

# BRERETON

## A FAMILY HISTORY

**B**IOGRAPHY is history in action. All should take pride in knowing something regarding their forefathers, where they came from, and what they have done. This work gives an outline of the Brereton family history in England, Ireland, and America, from A. D. 1066 to the present, but does not attempt a detailed pedigree of the different branches, or assume to prove "royal descent from Norman, Saxon, and Celt"; that is left to such works as "Ormerod's History of Cheshire," "Memoirs of the Brereton Family," by Sir Fortunatus Dwarris, and "The Breretons of Cheshire," by Robert Maitland Brereton. These scholarly works are mostly occupied with English records, touch lightly on Irish Breretons, and say little or nothing of American families, of whom no account has been attempted before.

The causes that led Breretons from Eng-

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land to Ireland and America were historic, and are treated here from that view-point. The loss of family records, early variations in spelling the name, families bearing names derived from ours, make a romance of interest, and are noted as a part of this "Brereton."

The sources from which material has been gathered are many: several histories of Cheshire, extracts from old town and church archives, antiquarian and curious chronicles, colonial documents, records from army and civil life in Europe and America, have each yielded their quota. Years of correspondence with Breretons and other families over the world has made the work possible.

Failure of a few to answer letters, because too modest to tell their story, and a total lack of records by others, have made it difficult to make the history complete. The war has broken into many families and delayed the work; but as the first collection of American Breretons, it may awaken interest and keep laudable family pride from losing

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its inspiring influence, by prompting fathers to recite to their sons the worthy deeds of their grandsires. Foolish boasting and cheap family pride have brought pedigrees into disrepute, but it is now known as a scientific fact in biology that heredity counts for more than environment—that we pass on to our descendants only that which we have inherited from our ancestors; therefore, the greater need of careful selection in marriage, and cultivating our best traits to become full-grown men, and thus control destiny.

Many family pedigrees are made up of guesses and assumptions based on hearsay; but we are fortunate in having definite records on file, and a landed estate, known as "Brereton," near Chester, England, since A. D. 1066.

Few subjects are more interesting than the origin of English family names. There were not many such until after the Norman Conquest. In early times single names were common to every nation—the Bible gives no others—and many great historic characters

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are so known at the present time. Most family names had their origin in some peculiarity, trade, or location, which at first was added to distinguish each from others of the same name. "John" was long or short, lived on a hill or in a forest, was a smith, tailor, or mason. Through the Middle Ages almost every name was written with "le," "de," or "atte," indicating that "John" was a clerk, or lived in the woods or at the tavern. In time these prefixes were dropped, and the trade, location, or peculiarity became fixed as a family name, as it is today. The same name often had many origins, because there were many bakers, farmers, shepherds, many a wolf, fox, or fisher, each the beginning of similar family names.

Brereton had but one origin, beginning with the Norman Conquest, preserved in "The Roll of Battle Abbey" and "Domesday Book," and perpetuated in the manor of "Brereton," in Cheshire, England. This was the first Brereton home, and so continued since A. D. 1066, when William the Conqueror confiscated most of the Saxon

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estates and gave them to his Norman barons.

Domesday Book describes this estate as "Brereton," and all who bear the name are doubtless descended from those Norman settlers of eight hundred and fifty years ago.

Battle Abbey was built by William to commemorate his victory at Hastings, A. D. 1066, and the historic "Roll" is said to contain the names of six hundred and twenty-nine chiefs of the Norman nobles who followed the King to victory. The original roll was destroyed by fire, but of three copies taken from it the name "Brereton," in various forms of spelling, is found in each. Spelling was not an exact science then as now; Beardsley, in his work on names, gives an instance of one hundred and thirty-seven different ways of spelling "Mannering" among Cheshire records, often differing many times in the same line, written by the same hand.

All doubt about the name is removed by Domesday Book, which locates and describes the estate known as "Brereton," and

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is so known, with its "Brereton Hall," to the present time. It is there spelled "Bretone," while in copies of "The Roll of Battle Abbey" it is "Bretoun," "Breton," and "Bere-ton," variations similar to the curious ways strangers attempt to spell it today.

In 1086, Domesday Book was prepared at command of the King, being a census of all land, stock, property and people then in England. It was done for the purpose of assessing war-tax for support of the government. The original is one of the most valued relics of the treasures of England; copies taken from it are held priceless in the great libraries of the world. The extract here given is in the ancient Latin, many abbreviations being filled in to make it intelligible to those not familiar with the original form in which it was written.

"Isdem Gislebertus (de Venables); tenet Bretone; Ulviet tenuit. Ibi ii hidae geldabiles. Terre est iv carucarum in dominio, est una et ii bovarii, et ii villani, et iii bordarii. Ibi una acra pra-

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ti. Silva una leuva longa, et dimidia lata, et molinum de xii denariis. De hac terra ii homines eius unam hidam, et habent una carucum, cum ii servis, et ii villanis, et iv bordariis. Totum tempore R. Edwardi valebat xx solidos, modo similiter. Wasta invenitur.”

This when freely translated reads: “The same Gilbert de Venables holds Brereton. Wulfgeat previously held it. There is land enough for four plows in the demesne. There are one or two oxmen, and two villains, and three bordars. There is one acre of meadow, woodland one league long and half a league wide, and a mill paying twelvenpence tax. Of this land two men, retainers of his, hold one hide and have one plow, with two serfs, and two villains, and four bordars. The whole in the time of King Edward (1066) was taxed twenty shillings, now (1086) to be taxed the same. Gilbert found it waste.”

