

# TRANSACTIONS.

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NOTES ON THE FAMILY OF ASHTON OF PENKETH,  
CO. LANCASTER, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE  
TO JOHN ASHTON, WHO WAS EXECUTED FOR  
HIS ADHERENCE TO THE JACOBITE CAUSE,  
28TH JANUARY, 1691.

*By J. Venn, Sc.D., F.R.S., Fellow of Gonville and  
Caius College, Cambridge.*

(Read 15th April, 1886.)

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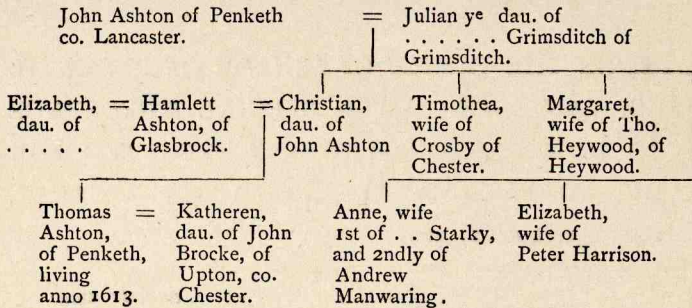
AMONG the Lancashire families which are supposed to be extinct in the male line, and about which very little information seems to be attainable, is that of the Ashtons of Penketh, near Warrington. Circumstances having caused me to take some interest in the fortunes of this family, I have been asked to communicate such information, as I have been able to obtain from various sources, to the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire. It does not amount to much, after all, and the family, though of ancient gentle descent in the county, was never one of any great local importance; still there are some points of interest to bring forward, and I presume that any information of the kind in question, which is not accessible from any ordinary printed source, will be acceptable to the Society.

The Ashtons of Penketh are duly included in the Lancashire Visitations of 1567 and 1613.\* In order not to take up too much space, I will merely give the last three generations, as recorded in the latter of these Visitations. It stands as follows in

\* The Arms allowed to the Ashtons of Penketh at the Visitations of 1567 and 1613 were:—Quarterly, 1st and 4th Argent, a chevron between three mascles Gules, for Ashton; 2nd and 3rd Argent, three popinjays proper, plumed about the neck Azure, for Penketh.

*The Family of Ashton of Penketh.*

the pedigree printed by the Chetham Society, with the exception of the four younger daughters whose names are supplied from a MS. at Gonville and Caius College, referred to below.



of the entire ignorance which seems to exist about him on the part of the historians and writers in biographical dictionaries. He blazes into notoriety in December, 1690, at Gravesend, when Captain Billop catches the ship in which the party had embarked, and he disappears as suddenly at Tyburn a month afterwards; leaving, apparently, no trace behind, except a mass of ephemeral pamphlet literature respectively denouncing the "Traitor" and celebrating the "Martyr".

Scarcely a vestige of information seemed attainable as to his origin and personal history. In the State Trials, where a very full account of the whole evidence against him is given, he is merely described as "John Ashton, gent., of Covent Garden"; whilst Macaulay and the other historians give no more minute description than that he was "a Lancashire gentleman". Nor in the biographical dictionaries, where one would naturally look for more minute particulars, is the slightest indication of his origin to be discovered.

He was, however, an Ashton of Penketh. This is decisively shewn by the administration of his effects (Prerog. Court of Cant., 20 Sept., 1698), taken out some years after his death by his father-in-law, Edward Rigby, where he is described as "Johannes "Ashton nuper de Penkett in Com. Lancastriæ". Moreover there were several portraits of him taken;\* one of these—by Riley, a court painter of the day—was engraved, and on this engraving, along with the name, are represented the arms of the Ashtons of Penketh, which are very distinct (I believe) from those of all the other families of that name in Lancashire. Thirdly, as a piece of collateral evidence, tending still further to identify him, it will be found that, in the State Trials, there is occasional reference to his "aunt Dupee". On turning to the will (to be presently noticed) of William Ashton of Penketh, we find that one of his sisters was named Dupuy.† So much seems clear enough, but

\* Three, according to Granger, (*Biog. Hist.* Continuation by Noble.)

