

RECTOR WOLSTENHOLME AND HIS MEMORIAL
TABLET.

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RECTOR Wolstenholme was buried in St. Peter's Church on 8th Dec., 1771, and a tablet was erected to his memory on the east wall of the south aisle, but the inscription was entirely concealed by the organ gallery. The demolition of St. Peter's Church has revealed this mural tablet, and it will shortly be removed to St. Nicholas's Church.

It is a curious fact that six years before his death, Rector Wolstenholme made application to the Parish Vestry for permission to be buried inside the church—the only interment ever made within the walls. His request was granted at the Easter Vestry held on Tuesday, 9 April, 1765, when it was “ordered that the Rev. Mr. Wolstenholme have liberty to be interred in the Library of St. Peter's Church, not claiming any right of a burying place, but laying down the boards as before.” It is not easy to explain this desire on the part of Rector Wolstenholme to be buried in St. Peter's, as a few months before (1 Dec., 1764) his wife had been laid to rest in St. George's Church, and three of his children were also buried there.

The small square building at the south-east corner of St. Peter's Church, which in recent years has been utilized as the clergy vestry, was in 1765 known as the Library. Here the books purchased by John Fells' bequest in 1715 were housed. In 1877 or 1878, during the churchwardenship of Mr. William Fowler, the space under the Library

where reposed the remains of Rector Wolstenholme was required for the new heating apparatus, and permission was obtained for the exhumation of his body and its re-interment in the churchyard. When the grave was opened it was found that the coffin to all appearance was intact, but on the first touch it crumbled away, with the exception of the wood which formed the bottom of the coffin. This, strange to say, was as firm as the day on which it was made. The mortal remains of the rector had almost entirely dissolved into dust. A few small pieces of bone, scarcely sufficient to fill an ordinary bucket, were found. These were carefully and reverently re-interred in the churchyard under the direction of Rector Stewart. An eye-witness of the exhumation and re-interment—the venerable parish clerk, Mr. Elias Williams—is happily still with us.

The inscription on the tablet is as follows:—

Juxta positae sunt Exuviae
Revd. Henr. Wolstenholme A.M.
qui in hac Villâ de Liverpool per Annos LI
variis functus est Officiis
Curati Parochialis, Primi Eccl^æ S^ti Georgii Capellani
deinde Medietatis hujus Parochiæ
(Eheu ! quam voluit potuisse dici, non indigni)
RECTORIS
Obiit An. Ætat. 75. Salut. 1771
Juxta etiam
conjugis dilectissimæ Elizabethæ
Johannis Owen de Hollandia-Superiore in hoc Com. Armig.
et Joannæ ex Familiâ de Legh de Adlington in Com. Cest. Filiæ
comis justæ piæ et benevolæ
Multis illa bonis flebilis occidit
An. Ætat. 55. Salut. 1764.
Ex filiâ egregiæ indolis, Annâ
Johanni Parr, mercatori nuptâ
Nepotes habuere quinque superstites.
Ille longum
vixit, æternum sibi qui merendo
vindicat Ævum. Casimir Lyr

The human Life is either short or long,
 Just as it is conducted right or wrong;
 His Life is long who to himself ensures
 A Life that to Eternity endures;
 His Life is short, who leaves that Work undone,
 Tho' it should be coeval with the sun.

It is improbable that Rector Wolstenholme wrote his own epitaph, consequently he cannot be held responsible for either the Latinity or the six lines of doggerel which complete the inscription. The latter are doubtless intended as a paraphrase of the quotation which immediately precedes them. I give a translation (more or less accurate) of the inscription:—

Near this spot lie the remains of the Rev. Henry Wolstenholme, M.A., who for 51 years in this town of Liverpool filled the several offices of Curate of the Parish, first Chaplain of St. George's Church and afterwards Rector of a mediety of the Parish. (Ah! how he would have wished to be called its not unworthy Rector.) He died in the 75th year of his age, and the year of our Salvation, 1771.

Near here are also interred the remains of Elizabeth, his beloved wife, the daughter of John Owen of Up-Holland in this county, esquire, and Joan of the family of Legh of Adlington in the county of Chester. Affectionate, true, devout and kind, she died lamented of many good men, in the 55th year of her age and the year of our Salvation, 1764.

By their daughter Anne, a woman of rare parts, who was married to John Parr, merchant, they have left five grandchildren to survive them.

"He has lived a long life who by his good deeds wins for himself the Life Eternal."—Casimir Lyr.

The words "Casimir Lyr." at the end of the Latin quotation were perplexing. I could find no enlightenment in any English work of reference. Fortunately Mr. G. T. Shaw, chief librarian of the city, to whom I applied for help in my difficulty, was able to inform me that in Larousse's *Grand Dictionnaire Universel* he had found a brief reference to the name, and this put me on the track of discovery. Briefly then, the quotation can be traced

to the writings of a Polish Jesuit, Matthias Casimir Sarbiewski, a Latin lyrical poet (1595-1640). The words come at the very end of the Seventh Ode of the First Book of his "Lyricorum Libri iv." The Ode is addressed to Publius Memmius, and the fifth (and last) stanza runs thus:—

Quae tibi primum dedit hora nasci,
Haec mori primum dedit. Ille longum
Vixit, aeternum sibi qui merendo
Vindicat¹ aevum.

