

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

3 MAY—31 MAY 1909.

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY

EASTER TERM 1909.

No. LIV.

BEING No. 3 OF THE THIRTEENTH VOLUME.

(SEVENTH VOLUME OF THE NEW SERIES.)



Cambridge:

DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; BOWES & BOWES.

LONDON: G. BELL AND SONS.

1909

Price 5s. net.

Monday, 10 May, 1909.

Dr VENN, President, in the Chair.

The following paper, illustrated with original documents, was read by C. P. ALLIX, M.A., on

AN ANCESTOR'S ESCAPE FROM FRANCE AFTER THE
REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.

As an introduction to the account of my ancestor Monsieur Pierre Allix, "cadet, ministre de la religion prétendue réformée," as the documents of the time cynically style him, in which he describes his escape from Charenton after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, I had better perhaps quote a few extracts from the manuscript history of our branch of the Allix family.

The earliest of our ancestors from whom we can trace direct descent is a Mons. Israel Allix, sieur du Val, of Alençon in Normandy. There were Allix's in this country at the time of the Norman invasion. Below is given an extract relating to the family in the reign of Henry III.

"Pendente 1: anno 37: Henrici 3. membrana 20. Rex omnibus &c. salutem. Sciatis quod concessimus dilecto et fideli nostro Rogerio allix quod toto tempore vitæ suæ habeat hanc libertatem quod non ponatur in assisis vel recognitionibus aliquibus, in cujus rei testimonium &c. teste ut supra apud Winton. 28 Decr."

In the MS. history are four of these extracts; they are endorsed, "Titles of Honor." I do not see wherein the honour consists, since they are apparently grants of money, vestments, and wine on the part of the King, comforting no doubt, but hardly "honorable" as my ancestor appears to have thought when he endorsed them. They are interesting only as showing that there were Allix's in England about 1253 and earlier, though we can trace no certain connection with them. Many are mentioned in the Allix roll kept at Old Willoughby, beginning with a William Allix, A.D. 1066, described as "Founder."

To return to Israel Allix, the grandfather of the subject of these pages. He was the owner of the family property, consisting of houses and hereditaments in the town of Alençon and also landed estate in the parishes of Vingt Hanaps and Larré in the neighbourhood. He was lieutenant in the company of the sieur de Hertrée, which was I suppose a territorial regiment of the time. There is among our family papers addressed to him, a Congé by Henry IV with an autograph signature in which the King, in return for the help he had given him in the siege of Amiens in 1597, grants to Lieutenant Israel Allix exemption from certain dues and taxes to which he was liable.

“Nous Henri par la grace de Dieu roy de France et de Navarre certifions à tous quil appartiendra que Israel Allix, Sieur Du Val, lieutenant de la compagnie colonelle du Sieur de Hertrée nous a servi en ce siege. A ceste cause nous mandons a tous nos bailiffs, sergants, prévosts, juges ou leur lieutenants quil ayent a le tenir quitte de la contribution au ban a quoy il pourroit estre tenu, et lui en faciez comme nous le en faisons, plain et entierre main levée, lui ayent promis demmener avec lui dix ou douze de ses soldats et de licencier le rest. En temoin de quoy, nous avons mis notre scel à ce present congé. Donné au camp devant Amiens ce xxx^{me} jour de Septembre mille cinq cent quatrevingt dix-sept (1597).

HENRI.”

Israel had four children, two sons, one named after himself, the second, Pierre, the father of our Pierre, and two daughters, Elisabeth and Mary. In 1637 we find them jointly redeeming the farm of Cruchet which was in fact the home demaine attached to the residence which is now known as the Chateau de Mezierre, though the house must have been pulled down and rebuilt, as the present Chateau is quite modern. The farm had been sold to pay his debts, presumably at Israel's death.

His son Israel, the younger, transferred his interest in the ferme Cruchet to his brother Pierre and we hear no more of him.

Pierre became a Huguenot minister and married Magdelaine Allisot of Alençon and had several children of whom Pierre the younger was the eldest, and who became “the learned Dr Peter Allix,” the subject of these memoirs.

The two Pierres are described as follows in the *Annuaire*

statistique du département de l'Orne pour mille huit cent et huit (1808). Alençon, which I saw at the Mairie when I was there in 1901.

"Pierre Allix, père, né à Alençon, auteur d'un catechism des protestants."