† It is printed Dupney, but I feel sure this must be a misreading for the much more probable form Dupuy. Two or three generations of gentlemen of this name seem to have held office at the Court. See, for instance, the entry in the Calendar of State Papers (Domestic) for 1661-2; "Henry Dupuy, servant to the Duke of York—reversion to his sons James, Thomas, and Lawrence, of the custody of the Pall Mall". There are similar grants in 1672 and 1687, "with the usual fee or allowance of £100 p. ann., together with the use of the house or lodge called the Mall House".

the process of fitting the Jacobite sufferer into his place in the family line is far from clear. Before offering my solution, the readers of a historical journal would probably prefer to have all the evidence laid before them, so as to enable them to judge for themselves. This I proceed accordingly to do.

First, however, a few words may be given to the personal history of the Jacobite sufferer. He was born about the year 1653 (*vide* marriage licence below). He must have entered the royal service at a comparatively early age, for, at his trial in 1690, he speaks of having been in that service for sixteen years. One of the contemporary pamphlets describes him as "commonly called *Major Ashton*". According to a family tradition he was "Paymaster of the pensions to Charles II. and Privy Purse to James II." There must be some mistake about this, however, for any appointment so important as this would surely have been recorded; and a careful search amongst the principal original entries of household appointments at the Record Office has not resulted in detecting his name. He certainly, however, held some minor appointment at the Court,\* and was much mixed up with the court society of the time. He is, for instance, frequently mentioned in Bishop Cartwright's *Diary* (edited by the Rev. J. Hunter, in 1843, for the Camden Society), along with Lord Preston, Colonel Worden, Mr. Dupuy, and others of that party. The bishop, in his will, left him a ring, he being apparently the only non-relative mentioned among these bequests. Moreover, in Clarendon's *Diary*, the date and juxtaposition with the Bishop of Ely leave no doubt that he is referred to in the following passages:—

"April 16, 1690. In the evening the Bishop of Ely . . . .  
"and Mr. As—— arrived."

"April 17. In the morning Mr. As—— went to London."

The Bishop of Ely, as is well known, was involved in Lord Preston's plot, and saved himself by flight.

\* Probably under General Worden, his intimate friendship, and partaking of the Communion with whom, is insisted upon, at his trial, as evidence of his attachment to the Church of England. In General Worden's will (Prerog. Court, Cant., 1690), John Ashton is referred to as his "servant". Worden himself is there described (1688) as "Treasurer to the Queen's Majesty". Ashton is a witness to the will.

Among the minor notices of Ashton, which I have lighted upon, the following may be added, since they are not likely to have attracted the attention of anyone who had not made a special search. They shew his intimate connection with the Jacobite party during the first two years of the Revolution. One is from the autobiography of the scoundrel William Fuller, who, after being employed for some time by the ex-king, went over to the other side and betrayed his accomplices :—

“I had likewise bills of exchange for £35,000 to be remitted from London to Scotland by several hands, . . . this contrivance was most ingeniously undertaken and managed by Mr. Ashton and Mr. Graham ” (p. 33).

This was in 1690, just before Fuller betrayed his accomplices. It pretty certainly explains the reference made in the trial of Ashton to a visit which he had recently paid to Edinburgh.

Again, in “A plain proof of the true father and mother of the pretended Prince of Wales”, written by Fuller after he changed sides, occurs the following passage :—

“Mr. Ashton was to pay the money: he was her Majesty’s treasurer in England, and since hanged for his zeal in a bad cause.”

This reference is explained by a letter (given in the same volume) from the ex-queen, Mary of Modena, dated March 8, 1690, in which she says :—

“I have ordered a sufficient sum of money to be remitted amongst the bills which F. [*i.e.*, Fuller] brings over to Ashton.”

Numerous similar slight notices might be added, but none of them are of sufficient importance for insertion here. I, of course, pass over all that may be regarded as of public and familiar acquaintance, as being given in the ordinary histories of the time.

