

THE
HISTORY OF WIGAN.

CHAPTER I.

The Short Parliament—Politics in Wigan in 1640—Poll Book for 1640—Result of Election—New Candidates for the Franchise—Petition to Parliament—Jury List—Cases tried at Court Leet of 1640—Gossip—Signs of National Trouble—Beginning of Revolution—The Government Petition to protect the King signed at Wigan—Principles of Parties—Condition of Wigan—First Outbreak—Colonel Roseworm's Account—Wigan Soldiers at Hindley—Wigan Recruits—Orlando Bridgeman—First Siege of Bolton—Invasion of Wigan by Assheton—Soldiers Firing from the Church Tower on the Parliamentarians.

WE now enter on the locally interesting year of 1640, the first year of a most memorable era in England's annals. Charles I., by his infatuated prejudices, seemed to be impelled by an unseen power to force the country to revolution, the fires of which were already kindled smoulderingly in every town in England, although very little conciliation would have smothered them, at least, for the time. The king was in sore trouble, the people in discontent, and the Scots in arms. The more affairs went against the king, the more despotic he seemed to become, as if it were his own fate to ensure his ruin in the very face of favourable moderation. The Short Parliament summoned at the end of 1639 had been convened presumably to give advice, but in reality to grant supplies to carry on the Scottish war. Parliament, most willing and anxious to support the crown and king in everything constitutional, civilly declined to consider the question of supply in preference to all others, and the king, in a rage, dissolved the Parliament, after a

short existence of three weeks, which brevity of existence was doubtless the cause of the petition against the return in Wigan coming to nothing. The king immediately regretted the dissolution, but could not recall his rash act, and again relapsed, beyond indifference to national feeling, into despotism. Notwithstanding his infatuated tyranny, the Commons made commendable efforts to repress their aggravated anger, and eagerly sought a way of escape from the almost inevitable revolution, if not rebellion. Affairs daily grew worse, till at length demonstrations of popular disapprobation everywhere proclaimed the outbreaking of discontent, and so loud did the cry of the aggrieved nation become that in less than six months after the dissolution of the Short Parliament the king, almost overwhelmed by his increasing troubles, ordered writs to be issued for a new Parliament. The excitement of the previous election, which had been great, sank into insignificance before that of the forthcoming election of 1640. Particularly so was this the case in Wigan, where the "inferior persons, labourers, and handicraftsmen" determined to bring all their energies to bear against the mayor and bailiffs, that they might have a voice in the general election—their just right, as they believed, but could not prove.

The true labourers in the vineyard of life seldom have their names preserved in the annals of their neighbourhood, although in their lifetime they may have been the most vigorously active, and their names known as household words. The names of many of those who have taken the most active share in building up the history of ancient Wigan have been thrown into the shade, or even into oblivion, as time rolled on. Amongst those forgotten toils must be numbered the humble, but arduous labours of many Wigan curates, whose benign presence must often have cheered the disconsolate hearts or desolate hearths of widows and orphans; yet their names, as if inscribed on preserved tombstones, may be gathered from the pages of the old registers, which are signed by them.

According to the signatures on the parish registers, Richard Callingwood was curate in 1640. The same parchment for October, 1641, is signed "Wm. Aynsworth and William Leigh, curats."

In the former year (1640), so full of local interest, the mayor was John Bullocke, and the aldermen were Robert Mawdesley, Christopher Bancks, William forth, Willam Pilkington, John Brighthouse, James Molyneux, George Rudall, Alexander fford, Lawrence fford, James Scott, and Edward Lloyd.

Daily throughout the town before the election boisterous declamatory meetings were held, at which speeches of the most violent determination were made with a view to encourage the timid and strengthen the convictions of others to assert their rights on the day of election, as if the Wigan election-cry were "Down with political monopoly." Instead of petitioning the Court Leet to be admitted as enrolled burgesses on paying the

required fine, and so having the unquestionable right of voting, these enthusiastic local politicians reasoned that they were as good and useful citizens, of as long and good social standing, and having privileges not inferior to the formally enrolled burgesses, and therefore they concluded they had as just and true claims to a voice in the general election, especially as no law could be shown to debar them from voting. Political feeling in Wigan never previously ran so high. The day for nominating the candidates arrived, and six gentlemen stood to contest the ancient borough. Three of them were old favourites of the previous election, Orlando Bridgeman, Ar., Thomas Rigby, Ar., and Edward Gardner, Ar. The others were John Standish, Radus Standish, and Sir Dudley Carleton.

On the day of election, in October, 1640, the Old Town Hall was crowded to the ceiling and the door, whilst many outside were vainly clamorous to get in. The roll, according to custom, was called by the Town Clerk, the votes registered, and the great interest taken in the election is manifest from the large number of votes recorded.

The poll book contains nine "pot" pages. There are 123 burgesses, of whom only 14 did not vote. Three more names, not included in this number, have a line drawn through them. Added to this there is a list of 173 honorary burgesses, two of which names are scratched out, and there are only 55 who voted. They are nearly all esquires or younger sons of gentlemen. The Mayor had seemingly a vote as a burgess and another as mayor, for he is the first on the common list and the last on the honorary one. Both votes he gave for Bridgeman and Rigby. As this interesting book has never been published, a copy of it, taken directly from the original, is here given. Mr. Rigby received 136, Mr. Bridgeman 126 votes, Mr. Gardner 57, Mr. John Standish 4, Radus Standish 2, and Sir Dudley Carleton 1.

Apud Wigan, 22nd die October, 1640.

Johes Bullocke, maior—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Rogerus Bradshawe, Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Radus Standishe, Ald.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 — Rigby, Ald. (scratched out)
 Robtus Mawdesley, Ald.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Ricus Worsley, Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Chrofrus Bancks, Ald.
 Willus fforth, Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Willus Pilkington, Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Jacobus Molyneux, Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Johes Brighouse, Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Georgius Rudall, Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Willus Browne, Pewterer un Ballier—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Robtus Markland, sen., alter Ballier—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Rogerus Baron, un Attorn.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.

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Galfrus Sherrington, alter Attorn.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Willus Watson, un S^rvien—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Josephus Pennington, alter S^rvien—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Edrus Lloyd, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Willus Browne, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Thomas Turner, gen.
 Alex. Thompson, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Henricus Scott—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Robtus Jollie—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Thurstanus Whalley—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Rogerus Scott, senior—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Ricus Casson—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Johes Scott—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Radus forth—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Willus Baldwin—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.
 Laurencius fford—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Willus Bancks—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Robtus Bancks—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Georgius Vanse—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Alex. fforer—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Henricus Marsden—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Gerrardus Bancks—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.
 Gilbtus forth—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Robtus Baron, Jun.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Edrus Sumpner—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Johes Standishe—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Jacobus Atherton—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Willus Gardner—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Radus Browne, Dyer—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Jacobus Langshawe—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Thomas Rylands—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Rogerus Laithwaite—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Radus Astley—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Gilbtus Ashton—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Robtus woods.
 Jacobus Higham—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Robtus Baldwin—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Alex. fforth, senior.
 Robtus Markland, Braseer—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Johes Lindsey—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Willus Wakefeilde—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Edmundus Molyneux—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Thomas Barrone—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Radus Barrone, senior (scratched out).
 Ambrosius Jollie—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.
 Michus Pennington—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Willus fford de le gate.
 Robtus Baron—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.

Thomas Kidd.
 Radus Hindley—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.
 Petrus Greene—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Robtus Langshaw—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Edrus Letherbarrow—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner
 Robtus Winstanley—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Edrus Ormishawe—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Rogerus Bibby.
 Jacobus Crouke—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Carolus Bancks—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Robtus Stringsmith (?)—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Radus foster—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Thomas Pilkington—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Edrus ffairclough—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Johes Platt—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Willus Cookeson—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Thomas Marshden—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Edrus Boulton, Taylor.
 Radus Leighe—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Willus Lythgoe.
 Humffrus Croytchloe.
 Johes Molyneux—Mr. Alex. Rigby and Mr. John Standishe (?).
 Robtus Brighthouse.
 Thomas ffaircloughe—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Alex. fford, Braseer—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.
 Willus Glover—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Gilbtus fford, Braseer.
 Radus Scott—Robert Gardner and Mr. Jo. Standishe.
 Rogerus Woods—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Edrus Pempton (Pemberton)—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Alex. Pennington.
 Johes Winstanley—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Thomas Orrell—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Seath Mason—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Gilbtus Leigh—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Humffrus Leighe—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Jacobus ffynch—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Thomas Tarleton—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Edrus Baron—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Robtus Briggs—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Radus Bancks—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Johes Rigby—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Rogerus Scott, senior—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Jacobus Baldwin—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Alex. fford, senior, Pewterer—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Galfrus Mouldings—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Milo Turner—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Jacobus Watson—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.

