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LANCASHIRE NONCONFORMITY.



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THE CHURCHES OF SOUTHPORT, LIVERPOOL,
AND THE ISLE OF MAN.

LANCASHIRE NONCONFORMITY;

OR,

SKETCHES, HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE,

OF THE

Congregational and Old Presbyterian Churches
in the County.

BY THE REV. B. NIGHTINGALE,

*Author of the "History of the Old Independent Chapel,
Tockholes,"*

* * * * *

THE CHURCHES OF SOUTHPORT, LIVERPOOL,
AND THE ISLE OF MAN.



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THIS VOLUME
OF
Nonconformist History
IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO THE
CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS AND CHURCHES
WHOSE HISTORIES IT CONTAINS.

P R E F A C E.

EXACTLY four years have elapsed since the first prospectus of "Lancashire Nonconformity" was sent out to the public, and in Volume VI., now issued, the work receives its completion. Four years, however, do not by any means represent the amount of time consumed in its production; for when that first prospectus was issued a not inconsiderable proportion of the work was already written, and materials were in hand for much of the unwritten portion, all of which had been a labour of many years. It is, therefore, with no light sense of relief that I look upon the finished thing. Amidst the claims of a busy pastorate, in a town where Nonconformity in all its forms, has no little difficulty in maintaining its ground, together with the prospect of serious financial loss, it has required some courage "to endure unto the end." The work has never lost interest for me during its progress; nor has the burden its weight. The possibility, however, of providing our churches with lessons, salutary and admonitory on the one hand, inspiring and encouraging on the other, and of contributing towards a quickened interest in their work, prevented me from beating a retreat, though the temptation to do so has been often present. "Lancashire Nonconformity" makes no great pretensions. It is a modest attempt to write a very interesting story, and all that the author can say for himself is that neither time, labour, nor expense has been spared that the story might be told correctly. Of the imperfections of the work no one is more conscious than myself. Early ideals have been realised to a very limited extent, and from the beginning it became evident that absolute accuracy was impossible. I cannot refrain from repeating a regret, expressed in earlier volumes, that our denominational "organs" are so often and so seriously inaccurate. Our Year Books, Calendars, Magazines, &c., which in the case of many churches are the only available sources of information about their early history, manifest a supreme contempt for facts and figures; and the obituary notices of brethren departed are often written by those who evidently only "know in part." It will considerably lighten the labours of any future historian, and save him hours of anxiety and irritation, if our churches will see that, as far as possible, only reliable information about themselves is printed, and especially that full and accurate

records of their doings are kept. The character of the documents in the production of the present work will in some measure explain any errors which it may be found to contain. In connection with this matter it may be added, that generally when a minister's name appears in successive volumes, and any difference in the accounts is detected, the latest information is the most accurate.

Several MS. volumes of the late Dr. Raffles, who himself intended to write a history of Lancashire Nonconformity, came into my hands when this concluding volume was in type. I regret that I had not the advantage of them earlier. They are, however, too valuable to remain unpublished, and I have interrupted the story in one or two places to find room for considerable extracts, making large use of them also in the shape of notes. The reader will pardon the digressions because of the interesting information they supply, whilst some further justification for their insertion may be found in the fact that this is the concluding and in some measure supplementary volume of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

Only a part of the Liverpool District of the Lancashire Congregational Union is covered by this volume, and it may be said to present unto us Congregationalism in the watering places. The picture is full of inspiration. The growth of these watering places during the present century has been quite phenomenal, and Congregationalism has not been behind in providing for their religious requirements. It is not the least respectable, vigorous, and aggressive form of Free Church life which is at work in our seaside resorts where multitudes of weary toilers spend a good share of each year.

The pleasing duty remains of acknowledging the kindness of innumerable friends. Pastors and deacons of churches, almost without exception, have promptly replied to my inquiries and placed at my disposal all needful church documents. The Rev. R. M. Davies, of Oldham, has continued the loan of the County Union Reports at much inconvenience to himself; the Rev. John Chater, of Southport, examined and corrected the account of the Southport churches; Mr. Alderman Rimmer, of the same town, secured for me the loan of several pictures from the Atkinson Art Gallery; the proprietor of the *Southport Guardian* generously lent me a number of blocks of "Old Southport;" the Rev. Wm. Berridge, Vicar of Lowton Parish Church, has aided me much in regard to the Mather family; and J. L. Thornely, Esq., of Liverpool, besides allowing me to use his MS. History of Gateacre Chapel has rendered valuable assistance in other respects. The kindness of the Rev. D. M. Jenkins in writing for this work the account of Welsh Congregationalism in Liverpool deserves special mention, even as does that of Mr. C. Goodyear, the courteous Librarian of Lancashire

