

**REMAINS, HISTORICAL AND
LITERARY, CONNECTED WITH THE
PALATINE COUNTIES OF
LANCASTER AND CHESTER. VOL.
XIV**

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F. R. RAINES

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THE JOURNAL
OF
NICHOLAS ASSHETON

OF DOWNHAM,
IN THE COUNTY OF LANCASTER, ESQ.

FOR
PART OF THE YEAR 1617, AND PART OF THE
YEAR FOLLOWING.

INTERSPERSED WITH NOTES FROM THE LIFE OF HIS CONTEMPORARY, JOHN BRUEN OF
BRUEN STAPLEFORD, IN THE COUNTY OF CHESTER, ESQ.

EDITED BY
THE REV. F. R. RAINES, M.A. F.S.A.
RURAL DEAN OF ROCHDALE, AND INCUMBENT
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INTRODUCTION.

THE ASSHETONS derived their surname from the town of Ashton-under-Lyne, where, according to the Heralds of former times, they were seated shortly after the Norman Conquest. The first of the family on record is said to have been Orme, the son of Eward or Ailward, to whom Albert de Gredley the elder gave in marriage with his daughter Emma, a carucate of land in Eston, or Eshton, being a sub-feudation of the manor of Manchester. Thomas de Ashton and Orme his father gave lands in Ashton to Robert de Buron; and Roger, another son of Orme, gave lands in Nut-hurst to the abbey of Cockersand.—*Testa de Nevil*. Their descendant, Sir John Assheton of Assheton was Knight of the shire of Lancaster in the year 1413 (1 *Hen. V.*) and his second son, Sir Raphe, obtained the manor and advowson of Middleton, with large estates at Rydale in the county of York, on his marriage (covenants dated 15th April 1438) with Margery Barton, the wealthy heiress of her father John Barton of Rydale, and of her uncles Richard and Raphe Barton of Middleton, which lands had descended from their ancestors John de Barton and his wife Matilda, daughter

and coheiress of Roger de Middleton, living in the reign of Edward II.

Raphe Assheton, a younger son and one of the thirteen children of Sir Raphe Assheton the first of Middleton, became possessed of a considerable estate at Great Lever, near Bolton-en-le-Moors, in right of his wife Margaret, the daughter and heiress of Adam de Lever, about the year 1465.

His grandson, Richard Assheton, appears to have followed the profession of the law, and married the rich widow of a London merchant. He also fortunately attracted the notice of that acute and profound statesman, William, Lord Burleigh, and was appointed by him Receiver General of the Duchy of Lancaster for Queen Elizabeth. In this office he acquired great wealth, which he wisely expended in the purchase of estates in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the county palatine of Durham.—*Hist. of Whalley*, p. 244. Hopkinson has preserved a lengthened catalogue of the lands thus acquired, and they appear to have been chiefly the confiscated property of religious houses, having been obtained conjointly with his kinsman, John Braddyll of Brockholes Esq. and with his nephew Thomas Crompton of Hounslow Priory Esq. Auditor of Revenue to Queen Elizabeth, son of John Crompton of Prestolee and of London (*Visit.* 1567) and father of Sir Thomas Crompton M. P. (See p. 113.)

Downham, however, had always been a lay fee, and was acquired by John de Dyneley in marriage with the heiress of Downham in the year 1308. The manor was sold by his descendant, Henry Dyneley Esq. in 1545 to Richard

Greenacres and Nicholas Hancock, and it was sold again by Ralph Greenacres on the 2d August 1558 to Richard Assheton the *protégé* of Lord Burleigh.

Richard Assheton having no issue, and dying in January 1578, appears to have devised it to his great nephew, Richard Assheton, second son of Raphe Assheton of Lever Esq. who made Downham his residence, and is frequently mentioned in this Journal. He had issue by his wife, Margaret, daughter of Adam Hulton of Hulton Esq. six children, (1) Richard, who married Isabel daughter and heiress of Mr. Hancock of Pendleton Hall, near Clitheroe (p. 54;) and on his death about the year 1597 s.p. his next brother, (2) NICHOLAS, became the heir apparent of his father. (3) Alexander was a linen draper, in St. Paul's Church Yard, London, and living there in 1618, but died without issue. (4) George was also living in London at the same time, and pursuing some business. He probably died young, (p. 124.) (5) Dorothy married Mr. Richard Sherborne of Dunnow, near Sladeborne, a natural son of Sir Richard Sherborne of Stonyhurst, and appears to have been on very friendly terms with her brother Nicholas.

Nicholas Assheton, the author of the Journal, was born about the year 1590, and probably received the rudiments of his education in the neighbouring Grammar School of Clitheroe. His remaining career is soon told. He married Frances, daughter of Richard Greenacres of Worston, near Downham, Esq. and died on the 16th April 1625, so that his sun had set quickly. He had issue five children, (1) Richard, who died an infant. (2) Richard his heir. (3)

Raphe, who was admitted a member of the honourable society of Gray's Inn, London, 10th December 1637, appointed by the Parliament in 1641 a Deputy Lieutenant for the County Palatine of Lancaster, and afterwards a Sequestrator of Delinquents' Estates. He died unmarried in 1643. (4) Margaret, married Richard son and heir of Mr. John Johnson of Worston, and died 3 *Charles II.* 1650, leaving no surviving issue, her two daughters having died in early life. Dr. Whitaker, in his pedigree of the Greenacres of Worston, (*Hist. of Whalley*, p. 295,) makes this Margaret to be the daughter of Richard Greenacres, and the sister of Mrs. Nicholas Assheton, an error which is corrected in the pedigree of the first line of the Asshetons of Downham, (*Hist. of Whalley*, p. 299,) where her proper parentage is assigned. That she was the daughter of Nicholas Assheton is evident from the Assheton pedigrees, (commonly called Lord Suffield's,) compiled about the year 1672, and also from an old volume of Lancashire pedigrees by Mr. Thomas Wilson F.S.A. of Leeds, copies of which are in my possession. (5) Christiana, the younger daughter, died issueless, and probably unmarried.

Richard the son and heir of Nicholas Assheton became heir to the estate on the death of his father, but appears to have been a minor, and probably a ward of his kinsman Sir Raphe Assheton of Whalley.

He was a layman of the third Lancashire Classis, and therefore a Presbyterian, but although surrounded by the Lancashire chiefs of the popular party, constantly living in their atmosphere, and closely connected by family ties with