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Robtus Prescott—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Alex. Ormishawe.
 Hugo Cowper—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Thomas Lowe—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Edrus Mason—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.
 Edrus Prescott—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Ricus Scott—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.
 Hugo Scott—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Petrus Anderton—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Johes Gregson—Orlando Bridgeman and Mr. Jo. Standishe.
 Ricus Seddon—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Johes Lee—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Johes Thomas—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Radus Markland—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.

In the same poll book, commencing on a new sheet of paper, are the following:—

Noia Burgensin Vill de Burg De Wigan in Coun. Lanc.

Johes Bullocks, maior (scratched out).
 Willus Comes Derby (Earl Derby).
 Ricus D—molyneux.
 Gilbertus Hoghton, miles and Barronett—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Radus ashton, Barronett.
 Willus Gerard, Barronett.
 Thomas Stanley, Barronett—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Alex. Radcliffe Balnei, miles.
 Anthonius Saint Johns, miles.
 Cecill Trafford, miles.
 Johes Stanope, miles.
 Johes Talbot, miles—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Robtus Wingfeilde, miles.
 Thomas Periont, miles.
 Vivian Molyneux, miles.
 Radus Blackstones, miles.
 Petrus Leighe de Lyme, Ar.
 Ricus Houghton (Ar. scratched).
 Edrus Standishe, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Petrus Venables, Ar.
 Chrofrus Anderton de Lostoocke, Ar.
 Thomas Gerrard, Ar.
 Ricus Shuttleworth, Ar.
 Chrofrus Bannistre, Ar.
 Robtus Blundell, Ar.
 Alex. Rigby de Burgh, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Radus Ashton de Downham, Ar.
 Johes Atherton, Ar.
 Hugo Rigby, Ar.
 Alex. Rigby de Midleton, Ar

Orlando Bridgeman, Ar.
 Radus Ashton de Midleton, Ar.
 Thomas Standishe, Ar.—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.
 Johes Moore, Ar.
 Edrus Ashton, Ar.
 Thomas Charnocke, Ar.
 Caroulus Gerard, Ar.
 Johes Poole, Ar.
 Ratcliffe Ashton, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Willus Houghton, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Radus Worthington, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Jacobus Winstanley.
 Randulphus Rerd, Ar.
 Henricus Bannastre, Ar.
 Thomas Langtree, Ar.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Thomas Cottam (?), Ar.
 Willus Anderton, Ar.
 franciscus Sherrington, Ar.
 Carolus Gerard, Ar. (scratched).
 Petrus Daniell, Ar.
 Hugo Chomley, Ar.
 Rogerus Nowell, Ar.
 Ricus Alport, Ar.
 Johes Moore, Ar.
 Johes Gerrard, Ar.
 Edrus Bromley, Ar.
 frus Leighe, Ar.
 Petrus Leighe, Ar.
 frus Downes, jun., Ar.
 Radus Snead, Ar.
 Edrus Bridgeman, Ar.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Henricus Byrom, Ar.
 Ricus Urmston, Ar.
 Josuah Radcliffe, Ar.
 Abrahamus Langton, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Edrus Scarsbrooke, Ar.
 Henricus Cayles (?), Ar.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Petrus Grim, Ar.
 Robtus Chernocke, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Thomas Eccleston, Ar.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Georgius fog, Ar.
 Adamus Hulton, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Robtus Browne, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Bartholemeus Hesketh, Ar.
 Thomas Lee, Ar.
 Johes Houlcrofte, Ar.
 Henricus —reile, Ar.
 Willus Bradshawe, Ar.

Josephus Klmesman, Ar.
 Willus Smith, Ar.
 Ricus Holland, Ar.
 Samuel Bispham, Medicine Doctor.
 Hamlett Hyde, Ar.
 Willus ffarington, Ar.
 Rogerus Kirby, Ar.
 Willus Ratcliffe, Ar.
 Robtus Molyneux, Ar.
 Georgius Lee, Ar.
 Edrus Chisnall, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Ricus Hackinall (?), Ar.
 Willus ffarington, jun., Ar.
 Thomas Longworth, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Alex. Johnson, Ar.
 Jacobus Chantrell, Ar.
 Thomas Gerrard, jun., de Ince, gen.
 Edrus Holt, gen.
 Edrus Morres, gen.
 Edrus Rigby, gen.
 Ricus Chorley, gen.
 George Rigby, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Sir Dudley Carleton.
 Thomas Lathom, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Ricus Ashton, gen.
 Abrahamus Launce, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Alex. Holte, gen.
 Olivus Markland, gen.
 Johes Bretherton, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Radus Browne, gen.
 Thomas Markland, gen.
 Georgius Warren, gen.
 Lyonell ffarington, gen.
 Johes Dunbabin (?), gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Radus Heaton, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Thomas Ince, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Thomas Anderton, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Henricus ffeetwood, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Carolus Walmesley—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Thomas Standish de Duxbury, gen.—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.
 Thomas Berrington, gen.
 Petrus Bennett, gen.
 Johes Eccleston, gen.
 Willus Dicconson, gen.
 Petrus ffulke, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Thomas Houlcrofte, gen.
 Thomas Travers—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Thomas Bridge, clicus—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.
 Robtus flogg, clicus—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.

Petrus Shawe, clicus.
 Jacobus Whittakers, clicus.
 Robtus Shawe, clicus.
 Edrus Eltonhead, gen.
 Edrus Tarbocke, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Alex. Bradshawe, gen.
 Radcliffe Gerrard, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby
 Gilbertus Gerrard, gen.
 Hugo Houghton, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Ricus Standishe, gen.
 Alex. Standishe, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Rogerus Urmeston, gen.
 Thomas Sergeant, gen.
 Edrus Boulton de Abram, gen.
 Johes Hulton, gen.
 Johes Osbaldeston, gen.
 Ricus Bannastre, gen.
 Josephus Rigby, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Robtus Shawe (Shane ?) de highbullock, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Hugo forth, gen.
 Olivus Martin, gen.—Robert Gardener and Alex. Rigby.
 Alex. Greene, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Johes Greene, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Radus Bancks, gen.
 Robtus Booth, gen.
 Johes Aynscowe, gen.
 Johes Croston, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Radus Standishe, Ar.
 Willus Stopforth, gen.
 Radus Langton, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Alex. Jollie, gen.
 Thomas Gerard de Newhall, gen.
 Edrus Parr, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Edrus Parr, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.
 Thomas Alburgh, gen.
 Elizeus. Hey, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Radus Standishe, Ar.
 Geogius Walton, gen.
 Philippus Osborne, gen.
 Egidius Heyshame, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Jo. Standishe.
 Willus Prescottt, Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Ricus Sankey, gen.
 Thomas Browne, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Johes Gardner, gen.
 Abell Asheworth, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.
 Radus Scott de Pembton, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.
 Johes Bullock, Maior.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.

The duly conducted election was over, but by no means the excitement, for to the original high-pressure enthusiasm was now added the chagrining disappointment

and determination to act of the new candidates for the franchise. A magnified repetition of the attempts made at the end of the previous election was made to enforce their rights. The whole Corporation and burghal class had the warning ringing in their ears that if the right to vote were refused every effort would be made to disannul the election. The names of those claimants were not on the poll book, and consequently could not be called, so that all went peaceably until the end of the roll call, when they, there and then, demanded that their names should be added and their votes registered. Threats to petition Parliament against the returns were the strongest, if not the only, arguments they could use, but in vain. They then publicly and boisterously vented their determination to have a new election in which they should have a voice. It would have been bad policy to have attempted to treat the matter with silent contempt. The mayor and bailiffs solemnly and formally heard their claims, and refuted their arguments on the same grounds as had been done less than a year before. The burgesses would not yield, and it was determined that a petition should be sent to Parliament; but the burgesses, anxious not to be behind, drew up a petition of their own to the Commons relating all that had taken place and was apparently on the eve of taking place. In this petition they were not forgetful to speak favourably of the ancient borough, the importance of the enrolled burgesses, and of the efficiency and purity of the local government. Whether the unenrolled townsmen actually did petition cannot now be ascertained, but the following is a true copy of the hitherto unprinted petition of the Corporation:—

“ To the right ho^{ble}. the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses assembled in the Comons house of Parliament.