This record gives a history of the times. Wulfgeat, the former owner, lost this estate

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and twelve others of vast extent, as shown on the same page in Domesday Book. A "hide" was about one hundred and twenty acres, a "plow" included six oxen and as many oxmen. Serfs, villains, and bordars were different grades of bondmen. Cheshire was the last to yield to the Normans; so, in punishment, all Saxon owners were driven out and Earl Hugh, nephew to the Conqueror, was given the county as a palatinate, or small kingdom. This Hugh Lupus (the Wolf) created nine barons, who, with him, ruled Cheshire. Gilbert de Venables was one of the barons, also others whose names we shall meet later, as the Breretons were related and married into the families of these barons for hundreds of years afterwards.

After the Roll of Battle Abbey (1066) and Domesday Book (1086), the next record was about 1087, in the reign of William Rufus, when a charter, given Gilbert de Venables, was witnessed by Ralph de Brereton. These parchments, with their signatures and seals, still exist among the town and



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church records of Cheshire. Dates then were not as now; the year began at Christmas, or Easter, or some other church holy-day, or with the reign of the King. Much labor is involved to make sure of exact time, but the variation is not great.

About 1176, Ralph de Brereton, a grandson of the first Ralph, is witness in a grant of Marton to Richard de Davenport.

About 1194, William de Brereton, son of this last Ralph, received a deed at the time of his marriage to Margery, daughter of Randle de Torhaunt, eight witnesses signing the contract. This William was knighted by Henry III in 1208, the beginning of honors held in the Brereton family for over five hundred years.

In 1216, Sir Ralph de Brereton, son of William, granted land to "Brereton" church, as shown by parish records still in existence.

About 1232, this Sir Ralph received payment of "half a salt works" for some public services done in Cheshire.

During the year 1250, Sir William Brere-

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ton was witness to legal documents in Chester. In 1307, another William Brereton was witness to four deeds still on file there. The same year, William le Brereton, Kt., was witness to deeds of sale in Chester.

Sir William Brereton, Kt., son and heir of Ralph, married a daughter of Sir Richard de Sandbach, in fulfillment of a contract made with William de Venables.

About 1275, Sir William Brereton married Roesia, daughter of Ralph de Vernon. This wedding united the Breretons with the Vernons of "Haddon Hall," so well described by Majors in the novel "Dorothy Vernon." This Sir William later gave one hundred marks for the marriage of their daughter Margery to Thomas de Davenport in 1301. He was knighted by Edward III in 1321.

In 1342, Sir William and his wife, Roesia, united in a deed of lands in Brereton parish. Roesia must have believed in "woman's rights" and had her name put in the deeds. This Sir William received indulgences from the Pope for services rendered in

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the Crusades to the Holy Sepulchre, about 1350.

Now let us inquire about the Brereton coat of arms. Why was it adopted, and what does it signify? Every knight engaged in the Crusades wore armor and had some insignia which distinguished him from others in battle. Frequently these indicated his name or some important event in the family history.

The motto "Opitulante Deo" (With the aid of God) needs no explanation; it is a beautiful sentiment, in accord with the best thought of past and present. But why the bear? We attempt only a few guesses: Perhaps those old warriors thought the first half of the name sounded like bear; or, in times when the stars had much to do with life, the *Ursa Major*—great bear, or dipper—with its pointers to the north star, may have signified that Breretons were to be guides to travelers in the journey of life; or the word "bear," to support, carry, endure, bear and forbear. Pope says, "'Tis the bear's talent not to kick but to hug"; this is mod-

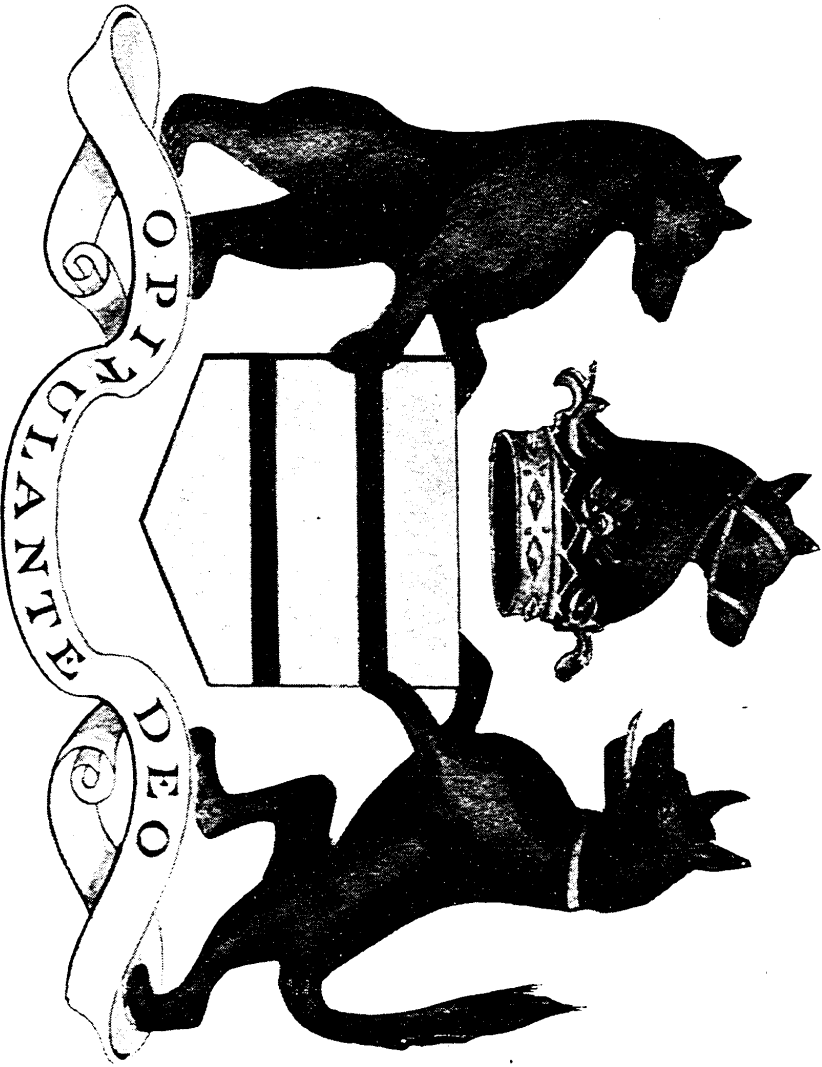
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ern in its application, suggesting that Breretons should never be “knockers.”

