of ancient charters and deeds, ranging over a period of some four hundred years, and which all relate to the manor and lands of Biddleston, will it is hoped be found of much interest, especially to those whose labours are directed to the northern counties. These charters with others relating to Newton, Shilmore in the parish of Alwinton, and Prenderlath, co. Roxburgh, which are to follow, belong to Walter Charles Selby, Esq., of Biddleston in Northumberland.

Charters relating to Biddleston.

(1.) Grant from William de Duglas, lord of Duglas, to Nicholas de Punchard and his heirs of all his land "del cotes" in the vill and territories of Bidlesden without reservation. To hold of the lord of the fee by the usual services and the yearly payment of one penny to William de Duglas and his heirs. Witnesses—Thomas de Clenhill; Walter de Burudone; Richard de Horsele; Richard de Charteney; knights; Roger de Ynghow; Hugh Gelun; and Thomas Scot de Wartone. Seal—on a shield, a man's head with either a wreath round his temples or a helmet with a vizor raised. Legend—+ s: WILLI DE DVGLAS.

(2.) Release from William de Duglas, lord of Duglas, to Nicholas de Punchard and his heirs of all title to the land "del cotes" in the vill and territories of Bydelsden. Witnesses—Thomas de Clenhill; Walter de Burudon; and Richard de Horsele; knights; Roger de Ynghow, Hugh Galun and Thomas Scot de Warton. Seal as before.

(3.) Release from William de Duglas, lord of Duglas, to Sir Nicholas de Punchardon, Knt., and his heirs of all title to land "de le cotes" in the vill and territories of Bydelisdon. Witnesses—Walter de Barouden; Thomas de Clenchill; Richard de Chartenay; Richard de Horseley; knights; Hugh de Bykerton; Hugh Galun; Thomas Scot de Warton; Walter de Forset; Alan de Tyrwit; "Hugh junior Galun" *(sic)*; John son of Michael de Tyrwit; Gilbert de Edlingtham; and Richard Oliver. Seal as before.