The humble petition of the Maior and Burgesses of the Town and Burrow of Wigan, in the County palatyne of Lanc. :—

Humbly beseeching this ho^{ble}. house of Comons assembled in Parliam^t.: That whereas the said Towne of Wigan is an Antient Towne Corporate, and so haith beene beyond the memory of men And for above the space of 400 yeares last past And during that tyme hath hadd a Maior who is and haith been Chieffe Officer and Gov^rnor in the said Towne And Bailiffs, sergeants, and others, assistants and under officers there for govⁿement of that towne, who ever hath been yearly chosen out of the Burgesses of the said Towne for the tyme being And elected by the greater votes of the burgesses p^sent of that Corporation. Which burgesses are and from tyme to tyme hath ever been incorporated and receyved into that Corporation by election of the burgesses then being and by takeing of a solome and ancyeⁿt oathe called the Burgesses' oathe of that Corporation, and afterwards enrouted as Burgesses in the Burges roule of the Towne there kept for that purpose. And that all Burgesses sent to Parliament to serve for that Burrow for the tyme whereof the memory of men is not to the contrary have been chosen onely by the enrouted Burgesses of that Corporation, and by no others nor in any otherwise. And that the Maior and Burgesses of the said Towne have during all the memory of men hadd and kept Courts Leets and other Courts in the said Towne for administration of Justice, ffayres, marketts, and other liberties there, to the greate good and peaceable government of the said Towne and cuntrye thereabouts. By reason whereof the said Burgesses have been and are the better enabled

to give and paie subsidies, fifteenes, and other duties, which said liberties and priviledges, wth. other good customes and franchises not repugnant to lawe, have been used and enjoyed in the said Towne by the Burgesses of the same. And by them and att there own chardges meantayned and defended to there greate costs upon all suits and stryffs arrysinge dureinge the tyme afforeaid. All which they clayme to belonge unto them as well by p^rscripcion and usage as by ancyent charter of King Henry the Third.

But now so yt is, maye yt please you, that divers inferior p^rsons, inhabitants, laborers, and handicraftsmen, being free only to trade within the said Towne of Wigan, and no enrouled or sworne Burgesses of the said Corporation, by the instigacon and incyteinge of others of uncivill government, have combyned, confederated, and complotted together, and doo give yt out in speeches, that they will disanull and annihilate the elections of Burgesses by the Burgesses of the said Corporation of Wigan alreadye made, certiyed, and sent to this ho^{ble}. house of Comons in Parliament, which was made in a free and publike manner, as is certiyed, and accordinge to the usual and accustomed and ancyent waye in the same Burrowe used dureinge all the tyme whereof the memory of men is not to the contrary, as by the oathes of ancyent testimonyes of 80 yeares of age th^t. yt shall bee thought fitt will appeare. And the said p^rsons, Inhabitants, and Tradesmen doo also give yt out in speeches that they will have a newe election of Burgesses for this said Burrow to be sent to this Parliament, wherein they will have as good election and votes as any the sworne and enrouled Burgesses of the same Burrow have. Altho' being often required they cannot make yt to appeare that they or any others of there capacityes att any tyme formerly ever hadd any votes or voyces in election of the Burgesses for Parliament.

The petition humble sente is (ffor that the hono^{ble}. house of Comons assembled in Parliament is the fountaine of all Justice, att whose feete the petitioners doo prostrate themselves, there lyves, libertyes, lands, and goods) yo^r. will be pleased they maye enjoy that peace in the libertyes of the said Towne and Burrow of Wigan w^{ch}. they and there p^rdecessors, Burgesses of the same Burrow, heretofore have ever hadd and done. And that the election of Burgesses for the said Comons by them alreadye made, sent, and certiyed to this Parliament maye stand. And the petitioners, according to there bounden duties, shall pray for y^r pious, prosperous, good, and happy successe in all yo^r affayres.

Know all men to whom these p^rnts shall come That wee, John Bullocke, Maior of the Towne and Burrowe of Wigan, in the county of Lancaster, and the Burgesses of the said Towne and Burrowe, doo by these p^rnts constitute, ordayne, and make James Winstanley, of Gray's Inn, Esq., one of the Burgesses of the said Town and Burrowe, doo by these p^rnts constitute, ordayne, and make James Winstanley, of Grays Inn, Esq., one of the Burgesses of our said Towne and Burrowe, our true and lawful Attorney, to exhibite, p^rferr, and prosecute for us and in our names and behalffe. A petition by us made to the right ho^{ble}. the knights, citizens, and Burgesses now assembled in the Commons house of Parliament. And whereunto this writing is annexed. And to doo all other things necessary and expedient in and concerning the p^rmis's. All which wee doo hereby ratify and allowe. And in witness hereof wee have hereunto put the Comon Seale of our said Towne and Burrowe, the Seaventh daye of November, in the Sixteenth year of the Reigne of our Sovereign lord Charles, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, ffrence, and Ireland, defender of the ffaith, &c. A.D. 1640.

JOHN BULLOCK.

Vera copia."

The Jury list for 1640 contains one hundred and seventeen names, beginning with the Mayor (Bullock) and aldermen. Of these, unfortunately, the trades of only seven are given, of which four are braziers, one a pewterer, one a smith, and one a dyer. From this old Jury list, which has never hitherto been published, I here give a

list of aldermen, bailiffs, attorneys, and those whose trades are named. The first on the list is Johes Bullocke, Maior, which is immediately followed by the names of eleven aldermen, viz., Robtus Mawdesley, ald. ; Chroferus (Christopher) Bancks, ald. ; Willus fforth, ald. ; Willus Pilkington, ald. ; Johos Brighthouse, ald. ; Jacobus Molyneux, ald. ; Georgius Rudall, ald. ; Alex. fford, ald. ; Laurencius fford, ald. ; Jacobus Scott, ald. ; Edrus Lloyd, ald. Willus Browne and Robtus Markland are then bracketted *ball* (bailiffs). Rogerus Baron and Balfrus Sherrington are next bracketted *attor.* (attorneys), and Willus Watson and Josephus Pennington are bracketted *svien.* Radus Browne, dyer ; Robtus Markland, brazeer ; Alex. fford, junior, pewterer ; Gilbtus fford, brazeer ; Radus Scott, brazeer ; Rogerus Wood, smith ; Nance (destroyed), junior, brazeer, are the only gentlemen whose occupations are mentioned after their names. The corner of the document is wanting, so that only eleven of those chosen as jurymen can be given, the conclusion that they alone were elected being arrived at solely by the fact that opposite their names the word *jury* is written. Their names are Ricus Casson, Ambrosius Jollie, Robtus Baron, Thomas Pilkington, Radus Leigh, Johos Molyneux, Gilbtus Leigh, Thomas Tarleton, ———ell, Edrus Prescott, and Johos Lee.

The cases that came before these gentlemen for trial are written in the most illegible Latin and English combined, and the manuscript is moth-eaten and time-worn besides. The first legible judgment is:—"We find that Crosse shall sitt ffour houres in the stocks att the Market Cross or else pay 3s. 3d." The next case shows that sanitation was not altogether despised, and that tenants were responsible for the cleanliness of their own premises. The entry in the Court Calendar is:—"Wee doe presente Robert Baron for not clensing his gutter accordinge to the last order of the last Leete." For this he was apparently fined. The decision of the jury was:—"Wee doe find that the said Robert Baron shall sufficiently clense the said gutter att or before the first day of July next upon the like sune afforesaid of 1s."