College, in placing at my disposal the Raffles MSS. recently given to that institution by the executors of the late Dr. Raffles. Thomas Whitehead, Esq., Secretary of the Norwood Church, Liverpool; I. Oliver Jones, Esq., of Waterloo; A. B. Paton, Esq., B.A., of Crosby, have laid me under great obligations by their generous help; and to the Rev. J. Barton Bell, of Ulverston, I am very deeply indebted. He has not only read the proof sheets and compiled the Index, but he has given me many hints during the progress of the work of a very useful character. To all these friends, and many more whose names are unmentioned, my warmest thanks are given.

I deem myself fortunate in being able to complete "Lancashire Nonconformity" in the Tercentenary year of British Congregationalism, in the Jubilee year of the Lancashire College, and in the Jubilee year of one of our most honoured Lancashire ministers; and if, in conjunction with these events, the production of this work shall help to a quickened interest in our Congregational history, I shall not think the labour has been in vain.

BENJAMIN NIGHTINGALE.

Fishergate Hill, Preston,

September, 1893.

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LANCASHIRE NONCONFORMITY.

CHAPTER I.

CONGREGATIONALISM IN SOUTHPORT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

LANCASHIRE county history during the present century is of the deepest interest, because of the birth and rapid growth of many of its most important towns. Nor has that growth been more marked in any part than along its sea coast. Barrow-in-Furness and Grange-over-Sands, Morecambe and Fleetwood, Blackpool and St. Annes, Lytham and Southport, are comparatively new names. In county maps of a century ago scarcely one of them will be found, and the Lancashire coast line then presented a very different appearance from what it does to-day. And not one of those seaside resorts has now a wider and more deserved reputation than Southport. If its rival across the Ribble estuary has become everywhere known as the "Brighton of the North," Southport has obtained the title, "Montpelier of the North." Yet a hundred years ago the site which it now occupies had upon it only a few small hamlets, which were included in the general name of North Meols. At that time this part of Lancashire was considered to be as wild and inhospitable as the Arabian Desert. Early travellers like Speed, Camden, and Defoe left it unexplored, whilst Popish recusants and Royalist fugitives found here safe hiding places. In his journey along the coast from Liverpool, Defoe did not proceed farther than Formby, which he thus describes early in the last century:—

Fernby, a village, lies near the sea-side, in the marshy grounds, where they dig turf, that serves both for Fire and Candle. These marshy Grounds extend a great Way North up beyond *Eccleston* and almost up to *Preston*. On the Edge of it Eastward is *Marton Mere*, which has been very large, but much of it is now drained.¹

The antiquarian, Peck, who flourished a few years earlier, has an interesting passage respecting this coast, which is here subjoined :—

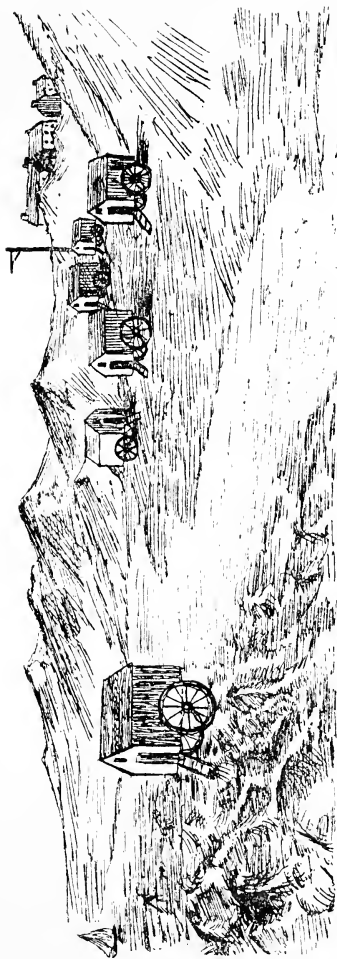
This bank, a long, shelving and sandy flat, is upon the Lancashire coast, nearly twenty miles north of Liverpool, and is about half that distance from the *Burba* bank. The beach is plain, open, and level, and at this time is much used for sea-bathing, though in Elizabeth's reign there was scarcely a house to be seen, unless we should dignify with that appellation a few straggling cabins that had been thrown up by fishermen who frequented the coast of North Meols during the fishing season, and which were formed only of loose logs of wood patched over with turf, and thatched with rushes that grew in the neighbourhood. The coast, as it retires inland, consists of a chain of barren sandhills which are holden together by the sea mat weed, and were probably then used as a rabbit warren.²

