

## John Miles in Wales.

THE following notes are largely drawn from the books of Dr. Thomas Richards, librarian at Bangor, with gleanings from a study in Welsh by the late Thomas Shankland, his predecessor. Both agree in recognizing the great service of the man to Baptists in South Wales, no less than in New England, whither he led most of his church.

John Miles came of a family long resident near Llanigon in Brecon. His father, Walter, lived at Newton (probably the hamlet between Clifford and Bodorddyn, as the mother was living at Clifford in 1649; but conceivably the Newton near Olchon) where John was born in 1620 or 1621. For on 18 March, 1636, when entered at Brazenose College, Oxford, he was declared to be fifteen years old, and his father to be "plebs." This may imply a working farmer, and certainly rules out armigerous descent. But the fact of John being sent to Oxford suggests that he was looked upon as likely to take holy orders; there certainly was a revival of religion at this time and place.

The society at Brazenose numbered about 200, under the care of Dr. Samuel Radcliffe, whose memory is perpetuated in the Camera opposite. The drill given must have been thorough, for in 1673 over in New England, Miles was teaching Latin, Greek, Hebrew and English, with Rhetoric, Arithmetic and Writing.

With the outbreak of civil war, and the conversion of Oxford into a garrison, the last opportunity for study there vanished. Most young men of twenty-two would see their duty to fight for their cause, and it would appear that ultimately he became a captain. But this raises questions by no means answered yet. First, was he for King or for Parliament; his name has not been traced on any muster-roll at all. Second, was he ordained before or after he took the sword; no record has been discovered. In those times many exceptional things happened, and many registers were kept irregularly. On the other hand, such registers as do survive have been most carefully examined, and often printed. The name of John Miles has not been identified at all. In 1648, however, there was a second civil war, with a stand made for the king at Pembroke. This brought a detachment of the New-Model Army under Cromwell across Glamorgan in 1648. And thus Miles came into contact with Baptists.

Next year he and his friend Thomas Proud went to London, apparently after a visit from William Consett and Edward Drapes. It has often excited surprise that they did not go to their compatriot William Kiffin, who had been known now some eight years. But Kiffin was not yet important, it is only his later life brought him to the front. The leading church was one which had acquired fine premises in the City, the old Glass House on Broad Street. In 1643 it had as its leader Thomas Gunn, from a Separatist church of 1621. There is no other church of which we have such a list of members :—William Conset, who appears in every Baptist document of the time; William Draper, soon to hold high office in the army to conquer Ireland; Edward Cresset, soon to be prominent at the Charterhouse; Joseph Stafford; Edward Roberts, of whom more directly; Captain Sir John Harman; Robert Bowes; Peter Scutt, soon to be secretary for all the London churches; Robert Doyley, soon to be colonel in the Irish army; T. Harrison; Richard Bartlett; Henry Grigg; Edward Green; John Brady; Edward Druitt; Richard Graves; William Combey; Thomas Carter; Robert Steynor; Peter Row; Robert Cherry; Ralph Mainwaring; William Haines; Nathan Allen; William Chassey; Samuel Tull; John Mildmay. All these are known as members in 1650, and no other church in London took anything like such a part as did this Glass House church. It is quite possible that the presence of Edward Roberts was an additional reason, for though Dr. Richards warns us against identifying him with a West Glamorgan man who did some sporadic preaching in Monmouthshire, Roberts was employed by his church to write to the churches which resulted from this visit.

Miles spent a fortnight in London, was baptized on profession of his faith, and the church recorded that his coming was an answer to prayer for home missionaries. In all their own long roll, only young Drapes seemed gifted that way; now they had a cultured Oxford man, qualified to break new ground by his Welsh language in a field peculiarly needy. He was sent back with their endorsement, and he started work at once. Within a year, however, he obtained a second appointment of a very different kind.

The Rump Parliament passed an Act on 22 February, 1649/50, for the better propagation and preaching of the gospel in Wales. Seventy-one officers, esquires and gentlemen were commissioned; committees of them were empowered to hear any complaint against ministers, and if proved, to eject them; to re-arrange all ecclesiastical revenues; to appoint to vacant charges or to itinerancies, such men as were approved by a quorum from a committee of twenty-five ministers. Among these

Approvers was Miles. It may possibly be that he was in episcopal orders, or it may be that the Rump spoke loosely in terming him a minister. For this examination work, he was paid £100 a year. The Act was to expire on 24 March, 1652/3.