Richard Rycrofte was "gatewaiter." In his name, but in the same clerk's handwriting, is the entry:—"Wee prsent Roger Browne Dawber for emptienge a barrell of stinkinge mucke upon the kilne medinge fides in mia xid. and referr the fine to Mr. Mayor's discrecion."

"Wee prsent Thomas Laithwaite for divers abusive words against Mr. Mayor that now is, to sitt foure houres in the stocks att the Markett Crosse, and to submitt himself before he bee released. Wee doo fine Peeter deane, for strikeing the said Thomas Laithwaite att the same tyme, 2s."

These transactions of the Court Leet are headed:—"Burgus de Wigan in Com. Lanc. Inquisicō capt ibm Decimo nono die Junii Anno Regni Regis Dm Caroli. Angliæ etc Decimo septimo coram Joho Bullocke gen maior vill and burg."

There was serious matter for men to talk about over their glass of beer in the evenings. There were no local newspapers and exceedingly few news carriers, yet they had stirring news from London, from Scotland, and from Ireland, and news, too, that, even in the very smallest of friendly companies, created dissension and ill-will. There were great doings in London with the king and his parliament, and often, over the evening glass, the face of the local politician literally flared with rage as he defended the royal conduct against those who feebly asserted dissent. Buckingham's assassination was a tale never to be forgotten. Hampden was re-tried in every village inn, acquitted by some persons and condemned by others. Religious arguments in the beerhouse frequently ended in a fight on the street. Deaths, marriages, births, and common scandal were, like the ever-varying weather, subjects on which even the most ignorant were qualified to speak. News had just come from London that Hugh Bullock had died and left a great fortune, and all Wigan was proud of him because he was a Wiganer, and out of his great wealth had left £100 to the Mayor and aldermen, to be applied in binding apprentices and for the relief and benefit of the poor people. Some old inhabitant, as he smoked his pipe or took his pinch of snuff, told the history of young Bullock's leaving Wigan, going up to London, and, after many hardships, but strict and conscientious attention to business, acquiring wealth. Such were the subjects of common talk in Wigan, and as people of such limited education had few ideas of their own, the same subject in the same words was talked threadbare and stale. But the frivolous language of the gossip was gradually being thrust aside by subjects of far greater moment, which were daily waxing stronger and taking a deeper hold of the public mind. Local matters were at all times interesting, but now national affairs were becoming local concerns. The revolution was mildly begun, for Parliament had taken the first step to protect itself against the political idiosyncracies of royalty by enacting that it could not be dissolved without its own consent.

The two members for the county in 1640 were William Farrington, of Worden, and Ralph Assheton. The former had been High Sheriff in 1636. His family came to the county in the reign of Edward III. The last of the male line was James Nowell Farrington, who died in 1848. The member was a staunch Royalist, and had his estates confiscated by the Parliamentarians. The other member, Ralph Assheton, afterwards became the chief local commander of the Cromwellian party during the civil war, and actively distinguished himself in the Wigan conflicts.

The government was a revolutionary, but loyal one, for the members, almost to a man, were of good family, education, and property, and by no means adventurers with nothing at stake. The prison doors were thrown open to Star-chamber victims of injustice, illegal judgments reversed, courts and commissions that were a disgrace to the

country abolished, and the triennial bill passed, for it was not overlooked that the king's declared opinion about the suspension of Parliament was, "if you do not your duty, mine would order me to use those other means which God has put into my hands;" and, moreover, it was well known that "he hated the very name of Parliaments." The real state of the country could only be observed aright by men of the deepest penetration. To the ordinary eye the condition of affairs in England stood in happy contrast to those of the Continent. Trade and commerce were steadily progressing, and national prosperity looked more healthy than ever it had done, yet, undoubtedly, beneath this apparent prosperous contentment people were "nursing their wrath to keep it warm." Both king and people were stubborn, and neither would yield, whilst unappeasable discontent made emigrants of many.

Both Commons and people had much cause to complain of the king's unconstitutional conduct, which they unhesitatingly condemned; yet, when a rumour spread that an insurrection was being contemplated, they were the first to determine to maintain their religion and protect the person of their king. A bill was drawn up to that effect, and sent to every constituency, in order to be signed by all persons over 18 years, whether householders or otherwise. The names of those who would not sign were also taken, and thus, although no punishment was inflicted for non-compliance, a census of the political bias and religious feelings of the people was taken. Wigan was amongst the first towns to send back the protestation signed as required. Signatures for the most part were written at the Parish Church after the evening service.

At the beginning of the Revolution politics in Wigan were of rather a one-sided nature. The vast majority of Wiganers were Royalists, and so was one of the two members. Revolutionary ideas were merely entertained to be refuted. Although Wiganers keenly felt the hardships of the king's unjust government, they could not dream of rebellion. The country was the king's, and their political creed was "the king can do no wrong."

Civil and religious freedom were threatened with destruction, and many sailed to the colonies in search of liberty; but this emigration was forbidden by an Order in Council, because the country was thus being drained of its strength and its wealth. Discontent grew, and, rapidly developing into indignant dissatisfaction, broke out and threatened to destroy the social ties of private life. Nobody was, or could be, idle. Pens and swords were alike drawn into requisition. Papers of a most denunciatory character were spread broadcast over the country. Divines became politicians, and politicians soldiers. Those at first timid and undecided became fierce advocates and partisans on the winning side, for to be neutral was to be an enemy to both parties. Every warlike expression in the Scriptures was culled by the

Parliamentarians, drawn through the intellectual mill of the ready writer, and brought out of the printers' hands in the shape of Civil War Tracts, the originals of which can only now be purchased at fabulous prices, although then thrust into every hand or thrown down at every door like ordinary modern advertisement bills. Every warrior of the Old Testament was held up as a prototype of a Parliamentarian, and every pet expression of the New became household political words, and thus politics and religion, for once blended harmoniously together, were the storms that lashed men's minds into frenzy. For nine long years the storm raged before the climax was reached, during which time towns were destroyed, properties confiscated, agriculture brought nigh to a standstill, trade impeded, homes desolated, and the country brought to the very verge of ruin as the natural result of civil war.

In two short years religion and politics drove the whole country mad. The faithful and loyal town of Wigan, "the abode of malignants," was drawn into the general vortex, and became conspicuous in the history of the next nine years, being in itself strongly fortified and near Lathom House. During that time Lord Strange, eldest son of the sixth Earl of Derby, was the real hero of its history. His family being impoverished by lawsuits, he had gone to the Continent in search of a rich wife, as is the custom of those whose home estates are encumbered, for far-away fowls have pretty feathers. He succeeded in finding one worth more than "her weight in gold," although poverty at first compelled him to borrow money to buy clothes suitable for appearing in society. He returned home to find England in a most unsettled state—the political atmosphere grown darker and more threatening. Soon after his return the Civil War was on the eve of breaking out, and, as Lieutenant of his county and the representative of a great family and greater party, an unhappy work was marked out for him for the rest of his life. He commanded the Royalist army stationed at Wigan. The first blood in the Great Rebellion was shed by this Wigan contingent in Manchester, whither Lord Derby (Lord Strange, at his father's request, had already assumed this title) had gone to demand the gunpowder and ammunition stored in it. The request was refused, and Derby withdrew; but, again entering with a few followers as a guest of the Manchester Royalists, an affray ensued on the streets, and a weaver, the first victim of the Civil War, was killed on the 15th July, 1642. Colonel Roseworm, an egotistical German mercenary, the defender of Manchester on this occasion, in his Civil War Tract, says:—"The town of Manchester, amongst others, apprehending a manifest danger of ruin from the Earl of Derby and his strength, who appeared for the king; having none that knew what belonged to military affairs, either for offence or defence, and having observed or heard of me that I was bred up in soldiery from my youth, well skilled in fortifications, nor contemptibly furnished