A few words may be added about Ashton’s private history, He married Mary, daughter of Edward Rigby, mercer, of Covent Garden. This Edward Rigby was the second son of Edward Rigby, Esquire, of Burgh and Layton (Admission Books of the Merchant Taylors’ Company). His business was carried on at first in Paternoster Row, afterwards at Covent Garden. His house,

here, "the Seven Stars", was a regular meeting place of the Jacobites. Bishop White Kennett (Hist. iii. 575) refers to it as "the royal club—so they called it—in Covent Garden". John Ashton had several children, who most of them died in infancy. One son, James, survived him, and, according to Narcissus Luttrell (Diary, Nov. 8, 1692), was made a baronet by the ex-king at Versailles, as a recognition of his father's devotion. He died quite young. One daughter only, of John Ashton's family survived. This was Maria Ann Isabella Margareta Beatrix. This unusual combination of names was due to the fact that the queen, Mary Beatrix, stood godmother to her.\* She became the wife of Richard Venn, M.A., Rector of St. Antholin's, London, by whom she had a family of eight children. She died June 25, 1762, and was buried at St. Mary Aldermary.

Ashton's widow did not long survive him. Her fate is thus described in "A View of the Court of St. Germain's, 1690-95" (printed in the *Harl. Misc.* vi. 395):—

"Mrs. Ashton, widow to Mr. Ashton who was executed for "his being concerned in my Lord Preston's affairs, went to the "court of St. Germain's, after her husband's death, as thinking "she had some merit to plead for a kind reception, but she was "much deceived. . . . A few days after her arrival priests were "sent to tell her that nothing but her being a Roman Catholic "could recommend a woman to the queen's service, which the "poor gentlewoman declining to comply with was neglected; "and dying soon after was refused burial till her father, Mr. Rigby "of Covent Garden, as a mighty favour and at great charges "obtained leave from the court of St. Germain's to have her "body brought over to England, and buried her in Covent "Garden Church".

This last statement seems incorrect: at least the parish clerk informs me that there is no such entry in the register. The

\* Several interesting relics are still in the possession of some of her descendants. For instance, a carved chair, given by the queen as a christening present; an inlaid cabinet, and an old clock, which had belonged to King Charles II., and one or two similar heirlooms. Some of these are specially mentioned in her will (Will of Maria Ann Isabella Margareta Beatrix Venn; proved at the Prerog. Court of Cant., 1762). There is no documentary evidence of her baptism. The rest of the family are in the registers of St. Faith, under St. Paul's. She was presumably baptised at the chapel at St. James's, but the registers of these royal chapels do not extend so far back.

family vault of the Rigbys and Ashtons was at St. Faith under St. Paul's. It was here that John Ashton himself was buried the night after his execution at Tyburn, viz., January 28th, 1690-91.

So much for John Ashton himself and his descendants. As regards the task of fitting him into his place in the family line, and of continuing that line beyond the point at which we found it left in the Visitation of 1613, the following documentary evidence is offered :—

I.—WILLS.

1. Will of WILLIAM ASHTON, of Penketh ; proved at Chester, by his widow Elizabeth, March 5th, 1668-9. He mentions " my brother Ashton ", and his sons and daughters, John, Thomas, Peter, Katharine, Frances, and Magdalen : " my brother Andrewe ", and his son John : " my brother and sister Dupney " [Dupuy ?] : " my sister Starky " : " my brother Sander's son Peter Sanders ". Thomas Ashton, senior, and Thomas Ashton, junior, are witnesses. (This will is printed in full in the Chet. Soc. Pub. for 1884).

2. Will of ANDREW ASHTON, of Liverpool, proved at Chester, in 1679. He mentions only his wife Alice, and his son John. He desires to be buried in Farnworth Church, the parish in which the hamlet of Penketh is situated. His executors are Nicholas Fazakerley\* of Kirkley [Kirkby], and Thomas Wright of Widnes.

3. Administration of JOHN ASHTON, Prerog. Court, Cant., Sept. 20th, 1698, was granted to his father-in-law, Edward Rigby. The widow was then dead ; and apparently only the one daughter Mary was left alive.

