

Mrs Gregory, who restored Bridge church at her own expense in 1867 was not, as her benefaction might suggest, a native of the village, or even of Kent, but was born in Congleton, Cheshire, in or about 1788, being Mary, one of the three daughters of Nathaniel Maxey Pattison, of West House, by Helen, youngest surviving daughter of Roger Comberbach, Prothonotary of the 'Palatine' of Chester, that is, the chief clerk, or officer, of the county. Her father was a silk manufacturer and the grandson of Nathaniel Pattison, of London, who, in partnership with John Clayton, of Stockport, established the first silk mill in Congleton in 1752.

Unfortunately no account of the daily life and works of this generous lady has come down to us, but that she was held in high regard is evident from the laudatory remarks in the obituary notice of her in the Kentish Gazette, which says —

"Full of years, mature in wisdom, animated by Christian faith, beaming with benevolence, and abounding in good works and alms-deeds which she did," Mrs Edward Gregory was beloved and honoured by all, both rich and poor, around her. This city [Canterbury] and neighbourhood will long mourn the loss irreparable which they have sustained --- A sincere friend, a judicious counsellor, a benevolent benefactress, has been removed from our midst, but her bright instructive example must ever live before our eyes"

Mrs Gregory died after a short and sudden illness at Bridge Hill House, where she had lived for most if not all, of her married life, on 27th March, 1867, aged 79 years, and was buried on 3rd April with her husband in the imposing Gregory family vault in former Hardnes churchyard. She had no children to whom to leave anything of her fortune of nearly £60,000.

The Rev. Edward Gregory, Mrs Gregory's husband, although a man with a strong local connection, was not actually of Kentish extraction but was descended from the Lincolnshire branch of a Nottingham family. Born in or about 1789, he was the younger son of Daniel Gregory, of Park Street, Grosvenor Square, London, and grandson of George Gregory, of Horlaxton, near Grantham, in the Parts of Kesteven. On the female side, however, he was very much a local man, since his mother was Elizabeth Catherine, the younger daughter of Stephen Beckingham, of Borene Park, which estate Stephen had got with his second wife Catherine, daughter of John Corbett, M.D. Through this connection the Rev. Edward Gregory was

Thus, also, a first cousin of Mrs. Edward Taylor, of Beffons.

It is worth noting in passing that Mrs. Beckingham's grandfather, Sir Anthony Ascher, of Bishopscourt, first baronet, had no less than seven sons, not one of whom left issue and the title died with Sir Hewitt, the youngest of these sons. This is a striking example of the strange fact that when a man has an inordinately large number of sons it is often a sign that his line is doomed to extinction. The Oxandens of Broome Park provide another local instance. Sir Henry, the seventh baronet, had seven sons, but the family became extinct in the male line on the death of his grandson, Sir Percy.

Educated at Trinity College, Oxford, where he took his M. A. degree, though he appears to have ~~been~~ entered originally at Magdalen in 1807. Edward Gregory petitioned in 1812 for letters Dimissory to receive Deacon's orders to enable him to become curate of Upchurch, to which he was duly licensed in February, 1813. In September of the same year he was ordained Priest and in October, 1815, he became curate of Lower Hardnes, where he remained until April, 1829. This was his last church appointment. Why he relinquished it has not been ascertained, nor is anything known of his subsequent activities.

Judging from the style of Bridge Hill House, it would appear that it must have been built by him, or possibly by him and his wife jointly, and it may be that having built it he simply retained it to enjoy it. He died there on 9th July 1849, aged 60, and was buried with his parents in Lower Hardnes churchyard. Tablets to their memory are on the North wall of that church. He was survived by his wife and his elder brother George, of Willborough, who, however, also died childless.