In this way Miles got to know promising preachers, and he enlisted some of them for his own Baptist work; Walter Prosser of Llanigon and David Davies of Gelligaer were decidedly useful.

He himself started a Baptist church at Ilston in Gower; and its church book enabled Joshua Thomas in 1790 to publish an account of how he built up a strong Association, managing churches at Ilston, the Hay on the Wye (near his birthplace?), Llantrissant and Abergavenny on the Usk, and Caermarthen. The work was done in consultation with Glass-house, and Miles went in 1651 to attend a general meeting called at the suggestion of leading Baptists in the Irish army.

When the Act expired, a wider arrangement was made for England also on lines adapted from the Welsh; and Miles continued to act, but now as part of a larger machine. This roused the ire of the Quakers, who regarded it as trammeling the Spirit; and they were particularly hard on men for taking State pay. Miles vigorously defended himself, but he presently became more vulnerable, taking office as a Lecturer at Llanelly, and a fresh salary of £40 from the inappropriate tithes. Feeling ran high, and a meeting of Baptists was convened at Brecon on 29 July, 1656, when others appeared from his native district, the Wye valley at Bredwardine and Hereford, besides Cludock. Miles had prepared an Antidote against the infection of the times, and this was adopted and printed in London; it strongly upheld the public pay system, for the continuance of which Miles had thanked Cromwell earlier that year.

He took a third step in 1657, accepting the living of Ilston, taking tithes of the parish, plus £40 from Eglwys Ilan instead of the £40 he had earned at Llanelly, plus £20 from the prebend of Whitchurch. No one seems to have twitted him with the fact that acceptance of a parish post involved the duty of christening all infants in the parish. From this point of vantage he continued to superintend all the affairs of the Association, on a centralized Strict and Particular basis.

Even on 26 March, 1660, he felt secure enough to enter his son John at New Inn Hall in Oxford; but on 24 July William Houghton obtained an order under the Great Seal to occupy the Ilston living; and an act of September made it clear that this was legal. The Baptist church book shows the last baptism on 12 August.

Three years passed before Miles saw his way clearly. Under

the Elizabethan Conventicle Act, all Baptist meetings were illegal, and every worshipper risked prison and fine, every leader risked exile or death. And this was no dead letter, hundreds of men being thrown into jail. Roger Williams had founded a plantation at Providence, and in 1663 John Clarke obtained for it a most liberal charter. Miles therefore followed the order to the disciples, and fled from persecution to another place. Yet it was no disorderly flight; he and part of his church with their records made their exodus across waters wider than the Red Sea. They settled eight miles east of Providence, and as it proved, within the Old Colony. Little did they know how the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers had forgotten their fathers' principles, and had fallen in with the rigid uniformity of the Puritans of Massachusetts. They imagined there was room for them at Rehoboth, and only after four years of disillusionment, culminating in a fine at Plymouth, did they move and set up a new Swanzey.

His work in Wales was over. Under a new Conventicle Act his articulated Association could not function; an agreement of 1666 shows new friendships with less pronounced Baptists. Had it not been for a second adherent at Olchon, planting a new church at Rhydwylym when the Act expired, there would hardly have been the score of licences applied for in 1672.

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HADDOCK OF LEIGH-ON-SEA. In the burial-ground of the parish church at Leigh on the Thames is a monument erected by Admiral Sir Richard Haddock. This naval family includes his son, Admiral Nicholas, 1686-1746; himself who died at the age of 85 on 26 January, 1714/5, controller of the navy; his father, Captain William, who died 22 September, 1667, aged 60; his grandfather, Captain Richard, who died 22 May, 1660, aged 79. This founder of the family was a Baptist. Other Baptists in the family were Joan, expelled from Enniscorthy in 1653/4; Leonard, who attended the Assembly in 1656; Foreman, who attended the Assembly in 1749 and 1751, from Horsleydown.

JAMES SMITH, whose career as treasurer of the New Connexion Academy was traced last April, used a seal about the size of a shilling, having in its centre a device which resembles the sails of a windmill, superimposed over a three-leaved clover. Above, IV; on the two sides, DG; below, JS in Gothic script. It has remained in the family, until Mr. B. B. Granger has presented it to our Society. The meaning of the letters and symbol has been forgotten; can anyone tell?