4. Will of [Colonel] JOHN ASHTON, of Ormskirk, Esquire, [son and heir of Thomas Ashton, of Penketh] dated 18 July, 1707, proved at Chester, 1707 (Piccope MSS., Chetham Library).\*

\* " Mr. Nicholas Fazakerley [died] January 6, 1679 [-80]. "—*A Cavalier's Note Book*, p. 307.

† Colonel Ashton married, before 1688, Katherine widow of John Risley, of Risley, co. Lan., Esquire, the mother of Captain John Risley, of Risley, the last representative of that ancient family, who died Nov. 1st, 1702, aged 27. Captain Risley, in his will, mentions his mother Katherine Ashton, his father-in-law (*i.e.*, stepfather) John Ashton, Esquire, Peter Ashton of Ormskirk, his (testator's) brother Strange Ashton, and his sisters Elizabeth, Ann, and Katherine Ashton.—J.P.R.

He mentions his son Strange and two daughters. His wife Catharine and his brother Peter are the executors.

5. Will of MARY ANN ISABELLA MARGARETTA BEATRIX VENN, proved at the Prerog. Court of Cant., 1762. She mentions certain heirlooms, *e.g.*, the clock and cabinet (mentioned above); also the pictures of her father and mother. These last were bequeathed to her eldest daughter (Mary Gambier), but I have not succeeded in tracing them.

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## II.—INQUISITIONS POST MORTEM.

### *Duchy of Lancaster.*

1. HAMLETT ASHTON, of Glassbrook [Glazebrook in the parish of Warrington], Feb. 1, 33 Eliz. [A.D. 1591]. He died Oct. 11th, in the preceding year. His will is given in full (apparently only the inventory remains at the Registry at Chester), his father-in-law John Ashton [of Penketh] being an executor. John, eldest son, and Richard and Thomas, younger sons.

2. JOHN ASHTON, of Penketh, Feb. 3, 20 Jac. [A.D. 1623]. Thomas Ashton, son and heir of Christian Ashton, daughter of John Ashton, over 30 years of age at the death of the latter. Julian Ashton, widow of John Ashton, still living at Penketh. The daughters, nephews, and heirs of John Ashton were Timothea Crosby, wife of John Crosby, aged 46; Margaret Heywood, wife of Robert Heywood, aged 37; Ann Manwaring, wife of Andrew Manwaring, aged 39; John Harrison, son and heir of Elizabeth and Peter Harrison, aged 8.

3. JOHN ASHTON, of Glassbrook, held at Preston, Oct. 7, 22 Jac. [A.D. 1624]. John Ashton died August 18th in the preceding year, possessed of the fourth part of the Glassbrook estate. Hamlett Ashton, his son and heir, was aged 3 years on the 28th July previous.

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## III.—PARISH REGISTERS.

### 1. *Farnworth (in which Penketh is situated).*<sup>3</sup>

#### *Burials.*

1620, June. John Ashton, arm<sup>r</sup>, of Penketh.

\* Sent to me by the Vicar of Farnworth.

- 1625, March. Maria, d<sup>r</sup> of Thomas Ashton, of Penketh.  
1626, Nov<sup>r</sup>. Isabella Ashton, of Penketh.  
1639, July. Arthur Ashton, of Penketh.  
1641, March. Margaret Ashton.  
1641, March. Elizabeth Ashton, of Penketh.  
1645, July. Thomas Ashton, arm<sup>r</sup>, of Penketh.  
1663, Sep. Maria, d<sup>r</sup> of Thomas Ashton, arm<sup>r</sup>, of Penketh.  
1667-8, Jan. 29. Alice Ashton, of Penketh.  
1668-9, Jan. William Ashton, gen<sup>s</sup>, of Penketh.  
1675-6. Feb. 18. Thomas Ashton, arm<sup>r</sup>, of Penketh.  
1678, Ap. 28. John Ashton, of Penketh.  
1684, Aug. 15. Magdalen Ashton, of Penketh.  
1685-6, Mar. 17. Mary, d<sup>r</sup> of Mr. John Ashton, of Penketh.

