

Excerpts from the diary of the Rev. John Sims

On June 13th 1644, our boats went out and brought in more sheep, £180 and 5 prisoners. Some say Mr. Lane's 2 sons and Mr. Lane's Curate and one that was made captaine and had his commission to raise a company for the keeping of the cliffs and some books papers and cloathes.

November 20th, 1644. Some of our men went out in a boat, which being customary and came into Plymouth from Kingsbridge with some clubmen on board.

November 21st. 1644. This morning some clubmen came in from the South Hams , they had a captured cavalier with them.

On Nov 29th 1644 A party of our men having been out around Kingsbridge brought in a Mr Walker and a notorious cavalier and 2 men. Killed one Captain Morgan.

1644 - 1661
12 years

was raising a fort on a hill (part of the Glebe of Aveton) which commanded the bridge leading to Kingsbridge; but before it could be finished the King's Party were destroyed. Then did the champions vaunt about the country, and made diligent enquiry after Bishop Lane the traitor (for so the rabble stiled him), at which time he privily lay in the Church-tower for three or four months; but, not being there secure, he got into other places that I know not of." I have been informed they threatened his life. " Those things being laid to his charge by the commissioners, he was dispossessed of both places: Francis Barnard had Aveton, and Ford Ringmore. My father had a temporal estate in Aveton, which was also sequestered, only a set of mills excepted, where my mother, with five children, took up their residence. The eldest son Richard (who was bred a Divine) for his security went to New England; at which time my father, to secure himself, went to France; where he remained till he could pay his peace. Barnard, not content to enjoy the place and pay no Fifths, most maliciously cut off the water-course from the mills (the water passing through the glebe-lands), which two of my sisters many times, with much toil, did stop; which continued from time to time. My father, returning from France, did constrain Barnard to pay the Fifths, "but with more trouble and charge than they were were worth, as I have been told," and remained with his family at the mills, the incomes but small for his family, removed with his second son, John, and daughter Elizabeth, and third son, William, to a place in Torbay, called ' Hope's Nose,' where he employed himself with some few servants, in drawing lymestones, and sold them to the Topsham boats, where he continued with much satisfaction for some time." By this expression [employed himself] he seems to have dug in the quarry with his own hands; but the expression in a letter from another person is, that he was

in the mill-leaf, and the remains of his family there in a miserable condition. One day he, walking up to view the ruins, met with one of Barnard's sons, who with base reviling language abusing him, without any provocation, he returned home to his wife, saying that Barnard could not content himself with enjoying his estate, but maliciously hath destroyed his mills, it being the only maintenance remaining, which he could in part suffer; but to suffer such an abuse from his son he could not bear: was therefore resolved to make his condition known at Cromwell's council-board. So with that few pence he had, walked to London (I think) in his 63rd year, and put in his petition, was suffered to make known his condition. It being discovered and proved, he had orders to dispossess Barnard, and name another person for Aveton-Gifford; which accordingly he did, naming one John Marten. Having thus settled his affairs, in hopes to enjoy some comfort in the new possessor, coming home on foot from Honiton to Exon, being very dry and money scarce, finding water in the road, drank thereof; which chilled his blood and threw him into an ague (and he took up his lodging at the King's Head in High Street), and after into a fever, which deprived him of his life. He lieth interred under the Chancel Table in Alphington-Church. This is the exactest account I can give, I being the youngest of the family."

I believe I need not observe to the reader from this letter that Mr. Lane is certainly the first instance, in all English History, of a Bachelour of Divinity who was forced to turn miller and dig in a quarry for a livelihood. But it may perhaps be requisite to let him know that I have chosen to print this letter, mean as it is, *verbatim*, that the plainness, not to say simplicity of it, may demonstrate that he who wrote it could have nothing in view but the honest design of giving a true account of his father's sufferings.

Supper, as far as an ancient person of the parish, lately living, could remember. He was also, as I have been informed, a man of a very vicious life, and fled at length to Ireland, being, as I have heard, turned out by the commissioners, not on Mr. Lane's complaint only but for his lewdness and debauchery. So plain is it that, instead of ejecting those of the Clergy who were really vicious, they rewarded and encouraged them, provided they did but declare for their party.

As for Marten, the other successor, though he was named by Mr. Lane himself (with the leave of the commissioners), in hopes to have found some kindness from him to his family; yet he proved as base to them as Barnard had before done. And as much a man of the times as he was, he could conform after his Majesty's Restoration, in order to keep this rich living.

[On the death of Sir Francis Torkinton (or Torkington) who had held the Benefice for more than fifty-two years, having been instituted on the 26th of March, 1585, William Lane, S.T.B., was instituted to "Kidmore *alias* Ringmore," on the 18th of November, 1637, on the Presentation of William Griffith, L.L.B., Patron for that turn by virtue of a Grant from Sir William Kirkham, of Blagdon in the County of Devon, Knight, made to the late Rector, Francis Torkington, and by him assigned to the said William Griffith. Sir William was the true Patron; but the Kirkhams were recusants, and he was, consequently, debarred from personally exercising his right. Mr. Lane was still Rector in 1642, in April of which year he signed the *Transcript* of the Parish-Register, which is preserved in the Principal Registry at Exeter. Our Register-Books prior to 1719 have been long lost! Samuel Ford, as Walker tells us, was the intruder: he was a priest, and retained the Living after the Restoration; and he signed the Declaration of Conformity on the 30th of July, 1662. On

former appeared at the Visitations of 1622, 1630, and 1638, as Rector of Clare Portion in the Church of Tiverton, and at the Visitations of 1630 and 1638 as Rector of Bondleigh. The latter appeared at the three Visitations as Rector of Cyst-St. Mary; and, although he had not then been instituted to Rewe, his name is entered in the Visitation-Book of 1630-1, over the name of Hugh Cholmeley; but the latter was not struck out.