The coat of arms illustrated is that found in Brereton Hall, the recognized Brereton standard; but there were many others belonging to different branches, as given in Fairbirns' Book of Crests, including bears in several attitudes, a unicorn and a fierce-looking dragon. The little seal, used in the book and stationery, is my design, expressing the essential facts of the family history—its English origin, 1066; its emblem, the bear; its faith, “Opitulante Deo” (With the aid of God); and the name Brereton. May they never grow less!

• A reliable authority says: “Many Breton lords are known to have followed William the Conqueror into England.” The estate was doubtless named “Bretone,” after that part of France, and the family occupying it took the name, as was then the custom.

The following items in heraldry should be clear, to avoid ridiculous mistakes, into which ambitious and recently rich Americans sometimes fall: A coat of arms may in-



BRIERLEYTON COAT OF ARMS

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clude the shield, emblems, supporters, helmet, crest, motto, and ornaments. No woman except a queen may bear a crest; unmarried women may not bear the family arms on a knight's shield, but use the same design on a lozenge (◊) instead.

In confining our genealogy to the one line of "Breretons of Brereton Hall," we give but a glimpse of what might be done if we were to follow other branches, a score of them, each having won renown, and produced men of even greater attainments. But space forbids; so we refer our readers to other works, where they may find lists of noted names. Our aim is not to tell all, but try to inform those not acquainted with the family history, and if possible "stir up the gifts that are within" those who have failed to measure up to their full stature of manhood.

Returning to the records, we find that William de Brereton, son of the previous Sir William, died before his father, leaving a son of the same name.

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In 1354, Sir William Brereton, heir to his grandfather, married Ellena, daughter of David de Egerton, a descendant of the Norman barons; by this alliance the Brereton estates were greatly extended, placing their social standing among the best in England.

In 1386, Sir William Brereton, son of the above, married Anylla, daughter of Sir William Venables, a descendant of Gilbert de Venables, first baron of Cheshire, and grantee of the first Brereton estate, three hundred years before. By a second marriage, to Elena, daughter of Sir William Massey of Tatton Hall, in 1426, the Brereton holdings were among the great estates of England, including the manors of Malpas and Picton, with lands in Woodhull, Cronton, Charlton, and Norwich.

William de Brereton, son of the above, married Alice, sister and heiress of Sir Richard Corbett of Leighton; this William died during the life of his father. About this time the "de" was dropped from English names, as it was simply a descriptive

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term and never a title, nor represented any special honor.

In 1409, a record says that King Henry removed the Mayor of Chester and placed Sir William Brereton in charge as military governor.

William Brereton, on the death of his grandfather, in 1435, was found heir to the vast estates of Brereton, and also the estates of his step-mother, in Tilston and Herthull, as recorded in 1438. He was knighted in 1485. His son, William Brereton, died issueless, breaking the line of descent, the succession passing to his nephew, son of Sir Andrew Brereton, in 1507.

On December 7, 1496, a deed was recorded to Ralph Brereton, brother of Sir Randle Brereton of Malpas. This Sir Randle was Chamberlain and Knight of the Bedchamber to Henry VII and Henry VIII. His son, John Brereton, about 1534, started the Norfolk branch of Breretons, from which many noted families have sprung.

In 1507, Sir William Brereton held vast



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estates, and also had control of the appointment of clergymen to churches at Brereton, Malpas, Tilston, and St. John's.

As a side-light on court life of the period, there is a record of one Sir William Brereton of Malpas, whom Henry VIII suspected of being too familiar with the Queen, Anne Boleyn. He was confined in the tower of London, and later the King gave orders to "muzzle the bear," meaning to take his head off; so Sir William died May 17, 1536, and two days later the Queen, mother of Queen Elizabeth, was beheaded. There is a legend that ever since that event the bear on the Brereton arms has been muzzled, but in free America we have left the bear free also.

In 1537, the wealthy Nunnery of Chester was dissolved, and its property confiscated by the King, as part of the policy of the "reformation." In 1541, these buildings and grounds were granted to "Urian Brereton, the elder, and his son, free of taxes," for favors done the King. For a century this place was used as a manorial residence by the Breretons, but was destroyed in 1646 by

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Cromwell's army, led by Sir William Brereton.