*Baptisms.*

- 1665, Oct. John, son of Arthur Ashton, of Penketh.  
1685-6, Mar. 17. Mary, d<sup>r</sup> of John Ashton, of Penketh, Esq<sup>r</sup>.
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2. *Warrington (Penketh is only 2 or 3 miles from Warrington).\**

*Burials.*

- 1593, Nov. 16. William, son to Hamlet Ashton, late of Glasbruck, gent.  
1604, Oct. 18. Alice, daughter to John Aston, gent.  
1612, Sep. 27. Margaret, d<sup>r</sup> to John Aston, gent.  
1616, Aug. 2. Thomas Ashton.  
1623, Aug. 19. John Ashton, of Glasbrucke, gent.  
1630, Aug. 13. An infant daughter unto George Ashton, gent.  
1643. Several "soldiers under Captain Ashton" buried.  
1654, July 24. John, son to M<sup>r</sup> Hamlet Ashton, of Glassbrook.  
1651, Sep. 21. "Thomas Ashton that was married into Dallam."  
1663, Sep. 10. M<sup>r</sup> Hamellet Ashton:—"This Hamlet Ashton was hanged at Chester for murder."  
1664, Nov. 6. Alice, widow to M<sup>r</sup> Hamlet Ashton, of Glassbrook.  
1690-1, Mar. 2. M<sup>r</sup> Hamlet Ashton de Glassbrook.

\* The extracts from the Warrington and Ormskirk Registers were communicated by Mr. J. Paul Rylands, F.S.A.

*Baptisms.*

- 1607, May 14. Edward, son to William Ashton, gent.  
 1614-5, Mar. 16. John, son to Thomas Ashton, gent.  
 1616, July 28. Thomas, son to Thomas Ashton, gent.  
 1617-8, Jan. 13. William, son to Thomas Ashton, gent.  
 1620, Oct. 9. Christian, d<sup>r</sup> to M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Ashton.  
 1622, April 11. Kateren, d<sup>r</sup> to Thomas Ashton, Esq<sup>r</sup>  
 1623, May 15. Elizabeth, d<sup>r</sup> to Thomas Ashton, Esq<sup>r</sup>  
 1625-6, Mar. 2. Margaret, d<sup>r</sup> to Thomas Aston, Esq<sup>r</sup>  
 1685, April 8. Marie, d<sup>r</sup> to M<sup>r</sup> John Ashton, Captain.

*Marriage.*

- 1602-3, Jan. 5. Robert Hewood, gent., and Margaret Ashton.

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3. *Ormskirk\** (*Piccope MSS.*).

*Baptisms.*

- 1689, Nov. 5. Anne Ashton.  
 1691, July 2. Strange Ashton.  
 1693, June 1. Katherine Ashton.

*Burials.*

- 1707, July 22. Col. John Ashton.  
 1756, June 3. Strange Ashton.

*Marriage.*

- 1710-11, Feb. 6. Anne Ashton and Stanley Werden of Tulketh,  
 gent.

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4. *St. Faith under St. Paul, London.*

*Baptism.*

- 1686, June 29. John, son of John and Mary Ashton.

*Burials.*

- 1686, June 30. John, son of John and Mary Ashton.  
 1689, May 20. Edward, son of John and Mary Ashton.  
 1690-91, Jan. 28. John Ashton, Mr. Rigby's son-in-law, was  
 buried.

\* The extracts from the Warrington and Ormskirk Registers were communicated by Mr. J. Paul Rylands, F.S.A.

1691, Aug. 11. — Ashton [no Christian name] grandchild of Edward Rigby.

1710-11, Mar. 1. Mr. Edward Rigby was buried.

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IV.—ROYALIST COMPOSITION PAPERS: SECOND SERIES:

VOL. XXVIII.

THOMAS ASHTON was in arms against the Parliament, but submitted Nov., 1644. Is seized of mansion of Penketh, land, wind and water mills, &c., of the yearly value of £28 10s.; and other lands. Has to pay £30 per annum to his younger brothers Andrew and William and his sister Christian: three other sisters mentioned, Katharine, Elizabeth, Margaret. There is a certificate signed by Benjamin Spencer, minister of Bromley, Bow, that Thomas Ashton was, in April, 1646, residing in Bow parish.