"Pierre Allix, fils, né à Alençon vers mille six cent quarent et un (1641), mort en mille sept cent dix sept (1717). Il fut ministre protestant à Charenton, savant des langues, et prédicateur eloquent. Il publia beaucoup d'ouvrages d'histoire et de controverse."

We now come to the eldest and last son of the Rev. Pierre Allix the elder, and I have left him till this point because with him the history passes out of France on to English ground.

From the Rev. Pierre Allix the younger, he now becomes "the learned Dr Peter Allix," as he was called, and as such I shall mention him in the future. He was born at Alençon in 1641, and his father sent him, as soon as he had superintended his early studies, to Saumur, there to pursue his academical exercises. He afterwards went to Sedan, where he began to distinguish himself at the early age of 19. While there he wrote a theological treatise on the "Last Judgement" and only left Sedan to take up the duties of minister at Ste. Agoville, in Champagne, where he was ordained. The opinion formed of his merit led to his being called in 1670 to Charenton, which was the centre of the protestant worship for all Paris, in order to take the place of the savant Daillé.

We read in Agnew's *French Protestant Refugees*, vol. i. p. 133 :

"In 1670 reunion between the Catholics and the Protestants was the plausible shape in which, at this date, the hostile designs against the Huguenots were framed. There were two vacancies in the pastorate of the 'Temple' of Charenton, and the Court had been anxious to fill them with latitudinarian divines. To this there was strong opposition, and at length, through the good offices of Mons. Caillard, the celebrated legal practitioner, the Huguenot Consistory of Charenton received the protection of government in making a free election, and Pasteurs Allix and Ménard were chosen. Allix was appointed, under a scheme formed in Paris, to make a new French translation of the Bible with the famous Claude, and the two worked together at the task."

Wylie in his *Wodrow's Analecta* has an amusing touch about his character; he says,

"Speaking of the two colleagues Allix and Claude, Allix was a frank, open man very much seen in the rabbinical learnings and of very free access. He kept weekly conferences in his house to which many doctors of the Sorbonne resorted. He was bold and brisk in the pulpit and when he read his text he cocked his hat (a French preacher in those days put on his hat at the beginning of his sermon) but Claude when he put on his hat, slipped it on and drew down the sides of it. There were some differences fell out between them, and Allix said that he would have been 40 years with his venerable colleague without bringing him into the pulpit and complained that Claude had brought him into the pulpit."

In 1683 Allix was chosen moderator of the last provincial synod of Meaux.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 obliged him to take refuge in England that same year with his wife Margaret Rogers and three sons.

He had considerable difficulty in obtaining a passport and it appears that he only got one (given below) by having had some promise from the King earlier in the same month. He and the other ministers only received 48 hours' notice to get out of the country. Allix retired at once to St Denis and prepared for instant flight.

"Nous Jean Jacques Charron chevalier Marquis de Ménars conseiller du Roy en ses conseils, maistre des Requests ordinaire de son hostel, surintendant des finances, Domaines et affaires de la Reyne, Intendant de la generalite de Paris, Certiffions que Pierre Alix cydevant ministre de la Religion pretendue Reformee au temple de Charenton qui est de nostre departement a pris la resolution de se retirer aux pais estranges en consequence de la Permission qui lui en a este donnee par l'edict du Roy du present mois d'octobre, lequel Sr Alix ministre avec Marguerite Roger sa femme et trois de ses enfans Jean Pierre Alix aage de six ans, Jacques Alix de trois ans et demy, et Thomas Alix aage de onze mois, s'en vá en Angleterre sortant du Royaume par Calais. Fait a Paris ce vingt quatre Octobre mil six cens quatreving seing.

DU MENARS.
Par Monseigneur
POPART."

LS

He had a narrow escape. The officer sent to arrest him arrived in Calais, after hot pursuit, in the evening of the day he sailed. This is the account of it in his own words.

"When I saw in 1685 in the month of August that we were certainly to be destroyed I send for England under another name my books of divinity that were to be seized by the King's Commissary in my study, having then taken my resolution by the encouragement of my lord of Salisbury to take my sanctuary in England and hoping that I could prosecute my studies with some comfort. The Edict of Nantes being revoked the 21st of October the same year, I was commanded the same day to set out from Paris at a distance of two miles. I had no time granted, but to get a pass from Mons. de Menars the Intendant who kept me very late by his fair proposals and promises. The same night I went to St Denys. When I went from St Denys to Abbeville I met there with the Marquis of Ruvigny, the father, who came from England and offered me all the offices I could expect from his friendship and favour in England. As I knew he had more favor at Court I thank him and I would not make use of a letter that he made his son to write to the Countess of Tyrconnel who was there at Calais with a yacht for England that I might have an easy passage in her yacht. I came to England and was very happy not to have made any use of the recommendation of Mr Rouvigny to the Countess because the order of stopping me came to Calais the same night which I was gone in the morning, having made a narrow escape from death by the fury and brutish humours of the Mayor of Calais."