with military abilities, propounded and concluded with me a contract under hand and seal, for half a year, engaging me, by the utmost of my advice and skill, to endeavour the security of their town, and engaging themselves, in consideration of my services for that time, to pay me £30, we agreed accordingly. I must be bold to say, that my undertaking of this service (though for a poor reward) as it was not small in itself; so it proved in the consequents as considerable both to the weakening of the king's party, and the strengthening of the Parliament is, as any action in that kind, through the passages of that year; for (let it be considered) four for one in that town, if not more, favoured my Lord Derby, and had publicly vowed to cut my throat if ever I attempted any works to keep him out. The party who favoured my undertakings were full of fears, and confusions, not knowing which way to turn themselves; the town in all its entrances open, and without any defence about it; a powerful enemy expected to come upon them, which within three weeks of our contract fell out. The very next morning after my contract my Lord Derby sent two gentlemen to me with £150 as a present from his lordship, with an invitation to attend him at Lathom. 'Twas easy to see what the drift of this kindness was. But £30, if backed by my promise, contract, or engagement, I have ever learned to value above all offers; honesty being worth more than gold. Returning, therefore, my thanks for the earl's nobleness, and the money with my thanks, I dismissed these gentlemen, and addressed myself to my trust." The Parliamentary party was now roused to action, and in two months from this affray Derby besieged Manchester, but was summoned, with his 3,000 Lancashire men, to assist the king at Shrewsbury, and from thence he returned to Wigan. Meanwhile Fairfax, Cromwell's right-hand man, had arrived in Manchester, attacked and taken Preston. Wars and rumours of wars now filled the whole country. The superstitious people of Lancashire, living in the very thick of the turmoil, saw great sights in the heavens and heard strange sounds. Every phenomenon was considered an omen. Men and women believed the distress of the country to be the direct visitation of Providence for "somebody's" sins. Even the aurora borealis was considered a supernatural manifestation.

The storm seemed at first likely to overwhelm the Parliamentarians. Lancashire was the great arena of Puritanism, and there was the theatre of the fiercest early struggles. Lord Derby was the local hero of the Royalists. He was the terror of the rebels and the pride of all loyal persons. Most of his followers were at first drawn from Wigan, Ormskirk, and Lathom House, and their head-quarters were in Wigan, and, consequently, they were called the Wigan army. His own brave and unselfish example made even his raw recruits fight like veterans, and although he was often defeated, it was from the want of numbers and not from any lack of good generalship. War was now the business of all men, and even on Sundays—on which

day many of the greatest battles have been fought—military preparations and exploits were actively attended to. One of the earliest fierce local skirmishes of this Wigan army took place on Sunday, 27th November, 1642, near Chowbent, and is thus described in an old War Tract:—"The last Sabbath, as we were going towards the church, a post rode through the country informing us that the Earl's (Derby's) troops were coming towards Chowbent; whereupon the country people rose, and before one of the clock on that day we had gathered together 3,000 horse and foot encountering them at Chowbent aforesaid, and beating them back to Leigh, killing some and wounding many; where you would wonder to have seen the forwardness of the young youths, farmers' sons. We drove them to Lowton Common, where they, knowing our foot to be far behind, turned face about and began to make head against us, whereupon began a sharp, although a short encounter; but when they perceived our full and settled resolution, they made away as fast as their horses could carry them, and we after them, killing, wounding, and taking prisoners about 200 of them; and we never lost a man, only we had three of our men wounded, but not mortally. The nailers of Chowbent, instead of making nails, have busied themselves in making bills and battle-axes; and also this week the other part of the country meet, and not only intend to stand upon their guard, but to disarm all the Papists and malignants within their precincts, and to send them prisoners to Manchester to keep house with Sir Cecil Trafford, who is there a prisoner. The men of Blackburn, Padiham, Burnley, Clitheroe, and Colne, with those sturdy churls of the two forests, Pendle and Rossendale, have raised their spirits, and are resolved to fight it out rather than their beef and fat bacon should be taken from them." On their return the Wigan Cavaliers, inflated by their little victory, pulled down the pulpit at Hendon (Hindley) Chapel, played cards in the pews, took away the Holy Bible and tore it in pieces, sticking the leaves upon the posts in several parts of the town, and saying, "This is the Roundhead's Bible." This was in December, 1642, just before Derby, with his two field-pieces, marched against Blackburn.

Lords Strange and Molineux, again, on Sunday, 25th September, 1642, besieged Manchester, which was strongly fortified with posts and chains, and barricades of mud at the ends of its ten streets. They had 4,000 foot, 200 dragoons, 100 light horse, and seven pieces of cannon. The siege and frequent severe sallies lasted some days. Derby's men damaged and plundered the houses, carrying away booty to the amount of £10,000. They failed, however, to take the town, and after losing 200 men, the Manchester people having two killed and four wounded retired from the siege. It was then that Captain Thomas Standish, son and heir of the Catholic family, of Duxbury Hall, fell, fighting under Lord Strange. He was a brave and zealous Royalist, although his father espoused the Parliamentary cause, and was a

member of the Long Parliament, much against the feelings, and to the disgust, of his loyal Catholic family and connections.

Men of peaceful and quiet habits were compelled to be soldiers: master and servant were forced to muster for drill: every town was socially divided: old friends were at enmity, and drawing their swords against each other: sons were in one party fighting against their fathers in the opposite: some laid down the pen and took up the sword: others left their ploughs and armed themselves with pitchforks. Then scarcely any trade flourished but that of the smith, who wielded the hammer with his brawny arm night and day. Amongst others, the Mayor of Wigan, like one of his predecessors in the reign of Edward II., was solicited by the king to bring him money, horses, and arms, on security of his forests and parks for the principal, and eight per cent. interest. Many were forced into the service, and thus the Royalist party was weakened. As Adam Martindale, a contemporary native of Lancashire, says:—"My brother Henry, who was then about twenty-four years of age, knew not where to hide his head, for my Lord of Derby's officers had taken up a custom of summoning such as he and many older persons, upon paine of death, to appeare at generall musters, and thence to force them away with such weapons as they had, even if they were but pitchforks, to Bolton; the reare being brought up with troopers that had commission to shoot such as lagged behind, so as the poor countrymen seemed to be in a dilemma of death, either by the troopers if they went not on, or by the great and small shot out of the towne if they did. This hard usage of the countrey to no purpose (for what could poor cudgeliers doe against a fortified place?) much weakened the interests of the Royalists (called the Cavaliers), and many yeomen's sonnes, whereof my brother Henry was one, went to shelter themselves in Bolton, and too keep armes there."

Members of Parliament were then men of the sword, and both made and maintained the laws. These were times of little talking and much action. When duty called, the member was ready either for the floor of the House or the field of the foe. Such a man was the member for Wigan, Orlando Bridgeman, a lawyer of great ability, son of the Bishop of Chester, and Rector of Wigan. In 1642 he joined Lord Strange without hesitation, augmented his levies, and took a very active part as an ordinary officer in every affray of the regiment. From that day his decision, success, and gallantry made him a marked man. But every man was then marked either by one side or the other, for such is the unhappy state of any country during a civil war that every man suspects his neighbour. Bridgeman, the member for Wigan, was marked by the Royalists for promotion, and by the Parliamentarians for execution. His fortunes were, like those of his royal master, defeat in spite of his great courage, daring, and faithfulness; but he was loyal to the last, through

trials and disasters. His "disloyalty" to the rebels disabled him from sitting in the Long Parliament, and thus Wigan was deprived of his valuable services, for he was a good, as well as a great man. Like other distinguished Royalists, he lived, in times of disaster and defeat, like an exile in his own land, wandering in disguise, with occasional glimpses of prosperity to brighten his hopes. In the darkest hour he was true to his king and exiled prince, and, after the Restoration he received thanks from his country and honour from his king. He was made chief baron of the Exchequer afterwards Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and was the first Englishman advanced to the dignity of baronet by Charles II., under the name of Sir Orlando Bridgeman of Great Lever. He was an able lawyer and an honest man, although two of his biographers speak disparagingly of the manner in which he discharged the duties of Equity Judge, and yet he certainly gave his judgments without fear or favour. He spoke fearlessly against the attainder of Strafford, when it was dangerous to go against current opinion, for he would not be a party to the iniquitous conduct of the Court. He was also one of the executors of Lady Derby, of Lathom House celebrity, who in her will, as expressing her heartfelt dislike to her wayward and unfilial son, said, "I give to my son, Charles, Earl of Derby, five pounds." He died at his residence in Teddington in 1674.

