

JORDANS.

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JORDANS is situated in a beautiful part of Bucks, midway between Beaconsfield and Chalfont St. Giles, being about two and a quarter miles from each of these places. It is two miles from Chalfont St. Peter, six miles from Amer-sham, and twenty-three from London.

There is but little history attached to Jordans. It appears to have been first appropriated as a Friends' burial-place in 1671, in which year a conveyance was signed from William Russell to Thomas Ellwood and others. No mention appears of any buildings until 1688, when a meeting-house is spoken of; subsequently a "new-built house and tenement called New Jordans" are referred to.

I have an ancient letter, unfortunately not dated, neither is the name of the place mentioned whence it was despatched. I surmise it to have been written in the early part of the 17th century. It is addressed thus—"Deliver this into the hand of Edward Rose, of hadnom." This letter is evidently from one member of the Society of Friends to another; indeed, it is well known that the family of Rose, of Haddenham, by whom this letter has been preserved, was connected with the Society of Friends down to the last generation. Quaker Rose was a well known name in that village some years ago. The letter is signed Edward Jordan; it contains no reference whatever to Jordans, still I cannot help thinking that the writer must have been connected with it as an early owner or occupier, and that the place takes its name from him or some of his connection.

Jordans has become a spot of considerable note, consequent on its being the place of interment of the remains of some remarkable persons, more particularly those of William Penn, Isaac Penington, and Thomas Ellwood. The grave of William Penn induces visitors to Jordans in great numbers, many especially from America, as its Visitors' Book proves. William Penn was son of Sir William

Penn, Knt., an eminent English Admiral in the reign of Charles II., and was born in London, 1644. His father took great care in his education, and about the fifteenth year of his age he was placed in Christ Church, Oxford; but as he withdrew from the national forms of worship, with those who, like himself, listened to the preaching of Loe, a Quaker of eminence, he was fined for nonconformity, and the next year, as he pertinaciously adhered to his opinions, was expelled the college. His father considered his singularly serious conduct as tending to impede his prospects of advancement at Court, and, therefore, as Penn the younger says, having been whipped and beaten, he was turned out of doors (1662). After visiting France, and then becoming a law student at Lincoln's Inn, he, in 1666, was sent to manage an estate in Ireland; there he renewed his acquaintance with Loe, and, showing great partiality to the Quakers, he was imprisoned by the Mayor of Cork. His return to England produced a violent altercation with his father, who wished him to abandon habits so offensive to established forms; as he refused to appear uncovered before him and the King, his father a second time dismissed him from his house and protection. In 1668, Penn first appeared as a preacher among the Quakers, and in consequence of some controversial dispute was sent to the Tower, where he remained in confinement eight months, during which time he wrote his most celebrated work, "No Cross, no Crown."

In 1670 Penn was again imprisoned, and in September of that year was, with William Mead, linen-draper, of London, indicted for having "by force of arms," &c., &c., disturbed the public peace. The details of this memorable trial are on record; it will be remembered that the jury would not convict, and were fined forty marks each, with imprisonment till paid. Notwithstanding no verdict was given, the two prisoners were remanded to Newgate, followed by the twelve jurymen, who refused to pay the fines illegally imposed upon them. The case of the jurymen was heard before the Common Pleas, where, by a verdict of that court, they were all discharged. The fines of Penn and Mead having been paid by some unknown hand, they were also discharged on the same day. In 1672 Penn married Maria Springett,

step-daughter of Isaac Penington, and thus the connection between these families; she was a lady of principles similar to his own. In 1677 Penn went with Fox and Barclay to the Continent on a religious excursion; and, after visiting the chief towns of Holland, they proceeded to the Court of Princess Elizabeth, granddaughter of James I., at Herwerden, where they were received with great kindness. Penn now devoted himself to a steady perseverance in the propagation of his opinions, and from that time published a great variety of tracts, and travelled much in Holland and Germany to support the cause of Quakerism.

Penn's father died in 1676, when he succeeded to a good property and had assigned to him a debt of £15,000 owing to his father by the Government. In 1681 the debt due from the Government to Penn as representative of his late father was, by a deed signed by the King and dated 4th March in that year, cancelled, by the transfer of the tract of American territory subsequently known as Pennsylvania. This business caused Penn's visit to that place, he having had great trouble upon the subject of the settlement of his boundary-line. In 1682, Penn again visited the province and confirmed the good understanding hitherto existing with the natives; after two years' residence, with the satisfaction of having promoted the prosperity of the colonists, he returned. At the revolution he was suspected of treasonable correspondence with the exiled Prince, and was therefore exposed to persecution. He was in the confidence of James II.; Croese, the Dutch historian, describes him "as the Quaker's sole patron at Court; the King loved him as a singular and entire friend." It was against this part of Penn's career that the late Lord Macaulay directed those calumnies which have been so ably refuted by Paget, Forster, Dixon, and others. Whittier the American poet, refers to this subject in the following lines, pointing to Macaulay—

How vainly he laboured to sully with blame
 The white bust of Penn in the niche of his fame!
 Self-will is self-wounding, perversity blind—
 On himself fell the stain for the Quaker designed!
 For the sake of his true-hearted father before him,
 For the sake of the dear Quaker mother that bore him,
 For the sake of his gifts and the works that outlive him,
 And his brave words for freedom, we freely forgive him!