Thus our ancestor arrived on these shores. We next hear of him in London at the house of a Mr Skey in Charterhouse yard. He was not there long however before attempts were made to lure him back to France.

In Weiss' *Histoire des Refugiés Protestant*, we read of Allix

"That he was distinguished in the ministry by great simplicity and good taste and by the most appropriate teaching for the circumstances in which his Church was placed. As before in France he excelled in calming dissensions and maintaining a spirit of unity among the protestants. Louis the XIVth did his best to persuade him to be converted and return to France."

Seignelay the French Minister wrote on this subject to Bonrepaux to London to this effect.

"Versailles, Feb. 9, 1686. The family of the minister Allix, who is in London, is now converted to the true faith in Paris, if you could approach the minister and induce him to return to France with the intention of being converted, you might without hesitation offer him a pension of as much as three or four thousand livres: if it is necessary to go further I have no doubt that upon any communication you may make to me, the King will consent to make him still further advances. In this case you

may be sure that you will have accomplished an act which will be most agreeable to his Majesty."

Allix resisted all the advances made him by the envoy extraordinary of Louis XIV, and remained in England, where he soon won the respect and sympathy of all. The honorary degrees of Doctor of the Universities of both Cambridge and Oxford, in 1690 and 1692 respectively, were conferred upon him, and upon the recommendation of Bishop Burnet he was made Canon and Treasurer of Salisbury Cathedral.

The Anglican clergy deputed him to write *The history of the Councils of the Church* (to be referred to later) and Parliament in its turn conferred upon him a particular mark of its esteem by ordering that all the paper required for the work should be imported from Holland free of duty.

This extract gives an amusing little touch of real life—showing how the overtures to Allix to abandon the Huguenot faith and be converted to Roman Catholicism appeared to Louis's envoy on the one hand and to the recipient of them on the other.

We get the result as it appeared to Mons. Bonrepaux of his attempt upon Allix in a letter that he wrote to the French Minister, Mons. Dr Seignelay, published in the "pièces justificatifs" at the end of Weiss's *Histoire*, p. 425.

"Londres, Fevrier 18^{me}, mille six cent quatrevingt six (1686). J'ai parlé au ministre Allix suivant votre ordre (translation) and I employed the device that you suggested to me to insinuate the gracious reception he might expect at the King's hand if he would return to France and be converted. He received the tokens of goodness and favour on the part of his Majesty towards him with great respect and show of gratitude. He told me that Mons. Ménars had spoken to him just before his departure from France, but that he could not make up his mind to do what was asked of him. We got into an argument about the authority of the Church and their separation from it. He promised to come and see me again and I did my utmost to induce him to take the good path."

Now let us see how the same transaction appeared to Allix.

I here give his own account of it written to one of the English bishops. When we remember the amount of the bribe, three or four thousand livres per annum, and also that, as he tells us, all he had been able to take away with him from

France was 2500 francs with which to support himself, his wife, and three children until he could earn more, we must admit that he was a man of iron will, great courage and strong faith, and honour him as he deserves.

"I forebore from waiting upon Mons. Bavillon although I received by his means many letters and books from some learned men of the Paris, but the Marquis of Ruvigny being come from France and having been informed that my mother and sisters were arrested at Paris and one transported to a castle of Normandy, out of sight of her acquaintance, where she was kept 10 months, I thought not fit to forbear more from paying him some visit which I did by the advice of the Marquis of Ruvigny to whom I gave a true account of what passed between him and me. I can not judge what hopes Mons. Bavillon had given to the French Court, but some time after that Mons. Bonrepaux, an extraordinary envoy, being come into England, sent to my house to know an hour when he could find me at home. I was then absent, but thought fit to go to him to prevent his coming to me. After many compliments he shewed to me the King's special orders to offer me such and such things for me, expressed by the Marquis of Seignelay, to whom I answered first, as to a minister of the King of France, and secondly, as to an apostate who had deceived me, changing his religion after many protestations done to me never to change. I never saw him after that although he came a second time into England with the same character of an envoy and I never saw Mons. Bavillon after that attempt."

