THE CLOSE FAMILY OF RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE.

It is somewhat astonishing how little attention our old "Town Families" of Mayors and Aldermen have hitherto gained from genealogists. Nothing can be more interesting than tracing the pedigrees of these families; seeing that, in former times, our towns owed their "Mayors and Aldermen" to the younger branches of the neighbouring aristocracy; and, in numerous cases, these scions of the county families have remained located to the present time in the towns they settled in, two centuries and a half ago; though in more instances have they, growing wealthy, abandoned their "town" and business, and seated themselves some short distance from it, founding a house of county aristocracy; perhaps after the old stock, from which they originally sprang, has long since become extinct and passed away.

Among the old Richmond (Yorkshire) families, we meet with several good names. There was long there a branch of the Pinckneys, a famous house in the vicinity; and it held a worthy station in the town; as the sister of Matthew Pinckney (whom we find recorded to be an alderman of Richmond in 1623) married into the family of Peirse, of Bedale. This Pinckney family only recently expired, merging in the family of Simpson, of Richmond and Stockton on Tees. Then there was also a branch of the very respectable Durham and North Riding family of Ewbanke established in Richmond. It was a son of this family that, succeeding to lands, by maternal descent, from the Hammonds, took their name, and became seated at Hutton Bonville. There was also a branch of the Smales here; a very respectable family, which matched in later times with Chaytor, Hammond, Greenwell, and Surtees; and the Sudells, who were also concerned at Spennithorne, and one branch of which merged in a scion of the house of Bowes.

There were several other good families at Richmond, which the limits of this article will not permit us to notice; but of all its families, none ranked during the last century before the Closes. They were a house of lawyers: and appear to have

risen and flourished in the law. They were Town Clerks of Richmond continuously for about a century, and unquestionably were the first attorneys and solicitors in Richmond, during that period, commanding all the best (and no doubt a most extensive) practice in that town and neighbourhood. We are unable to give a connected pedigree of the family save in the later generations, but the following biographical notices of the early Closes will be useful and interesting to those they concern, and are at least, when once collected, worth preservation.

The Closes have been long—at least about three centuries—located in the vicinity of Richmond; if we may trust the surname being the real one of an "Elizabeth Close," a nun of Marwick Priory, A.D. 1553; but, as of all ecclesiastics, we must never make too sure of their original surnames, so may we pass from this lady, and "1553," to the reign of Charles II.

In the time of Charles II. we find four members of the Close family possessed of property in Richmond. They were,

I. James Close, of whom presently.

II. John Close, who owned a house in Frenchgate, Richmond, 1679; was Warden of the Company of Mercers, Grocers, and Haberdashers of Richmond in 1702; and served the office of mayor in 1716. This gentleman married Jane, sister and heiress of Charles Estouteville, Esq. of Hunmanby, and had issue only daughters, his coheiresses; of whom

Jane Close, married, Oct. 1722, Thomas Grimston, Esq. of Grimston Garth, co. York, and had issue

John Grimston, her son and heir, who had lands in Hunmanby, Fordan, and Ergham, and elsewhere, *jure matris*.

III. Ralph Close, who owned a tenement in the Bailey, Richmond, 1679; and was appointed a common councilman of the same place, by the second charter, 1684.

IV. Henry Close, who owned a toft in Millgate, Richmond, 1679.

James Close, attorney at law, appears to have been the representative of the family at this period. He was appointed town clerk of Richmond by King Charles the First's first charter, dated 1668, and was mayor of Richmond in 1691 and 1707. He owned a house in Frenchgate 1679; and was buried at Richmond 4th Nov. 1708, as "Mr. James Close, sen^{r}." To this gentleman succeeded

ANTHONY CLOSE, gent. attorney at law (no doubt his son), who was appointed deputy town clerk of Richmond 1690, elected an alderman 1702, (when he resigned his office of deputy town clerk,) mayor of Richmond 1704, 1715, and 1728; buried 6th Oct. 1728. In 1701, this gentleman received a lease of Coalsgarth Quarry, near Richmond. He appears to have had three sons,

I. JAMES CLOSE, attorney at law, his successor.

II. Robert Close, of St. John's College, Cambridge, A.B. 1704; A.M. 1708; the very talented and celebrated master of Richmond Grammar School; to which he was appointed 1722. He held it till his death, which occurred 16th Aug. 1750, at the age of 67.[a] X

III. John Close, of Oulston, co. York, attorney of the Court of Common Pleas 1730.

JAMES CLOSE, gent. attorney at law, was appointed town clerk Dec. 1702; elected an alderman 1718; resigned the office of town clerk 1725; mayor 1723, 1728, 1731, and 1746; buried 23 June 1755. This gentleman, who was re-admitted an attorney of the Court of King's Bench under the regulations of the Act passed 1729-30, received a lease, together with others, of mines in Wicliffe pasture, near Richmond, in 1718, from the Corporation of that town. His election as mayor, in 1728, was to succeed his predecessor Anthony Close, who was serving that office, but died in the course of the year. This gentleman appears to have had two sons,

I. RALPH CLOSE, attorney at law, his successor.

II. James Close, living 1755, and in every probability father of William Close, Esq. mayor of Richmond in 1812; who, in 1820, owned a house in Frenchgate, which was the property of Mr. Matthew Smales in 1679.

——— Close (a daughter) married on 29th Aug. 1765 to Benjamin Hilton, Esq. of the Six Clerks' Office, London.