To all this may be added a very vivid description of Southport as it was in 1829, by Mr. Roby, in his legend of "The Phantom Voice" :—

It was at the close of a bright and memorable evening in October that I had carelessly flung the reins upon the neck of my horse, as I traversed the bare and almost indescribable sands skirting the Lancashire coast. On my right a succession of low sand-hills, drifted by the partial and unsteady blasts, skirted the horizon—their summits marked upon the red and lowering sky in an undulating and scarcely broken outline. Behind them I heard the vast and busy waters rolling on like the voice of the coming tempest. Here and there some rude and solitary hut rose above the red hillocks, bare and unprotected ; no object of known dimensions being near by which its true magnitude might be estimated, the eye seemed to exaggerate its form upon the mind in almost gigantic proportions. As twilight drew on the

¹ "Defoe's Tours," vol. iii., p. 250 (1748 Edition). As an item of interest in connection with this place take the following from Baines:—"The first potatoes in England are said to have been grown in Formby ; some say by a Formby man sailing in Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition ; according to another tradition, washed on the shore from a wrecked vessel" (vol. ii., p. 292, Edition 1870.)

² Copied from "Whittle's Marina," p. 8.



SOUTHPORT PROMENADE IN ITS INFANCY.

deception increased; and starting occasionally from the influence of some lacerating thought, I believe, perchance, some huge and turreted fortress, or a pile of misshapen battlements, rising beyond the hills like the grim castles of romance, or the air-built shadows of fairy-land. Night was fast closing. I was alone, out of the beaten track, amidst a desert and thinly inhabited region; a perfect stranger. I had only the superior sagacity of my steed to look to for safety and eventual deliverance from the perilous labyrinth. The way, if such it might be called, threading the mazes through a chain of low hills, and consisting only of a loose and ever shifting bed of dry sand, grew every moment more and more perplexed, I seemed to be rambling through a succession of amphitheatres formed by the sand-hills.¹

The story of the origin of the town has often been told, but it would be a serious defect in this sketch if all reference to it were omitted. Its founder was William Sutton, a native of Churchtown, described as "the best monumental mason in the parish,"² known also as the "Old Duke" because of his delight in "relating a legend of the Duke of York having passed this way on his journey to Scotland."³ It was customary on "Big Bathing Sunday" for the people who had come to the Fair at Churchtown to be taken to the shore in carts and other conveyances, and to meet their convenience William Sutton erected a small wooden hotel at South Hawes in 1792. The first portion was built mostly of wreckage gathered on the shore, and the people called it the "Duke's Folly." The hotel was closed in winter, and William Sutton continued to reside at Churchtown until 1798. What took place in the year is well told by Mr. Bland :—

In August news arrived of Nelson's victory of the Nile. According to tradition there had formerly been a bay of eleven fathoms opposite the end of what is now Duke Street, where vessels could safely anchor. In this year the Old Duke took up his residence at the "Folly," and gave a kind of "House warming." This event was made to do double duty, and Nelson's victory was recognised by naming the stream which then ran between Mrs. Walmsley's cottage and the "Folly" the NILE, and Dr. Barton, a retired Ormskirk surgeon, who presided, facetiously named the village SOUTH PORT, by dashing about him a bottle of port, in imitation of the ceremony of christening a ship. The term "Port" had reference to the bay mentioned

¹ "Traditions of Lancashire," vol. i. (Edition 1882), pp. 363, 364.

² Bland's "Annals of Southport," p. 99.