Bolton was a thorn in the flesh of malignant Wigan, and Wigan was a standing menace to the Boltonian Parliamentarians. The desire of each was to capture and destroy the other. Opportunities were eagerly looked for and seized. Wigan was strongly fortified, whereas Bolton had only been hastily strengthened by mud walls two yards thick, and a chain. Roseworm had fortified it, and Colonel Assheton, an able and daring soldier, commanded its forces. Jealous of each other's craftiness, each town kept constant watch over the movements of the other, and scouts continually patrolled the neighbourhood. No sooner was it known at Wigan that most of the forces had been withdrawn from Bolton to aid in the attack on Preston than the Wigan army hurried, as from ambush, to possess the undefended town. But the inhabitants had all become soldiers, and, after recovering from their first surprise, bravely defended their town. The leaders of the Royalists were Captain Anderton, of Lostock, Captain Anderton, of Birchley, and Sir Gilbert Gerard. They essayed to enter the town by Bradshawgate. A fierce contest ensued, and the inhabitants were driven behind their temporary fortifications at the point of the Royalist pikes. The few soldiers remaining in the garrison soon rallied, and great gallantry was displayed on both sides; but the Puritans' muskets and pikes were too much for the Royalists.

The Wiganers had attacked with fierce determination, and shot their great guns fourteen times against the town. The Boltonians boldly essayed in great numbers to

repel them. Very hot and determined skirmishing went on for over four hours. Many townsmen were killed; but the Wigan men were mowed down in far greater numbers, yet they would not yield, but again and again attacked with renewed vigour, and were repulsed each time with great loss. Their thinned but unwavering ranks made a last attack about four o'clock in the afternoon, and the besieged, encouraged by their greater numbers and previous success, rushed upon them with increased fierceness, and literally swept them from the field, pursuing the fugitives for several miles towards Wigan, and thus Derby's attack on Bolton on Thursday, 16th February, 1643, failed. His men received honourable burial next day at the hands of the enemy. Twenty-three of his soldiers were buried in one grave. A list of 78 Bolton men, who were buried at the same time, is given in the Bolton Parish Register.

A strange tale in connection with the storming of Bolton is credited to this day. A man called Isherwood and his wife were both killed by the attacking Wiganers. As the dead woman lay in the street her starving baby was vainly attempting to obtain nourishment from her breast, on which an old woman, seventy years of age, who had not so nourished a child for over twenty years, took up the starveling and placed it at her breast, whence it immediately, and seemingly miraculously, succeeded in obtaining nourishment.

This was the first attack of Wigan on Bolton (16th February, 1643) the following account (a Civil War Tract) of which was written two days afterwards by an eye-witness:—"On Thursday morning last the enemy approached the town of Bolton, with the forces from Wigan at the top of the Pike (which is within a mile of the town) before there was any certain intelligence brought into them within, so that the enemy was in view before they were aware; and, marching furiously on, their horses presently surrounded the town, and by the guidance of some of our neighbours that were amongst them, and of the company, so observed the ways and bridges, that if they saw any come in to the aid of the town, they presently rode at them, and took their arms from them, such as they had, pitchforks and the like; but not many were thus met with, for upon the sight of the horse the unarmed men rather drew back, for the present being no considerable number, and the foot came marching down towards Bradshawgate end, where there was a great work, and some company of musketeers placed therein, but the enemy so furiously set upon them at that place with both musket and great cannon, that they forced them out of the work (but there was another work at Hardmans, of the Crosses), and presently, they having wheeled about, got betwixt us and the town, and forced Captain Assheton (who kept that end of the town) to retreat towards the end of the town; and the truth is, he had stayed so long in the work that the enemy began to break in upon them, so much so that they came to hand blows, whereby the Captain slew one man

with his skeane, and one of his soldiers thrust another through with his pike. The enemy having taken the foresaid works came to the houses that lay without the chain, and fired one of them, got into some others, and shot out of them, and then fired another lone house on the back side, and then fired a third house or barn with hay in it, and at last beat our men from the house side at the mud wall end, so that they were forced to fall backward and lose ground; but it pleased God, the Captain, Lieutenant, and soldiers, so well expressed their undaunted courage that they sent them such storms of bullets into the houses as powdered them to purpose. Then Captain Assheton, with some sixteen musketeers, broke through a house, and shot awhile with good success, and afterwards seeing them march up madly, commanded them all to shoot at once, and to floor the enemy if possible they could, which through God's providence they did, and so beat them off that they durst not come up any more, but drew away their dead and bleeding soldiers, retired further off, and, perceiving the shouts of the country people that came in in great numbers, took what they could suddenly, and glad they could get away. * * * Our word was, 'God is my help,' and He was so indeed, for He helped us against them that else would have devoured us."

Happily there are always in this selfish world philanthropic people who cannot think of their own prosperity without also taking into pitiful consideration the miserable pittance of the poor. In many towns in England there are princely charities that are the stepping-stones by which poor persons of ability and strict integrity are enabled to pass the otherwise insurmountable difficulties that lie between them and prosperous positions in the highest callings in our land. By them such education is provided by which those of no monetary means or social influence may attain the highest honours and dignities that are the rewards of the ablest statesmen and most princely merchants. Education, either commercial or scholastic, has been the chief means, according to the opinions of far-seeing donors, by which the road to such success could alone be travelled, and old Wigan philanthropists provided accordingly. Many English towns, as if ungrateful, by no means boast, but seem rather to be ashamed, of their local philanthropists, although there is not a town in the land that has not been benefited and is still benefited by some such friend. Wigan is not behind other places either in its number of charities or ingratitude to the donors. In the old parish, in the early part of the nineteenth century, when royal commissioners were appointed to inquire into such bequests, there were not less than seventy distinct charities. In the borough proper there were 21; in Abram 4; in Aspull 3; in Billinge-Chapel-End 6; in Billinge-Higher-End 3; in Dalton 2; in Haigh 6; in Hindley 4; in Ince 4; in Orrell 3; in Pemberton 4; in Upholland 9; and in Winstanley 2. To people of the present day many of those charities seem to be

the results of wills written by deluded donors ; but the social condition of the donors' day was very different from that of ours ; and if their charities did seem strange, or even of lunatic aspect, that was no justification for misappropriating or abusing them, as was certainly done with many of the Wigan charities. In dealing with these charities in this history the language of these commissioners will be frequently used as sufficient to elucidate the affairs of the bequests. Their reports on the three of the oldest bequests were as follows :—

“Edmund Molyneux, citizen of London, by his will, bearing date 8th October, 1613, devised all his lands at Canewden, in Essex, which were £20 by the year, rent, to be bestowed in penny bread, and given to the ancientest and poorest people at Wigan and at Holland every Sunday throughout the year for ever, viz., at Wigan to 60 and at Holland to 30 of such poor people every Sunday, to each one penny loaf, and the remaining 10s. he gave to the churchwardens for their pains at both churches, equally to be divided, and, if the churchwardens should not perform this, his gift, according to his will, he directed that the land and the rent thereof should go to the use of a free school to be kept at Holland.”

“The estate in Canewden, in Essex, has been for many years under the management of the rector and churchwardens, but it does not appear that it was ever conveyed to trustees for the uses above-mentioned.”

“It consists of 53a., 2r., 33p., according to a survey taken in November, 1827, and was let to John Barrington, Esq., on lease bearing date 18th March, 1806, for 21 years, from September then last, at the yearly rent of £75, payable to the lessors, and Hon. and Rev. George Bridgeman, the rector, and the churchwardens of Wigan and chapelwardens of Upholland. In 1822 it was agreed that the rent should be reduced to £65, and since the expiration of the lease the tenant has refused to pay more than £55, and a new lease at that rent was in preparation at the time of our enquiry. This is stated to be the best rent that can be obtained, as there are no buildings upon the estate, and there is consequently a difficulty in finding any other tenant wishing to take it except Mr. Barrington, who has the adjoining land.”

“Of the clear rent of this estate two-thirds have been retained by the churchwardens of Wigan, and one-third has been paid to the chapelwardens of Upholland.”

“The first-mentioned share has hitherto been disposed of in the purchase of bread, together with the yearly sum of £17 14s., paid by the overseers as the interest of Holt's Charity, the particulars of which will be stated hereafter under the head of the charities of Willis and others. From this fund 23s. worth of bread has been usually provided every Sunday, which, at 52 weeks in the year, would amount to £59 16s.”