RALPH CLOSE, gent. attorney at law, was appointed town clerk of Richmond 6th Feb. 1725, and in 1729-30, was re-admitted an attorney of the Court of Common Pleas, under the recent Act's regulations. He was living 1739, 1745, 1748; and

[a] Israel Close, of St. John's Coll. Camb. A.B. 1738. see MS note attached
Henry Close, of Sid. Coll. Camb. A.B. 1740, A.M. 1744.
John Margerum Close, of Eman. Coll. Camb. LL.B. 1774.

X Will of Robt. Close, clerk, of Richm. co. York, dated 2 Dec. 1729, proof 19 Aug. 1750 [Arch. Richmond] mentions brother Henry Close & each of his children; his sister Anne, wife of James Close sole extrix. no others mentioned.

Robert Close, B.A. 1703/5, M.A. 1708

Admitted St. John's Coll. Camb. as follows:

"born at Richmond, Yorkshire, son of RALPH CLOSE, deceased; school: Richmond, under Tompsson

Adm: Sizar 17 March 170$\frac{8}{9}$, aged 17

∴ born circa 1684

Notes: Master of Grammar Sch. Richm. 1722-50

Carlisle Gram. Sch. II. 879

Died 16 Aug. 1750 at. 67

See Gent's Mag. 1815. II. p. 24^b

said to have been a Fellow of St. John's but that is a mistake

N.B. father Ralph not Anthony

Israel Close. B.A. 1738

Adm. St. John's Coll. Camb. as follows:

"eld. son of Wm Close, attorney-at-law, Lincolnshire; born at Boston: school, Boston under Mr. Smith; adm. pensioner 26 May 1734, at 20 (∴ b. circa 1714)

Notes: Ordained Deacon 15 Mar. 1738$\frac{9}{0}$ & lic. curate of Tothill Lincs. by Bp. of Lincoln Instituted vicar of Beesby, co. Linc. 27 May 1742 holding that living until (his death) 1771.

in 1750 received a lease of the above Wicliffe pasture mines. He appears to have only had one son and one daughter.

I. JOHN CLOSE, of whom presently.

I. Dorothy Close, who resided in a house in Richmond, supposed to have been family property. When she, "Mrs. Dolly Close," died, "Mrs. Close" (her widowed sister in law) "moved into that house."

JOHN CLOSE, Esq., like his ancestors, was brought up to the law, but in a higher branch of that profession. He was brought up to the bar, and became a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn; and was Clerk of Assize for the Northern Circuit. He inherited some property about Richmond; but resided a short time at Scorton, and, intending to reside at Easby Hall, furnished it and fitted it up accordingly. He died, however, very suddenly the night before he intended entering it, 4 April 1772, at the age of 51, and was buried in Easby church; having been active in suppressing the riots of the Wensleydale miners in 1757. He married, in 1757, Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Wilson, Esq. of Hartlepool, in Durham, ancestor of Robert Wilson, Esq. High Sheriff of Essex in 1815, and of Mr. T. Wilson, once M.P. for the city of London. (Vide pedigrees of this family in Surtees' Durham, and Sharpe's Hartlepool.) The said Elizabeth was left pregnant at her husband's death, and dying herself 28-9th May 1802, æt. 65, was interred beside him at Easby. They had issue one son and six daughters.

I. JOHN CLOSE, of whom presently.

I. Anna Close, married 20th Sept. 1777, to William Tufnell, Esq. second son of John Tufnell, Esq. of Langleys, in Essex; and was mother of John Jolliffe Tufnell, Esq. of Langleys, heir to his uncle, and High Sheriff of Essex 1823, Lady Pilkington, of Chevet, Lady Young, of Marlow Park, &c. See Burke's Commoners.

II. Jane Close, married, at Richmond, 21 Oct. 1790, to Anthony Hammond, Esq. of Hutton Bonville, near Richmond, Senior Deputy Lieutenant for the North Riding; and had issue. See the pedigree of that family in this work.

III. Elizabeth Close, married to Mark Currie, Esq. o Duke Street, Bloomsbury, (son of William Currie, Esq. o London, banker,) and has had eight children. Their marriage took place 8th Jan. 1789.

IV. Dorothy Close, married in 1797, at Richmond, to Leonard Currie, Esq. of Bromley, Middlesex, since of Stanlake, Berks, brother of the said Mark; and has six children. See the Currie pedigree in Burke's new edition of the Commoners.

V. Isabella Close, married to Charles John Wheler, Esq. second son of Sir Charles Wheler, Bart. and has had a large family. Vide the Baronetages.

VI. Margaret Close (posthumous), born 1772; married to the Rev. James Hewgill, A.M., LL.B., Rector of Smeaton, Yorkshire, half-brother of General Edwin Hewgill, of Hornby Grange, near North Allerton, (and son of the Rev. Henry Hewgill, A.M. of Hornby Grange, Lord, Patron, and Rector of Great Smeaton, and forty-three years a Justice of the Peace for the North Riding, by Antonina his second wife, sister of Henry Willoughby, fifth Lord Middleton.) She was dead s. p. in 1844. (Vide Burke's new edition of Commoners.)

JOHN CLOSE, Esq. only son and heir, was a minor, 1772, at his father's death; when also Peter Hammond, Esq. of Bolton Hall, who was his godfather, leaves him and each of his sisters a legacy by his will. This gentleman married at Richmond, Anne, daughter of —— Hogg, of Stockton on Tees, sister to the wife of the Rev. —— Blackburne, of —— near Bristol, grandson of Archdeacon Blackburne.

Mr. John Close for some time held two small appointments under Government, but was afterwards Consul at Charanti in France, and so remained until his death. He left sons, settled abroad; some are in India, others in France.

There are still, however, males of the Close family located in different parts of Yorkshire.

Seaton Carew, Durham,
Sept. 1844.

W. D. B.