Sir William Brereton, grandson of the Lord High Marshal of Ireland, 1540, was married to Jane, daughter of Sir Peter Warburton of Arley.

Sir William Brereton, born in 1550, married Margaret, granddaughter of the Earl of Rutland, being the same family, and about the time Dorothy Vernon married into the Rutland family. This Sir William built Brereton Hall in 1586, the cornerstone of which is said to have been laid by Queen Elizabeth. He was created "Lord Brereton of Leighlin" in Ireland, May 11, 1624.

John, eldest son of Lord Brereton, died in his father's lifetime, leaving a son, William, the second Lord Brereton, who succeeded his grandfather in 1631; but having sided with the King against Parliament, lost most of his estates, suffering great financial and social reverses.

William, the third Lord Brereton, through loyalty to the King, lost the barony of Mal-

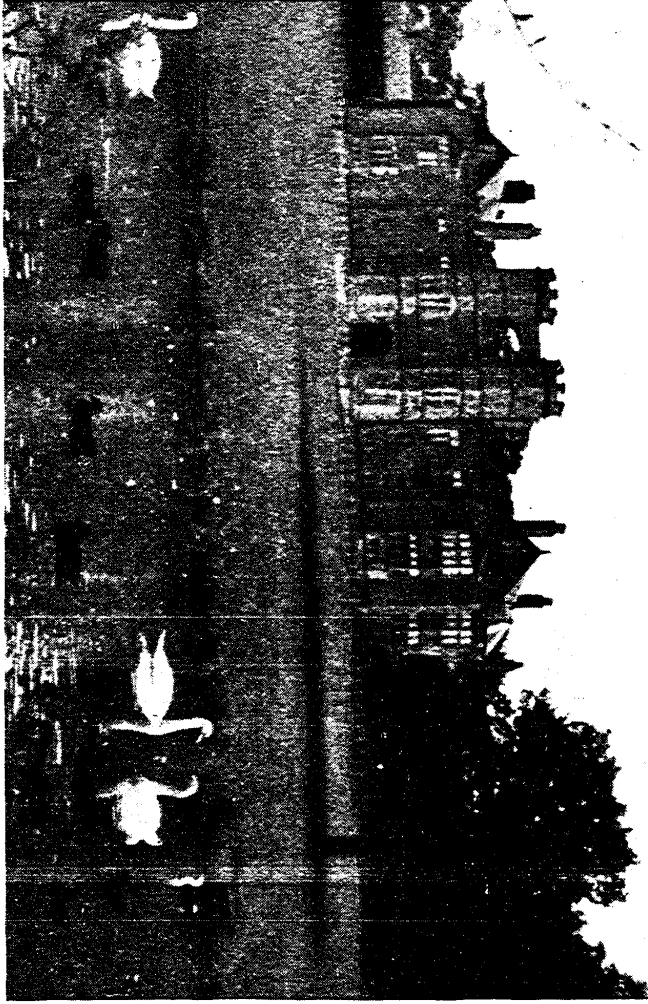
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pas. He was a scholarly man, being credited with founding the Royal Society in 1658.

John, the fourth Lord Brereton, and Francis, his brother, the fifth Lord Brereton, both dying without issue, title to "Brereton Hall" in 1722 passed through the female line to the Holts of Aston, Warwickshire, after being in the Brereton family continuously for six hundred and fifty-six years. It has since passed from the Holts, having been sold to satisfy other claims, but retains the old name, and is shown to visitors as "Brereton Hall."

Old Chester, the county seat of Cheshire, near which Brereton Hall is located, is among the most interesting places in all England. The ancient wall with its towers stands as a relic of the past. The Romans held it for four hundred years, and remains of their works are found twenty feet beneath the present surface. It was a border fort held against Welsh invasion for centuries. There are many ancient ruins, buildings, and castles, the best-known being Hawarden Castle, the home of the great Gladstone,

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which is about twenty - five miles from Brereton Hall.

Brereton Hall is situated on a gentle rise on the bank of the Croco, two miles north of Sandbach, Cheshire, England, located on the estate known as "Brereton" since the Norman Conquest in 1066, and recorded in Domesday Book in 1086. The principal front of the hall faces west, having wings terminating in gables, and two lofty octagonal towers, enriched with large bay windows and various ornaments in the mixed style of Queen Elizabeth, with the rose and portcullis, the royal arms, and those of the family. Over the door is the date, 1586. Several inscriptions set within rich framework of stucco are of special interest, a sample of which is here given :

“Though thou be for thy pedigree  
accounted as ancient as Saturn,  
In wisdom as wise as Solomon, in  
power as mightie as Alexander,  
In wealth as rich as Croesus, or for  
thy beauty as Flora ;

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Yet if thou be careless of religion,  
and neglect the true service of  
the ever living God:  
Thou art a Caytife most vyle and  
miserable.”

The following is the quaint description  
written long ago by Ormerod :

“Brereton standeth upon the London  
way, at Blackmere, or Brereton lake,  
and hath a Fair, which is held on  
Brereton green, on Lammasday, be-  
ing the first day of August. Not far  
off is the Parish church of Brereton,  
and near unto the church the goodly  
Manor - place, newly builded, all of  
brick, the like whereof is not in all the  
country. Therefore it is not to be omit-  
ted by visitors, and not so much for its  
buildings, as for the number of ancient  
and valient Knights and gentlemen  
who had and have their origin thence.”

