

A HISTORY OF THE BARONETAGE

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A History of the Baronetage by Francis W. Pixley

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FRANCIS W. PIXLEY

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THE BARONETAGE**

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LONDON
DUCKWORTH AND COMPANY
1900

TO
SIR CHARLES H. STUART RICH
FOURTH BARONET OF SHIRLEY, F.S.A.
FOUNDER OF THE
HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF THE BARONETAGE
THIS WORK, AS A TOKEN OF OUR
CLOSE FRIENDSHIP OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED



PREFACE

ALTHOUGH close upon three centuries have elapsed since the erection of the degree of Baronet by King James I. of England and VI. of Scotland, yet, so far as I have been able to ascertain, no history of this hereditary dignity has ever been attempted. To endeavour to supply this deficiency in literature is consequently a task of considerable difficulty, accompanied by many misgivings.

A writer undertaking a history of the Peerage could begin by surrounding himself with works innumerable, from each of which he could cull something wherewith to enrich his own, but to break fresh ground requires more research; and when his work is completed, the author has the uneasy feeling that there is concealed in many unknown localities much information which he would like to have included in his history, as being essential to its completeness, had he only been aware of its existence.

I have, however, done my best to gather together from various sources the hitherto disconnected documents which form the history of the sixth hereditary degree of the higher nobility of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; and I can only claim that however incomplete

my work may be, it will be the means of presenting many documents printed for the first time. I also hope that it will cause many erroneous ideas in connection with the Baronetage to disappear for ever.

Amongst these may be mentioned the idea that the Baronetcies first created by King James I. were sold to persons of no social standing for the purpose of providing funds for the King's private expenditure; the extraordinary error, which has been perpetrated even by Kings of Arms and Heralds, that the Baronetage is an 'Order,' whereas it is a Degree of Dignity Hereditary; also, that 'Bart.,' the popular nickname for a member of the Football Club of a well-known Metropolitan medical hospital, is a proper abbreviation of the word Baronet.

I must express my deep thanks to many Baronets who have given me assistance in my work; also to Sir Arthur Vicars, C.V.O., F.S.A., Ulster King of Arms, and Sir John Balfour Paul, F.S.A. (Scot.), Lyon King of Arms, for their courteous replies to many inquiries; to Captain Francis Fletcher-Vane for the copy of the grant to Sir Ralph Fane (or Vane), together with its translation; to the Rev. R. E. Cole of Doddington Rectory, Lincoln, for the document which enabled me to give an example of the fees paid on the creation of a Baronet; to Mr. Frederick P. Pelham for the loan of many interesting documents in connection with the 'Committee of the Baronetage for

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Privileges,' originated by his relative, the late Richard Broun; to many courteous officials of the Reading Room of the British Museum, of the Public Record Office, and of the Guildhall Library; and, above all, to Lady Shuckburgh for her great kindness in allowing me to examine the documents at Shuckburgh Hall handed to the late Sir Francis Shuckburgh, Baronet, who was the Treasurer of the 'Committee of the Baronetage for Privileges.'

It was, however, with great regret that I discovered that the minute-book of the Committee was not amongst these papers, and all efforts to trace its whereabouts have been in vain. By means, however, of reports, circulars, etc., issued by this Committee, I have been enabled to give an account of its proceedings, and can only regret that, owing to the absence of the minute-book, I have been unable to make it more complete.

FRANCIS W. PIXLEY.

LONDON, 1st May 1900.