Bartholomew Parr was of Exeter College, Oxford: he matriculated on the 25th of January, 1609-10; B.A., 30 June 1612 (incorporated at Cambridge in 1614); M. A., 27 April, 1615 (and again incorporated at Cambridge in 1616). He was collated to a Prebend in the Cathedral on the 16th of January, 1619-20, and held it till his death in, or just before, 1660. Edward Parr, who succeeded him at Rewe, (by, of course, some irregular arrangement), in 1651, was Bartholomew's son; a Puritan, who (as we have seen) was deprived for nonconformity in 1662: he, too, was of Exeter College, and matriculated on the 12th of December, 1643.]

203.—RINGMORE, Devon: William Lane, B.D., Rector; also, Rector of AVETON-GIFFORD in the same County.

He was educated in the University of Oxford, and possessed of the Living of Ringmore some time before he obtained that of Aveton-Gifford, to which he was admitted much about the beginning of the rebellion, and was not settled in it, nor had time to remove his goods from Ringmore, when the town of Plymouth declared for the Parliament. At which time (as a son of Mr. Lane accounts to me for the sufferings of his father) the garrison "came out with their boats, and plundered those parts, and carried off most part of the valuable goods in the House, and took," says he, "two of my brethren, Richard and John, not giving them time to put on their stockings, and forced them to carry what of the goods they could to Awmar (a creek where boats are kept, about a mile from the houses), where they carried off stolen sheep and plundered goods, with my two eldest brothers. They imprisoned them in Plymouth sometime, where they suffered for want of apparel and other necessaries for some time. All which time my father was active with Sir (sic) — Champernon, and other Gentlemen in those parts, for raising succours for his Majesty, and

was raising a fort on a hill (part of the Glebe of Aveton) which commanded the bridge leading to Kingsbridge; but before it could be finished the King's Party were destroyed. Then did the champions vaunt about the country, and made diligent enquiry after Bishop Lane the traytor (for so the rabble stiled him), at which time he privily lay in the Church-tower for three or four months; but, not being there secure, he got into other places that I know not of." I have been informed they threatened his life. "Those things being laid to his charge by the commissioners, he was dispossessed of both places: Francis Barnard had Aveton, and Ford Ringmore. My father had a temporal estate in Aveton, which was also sequestered, only a set of mills excepted, where my mother, with five children, took up their residence. The eldest son Richard (who was bred a Divine) for his security went to New England; at which time my father, to secure himself, went to France; where he remained till he could buy his peace. Barnard, not content to enjoy the place and pay no Fifths, most maliciously cut off the water-course from the mills (the water passing through the glebe-lands), which two of my sisters many times, with much toil, did stop; which continued from time to time. My father, returning from France, did constrain Barnard to pay the Fifths, "but with more trouble and charge than they were worth, as I have been told," and remained with his family at the mills, the incomes but small for his family, removed with the second son, John, and daughter Elizabeth, and third son, William, to a place in Torbay, called 'Hope's Nose,' where he employed himself with some few servants, in drawing limestones, and sold them to the Topsham boats, where he continued with much satisfaction for some time." By this expression [employed himself] he seems to have dug in the quarry with his own hands; but the expression in a letter from another person is, that he was forced to oversee a quarry. However, the former is more to be depended upon, as coming from his own son. "But it so happened that a small vessel of Brest, passing by, which had K. Charles II's Commission, landed their men, and carried off the working-tools, bedding, and household-goods, to say all that was in the small cottage; that work was ruined. My father, returning again to his mills, found that the water had for some time been cut off by Barnard, the grass was grown

in the mill-leaf, and the remains of his family there in a miserable condition. One day he, walking up to view the ruins, met with one of Barnard's sons, who with base reviling language abusing him, without any provocation, he returned home to his wife, saying that Barnard could not content himself with enjoying his estate, but maliciously hath destroyed his mills, it being the only maintenance remaining, which he could in part suffer; but to suffer such an abuse from his son he could not bear: was therefore resolved to make his condition known at Cromwell's council-board. So with that few pence he had, walked to London (I think) in his 63rd year, and put in his petition, was suffered to make known his condition. It being discovered and proved, he had orders to dispossess Barnard, and name another person for Aveton-Gifford; which accordingly he did, naming one John Marten. Having thus settled his affairs, in hopes to enjoy some comfort in the new possessor, coming home on foot from Honiton to Exon, being very dry and money scarce, finding water in the road, drank thereof; which chilled his blood and threw him into an ague (and he took up his lodging at the King's Head in High Street), and after into a fever, which deprived him of his life. He lieth interred under the Chancel Table in Alphington-Church. This is the exactest account I can give, I being the youngest of the family."

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As for Barnard, who was his first successor at Aveton-Gifford, he was for some time the legal Incumbent of Ugborough in this County, and had been, for some rebellious practices no doubt, seized and carried away prisoner by a party of the King's Horse; for which, after his release, he was rewarded with this rich living, and inducted to it by a troop of horse, as the way then was. During his abode there he never used the Lord's Prayer, or administered the Sacrament of the Lord's

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