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V.—MISCELLANEOUS MINOR NOTICES.

1. In a narrative, published by the Chetham Society (vol. ii. p. 83; see also pp. 47, 51), it is stated that a "Captain Ashton, of Penketh, eldest son of his father"—also described as "Master Ashton of Penketh, junior"—was killed in the attack on Bolton, Feb. 16th, 1642-3.

2. *Roger Lowe's Diary.*

Sep. 7, 1663. "Hamlett Ashton was hanged at Chester for "killing a tapster at Nantwich."

Sep. 10, 1663. "It was a very rainy day. This day Hamleth Ashton was at Warrington buried, being "Monday before hanged at Chester for "murder."

3. *Gray's Inn Admission Register.*

1584, July 2. Hamlet Ashton of Glazebrook admitted.

1634, Nov. 29. Thomas Ashton, second son of Thomas Ashton of Penketh, arm<sup>r</sup>, admitted.

4. *Marriage Licence: Vicar General's Office.*

1685, Dec. 15. John Ashton, Esq., aged about 32, of St. Martin's in the Fields, and Mary Rigby, aged about 19,

daughter of Edward Rigby, mercer, of St. Augustin [*i.e.* "St. Faith under St. Paul"] at Great St. Helen's.

VI.—CHESHIRE FUNERAL CERTIFICATES.

(RECORD SOCIETY, 1882.)

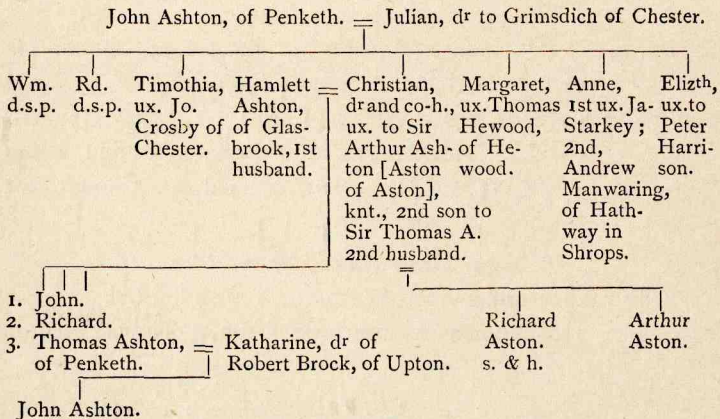
(Dame Elizabeth Aston, late wife of Sir Thomas Aston, of Aston in Cheshire, 1606.)

"Sir Arthur Aston, second son to Sir Thomas Aston and Dame Elizabeth, married Christian, daughter of John Aston [Ashton] of Penketh, in the county of Lancaster, Esq., by whom he had issue, Richard Aston, his eldest son, and Arthur Aston, second son."

VII.—MS. AT GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE.

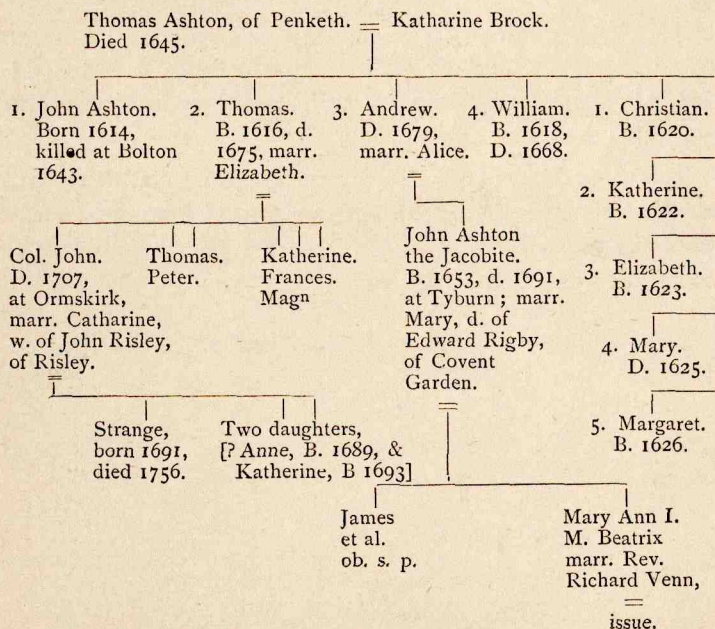
In a MS. in our own College library (MS. 523) there is a pedigree which is carried on a little further than the published one of 1613. It occurs in a folio volume of Lancashire pedigrees. Its authorship is uncertain, but it is in substantial agreement (allowing for difference in the spelling of the names, and certain other unimportant points) with Harl. MS. 2086, in the British Museum.