Burke, the great English authority on  
genealogy, says: “The last Lord Brereton

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was a lineal descendant of the nine earls of Chester, of whom the first was Hugh Lupus, nephew of William the Conqueror.”

A social incident in the passing of the estates is recorded in the family of the second Lord Brereton (1611-1664), during the triumph of Cromwell and losses of all who supported the King's cause. Lord William Brereton had ten children, of whom but one married. There were six daughters, Anne, Mary, Frances, Jane, Margaret and Elisabeth. All lived to good old age—Mary, 80; Anne, 85. Think of the old manor in its dark days, with fortune gone, and these girls left in social neglect!

As a contrast to this, there are many records in old English churches of child-marriages, especially among the landed gentry, who desired the union of their houses with others of large fortunes, or, in case of death, to save them from confiscation by the King, as the law then permitted. Richard, Duke of York, at four years, was married to Anne Mowbray, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, she being six years old. James Ballard,

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at ten years, was given two apples by Anne, "a big girl," if he would marry her. The temptation was effective; but after the ceremony, he cried to go home, and they never met again until November 8, 1565, five years later, when a divorce was sought, and the church dignitaries and learned judges set them free. At Brereton church, in 1552, John Somerford, aged three years, and Jane, daughter of Sir William Brereton, aged two and a half years, were held in arms, and prompted to respond to the vows of matrimony. The record was made April 15, 1564, when the said Jane, being twelve years old, refused to "ratify" the marriage or have the said John for her husband, so the courts granted a "divorce."

Two more items, out of a thousand that might be taken from the records of "Merrie England, in the good old times," before the days of modern wage slavery and present corrupt social conditions: In 1322, a tower was built on the walls of Chester, the payroll for labor being preserved. Masons were paid threepence per day, carpenters three-



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pence, laborers twopence, women for carrying rock one penny; this was under municipal ownership. In 1086, as recorded in Domesday Book, a work-ox was valued at two shillings, the best being two and a half shillings. How the happy farmer of today would enjoy selling four- and five-year-old steers at fifty and sixty-five cents each!

Let us now inquire what other Breretons have been doing. We have followed the records of the heirs to the fortunes and honors of the family estate and Brereton Hall. But what were the younger sons and their descendants doing?

The line of inheritance having been broken in 1722, no Brereton has proven title, through the eldest son, to be "Brereton of Brereton Hall," but younger branches may have as good blood and be entitled to as high a place in the intellectual and social world. If any have lost out in the race, now is an opportune time to lay foundations and build for the future.

Shakespeare says, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have

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greatness thrust upon them." We have searched many sources, and find Breretons known to fame in the fields of war and in professional and civil life, in Europe and America, from which we select a few achievements.

In 1300, Gilbert de Brereton was rector of Astbury, near Brereton. In 1344, Hermo Brereton (son of Sir William and Roesia) was rector of Brereton church. Thomas de Brereton was rector of Brereton church in 1433.

Humphrey Brereton of Malpas was a writer and courtier of note during the War of the Roses (1455-1485), playing a part in diplomacy between Lord Stanley, Henry VII, and Richard III.

John, Thomas, and Peter, sons of Sir Randle Brereton, were all clergymen (1530-1550). Cuthbert Brereton (1570-1613), grandson of the Rev. John Brereton of Norfolk, was a lawyer and statesman of that time.

Sir William Brereton of Chester in 1604 was appointed to arbitrate a dispute be-

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tween two prominent families as to "which shall sit highest in the church and foremost go in processions." Wise William, and happy age, when such social problems were so easily solved!

Thomas Brereton of Malpas (1660-1700) was a poet and dramatist of note.

In 1635, John Brereton, Mayor of Chester, established an exhibition of fine horses, offering a prize of "a silver bell worth eight pounds"; this fair has been an annual event down to the present.

Thomas Brereton (1691-1722) studied at Oxford, and was author, dramatist, and customs officer of the British Government in Chester.

Owen Salsbury Brereton (1715-1798), son of Thomas Brereton of Chester, studied at Cambridge, and was a noted scholar and archæologist.

Captain William Brereton, of the Royal Navy, military governor of Manila, 1762-1765.

Lieutenant - Colonel Thomas Brereton (1782-1832) commanded British forces in

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West Indies and Cape Town, South Africa.

General Sir William Brereton, K. C. B., K. H. (1788-1864)—son of Major Robert Brereton, who fought at Culloden—commanded at Waterloo, and Sebastopol, 1812. Major William R. Brereton, of Kildare, was nephew of above.

The Rev. Charles Brereton (1814-1895), son of John Brereton, LL. D., Bedford, studied at Oxford; was Canon of Ely, and author.

The Rev. Charles D. Brereton (1820-1876) studied at Cambridge; was British consular chaplain in Spain.

Alfred Brereton, executive of British railroad service in India.

The Rev. Joseph Lloyd Brereton, educational reformer, founded a school of practical methods for sons of country gentlemen.

William Westropp Brereton (1810-1867), was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin; Queen's Counselor, Irish bar, Dublin.

William W. Brereton, M. R. C. S. I., Professor of Surgery, Queen's College, Dublin.

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Colonel Edward Fitzgerald Brereton served in British South Africa.

“Breretons of Brinton,” Norfolk, show a record of ten generations.