³ Ibid., p. 55.

above. Thus was founded this handsome town, which speedily became noted far and wide." ¹

The "Duke's Folly," as will appear later, is of special interest to Congregationalists, and its subsequent history is told by Whittle thus :—

Mr. Sutton removed to the inn with his family, and resided there till 1802. It was then taken by Messrs. Hilton and Leadbetter, of Wigan, for a term of twenty-one years, beginning with April, 1803. Having a general acquaintance with those visiting the place, they brought the house into great repute, calling it Southport Hotel. They only occupied the premises seven years, when Mr. Ashall, of Wigan, became its tenant. During this time it was greatly enlarged by Mr. Sutton. Mr. Ashall remained four years, and was succeeded by Mr. Trevitt, who became its inmate only two years. Mr. and Mrs. Clare, from Wigan, were the next to inhabit this place. They continued till April, 1824, when the original lease expired. Mrs. Clare gave it the title of the Original Royal Hotel. A son-in-law of Mr. Sutton's held it one year, and in April, 1825, it was occupied by Mr. Halfey.²

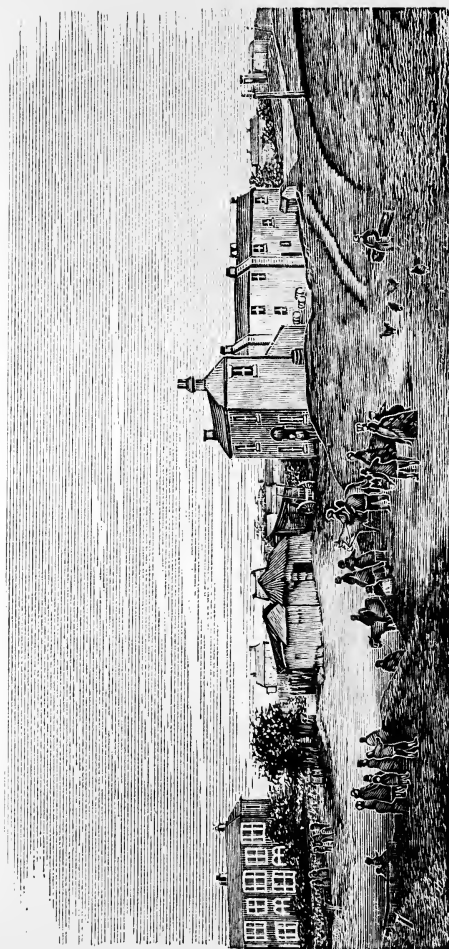
In October, 1854, the license of the Original Hotel was transferred to the Royal Hotel, and at the same time the building was demolished. The site is partly occupied by the memorial lamp at the end of Lord Street, into which a stone tablet, found at the back of the house when it was being taken down, has been built. The lettering upon it is supposed to have been Mr. Sutton's own, and the inscription reads thus :—

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD,
1792,
THIS HOUSE WAS BUILT
IN MEMORY OF D. W. SUTTON,³
of *North-meols*, who was the
first Founder & Executor of
South-Port, which was call'd his
Folly for many Years, and it proves
that his foresight was his Wisdom,
which should be remembered with
Gratitude by the LORDS of this
Manor and the Inhabitants of this
PLACE ALSO.

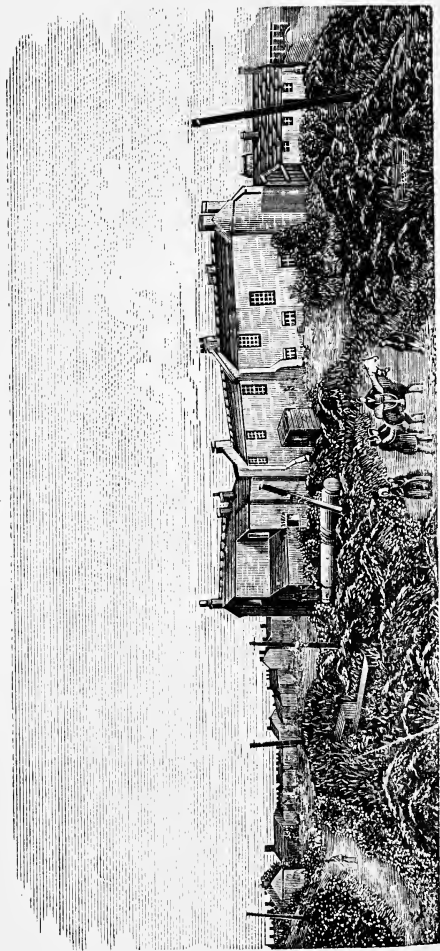
¹ "Annals of Southport," p. 56.