The last three generations are given thus:—



them all together, in order to solve the puzzle ; and I have made some endeavours to do so, but not with any results sufficiently certain to justify the composition of a rather intricate scheme. The fact is, that more evidence is required ; and I should be extremely glad if any local antiquarian with opportunities of enquiry on the spot (especially in the Chetham Library, the Probate and Episcopal Registries at Chester, &c., &c.), which I cannot enjoy, would kindly furnish me with such. The principal desiderata clearly are the wills of Thomas Ashton, who died in 1675 ; and of Alice, widow of Andrew Ashton, who died after 1679. I cannot find these either at Chester or in London.

Confining, however, our attention to John Ashton the Jacobite, I think that any one who will pick out the requisite references from the above data will probably agree with me that he was most likely the son of Andrew Ashton, of Liverpool, and that the arrangement of some of his nearest relatives may stand as follows :—



In the Liverpool Burgess Roll of 1644 the name of *Andrew Ashton* (No. 162) appears with the prefix "Capt<sup>n</sup>", and from its position on the list would seem to have been added at the time the Royalist forces held the town. It continues in all the lists down to and including that of 1675. In the rolls of 1671 and 1675 the name of "Major" *Thomas Ashton*, apparently inserted about 1668, occurs as No. 505 and No. 423 respectively: this was probably Andrew's brother Thomas, and the Thomas Ashton of Penketh who, as previously mentioned, had to compound for his estates under the Commonwealth (*Roy. Comp. Papers*, vol. 28, No. 1473).

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In the Charter granted to Liverpool by James II. in 1685, the name of *John Ashton* Esquire, is inserted among the 15 "burgesses" nominated on the Common Council appointed by the Charter. This John Ashton did not take his seat, however, until 22nd June, 1686, under which date there is the following entry in the Liverpool Corporation Records (vol. iv. p. 436):—

"John Ashton of Penketh Esquire tooke the oath of a  
"Comon Councill-man w<sup>th</sup> all the other Oathes by Law  
"required and subscribed."

This name does not occur in any list of the Council after 1691, a fact which supports the presumption derived from the description "of Penketh" that it is that of the Jacobite who is the subject of this paper.

ROCHDALE IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 17TH  
CENTURY.

*By Lieut.-Col. Fishwick, F.S.A.*

(Read 4th November, 1886.)

AS the original parish of Rochdale was some 12 miles long and 4 miles wide, it would present too great an area to be satisfactorily dealt with within the limits of a paper like the present. I shall therefore confine myself to the town of Rochdale and its immediate vicinity, and, as far as practicable, limit the period so as to include only the years intervening between the death of Queen Elizabeth and the opening of the "Long Parliament"—thus avoiding, on the one hand, the fierce religious persecutions of the "Virgin Queen"; and, on the other, the deadly feuds between the King and the Parliament, and the Cavaliers and Roundheads. From 1603 to 1640 was a period during which many important national events took place; but the country was so far at peace with its neighbours as to permit of much attention being given to the development of trade and commerce, and it was at this time that many of the towns in Lancashire first began to rise out of their obscurity; it is proposed, therefore, to bring together such scattered fragments of evidence as can be discovered bearing upon the state of Rochdale at this period, and thus present to ourselves a view of the town as it was then—a view no doubt imperfect and perhaps but ill defined—but yet one the outlines of which as well as many of its details shall be drawn by those who were themselves witnesses of what they describe.