The first edition of his works is dated 1625. The copy from which the above was taken was printed by Balthasar Moretus at the Plantin Press, Antwerp, with an engraved title page, designed by Rubens, 1632. It contains four books of Lyrics, one of Epodes and one of Epigrams.²

It is certainly both interesting and gratifying to know that Casimir (or Sarbievius,³—he is called by either name it seems) had readers in the 18th century, and that in 1771 there was at least one scholar in Liverpool familiar with his writings. In the greater Liverpool of to-day how many scholars could be found who have read a single line of his works, or even know his name?

On the lower face of the tablet the arms of Wolstenholme are emblazoned, viz.:—*Az. a lion passant guardant, between three pheons, or.* The artist has, however, incorrectly figured a lion *rampant*.

Rector Wolstenholme belonged to an old Lancashire family long settled at Wolstenholme Hall in the parish of Rochdale. Several members of this family early in the 18th century came to Liverpool and purchased land on

¹ On the tombstone this is written "*vendicat*."

² Another edition by Barbou, in his series of prettily printed Latin classics, issued as *M. C. Sarbievii Carmina*, Paris, 1759; and the Poems were reprinted at Leipzig, in 1840, in a collection of "Modern Latin Poets."

³ Polish names are usually Latinized in this way—the termination "*wski*" becomes "*vius*." There is a chronicler named in Polish "Bzowski," and in Latin he becomes "*Bzovius*"; and "Casimir Sarbiewski," following the same rule, is Latinized into "*Sarbievius*."

which they erected dwelling-houses. They named the locality Wolstenholme Square, and for many years it was a fashionable residential quarter.¹ Here Rector Wolstenholme lived, and it was also the residence of John Parr, who married the rector's daughter. Rector Wolstenholme was a scholar of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1717, graduated B.A. in 1718, and M.A. in 1721. It was about this time he is found as one of the curates of the parish, but the date of his ordination I have not been able to ascertain. On the completion of St. George's Church in 1734, the Corporation appointed him as its first incumbent, and to this fashionable congregation he continued to minister until the death of the Rev. Thomas Baldwin in 1752, when he was preferred to the rectory of Liverpool. He was the author of "Candid examination of the Reasons why the people called Quakers do not pay Tithes," 1772, and of two volumes of "Sermons on several occasions," Liverpool, 1790, "printed at Smith's Navigation shop."

As appears from the memorial tablet his only surviving child, Anne, was married to Mr. John Parr,² an opulent merchant, who was mayor in 1773-4. The Parrs are an ancient Lancashire family who possessed landed property at Rainford. Many members of this family have distinguished themselves in art, literature and the services. From the Parr-Wolstenholme marriage there are descendants still living in Liverpool. Their great-grandson,

¹ John Parr, in 1781, as executor for Henry Wolstenholme, held a large tract of land (in various parcels under one lease from the Corporation), extending from Colquitt Street down to Wolstenholme Square; and in 1797 Thomas Parr obtained a separate lease of the land upon which the Royal Institution now stands. The lives named in this lease were Thomas Parr (the lessee) then aged 27, James Parr, then aged 28, and John Parr, then aged 30. In 1799 Thomas Parr purchased the reversion, and in the grant the premises (now the Royal Institution) are described as a "dwelling-house, counting-house, warehouse, coach-house, stables and other buildings now erected or erecting thereon."

² In St. Nicholas's Church there is a tablet to the memory of John Parr, and of his wife, Ann (née Wolstenholme). He died 7th Oct., 1798, aged 76. She died 12 April, 1765, aged 25. They were married at St. Peter's Church, 21 Sept., 1756.

the late Mr. Edward John Parr, was well known to the present generation as a militant High Churchman, and a vigorous speaker at diocesan conferences and other church meetings. His widow has in her possession a large folio Book of Common Prayer, with Rector Wolstenholme's autograph on the fly leaf, and also a quarto Book of Common Prayer used by John Parr during the time he filled the office of bailiff, with his name and the name of his co-bailiff inscribed therein.

These books and other family papers are carefully preserved by Mrs. Parr for her youthful grandson, the only male representative of this branch of the family.

In the Appendix to my *Liverpool in the reign of Queen Anne*, published in 1908, I printed all the inscriptions on the monuments and in the windows of the two parish churches—St. Peter's and St. Nicholas's—except two. One was that of Rector Wolstenholme, which was concealed by the organ gallery, and the other was a mural tablet behind the door in the north-east porch of St. Nicholas's Church, which was overlooked. The inscription on the latter is as follows:—

Eliz. relict of Aldⁿ Baldwin of Wigan was interr'd near this place, Jan^y 24th, 1733, aged 84.

Also Sarah wife of Tho^s Baldwin, M.A. and da^{tt} of Jn^o Waring of Liverpool, Esq^{re}, May 22nd, 1743.