In 1694, Penn lost his wife. Though severely afflicted by the event, he in about two years married again, and travelled in Ireland and England as a preacher. He again visited his province in 1699, with his wife and family, and returned to England in 1701. He then published "A Brief Account of the Province of Pennsylvania," proposing an **easy purchase** of lands on good terms of settlement to **such as were inclined** to remove thither. He did not cease to watch over the interests of his colony with a paternal eye till his death, which happened in 1718, at Ruscombe, near Twyford, Berks, at the age of seventy-four. He lies in the first row of graves at Jordans, near those of his wives and children—two daughters, each named Gulielma Maria (1672 and 1689), a son William (1674), a daughter Margaret (1674), and a son Springett (1694). Penn's second wife was the daughter of Thomas Callowhill, of Bristol, and, according to a recent biographer, "she compensated for the soft angelic radiance which had clothed the first wife by indomitable strength and resolution." Her energy, in some degree, made up for the decline in Penn's mental and bodily faculties, caused by paralysis, some time previous to his death. Of the personal appearance of the founder of Pennsylvania, we are told "he was tall in stature, and of athletic make. When a young man he was handsome in person and graceful in manner; later in life he was inclined to corpulency, but, using much exercise, he retained his activity, and his appearance was then of a fine, portly man."

In the same row of graves is that of Isaac Pennington. He was the eldest son of Alderman Pennington, of London, the regicide. On his marriage with Lady Springett, his father gave up to him the family property at Chalfont St. Peter. According to the testimony of William Penn, Pennington was born about the year 1617; "he received a liberal education through all the advantages the schools and universities of his own country could give, joined with the conversation of some of the most intelligent and considerable men of that time." From his childhood, Ellwood tells us, he was religiously inclined. "I met," says Pennington, "with some writings of the people called Quakers, which I cast a slight eye upon; I disdained them as falling short of that wisdom which I had been

longing and searching for." After a time he was invited to meet one of the Quaker sect, when he was so powerfully impressed with their doctrines that he joined their community; he was not a silent member of it, and thus his persecutions. Before the close of the year 1660, Isaac Penington and Thomas Ellwood were made prisoners—the former at Aylesbury, and Ellwood at Oxford. Their offence was their persistently holding religious meetings in their own houses. This persecution was occasioned by the outbreak of the Fifth Monarchy men. Letters passed between the prisoners; one, addressed by Penington to Ellwood, is dated "Aylesbury Jail, 14th of the Twelfth month, 1660"; letters from Penington to his wife are dated in the following month. There is no account of the precise time or circumstances under which Penington was released from Aylesbury Jail. On this occasion it must have been early in the year 1661; in 1665, Penington was again in Aylesbury Jail.

The Penington family continued to occupy the Grange at Chalfont St. Peter for some years after the Alderman's estates were confiscated. This estate was bestowed by Charles II. on the Duke of Grafton, and temporary permission was given to the former proprietors to remain in the house which formerly had been their own. Soon after Isaac Penington had been confined in Aylesbury Jail this permission was withdrawn, and the family ejected. Mary Penington then took a small house at Aylesbury, so that she and her family might be near her husband. This second imprisonment must have been a long one, as his letters are dated from Aylesbury Jail, 1665, 1666, and 1667. He was eventually liberated by the good offices of the Earl of Ancram. Only three weeks elapsed when, by the contrivance of the Earl of Bridgewater and one Palmer, a magistrate, he was again imprisoned. He was on this occasion confined in a most unhealthy and incommodious apartment in the jail, which so much debilitated his tender constitution, and brought on such a severe attack of illness, that for a time it was thought he would not recover. Ellwood describes the place as "so decayed that it was scarce fit for a dog-house; and so open it lay, that the prisoners might have gone out at pleasure. But these Friends were purposely put there in confidence that they would not go out, that

there might be room in prison for others, of other professions and names, whom the jailer did not trust, in the old malthouse." Sixty or seventy Quakers were kept imprisoned in this miserable place. During his various imprisonments, Penington wrote several religious works, and his correspondence was very extensive.

In 1668 Mrs. Penington took out a writ of habeas which brought her husband to London to trial; it was then ascertained that there was no case whatever to try, so he was at once liberated. In 1672 Penington was again made a prisoner, for the fifth time. On this occasion his confinement was in Reading Jail, caused by a visit he paid to Friends who were there confined. He continued a prisoner for twenty-one months, till Charles II. released by Letters Patent such Friends as were imprisoned throughout the nation on suits of the Crown. In the autumn of 1679, Penington accompanied his wife to her native place in Kent, and after visiting her tenants there they remained at one of the farms, called Goodenstone Court. Just at the time fixed for their return home Penington was taken ill and died, after a few days' suffering. His remains were interred at Jordans. A small head-stone marks the spot, with the name and date, "Isaac Penington, 1679." His age was sixty-three years. Many testimonies were published respecting the Christian life of this good and cruelly-persecuted man.

Thomas Ellwood, the intimate friend of Milton and the Penns and Peningtons, lies in the third range of graves, and his wife by his side; he died in 1713. His autobiography has gone through several editions.

The grave-stones now existing were not erected at the time of burial, but were subsequently introduced for the information of visitors to the place; they merely give the names and dates of the deaths of the occupiers of the graves.*

* See "The Penns and Peningtons : " Kitto, 1867.