William Fitzgerald Brereton, Liverpool, leaves a family of noted ability, three sons and two daughters, all filling important places in their several fields: Austin Brereton, London, dramatic journalist and critic; author “Life of Henry Irving.” Bernard J. S. Brereton, Tacoma, Washington, expert in forestry and lumber; author; has six sons—Bernard Duane, Charles Austin, William Albert, Walter Fitzgerald, Charles Stanley, Vernon—a good way to keep the family name and brains alive. Stanley Brereton, Vancouver, B. C., lumber broker. Isoline Brereton Kerez and Mary Layola Whiteside, in war service in Europe.

Colonel Thomas Brereton, Rathurlis, Tipperary, served in British army. Lieutenant-Colonel John Brereton, of same family, served in British army. Franc Sadlier Brereton, D. D. S., San Francisco, California. Captain Fred Sadlier Brereton, author

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of many books; active in great war. J. Saddler Brereton, public accountant, Salt Lake City, Utah. Cloudsley Brereton, son of Captain Shovell H. Brereton, educator and author, London and Paris.

David Brereton, born 1732, at Killurine, Kings County, Ireland, had three sons; Dr. Joshua Brereton, born 1762, surgeon, Tullamore and Dublin; David Brereton (1768-1831) who remained on the estate in Killurine; and John Brereton, of Rathdrum, Kings County, Ireland. John Brereton (1799-1851), of Rathdrum, son of the above, had four sons: William, a sea captain, who married a cousin of Sir C. Bridge, and his son is Lieutenant-Colonel C. B. Brereton; Samuel, a surgeon in the British army, who died in Bagdad, 1880; John Brereton, who went to New Zealand in 1880; and George Brereton, New Haven, Connecticut, U. S. A., whose son graduated from Yale, and whose daughter studied in Paris. The first David above was also great-grandfather of the author of this book.

At present the Breretons in the profes-

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sional and industrial life of Great Britain are too numerous to record here, many taking part in the great European struggle. Directories of London, Dublin, and other cities give many addresses.

Many Breretons in America are of Irish origin, and it is fitting that some account be given of the causes and time of their going there. Terms quoted below are common in histories of that period. The Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, during the twelfth century, introduced elements that later became factors in the struggle against England. At first the motive of these settlers was to change Ireland into an English colony. The "English Pale" included several counties around Dublin, where Irish dress and customs were forbidden by repressive laws which prohibited marriage or any dealings with the "mere Irish"; but in spite of laws many became "English rebels," adopting Irish customs and religion. Doubtless some of these "adventurers" were Breretons, who settled in Ireland at an early date, accounting for some Breretons being Roman Cath-

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olics; but, regardless of religion, all who bear the name are derived from the same Norman stock, dating back to A. D. 1066.

Many great Irish characters are of English or other than Celtic origin. The Duke of Ormond was related to the Kings of England. He was honored by the title "Butler of Ireland," and later this official title was adopted as the family name—Butler. Geraldines, or Gerald, noted Norman - Welsh leaders, became Fitzgerald (meaning "son of Gerald"), a name that has given glory to Ireland over the world. Charles S. Parnell, the great Irish leader, was of an American mother; his father's people moved from Cheshire into Ireland about 1660. Edmund Burke came of an English father, was educated in England, and was a member of the English church. Henry Grattan was of Anglo-Norman stock, and a Protestant. Even Saint Patrick was of Scotch or French origin. The romance of such a record consists in those non-Celtic people becoming ardent Irish patriots. This is no reflection on any race, but corrects the common impression



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that Ireland is altogether Celtic, while in fact much of its glory comes from leaders of Anglo-Norman-Irish stock.

A few authentic records of Breretons in Ireland are given as evidence of their influence.

In 1548, John Brereton was military commander of Wexford, where he suppressed roving bands of robbers, and established order in his district.

In 1550, Captain Andrew Brereton held the estate of "Lucale" in Ulster, where he resisted the O'Neills of Tyrone, and in a personal encounter "slew seven assailants, including two brothers of the Countess." In 1563, he is called "the turbulent farmer of Lucale," and, to escape the vengeance of the natives, sold his estate of thirty-two thousand acres to the Earl of Kildare and moved to other parts.

In 1534, Sir William Brereton was active in suppressing "Fitzgerald's rebellion," and was made Lord High Marshal of Ireland in 1540, but died soon after, and was buried in Kilkenny. His son, Captain Brereton,

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was also engaged with him in this war. Andrew Brereton, another son, in 1550 married Catherine, daughter of Sir Andrew Fitzsimons, of a noted Anglo-Irish family.

In 1551, a company of "Anglo-Irish gentlemen," among whom was a Brereton, agreed to settle Kings and Queens counties, they to have the lands confiscated from the O'Mores and O'Conors, on condition that they "keep out the Irish rebels."

In 1635, Sir William Brereton made a tour of Ireland, writing a description of the peoples and the conditions there. He was a man of unusual ability, as may be seen from his journal, preserved among the Clarendon manuscripts and printed by the Chetham Society. The following are sample prices paid by him in Ireland, 1635:

"Eggs, seven for one penny; pullets  
threepence:

Veal and mutton one penny per  
pound:

Large salmon threepence, large cod  
twopence:



*St. William Brereton Major Gen.,  
of Cheshire Staffordshire and  
Lancashire.*

See pages 32, 33 -- "Brereton a Family History"

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One hundred fresh herrings three-pence.”

This was Sir William, the Parliamentary general, who took sides with Cromwell, and defeated Lord Byron of the King's forces at Chester.