² "Marina," p. 12.

³ William Sutton was buried at Churchtown on the 29th of May, 1840, aged eighty-eight years.



"DUKE'S FOLLY," WHERE CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP WAS HELD IN 1812.



"DUKE'S FOLLY" (ANOTHER VIEW).

The ecclesiastical history of North Meols previous to the origin of Congregationalism at the beginning of the present century will only occupy a few sentences. North Meols Parish Church is a very ancient foundation, being given to "y^e monastery of Penwortham w^{ch} was a Cell to Evesham."¹ In 1300 the Patron was the Abbot of Evesham, and in 1594 the Register of Baptisms begins. From 1640 to 1684 the Rev. James Starkie was rector. This was a long and troublous period. It saw the rise and fall of the Commonwealth, and the enforcement of the most rigorous measures against Dissenters. By Calamy and Dr. Halley Mr. Starkie is called a Nonconformist minister. He preached the funeral sermon of the Rev. Nathaniel Heywood, in the Ormskirk Parish Church, who died December 16th, 1677, his text being Col. iii., 4. Upon this Dr. Halley remarks:—"I suppose this was the last sermon preached by a Nonconformist in the curious old church at Ormskirk."² In an account of Nathaniel Heywood, supposed to have been written by his brother, Oliver Heywood, and certainly by an intimate friend and contemporary, Mr. Starkie, who preached "an excellent sermon in the Parish Church at Ormskirk (no man forbidding him; nay, all that were any way concerned consenting"),³ is styled a Nonconformist minister.

In Heywood's diaries are also numerous references to Mr. Starkie, which prove that between himself and the Heywood family there was a close friendship, and which supports the assumption that he was a Nonconformist. Mr. Bland says that inasmuch as he was not ejected in 1662 he "must have obeyed the 'Act of Uniformity.'"⁴ That does not follow. It may be that North Meols was too isolated to attract much attention, or that Mr. Starkie could count upon the protection of influential friends. Certain it is that the ejection of some Nonconformist ministers was very temporary, that others by a little scheming managed to retain their positions; and it is equally certain that Mr. Starkie's

¹ "Notitia Cestriensis" (Chetham Society Series, vol. xxi.) p. 194.

² "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. ii., p. 190. Vide also vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

³ "The whole works of the Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A.," of which the Rev. Richard Slate was part author, vol. i., p. 481.

⁴ "Annals of Southport," p. 32.

Conformity would have brought upon him the animadversions of some of his Nonconformist friends. Instead of that, however, he is spoken of to the last with the highest respect as a Nonconformist minister. He laboured at North Meols until his death, and was buried there May 3rd, 1684, his wife, Elizabeth Starkie, having died nearly eight years before. For more than a century afterwards North Meols Parish Church was the only building for public worship in the parish, and as Mr. Starkie's ministry is its only point of contact with Nonconformity it is unnecessary to trace its history further.

II.—CHURCHTOWN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

CONGREGATIONALISM in Southport is almost as old as the town itself, and it was the first amongst the forms of religious activity to share the honours and responsibilities of service in this neighbourhood with the Established Church. It has already been stated that this part of Lancashire a century ago was quite isolated and unknown, consequently utterly benighted. It was on this account that it was selected in 1801 as the first field of operation for the "Itinerant Society," an association of Congregational ministers in Lancashire and the adjoining counties. In that year the Rev. Wm. Honeywood, who had been pastor of a church at Stone, in Staffordshire, was engaged to preach, amongst other places, at Ormskirk, Bretherton, Newburgh,¹ Lathom, and North Meols. Respecting the latter place, he writes in 1802 :—

A congregation of one hundred and twenty have assembled, some of whom have come two or three miles, even during the cold and stormy nights of winter.²

Mr. Honeywood resided at Ormskirk, where he met with much opposition. After some months he made an attempt at North Meols, in that part of the parish called South Hawes, and licensed

¹ Vide vol. iv. "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² Slate's "History of the Lancashire Congregational Union," p. 6.