"This bread is made up in fourpenny loaves, and given away by the churchwardens to the poor of such parts of the parish as attend Wigan Church, according to a list made out by the churchwardens, upon the recommendation of any of the more respectable inhabitants. Whenever any extraordinary expenses are incurred, the quantity of bread is accordingly reduced."

"By indenture of feoffment, bearing date 1st June, 1632, between Robert Barrow and William Forster of the first part, and Christopher Bancks and twenty-five others, described respectively as the mayor, aldermen, bailiffs, and burgesses of the town of Wigan, of the second part, reciting, that Hugh Bullock, of London, deceased, had given £100 to the mayor, aldermen, &c., to be employed for the relief and benefit of the poor people, inhabitants of the said town and borough; and that Henry Mason, Rector of St. Andrew Undershaft, London, had given to the said mayor, aldermen, &c., £100 more, to be employed in the same manner; and that the said mayor, &c., had contracted with Edward and Edmund Parr for the purchase of a cottage and thirteen acres of land in Rainford, which premises had, in consideration of the sum of £200, been conveyed to the said R. Barrow and William Forster to the intent that they should settle the same upon the said mayor, aldermen, &c., for the purposes aforesaid; the said R. Barrow and W. Forster granted and enfeoffed to the said Christopher Bancks and others, parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns, the premises above mentioned upon the trusts aforesaid; and the said Christopher Bancks and others covenanted to employ the same accordingly, either in binding some of the poor people apprentices, apparelling of some of them, employing or setting of them, or some of them, to work, or otherwise, as the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of Wigan should think fit; and they further covenanted that the twelve surviving feoffees should, within six months after the decease of the residue, convey the premises to the use of the said survivors and of the mayor of Wigan and so many aldermen and burgesses as should in the whole make up the number of twenty-five, and their heirs; and it was provided that the said mayor and aldermen and the twelve burgesses might demise the premises for any term not exceeding twenty-one years, or three lives, in possession."

"By indenture of feoffment, bearing date 17th day of June, 1639, between William Brown and two others of the first part, and John Brighthouse and two others, described respectively as mayor, recorder, aldermen, bailiffs, and burgesses of the borough of Wigan, of the other part, reciting, that the above named Henry Mason had delivered to the said mayor, aldermen, &c., £140, to be bestowed upon lands and tenements, and the profits to be employed for the relief and benefit of the poor people, inhabitants of the said town and borough; and that the said mayor, aldermen, &c., had contracted with James Molyneux for the purchase of a close called the

Banks, alias Bangges, in Wigan, containing by estimation three rood lands; and also a close called Hell Meadow, in Pemberton, for the remainder of a term of 1,000 years, which premises had, in consideration of the said sum of £140, been conveyed to the said William Brown and others, parties of the first part, as trustees, to re-grant the same to the said mayor, aldermen, &c., the said William Brown and others granted and enfeoffed to the said John Brighthouse and others, their heirs, and assigns, the said close, called the Bangges; and also assigned to the said parties, their heirs, and assigns the said close, called Hell Meadow, for the residue of the said term of 1,000 years, upon the same trusts and with the same covenants as were expressed in the indenture of feoffment of 1632 above abstracted."

"In the conveyance of the above-mentioned premises to William Brown and others, bearing date 10th April, 1638, the lease of Hell Meadow is recited as bearing date 16th April, 1600, and having been granted by Humphrey Winstanley to Roger Bradshawe for the term of 1,000 years, from the day of the date."

"The freehold and leasehold premises comprised in the indentures of 1632 and 1639 have been conveyed from time to time to new trustees; and by indentures of feoffment and re-feoffment, bearing date respectively 28th August, 1826, and 2nd July, 1828. Sir Richard Clayton, John Walmesley, and Thomas Barton, as the surviving trustees of the said premises, conveyed the same to John Holt and two others, and they re-conveyed them to the said Sir Richard Clayton, Bart., the Recorder of Wigan, Henry Bullock, the Mayor, &c., and their heirs, upon the same trusts as declared in the indenture of 1632."

"The farm in Rainford is now held by Thomas Dean, or his under-tenant, under a lease, of which the following is an abstract:—

"By indenture, bearing date 4th February, 1774, between Robert Green, the then mayor, William Ollerhead, and nine others, described as burgesses of the said borough, and surviving trustees of the lands and tenements thereafter mentioned, in trust, for the use of the poor of Wigan, of the one part, and Thomas Barker of the other part; the said trustees, in consideration of the sum of £203 demised to the said Thomas Barker, his executors, &c., a messuage or dwelling-house, with the barn, stable, shippon, and the several closes thereto belonging, situate in Rainford, called Alcock's Tenement, and containing together, by estimation, 13 acres of land, excepting the timber and minerals upon or under the said premises, to hold the same from 13th February then instant, as to the said closes of land (except the close called the Moss Hey for outlet), and from the 12th of May then next as to the residue of the said premises, for the lives of the said Thomas Barker, aged 33 years, or thereabouts; Robert Ashton the younger, the son of Robert Ashton, of Adlington, weaver, aged 8 years, or thereabouts; and James Dean, son of John Dean, of Wigan,

weaver, aged 16 years, or thereabouts, and the life of the survivor of them, at the yearly rent of £11, payable to the said lessors, their heirs, and assigns (in trust for the use and benefit of the poor inhabitants of and legally settled in Wigan) every 30th August, with covenant on the part of the lessee to keep the premises in repair, and to underwall in a workmanlike manner the south and south-east corners of the said dwelling-house, where the same was wanting, and to plant yearly during the said term, upon the said demised premises, twelve good and healthy young oak, ash, or poplar trees, or such other timber trees as would best suit the soil, and if any should die to plant others in their stead."

"The premises comprised in the lease above abstracted consist of a farm-house, with outbuildings, and 15a. 2r. of land, and are now underlet at £40 a year. We are informed that the buildings are much dilapidated, and too small for the farm; but if the sum of £50 was laid out upon them, the farm would be worth as much as £50 a year. The trustees have lately cut some timber on this estate, to the value of upwards of £80, but it is not yet determined in what manner to dispose of the money when received."

"We have not been able to ascertain for what purpose the sum of £203 (the consideration money for the lease above-mentioned) was required, or how it was applied."

"With respect to the premises comprised in the indenture of feoffment of 1639, the Hell Meadow lies partly in the township of Wigan and partly in the township of Pemberton; the part lying in Wigan, with the Bangges closes, is let to Charles Walls, as yearly tenant, at £10 per annum, and the part lying in Pemberton to Jonathan Andrews, as yearly tenant, at the like rent. We are informed that these closes might be let at advanced rents, that in their present state they are worth £25 a year, and are capable of improvement, and that the fences and an embankment against the river requires some repairs."

"John Bullock, by his will, bearing date 26th March, 1642, after devising to his daughter, Ellen Bullock, in tail, with divers remainder over, all his messuages, lands, &c., in the parishes of St. Dunstan in the East and St. Botolph's, in London, and in the town of Wigan, not thereinbefore devised, gave to the mayor, aldermen, and overseers of the poor of Wigan, and their successors, a yearly rent-charge of £5 issuing out of all the messuages, lands, &c., above-mentioned, payable quarterly, five days before each of the feasts, to be distributed immediately after the receipt thereof, by the said overseers and two of his nearest kinsmen, to the most needy, poor inhabitants, living in the said town, as they in their discretion should think fit, and a power of entry and distress was given to the said mayor, aldermen, and overseers, in case of non-payment."

"We could not obtain any further information with respect to this charity."

Bolton had been twice unsuccessfully assaulted by the forces from Wigan, and now the Boltonians, knowing that a large contingent of the Wigan army had been withdrawn to aid in the defence of Lathom House, determined to storm the great stronghold of the Royalists. To attack and take Wigan was now the highest ambition of the Boltonians, who had acquitted themselves bravely in all they had hitherto attempted. To assault the walled borough was to brave the lion in his den, and give substantial proof of their growing confidence. Every Boltonian jealously felt that whilst Wigan held her own Bolton was but an inferior rival, whereas each was determined it should be second to none. Every townsman was enthusiastic, and enthusiasm is the greatest incentive to action to protect reputation. With two thousand good and true foot soldiers armed with muskets, billhooks, and clubs, three hundred horse, eight pieces of cannon, and plenty of ammunition and provisions, Sir John Seaton, Major-General of the Parliamentary forces, proceeded from Bolton to assault Wigan, when the news soon reached Lord Derby, who instantly prepared to give them a warm reception by throwing up strong entrenchments and forming a camp in the Parson's Meadows, on the banks of the Douglas.