Breretons claiming descent from Sir William, Lord High Marshal of Ireland, should study Irish history, and note that those in Ireland previous to 1650 probably were Roman Catholics or English royalists, and were driven out or crushed by Cromwell. Therefore, Breretons who are Catholics, or came from Ireland to America in Colonial days, have best historic grounds for making this claim. Breretons who have been influential in Ireland since Cromwell's time are more apt to be descended from followers of Sir William, the Parliamentary general, as land grants made to Protestants by Cromwell show. Prendergast's history of Ireland gives the name of Sir William Brereton as getting grants of four thousand eight hundred and twenty-six acres in Tip-

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perary; also, "Major Brereton, of Colonel Sadlier's division, was granted lands in Tipperary, about 1645."

In a private letter just at hand from W. F. Butler, Irish historian of Dublin, he gives me names of Breretons who were granted lands in Ireland about 1645, as follows: "Henry Brereton of Dublin, lands in Cavin; Sir Thomas Brereton, lands in Tipperary. Among English officers who were paid in Irish land-grants were Robert Brereton, Captain Samuel Brereton, and William Brereton." These doubtless were some of the forefathers of many Breretons who trace their ancestors to Ireland. From 1541, under Henry VIII and Elizabeth, through Cromwell's time, to William III, 1690, practically all Ireland was "transplanted," the most active "Papists" being banished to Spain and America, their property being confiscated, leaving Ireland without leaders, the poorest natives only being retained as serfs to cultivate the soil. This forced migration accounts for many early American families with Irish names, espe-

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cially in the South. The mass of Irish immigrants came to the United States much later. These vast estates of the old Irish gentry, confiscated from Roman Catholics, were sold or given to English Protestants, whose descendants have since held large tracts, as absentee landlords, in Ireland.

Owing to poor crops, high taxes, and constant political agitation, conditions in Ireland grew worse, prompting many enterprising people to move to America. Among these were Breretons, some amidst pioneer conditions, losing trace of their origin, having no record as to where their fathers came from or when they landed in America. But the name unites us, and this history aims to give a background, in hope of clearing a way for each family to find its proper place on the genealogical tree.

Early accounts of Breretons in America are important, not alone for those who have no records, but to help others find their place and relationship by research. The first known was John Brereton of Chester, who studied at Cambridge, 1587-1589, and went

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on a voyage of discovery to Virginia with Captain Gosnold in 1602. The Dictionary of National Biography, writing of this, says: "On Friday, May 14, 1602, the voyagers made the headland which they named Cape Cod. Here Gosnold and Brereton went ashore on white sand, the first spot in New England ever trodden by English feet. Doubling the cape and passing Nantucket, they touched at Martha's Vineyard, and passing round Dover Cliff, entered Buzzards Bay." (All named first by Brereton.) Captain John Smith, in his "Adventures and Discourses," writes: "Master John Brereton and the account of his voyage fairly turned my brains, and impelled me to cast in my lot with Gosnold and Wingfield, and make that subsequent voyage, which resulted in planting and colonization of Virginia in 1607." This Brereton account is reprinted in the Massachusetts Historical Collection, also in Captain John Smith's history of Virginia; a copy of the original sold in 1878 for sixteen hundred dollars. These reprints may be found in every large library,

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and should be read, as it is beautifully written, and all should know that, though no Brereton came over in the "Mayflower," they were represented on the ground before it landed, and this John Brereton may have stood on Plymouth Rock before the Pilgrims hallowed it by their feet.

A few quotations from the Brereton account may whet the appetite, or satisfy those not privileged to read it all: "In May we sowed for trial, wheat, barley, oats, pease, which in fourteen days sprung up nine inches." Captain Gosnold made Brereton the leader in trading with the Indians for furs and copper. Of them he writes: "These people (Indians) are exceeding courteous, gentle of disposition, and well conditioned, excelling all others that we have seen for shape of body and lovely favor, I think they excell all the people of America; of stature much higher than we, of complexion much like a dark olive, their eyebrows and hair black, which they wear long, tied up behind in knots, whereon they prick feathers of fowls, in fashion of a coronet. We saw but



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three of their women; they were low in stature, and were fat and well favored, and much delighted in our company: the men are very dutiful towards them. Though our diet and lodging were none of the best, yet we had no sickness, and were much fatter and in better health than in England. On June the 18th, being Friday, we left the fair land with many sorrowful eyes. Returning we landed at Exmouth, England, on Friday, July 23rd, being absent in all four months." The full account is well worth reading, as it gives the first impression of the country. Friday seems to have been Brereton's lucky day.

After the settlement of Jamestown colony, in 1607, great interest was aroused in England, and a second charter was granted by the King in 1609. It was signed by six hundred and fifty-seven names, including twenty-one peers, ninety-six knights, fifty-three captains, twenty-eight esquires, fifty-eight gentlemen, and other "adventurers," among whom was Thomas Brereton.

In 1612, a third charter was secured, by

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petition of three hundred and twenty-five gentlemen, including Thomas Brereton and "John Brereton, a merchant of London." Following these names in brackets is a note, thus: [Britain, Britton, Bretton, Braxton], indicating different ways of spelling these names on the records. Each of the petitioners was to pay thirty-seven pounds ten shillings to equip the expedition, and were to receive in return a "chance" for lands or other interest in the new world.

