

## Funeral of Rev. George Allen Vander-Meulen 1888



The Old Rectory, West Knoyle

Amid profound demonstration of respect and unfeigned manifestations of sorrow, the funeral of the Rev George Allen Vander-Meulen, rector of West Knoyle, was solemnised on Saturday afternoon. In last week's Gazette, a brief notice of the rev. gentleman's decease appeared, but it may be now supplemented by a short biography.

Deceased was educated at Rugby and at Trinity College Cambridge. His first appointment was at Wilton as curate, from when he became rector of Little Longford, Wilts, and finally, rector of West Knoyle. He commenced his work in the latter parish in August 1882, and being thoroughly experienced in parochial work, he entered upon his ministry with a zeal and earnestness found but among few. His constant visits among the poor, for whom he ever had a kind word, his urbanity, and his tender Christian solicitude for the welfare of those by whom he was surrounded, endeared him to all, and he has left behind a memory which will be fondly cherished by all with whom he came in contact.

Whilst being a hard worker for the spiritual good of his parish, deceased was also an admirer of those outdoor games which tend so materially to give health to the body. He was an ardent lover of cricket and when at college, he possessed the reputation of being a most successful player. In local cricket circles he was always warmly received, and his loss will be much felt. Great sympathy is extended to deceased's widow and four children in their heavy bereavement.

The rev. gentleman had a long and painful illness and suffered excruciating agonies with extraordinary Christian fortitude and resignation. His last words were "What beautiful music! Now I am going home". He has passed away in the prime of life from a career of great usefulness; he now rests from his labours and "his words do follow him".

The corpse arrived from Kingswear, South Devon, where deceased had been staying for the benefit of his health, by the 12.43 train at Gillingham. The weather was most inclement and seemed in harmony with the feelings of the large number of persons who assembled to show their last mark of esteem. The funeral cortege was met at St Andrew's Gate by the inhabitants, who, headed by the churchwardens, Messrs R C R Godwin and G J Welch, preceded the corpse. Many clergy joined the procession, as did a number of laymen of surrounding parishes who entertained much respect for deceased and were associated with him in different ways. The Mere and West Knoyle choirs also joined the mournful procession as it wended its way to the church.

Amongst the clergy present were Rev Edward Inman (vicar of Gillingham), Rev Canon Olivier (Wilton), Rev E G Wyld (Mere), Rev R N Milford (East Knoyle), Rev A E Suffrin (East Knoyle), Rev E Staden (in charge of West Knoyle), Rev H P Marriott-Dodington (Little Birch, Herefordshire), Rev C Trew (Headmaster, Gillingham Grammar School), Rev W Truell (Shroton) and Rev A E Baynham (Little Langford).

Among the parishioners were Mr C Welch, Mr G J Welch, Mr John and Mrs Broadway, Mr Wm and Mrs Andrews (Bush), Mr W Andrews (Oxleaze), Messrs Fowler (2), Misses Fowler, Mr James Broadway and numerous others. Those from other parishes were Mr W S White (Charnage), Mr H Andrews (formerly deceased's churchwarden at Little Longford), Mr J Jupe (Burton), Mr W Corps, Mr A Randall (Tisbury) and Miss Herrington (West Lane Mere). The family mourners included Mrs Vander-Meulen and son, Captain Vander-Meulen, R.N., Colonel Vander-Meulen, Rev F Newman, Rev J Wyndham (Sutton Mandeville), Misses Wyndham and Rev John Menet.

The church was crowded and the service was fully choral. The hymn "Now the labourer's task is o'er" was sung after the lesson and "Jesus Lives" before the blessing. The Rev E Inman read the lesson and the Rev E G Wyld conducted the service. Mrs Godwin presided at the organ. The service at the grave was read by the Rev E G Wyld. Numerous wreaths and crosses of choice flowers were sent by sorrowing relatives and friends, and the coffin was completely covered with these floral tokens of respect. Among the many who sent wreaths or crosses were Earl Pembroke, Mrs Vander-Meulen, Captain Vander-Meulen, Rev J Menet, Rev E and Mrs Inman, Rev G and Mrs Oldfield, Mr RS and Mrs A Freame, Mrs Micklethwaite, Misses Wyndham and Mr and Mrs Lewis. The funeral arrangements were entirely in the hands of Mr Walton of Mere and he carried out the same with his usual ability.

On Sunday morning an eloquent and impressive funeral sermon was preached by the Rev E Inman (formerly for ten years the esteemed rector of West Knoyle) to a crowded congregation. The discourse was founded on the I. Epistle of St John, iii, 2.

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