

WILLIAM WIGHTMAN, ESQUIRE.

This man, the date of whose birth is uncertain, died in the year 1579, and was, presumably, well advanced in age at the time of his death. It will be noticed that the period of his life was coincident with the stirring period of the English Reformation. And it seems more than probable that his services rendered to the Reform cause brought him into the prominence which he certainly had. He lived twenty-seven years in the Harrow Rectory, of "Harrow on the Hill." If he ended his days in the Rectory, as seems to be the case, he began to occupy it in 1552. This was just one year before the death of Edward VI, when the Reformation had come to a position of dominance in England. It is quite likely that the King himself appointed him to this residence. That he had some special and important relationship to this historic church is certain, from the fact that there are figures of brass of himself, his wife and five children within the church; his tomb is also in this church. These facts are vouched for by Lysons, in his "Environs of London," dated 1790. The English coat-of-arms was granted to this man, and through him to the family generally, on the 14th of July, 1562.

It will be seen that this is the same year in which the first convocation of bishops was held in the reign of Elizabeth, after the Bloody Period of Mary. It is supposed that the coat-of-arms was granted in recognition of services rendered the church in these times of peril.

The heraldic description of the Wightman arms (English) is found in the Heraldic Office, London, and is as follows:

Arms.—Argent on a bend, engrailed gules, between 3 Cornish Cloughs proper—as many leopards faces, Or:

Crest.—A stork argent, winged sable, membered gules, holding in the mouth a snake winding round the body, vert.