Captain John Smith in the account of his adventures with Powhatan and Pocahontas tells of Edward Brereton, who was a "soldier captured by the Salvages" and "set to kill fouel"; also, he was one of four chosen to accompany Smith to the lodge of Powhatan, after "Captain Newport refused to go unless a guard of 120 should accompany him." The amusing thing in the record is that Brereton's name is spelled "Edward Burton," "Brynton," and "Brinton" in different parts of the same narrative. Even John Brereton, of Gosnold's voyage, known to have been a scholar, signed his name

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“Brierton,” as appears in the original; an example of times when gentlemen were more familiar with the sword than the pen. To spell and pronounce the name has been a problem, even in the family, as is evident from records of earliest times. In Cheshire memorial windows, tablets, and records, dating from 1200 to 1600, it was occasionally written “Breto,” “Brert,” “Berreton,” “Breerton,” “Brerton,” “Bretone,” “Brier-ton,” several different spellings appearing in the same inscription. Some were doubtless abbreviations, as was the custom in those times. How to pronounce the name seems easy to most of us, but strangers find it difficult, and there is a difference, even among ourselves, because we seldom meet Breretons outside our own family, to standardize our accents. Some give *e* the long sound as “Breerton”; but I much prefer the broad sound, making the first part rhyme with *care, fare, brare*. Practice this a minute and you have it.

The following records of Breretons who settled in America during Colonial days

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have been found; but owing to different ways of spelling the name it has been difficult to follow up clues at this distance from original sources. The Maryland records give a hint of what may be done in Virginia and adjoining states by those located near there, if willing to make the search.

In 1628, Sir William Brereton held interests in Massachusetts, being a director in a company that promoted the settlement of Charlestown, now included in the municipality of Boston.

In 1670, John Winthrop, of Boston, wrote Lord Brereton relating to the settlement of New England. This letter is on file in the English archives.

During the parliamentary agitation in England, many gentlemen of both sides lost their estates, and others fled the country to save their lives. These Cavaliers went to Virginia, Maryland, and adjoining colonies, to make new homes and lay foundations for the future United States. Among them were ancestors of Washington, Jefferson, Randolph, Madison, and some Brere-

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tons, as shown by records preserved in the archives of the states.

William Brereton (Bretton, Britton), gentleman, settled on the Potomac, Maryland, in 1637. He "transported himself, his wife, one child, and three able menseservants," for which he was granted seven hundred and fifty acres in St. Marys County. He was a burgess of the assembly in 1649, and gave land for a church on St. Clemens Bay in 1661. Breton's Bay and Britton, Maryland, mark the locality of his estate.

September 9, 1659, a tract of land called "Brereton" was surveyed in Cecil County, Maryland, for "William Bretton, gent." This may have been the same Brereton as above.

June 5, 1675, a tract of three hundred and fifty acres, entitled "Brereton's Chance," was granted William Brereton, for "transporting himself, his wife, his son William, and four able men." This was evidently a different William Brereton, as it was thirty-seven years later, and he brought four men, while the other brought but three.

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November 15, 1675, "Mr. William Brereton, one of his Lordship's justices of ye county of Somerset," married Nicholas Toadvin and Sarah Lowry, foreparents of many prominent Maryland families of the present time.

These records are important, because the land described as "Brereton's Chance" has been held by descendants of the Breretons for over two hundred years; but the spelling of the name has been changed to "Brewington," no one knows just when or why. I am indebted to Senator Marion V. Brewington, Salisbury, Maryland, for photographic copies of documents preserved in Annapolis, Maryland, showing ten different spellings of the name, several on the same page, in the same handwriting. The old family Bible records show the gradual change in spelling, as, "Brereton," "Breunton," "Brewington." One branch of this interesting family spells the name "F. W. Bruington, Cripple Creek, Colo.," another holds to the original spelling—"George W. Brereton, Peninsular Junction, Md." Henry

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Scott Brewington, attorney, Baltimore, Maryland, stoutly maintains that his name is Brereton, but for business reasons spells it otherwise. The Rev. Julius A. Brewington, Lewisville, Pennsylvania, is another, proud to claim his origin from Brereton stock. Old tombstones and records in Maryland show "Brereton" as the original spelling of Brewington. This Colonial family, in all its connections, is talented in many ways, holding high positions in society and business. It is hoped they may all find it convenient to return to the standard form of spelling the historic name.

Carter Braxton, a prominent Virginia planter, and signer of the Declaration of Independence, is credited with deriving wealth from his ancestors, but his biographers give no hint of whom they were. This is unfortunate, as the name and what is known of the man show many Brereton characteristics.

A few names, correctly spelled, appear, as—"Colonel Thomas Brereton, of Northumberland county, Virginia," an officer in

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the Colonial army in 1680; Robert Brereton, a chaplain in the army in 1741; "Lieut. Edward Brereton," 1755; "Edward Brereton, ensign," 1756. I have been unable to trace the descendants of these Breretons; they probably are lost in the female line, or, through incorrect spelling, exist under other names resembling ours. Among Rhode Island records, in 1661, Francis Brayton is mentioned four different times as a commissioner of Portsmouth colony, and in 1774 Captain David Brayton is recorded as an officer of the militia. In 1786, Stephen Brayton of North Providence was appointed a commissioner of roads by William Brenton, the Governor of Rhode Island. How suggestive this sounds! Let someone make a study of early Rhode Island records for the origin of these names. Their prominence in public affairs indicates that they may have been Breretons whose names were incorrectly spelled by the clerk, and in time their families fell into the same custom.

The historical romance, "Janice Meredith," represents Colonel John Brereton as