They evidently held the learned Doctor in high esteem on the other side of the Channel, since they could not let him alone even then. Dr Allix gives an account of a second attempt made upon him.

"Few weeks after all that, he says, the Archbishop of Paris sent for my mother-in-law, who was then living in Paris, and commanded her to write to her daughter, my wife, that by the King's order he made to me by her hand the same offers which had been made to me at London if I was willing to come back, and that I was not to come till all things be settled to my satisfaction and for the execution of the King's promises to me. My wife thought not fit to acquaint me with her answer, but she answered so, that since that time we have not been more disturbed on that side, my mother-in-law being in a great wrath against her daughter."

The learned Doctor soon began to win his way in England, and we hear of him dining with the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth, where John Evelyn met him, as he mentions in his diary, on July 8, 1686.

"I waited, he says, on the Archbishop at Lambeth, where I dined and met the famous preacher and writer, Monsieur Allix, doubtless a most excellent and learned person. The Archbishop and he spoke Latin together and that very readily."

Allix took out letters of naturalisation, then called "Denisation," in 1686, and the same year received a permit from James II to hold services in French in a house in Jewin Street, without Aldersgate, in London, pending the building of a permanent church. The permit states that the house is first to be fitted and adorned for divine service according to the directions and satisfaction of William Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Allix was the first of the French reformed ministers to submit to reordination, which appears to have been a great shock to his fellow refugees. We find in Wodrow's *Analecta* that a certain Mr Webster had an account of it from one of the French ministers in Edinburgh, who said that when they were forced out of France in 1685, Mons. Allix was the first who submitted to reordination in England, and that he was so shocked when he saw Mons. Allix reordained and a declaration made that he was no minister, and the reflection cast upon the whole ministry of France and the reformed churches, that he could not bear it and came to Scotland.

From the time of his arrival Allix devoted himself to his congregation of refugees in London, conducting the services in the house in Jewin Street, and for five years had a hard struggle with poverty. In 1690 he was appointed by Burnet, bishop of Salisbury, treasurer of the Cathedral at a stipend, as he tells us, of £170 per annum, no very great fortune, but it relieved Dr Allix of the heaviest of his anxieties. Subsequently he was made a prebend, which no doubt caused a substantial increase to his means. On the recommendation of Charles Ashton, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, he was also elected a Fellow of that College. He thus began to build up the family name and fortunes afresh in this country, which course was continued by his son, who became a dean of Ely and who bought the property of Swaffham Prior in this county, which has belonged to the family ever since, and was the original home of the Allix's in England.

Dr Allix was asked, as before mentioned, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Worcester and others, to write a history of the Councils of the Church, and this he did from 1686 to 1699. He tells us that he kept a copyist, or as we should say a secretary, to help him, at a salary of £15 a year. It was intended to be a bulky work, since it was to run to seven volumes and each volume was to contain 300 pages. The manuscript was left by will to his son the Dean of Ely, and I fear lost, though I have two or three duplicates both in English and Latin of the first few pages of it or of the introduction to it. In this year there was an attestation issued, which still exists, by the bench of bishops of that date, with the autograph signatures of almost all of them, viz. the Archbishops of both provinces, and the bishops of Salisbury, London, Winchester, Worcester, Rochester, Exeter, Chester, Ely, Norwich, Peterborough, Gloucester, Lincoln, Bristol, Oxford, Cirencester, Lichfield and Coventry. The attestation sets forth that as Dr Allix has prepared the manuscript of "the Councils," but is debarred from publishing by the expense of printing; that he needs and deserves more help than will arise from the subscriptions alone &c. The sum promised to Allix was £480, but of this he only received £65, and it is to be presumed that he never got the balance, for the work was never printed, though there remains endless correspondence between him and the printers, of whom he consulted at least three; a bookseller named William Hawse, a Mr Chiswell and a Mr Bennett. The edition was to consist of 1250 copies of 7 vols. each at 15s. per volume, and the cost was estimated at £937. 10s. It was to be issued in Latin and Greek, and I suppose in English also.