In those stormy times the victors of to-day were often the fugitives of to-morrow. Death or victory was the determination of some; flight, in order to live to fight another day, the resolution of others. All England was astir, like a hive of bees swarming. The fires of civil war were doing their destructive work in and around Wigan, and they were to go on blazing until the darkest blot was indelibly stained on the page of English history by an Englishman of undoubted great ability, yet none the less a regicide. Fairfax was daily gaining power in the neighbourhood, and Derby was doing all he could to counteract his influence. Scarcely was breathing time given to the Wiganers. Everyone was on the alert. Watchmen and scouts were eagerly scanning and scouring the country. All was excitement without and tumult within the town. Raw levies were daily drilled and fortifications repaired. Ordinary work was at a standstill, for every hand was needed for the work of war. It was early spring, but ploughmen were in the fields for other purposes than sowing seed. Men had only time to fight for life, not to work for a living, and very hard was their fare. It was known that the Bolton men, eager for revenge, were on the march to Wigan. Then the lurid glare was seen from the beacon, and, as when busy bees are disturbed in a great hive, the sound and the labour increased. The enemy approached, and every man was called to arms by the beat of the drum. Patrols hurried into the town, within two miles of which the enemy had approached, pitched their camp to rest awhile, in order to rise refreshed for battle. The Wiganers had finished their outworks, dug their ditch, and raised fortifications of earthmounds, the remains of which are now the southern boundary of the borough. The gates of the

town were closed and guarded, the ramparts manned, the rude cannon loaded, and the struggle for victory commenced. Derby's men were driven within the battered walls of Wigan, contesting bravely every backward step. Assheton's 2,000 men were much reduced, for the engagement was a sanguinary one. The fatal shots of Derby's sharpshooters thinned the rebel ranks, who, nevertheless, were every moment gaining ground. There were hand to hand engagements in every street, and when soldiers have once dipped their swords in human blood they seem to think of nothing else but how to shed more. The Market Place and the church are alike to them in action. There is no time for thinking of religion or sacrilege—the craving wish of each and all is how to have the enemy's blood. The Puritan soldiers were crowding into the Market Place—a large open space in front of the church—and what could be better than to attack them from the church tower, thought the Wigan soldiers. It appeared to eighty-six cavalier sharpshooters that the idea was a good one, and at once they hurried to the top of the church tower, from which they showered down their deadly shafts upon their hapless countrymen beneath. Yet these, too, were Englishmen, and so would not yield. They assailed the tower of the venerable building, and threatened to blow it and the sharpshooters into oblivion if they yielded not. The powder was there and the fuse was ready, but, sensibly, these brave men yielded, and the sacrilegious Puritan victors ransacked the church and destroyed the papers of its own history, as if they, too, were enemies. Just before this Derby himself had been called upon to attend the Queen on her journey from York to Oxford, and thus Assheton the more easily soon made himself master of every fortified place in Lancashire, except Lathom House, the siege of which was long and successfully maintained by the brave Countess of Derby. This storming of Wigan was on the 1st of April, 1643, and is called Assheton's invasion, as the successful attack on the town was chiefly owing to his indomitable courage and perseverance. He was one of the most daring and successful commanders of the Parliamentarians, and belonged to one of the oldest families in the hundred of Salford and Blackburn. He had glory to gain and the cause of his party to advance, although the cowardice of one of his colleagues, Colonel Holland, now nearly cost him his life. As a soldier nothing could be more creditable to him than his attack on Wigan.

In 1286 all borough towns were by Act of Parliament surrounded by walls for the protection of the inhabitants. Wigan was then a borough. The Act of 35th Henry VIII. recites that "divers and many beautiful houses of habitation had been within the *walls* and liberties of the towns of Lancaster, Preston, Liverpool, and Wigan, in the county of Palatine of Lancaster, which now are fallen down decayed, and at this time (1544) remain unre-edified, lying in desolate and waste places." Provision for their restoration is made by the Act; but so enraged was Assheton

at the malignancy of Wigan that he razed the ramparts to the ground and threw down the walls lest the varying fortunes of war had destined that the town should again fall into his enemy's hands. Eight hundred prisoners were captured, a thousand stand of arms and two thousand pounds of treasure, and Wigan was humiliated and defeated, but not disgraced. As a reward for his day's work Assheton received forty shillings a day over and above his pay of colonel of horse and of foot. It was one of the last places held by the Royalists in Lancashire, and yet, though defeated and occupied by the enemy, she was loyal for the most part until the successful Cromwellian party wrought havoc with the political principles of the natives. The garrulous and complaining Colonel Roseworm gives the following account of the engagement and its result:—"I was solicited, April the 1, 1643, by the deputy-lieutenant to attend and assist our forces against Wigan, for indeed the soldiers declared themselves discontented if I went not along with them. I went accordingly, being loath that these should want any of my services, who had offered me such roome in their hearts; nor were we without a happy successe in our attempt, for by a gallant assault, chiefly by Colonel Assheton's men, we took that strong town in less than an hour. Whilst the town was taken, the enemy having for a refuge observed and fitted the church and steeple adjoining for their advantage, fled thither as many as could, and killed from thence, I daresay, more men after the taking of the town than we lost in the whole assault besides. Whilst we struggled with this difficulty, an alarum was sent us from the enemy; I went speedily with some few horse to view the state they stood in. I found them only three slender troops of horse, who, observing us to present a resolute force towards them, instantly tried their heels, and gave us language enough in their disorder to tell us we need not trouble ourselves with such enemies. I returned with what haste I could, with the truth in my mouth, but found Colonel Holland in such a shaking agony of fear that he was ready to march away with all our forces, consisting of 2,000 foot, most part good musketeers; the rest club and bill men, and to my best remembrance about 200 or 300 horse, besides eight piece of ordnance, and no want either of ammunition or provision, and surely with this force I durst have seen the face of the greatest enemies we had about us, though conjoined at that time. But whilst receiving these arms, and making preparations for their convoy, Colonel Holland (for who can settle a trembling heart?) marched away with all the forces, left me with one company only (these also, fearing their inabilities to deal with so many prisoners, forsaking me) engaged among 400 prisoners. Many good arms, two great pieces of ordnance, in the midst of a town where generally all the townspeople were great malignants. Being thus wholly forsaken by all, I was forced first to run to find my horse, and then flie for my life, which in such a danger was most strangely saved."

As to the fatalities on the occasion of Assheton's invasion no information can be gleaned from the parish register of burials. In the months of May, June, and July there were 37, 83, and 17 burials respectively in the years 1641, 1642, and 1643. Although the mortality of that part of the year of the invasion is so high, yet the death-rate during the actual month (April) is reduced to a normal one, and, moreover, the list of 83 only contains an ordinary proportion of males without the remotest hint that they had any military connection. Many of the men who fell must have been shot actually in the churchyard, and were, no doubt, buried there, and, although they may have been buried as on an ordinary battle-field, it seems strange that no mention whatever of the interment is made, as in the Bolton and other registers on similar occasions, and much more remarkable is it when such burials as the following are so carefully recorded about the same period :—

24th May, 1641. James, son of John Dickson, a stranger.

15th May, 1642. A poor traveller, unknown.

18th September, 1643. A poore traveller.

The Gerards of Bryn took an active interest in the Royalist cause, as well as most of the Catholic families of the neighbourhood. Richard Gerard was a distinguished colonel, and courageously shared the misfortunes of his master. He himself raised and led an army of foot. After many vicissitudes of fortune he was appointed, after the Restoration, Cup Bearer to the Dowager Queen. He afterwards purchased Ince from his cousin Thomas, who died without male issue, but left a daughter, known as the heiress of Ince, who married a Gerard.