

SOME HAMPSHIRE RECTORS.

BY MRS. COPE.

To find any connection between Hampshire and North Wales is very unexpected, but in this world the unexpected generally happens. There is in North Wales a peculiar part of it adjoining England which figures on the map as a detached portion of Flintshire, but which is known locally as Maelor Saesneg, or English Maelor. The old families who lived there for generations were all of Norman origin; to this day the locality prides itself on not knowing a word of Welsh—the only Welsh is the Post Office notices, which no one pretends to understand.

Close to Wrexham, but not actually in English Maelor, is the pretty village of Gresford. Both Wrexham and Gresford are celebrated for the fine towers of their churches; that of Wrexham ranks as one of the "Seven Wonders of Wales." Among the oldest families in English Maelor was Pyvelisdon or Puleston, always pronounced Pilston, whose origin was Pyvelisdon in Normandy, whence they settled near Newport in Shropshire, calling a place after their old Norman home, and in the 13th century they moved from Salop to Maelor Saesneg, to Emral, or Embershall, where they lived, father and son, through long centuries until the family died out in the male line in the time of George III.

There were many branches of the family. Some yet remained in Shropshire, others found homes round the neighbourhood of Emral, and another branch came to Hampshire and settled there in the 16th and 17th century. How this came about is evident.

The Dean and Chapter of Winchester Cathedral, after the Reformation, obtained by exchange the living of Gresford, where a branch of the Pulestons lived at Llai Hall. Thus in the reign

of Queen Elizabeth Richard Puleston left Gresford and became Rector of Kingsworthy.

The Rev. Richard Puleston was one of seven sons of Roger Puleston, of Emral. Richard and Roger were old Puleston family names. He was born in 1548. His mother was Alner, or Anne, daughter of Richard Grosvenor, of Eyton. She had a large family, for in addition to seven sons she had five daughters, all of whom married.

Richard Puleston came to Kingsworthy in 1596, on the presentation of the Earl of Southampton. The pedigree gives his birth date as 1548, and that he married Ales Lewis, from Burcote in Oxfordshire, by whom he had eleven children. The eldest son, John, lived at Worthenbury. The second son was, like his father, in the Church. The family pedigree gives him as Rector of Hope, Flintshire, and Abbotsworthy, Hampshire, and says that he had a son christened Hamlett, who was buried at Old Gresford, 1662. He was Fellow of Jesus College. He was 30 years of age when he died. His mother's name is not given—possibly the name Hamlet supplies a clue.

Dr. Andrews says that "Abbotsworthy was practically the same as Kingsworthy; it possibly had a chapel of its own in early Hyde Abbey days. It is really a hamlet adjoining the larger parish. The Christian name Hamlet is singular and deserves attention, as 'Hamlet Marshall' was Rector of Old Alresford from 1616 to 1633; he was King's Chaplain."

It is possible the Rev. Richard Puleston, D.D., of Abbotsworthy, married one of the Marshall family. In the list of institutions he is given as Rector of Kingsworthy 1618, on the presentation of John Puleston, gent., for the Earl of Salisbury, and his sureties were John Puleston, of Micheldever, armiger, and Thomas Puleston, of St. Mary Magdalen, Milk Street, London, draper. He is said to have died 1635.

Besides these Puleston rectors in Hampshire, apparently there was a third Rector of Kingsworthy, Richard Puleston, against whose name in the pedigree is d. s. p. He was second son of

Edward Puleston, of Allington. He also was one of a large family—six sons and five daughters. The third son, John Puleston, of Gresford, is perhaps identical with the John Puleston of Micheldever above mentioned. The wife of John Puleston, of Micheldever, was Katherine Cozens, co. Hants, by whom he had George (d.s.p.) and two daughters.

Thus there were three Richard Puleston, all rectors of Kingsworthy, extending from 1596 to the Civil War time.

But besides these three Hampshire parsons, yet another Puleston held a Hampshire living, that of Hinton Ampner, 1698. The note given me by Dr. Andrews says his name was Kendrick or Henry. The name Henry scarcely occurs in the pedigree, but there was a Kendrick Puleston, born 1663, son of John Puleston, of Bercham (near Wrexham), by Ellen or Eleanor, daughter of Sir Kendrick Eyton, of Eyton. Kendrick Puleston also was one of a large family—six brothers and five daughters. No details are given about Kendrick, but one of his brothers, Gerard by name, settled in London, marrying Rachell, grand-daughter of Sir Thomas Allen, of Finchley. The son of this Puleston-Allen marriage was Allen Puleston, whose portrait hangs at Canons Ashby, for his wife was Mary Dryden, of Canons Ashby, but here again it would seem that the line died out. They had one son, Allen Edward, and daughter, Maria Elizabeth Phillipe, baptised at Canons Ashby 1721 and 1722. Of them I can trace no further.

Perhaps this short biographical account of the Pulestons may bring to light some details further about them. Perhaps memorial stones exist to their memories, or parish registers record the name, which is peculiar, and, so far as I know, belonged exclusively to the one family only, whose coat of arms (three silver stars on a black shield) gave rise to a witty rejoinder when a quarrel arose between a lady of the house of Puleston and another of the Corbet family, whose arms was a crow or a raven. "Oh!" remarked the one old lady to the other, "Stars come out when crows go to bed!"

It is extraordinary to see how generation after generation there were large families—five, six, or seven sons,—yet in the end the old line died out, and no heir of the name Puleston was left. Richard Parry Pryce took the old name of Puleston from his mother, and was created a Baronet in 1813. His grandson, the last Baronet, was one of five sons, yet the last male heir died in 1896, and the Baronetcy became extinct.