Dr Allix was the author of twenty-eight works, besides three discourses, published in 1688, to combat the Roman pamphleteers of that date. A list of them is to be found at the end of Allix's *Reflections on the Holy Scriptures*, but it does not contain the last five which I have taken from Dr Allix's own manuscript list. They were *Réponse à la dissertation à la fin du livre de Monsieur Arnaud, A preparation for the Lord's Supper with maxims of true Xtianity*, a discourse concerning *The Merits of good works*, a historical discourse concerning

The necessity of the Minister's intention, and a discourse concerning Pennance, the Roman doctrine makes void repentance. And I have also two prayers written by himself for use in the Consistoire which have never been in print. They are fine compositions and deserve to be known. One of them is here given.

“O Seigneur il n'y a point dans les hommes de si parfaite pureté quelle puisse supporter la rigueur de ton jugement. Puis donc que tes yeux decouvrent nos imperfections, veille les effacer au sang pressieux de ton Fils bien aimé. Pardonnons nous les défauts ou nous pouvons etre tombés en cet heure, par un effet de l'ignorance, de la temerité, et de l'imprudence qui nous sont naturelles. Voy d'un œuil propice les faibles efforts de notre obeissance, et les souhaits que nous formons pour la gloire de ton grand nom. Sois a notre issue comme tu as été a notre entrée. Repans ta benediction sur les resolutions qui ont été prises dans cette assemblée. Dons nous la joie d'assister a l'accroissement du regne de ton Fils, afin, que recognoisant par l'experience que tu es avec nous, et voyant que ton œuvre prospere entre nos mains, nous soions remplis d'une sainte assurance pour nous reposer sur le bras tout puissant de ta bonne providence, et sur les soins de ton amour, tant quenfin, apres t'avoir servi icy bas, selon la mesure de grace que tu as donné, nous allions recueillir le fruit des promesses que tu a faites à la fidelité de tes serviteurs. Or à toi, Pere, Fils et St Esprit, un seul Dieu, benit eternellement, soit louange, honneur et gloire aux siècles des siècles. Amen.” (Copy of the original unaltered.)

So keen a theologian was he that late in life he converted a Jew, Jonah Ben Jacob Xeres, afterwards baptised John. He says it took him four hours' argument to convince him of the absurdity of the oral law of the Rabbis, and this was only the close of a controversy prolonged for months. Allix afterwards gave him a certificate of his conversion.

He made his last will in which he gives his soul to God, and exhorts his wife and children to live in the fear of God and to keep up the good union and understanding wherein they had lived till now, which, he said, is the sure and only way to bring down the blessing of Heaven. It was in French, was translated by Peter St Eloy, N.P., dated the 17th Feb., 1717, and witnessed by Sam. Woodcock, J. Le Clerc, De Virley, and R. de Boyville.

So ends the history of what I must call a great and good man, for to leave as he did, houses, land, relatives, a home and a distinguished position, such as his was, with every prospect of

advancement in his profession, and to seek his fortune in a foreign land for conscience sake, was no mean achievement. The Huguenots were men who held the form of their religion to be of the last importance, and were prepared, like the early martyrs, to sacrifice all for it. Some went to the galleys, some to the scaffold, and some into exile.

I will close this brief account by reading a part of the inscription upon the Chancel Screen in St Mary's Church, Swaffham Prior, dedicated to his memory.

"To the glory of God and in memory of the Rev. Pierre Allix, the Huguenot refugee, this screen was rebuilt in the year of the Coronation of King Edward the VIIth, 1902. The Rev. Pierre Allix, afterwards known as the learned Dr Peter Allix, was the first of the family who settled in England, was the son of the Rev. Pierre Allix the elder, and grandson of Lieutenant Israel Allix, Sieur du Val of the Compagnie Colonelle du Sieur du Hertrée, and of the parish of Vingt Hanaps near Alençon in Normandy. He fled from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and took refuge in London, leaving houses and lands, kindred and preferment for conscience sake. Large offers were made him by King Louis XIV to induce him to return to France and abandon the Huguenot Faith, but without success. The degree of D.D. was conferred upon him by both the universities of Oxford and Cambridge 'honoris causa.' He was presented by bishop Burnett to the Treasurership of Salisbury Cathedral with a prebendal stall. He was born at Alençon in 1641, died in London in 1717, and is buried at St Sepulchre's Church, Holborn."

Then follows this text from the tenth chapter of St Mark's Gospel:

"Verily, verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life."

One word only to close this memoir of a great and good man, "Requiescat."

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