In most English villages the Church is the centre from which the streets radiate in several directions, and around which are

clustered all the chief buildings of the place. In Rochdale, however, this was not the case, but (for reasons which will be presently seen) the houses had the appearance of running away from the venerable Parish Church,—which appeared externally then much as it did before the recent alterations and additions—its low and massive tower, perched on its commanding eminence, formed a conspicuous object for miles around, and the sound of its bells echoed far and wide along the valley of the Roche. In the tower was a clock, but the chimes were not added for at least a century afterwards, and there were then five bells. To the Church there were three doors, one in the west end and two in the south side, one of which was called the little door. The main entrance was as now, and there was also a porch,\* which was replaced by one built in 1700 by the then vicar, Dr. Pigott.†

The south porch, as was common at this period, was used as a place in which proclamations were made by the Sheriff's officer.‡ Here also all notices of rates and other parochial matters were posted, and frequently it was the place appointed where legacies were to be paid and bargains for sale of land ratified and completed. From an Inquisition taken in 1610, after the death of Thomas Holt of Gristlehurst, mention is made of a rental of £20 to be paid yearly at Ladyday and Michaelmas, "at or in the "south porch of the Parish Church of Rochdale."§ On 14th Oct., 1639, John Healey, yeoman, surrendered 2 acres, 3 roods, and 34 falls,|| out of the wastes of Healey being before the door of the said John Healey, to the use of Robert Chadwick, of Healey, gentlemen, and James ffelding, yeoman, that they might be seised of the same, to the use of Richard ffrythe, then Reader of the chapel of Whitworth; the arrangement being that John Healey was to pay to Richard ffrythe 50s. a year, by equal payments at Christmas and Midsummer, "at y<sup>e</sup> church of Rochdale "South Porch, betweene the hours of 10 of the clocke in y<sup>e</sup> "morning and 2 in the afternoon."\*\*

\* Repaired in 1646, at a cost of £6. (Churchwardens' account.)

+ *Not. Cest. Chet. Soc.*, vol. xix.

‡ *Notes and Queries*, iii. xii. 359.

§ Inq. Post-Mort. Record Off. xx. 63.

|| A Fall = a perch.

\*\* Manor Survey, 1626.

The church had no galleries, the west gallery not being erected until 1693 and the south one in 1699.

At the east end of the south aisle was the Trinity Chapel, which was founded as a Chantry in 1487, and here in pre-Reformation times, the priest twice a week prayed for the founder with *De profundis*. The chapel in the beginning of the 17th century belonged to the Butterworths of Belfield. The other chantry, dedicated to St. Katherine, was at the east end of the north aisle, and had probably before this time either disappeared entirely or was the portion of the church then used as a vestry. The body of the church was almost entirely free from benches or pews, and the floor was covered with rushes, with here and there a gravestone.

It was now that the fashion of each family wishing to be seated by itself in church began to obtain.

In 1621, the vicar and churchwardens, with the consent "of the gentelmen and cheefe yeomen," allowed Edward Leigh, of Rochdale towne for to erect and set by a forme in a vacant place over agaynst the litell doore of the south syde of the church on the outsyde of the chancell to the use of him his wife and familie theire to sit and heare devine service and sermon," and the same was "erected and bilded very decentlye and in no sort offensive to anie one of the inhabitants."\*

In 1635, the chancel was repaired, at the cost of Sir John Byron, who was then farmer of the rectorial tithes; the floor was paved and the seats "uniformed Quire wise and the rest decently repaired and adorned."† Possibly a portion of these seats were those which, in the next century, were known as the "Yeomanry Seats," and about which there were parochial disputes which excited great interest at the time.‡ At the visitation of 1611 it was reported that there was no cushion for the Pulpit, neither was there a cloth for the Communion Table, and it was also alleged that there had been no "perambulation" of the parish that year—considering the size of the parish this is not to be wondered at.

\* Raines' Lanc. MSS., 1, 2.

† Cal. State Papers, Dom. 1635.

‡ Dr. Ray's MS.