

In the vestry book of the parish church of St. Matthews, Friday-street, London, in which parish Sir Hugh resided for many years, some one has made the following note:—

“HUGH MIDDLETON, jeweller, worked a silver mine in Cardiganshire, which produced £100 per day for some time, and enabled him to bring the New River into London. Half the shares were offered by him to the Corporation, but it refused them on a plea that the undertaking would ruin the water-bearers, then very numerous.

“The shares 72 in number were divided into equal parts, one of which was held by James I. under the patent, and thence called the King’s moiety, but as this invaluable river had nearly ruined Sir Hugh, the Monarch resigned his moiety, and reserved only £500 per annum, though the 36 shares are yet called the King’s moiety, these now bear an enormous price as will appear from the following facts.

“On 10 Feb., 1766, Mr. Skinner, the auctioneer, sold at the Senegal Coffee House a 36th share of the King’s moiety for £4,400; and in April, 1799, five-eighths of a 36th was advertised for sale, and stated to produce near £300 per annum, with a vote for each county through which the river flows, and another 36th of the King’s moiety was sold in 1770 for £6,700. It is said that the company now (1807) pays £1,500 per annum for the ground at New River Head, which had been rented by it for £50 previous to 1774 when the old lease expired.”

In the original charter of the New River Company, SIR HUGH MIDDLETON was, of course, the first governor of the company. The statement by Pennant that he received knighthood upon the occasion of the opening ceremony, is clearly an error. He was never knighted, but on the 22nd October, 1622, was created a baronet, being described in the Patent Roll as “Hugh Middleton, of Ruthin, co. Denbigh, Esq., citizen and Goldsmith of the city of London.” (Forty-seventh Report, Deputy Keeper, Pub. Records, Appendix, p. 130.) He died on December 7, 1631, and was buried on the 10th December in the church of St. Matthew, Friday-street, London (Par. Reg.) Sir Hugh, in his will, directed that a monument to his memory should be placed in the church. If this was done, all trace of it was destroyed in the great fire of