



NOTES ON THE HARDMAN FAMILY.

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

Read 23rd January, 1890.

THE volume of MS. which I have exhibited to the Society this evening was purchased a few years ago, from a second-hand bookseller, by the Committee of the Rochdale Free Public Library. It contains several rough pedigrees and a series of notes and letters, all having reference to the claim to the Hardman estates, which were in dispute at the time the MS. was written. Into this question—which, some twenty years ago, was finally settled by an Act of Parliament—it is not now necessary to enter; but it may be well to state that the claimant who owned this MS. failed to prove his descent as lawful heir.

Whether the name of Hardman is derived from the A.S. *heard* = strong, or simply from *herd*, the keeper of cattle, it is equally obvious that there must be scattered all over the country many families of this name between whom no kinship exists. As early as 1296 a William son of Alexander Herdman held land in Ogden, in the parish of Rochdale, where there were subsequently several families of the name. At a place called Marcroft

Gate lived Thomas Hardman, yeoman, who was buried at Rochdale, 5th July, 1594, and from whom descended, it is believed, the Hardmans of Greens, in Brandwood, in Spotland, and the Hardmans of the town of Rochdale. The Marcroft Gate branch continued to live there for several generations; and one of them was probably the Richard Hardman of Rochdale who died 24th February, 1678-9, and whose son John purchased Allerton Hall. He was M.P. for Liverpool in 1754. He died without issue; and it was the death of the children of his brother James, of Rochdale, without issue which left the Allerton Hall estates without an owner.

One of the sons of James, in conjunction with his mother, founded the Moss School, at Rochdale. The death of James Hardman called forth the sermon by the Rev. Josiah Owen, entitled "The end of all perfection."

The owner of the MS. volume makes Richard the father of James, and John to be the son of James Hardman of Radcliffe, who was buried at Radcliffe 11th February, 1690; and this brings me to another branch of the family, which was long settled at Hardman Fold, near Radcliffe. This place, still known as Hardman Fold, consists of a group of three or four houses, in at least two of which, for many generations, lived members of the Hardman family. One of the houses was built of "raddle red daub," and was pulled down only about forty years ago. In 1783 John Hardman and William Hardman both paid poor rates for Hardman Fold.

The claimant to the Allerton Estates, who owned the MS., proposed to trace his descent from James, son of James Hardman of Radcliffe [? Hardman Fold], and brother of Richard Hard-

man, the progenitor of the Rochdale branch. This James (the son of James) was baptized 16th August, 1666, at Radcliffe, and had issue, according to this MS., several daughters and a son James, whose grandson (another James) was the father of John Hardman, a cotton corder of Bury, who was the claimant.

A Lawrence Hardman, of Marcroft Gate, in 1625 took a lease of a place called Greens, in Brandwood (Rochdale), from one of the Holts of Gristlehurst. This estate in 1696 was divided into Great Greens and Sheephouse Greens, and these properties are still held by members of the Hardman family.

There is a family tradition that a Laurence Hardman, a younger son of a Hardman of Greens, in the seventeenth century removed to Ireland; and if this is correct, from him may have descended the Hardmans of Drogheda, in Ireland.

In 1674 Robert Hardman obtained the freedom of the town of Drogheda, and there married Katherine, daughter of Alderman Newton. Robert Hardman was also an alderman, and it is believed that it was his son George who was Mayor of Drogheda in 1699. This George died *s.p.*, his property going to his brother George, whose descendants are still living in Ireland, and have a cherished family tradition that their ancestors came from Lancashire.

The Hardmans of Brandwood were a prolific race, and their descendants appear to have spread far and wide over the Rossendale valley.

In the Fylde district, particularly in Poulton and Bispham, in the sixteenth century, this name was common, and, singularly enough, as in Rochdale and elsewhere, a favourite Christian name was Laurence.

In concluding these brief notes, I may say that the status of this family never appears to have reached a high level, although some of its branches were for many generations fairly wealthy yeomen; but the only one who reached "perfection" was the wealthy woollen merchant of Rochdale, on whose gravestone runs the legend—

"Scorn thou the blazonry a stone can give.
This stone shall perish, but thy name shall live,"