a house occupied by Richard Ball, near Birkdale Mill. The prospect being somewhat encouraging, he visited the place once a fortnight, and at the request of some persons who had frequently heard him at South Hawes began to preach at Churchtown. In 1802 Mr. Honeywood, finding the work too heavy, removed to Lower Chapel, Heckmondwike. He resigned his charge there after a ministry of about twelve years, and for some time conducted a Day School. He had a numerous family, and continued resident in Heckmondwike until his death in 1820. There had been associated with him for a short time, during his ministry in Lancashire, Mr. Wm. Hacking, who "laboured gratuitously," and subsequently entered Rotherham College to be educated for the ministry.¹ Mr. Hacking, it appears, had sole charge of the Itinerancy for a short time after the removal of Mr. Honeywood. On the 11th of December, 1802, Mr. Hacking was succeeded by the Rev. George Greatbatch, being then twenty-three years of age; and as he may be considered the father of Southport Congregationalism the reader will welcome such information about him as I have been able to obtain. He was born at Shelton, in the Potteries, in October, 1779, his father being a respectable person, who had made considerable sacrifices for Evangelical Protestantism, and one of his ancestors, was a famous preacher in Cromwell's army. George Greatbatch, was converted by the preaching of the Rev. James Boden, of Hanley, whose church he joined in his seventeenth year. His first wish was to go out as a missionary in connection with the London Missionary Society, which was then newly born, and for this purpose it was proposed that he should enter Mr. Haldane's Institution at Edinburgh; but in 1802 the Rev. Wm. Roby, of Manchester, laid before him the needs of Western Lancashire, and asked him to succeed Mr. Hacking as the agent of the Itinerant Society. This eventually he did. He fixed his abode at Newburgh, the most central point of his wide field, and "occupied a part of the cottage, tenanted by one of his hearers, expecting it would be only for a month or two; but prejudice would not allow him to rent a house in the village, and he, with his increasing family, remained 'in his own hired'

¹ Vide vol. ii of "Lancashire Nonconformity."



THE REV. GEORGE GREATBATCH.

lodgings upwards of four years.”¹ The following passage will give some idea of the sort of work Mr. Greatbatch had to do at this time, together with the difficulties by which it was beset:—

His salary was fixed at £80 a year; but as it was necessary for him to keep a horse, and as wheat ranged from 21s. to 30s. per bushel, his worldly prospects were not very inviting. How, indeed, man and horse, wife and child, could exist in such circumstances is truly wonderful. His residence was fixed at Newburgh, and from thence he made daily excursions to the surrounding villages. Every evening, however, he was obliged to return to Newburgh, as at no place except Ormskirk could he obtain a bed. On many a wild night he and his pony had to struggle with the tempest, and only reached home at midnight, drenched with rain and benumbed with cold. But at the door of his lodgings—he could not then obtain a house—there was seen standing his faithful wife, with a lantern in one hand, and a can of warm bran and potatoes for the horse in the other. “And so,” said Mr. Greatbatch, “after taking my horse to the stable, feeding him, and rubbing him down with a wisp of straw and a hair brush, I entered my home exhausted, but met with such smiles of welcome as none but an affectionate wife can give.”²

In June, 1804, Mr. Roby intimated to Mr. Greatbatch that it was doubtful whether the ministerial association would be able “to support the itinerancy much longer;” and in October of the same year the intimation was repeated, “owing to the low state of the finances.” Happily, however, the churches quickened their interest in the work, and Mr. Greatbatch was kept at his post. Hitherto North Meols had been supplied once a fortnight, and Mr. Greatbatch says that, though “the congregations were generally pretty large,” the “ignorance and prejudice of the people were great,” and that he used always to return home with a heavy heart. He continues:—

In the winter of 1804 the Lord was pleased to revive his work. Many hearts were deeply impressed with the word, several young people became active, and prayer meetings were established among them. It was in the neighbourhood of Churchtown where this took place, and the house where we met together became sadly too small for us. In the spring of 1805 we took a house entirely for preaching in, and had it fitted up with a Pulpit and forms.

¹ Slate’s “History of the Lancashire Congregational Union,” p. 8.

² “Congregational Year Book” for 1865, p. 241.

This place was very soon as much too small as the other had been, and we had it enlarged early in 1806.¹

In 1805 the Rev. S. Bradley, of Manchester, visited, amongst other places, North Meols, to ascertain "the real state of the congregations," and the following is the testimony given :—

Although Mr. Bradley's visit there was quite unexpected, yet, in a few hours, at least one hundred and fifty persons were collected, who attended with peculiar seriousness to the things that were spoken. Of their own accord they have established meetings for prayer, at which fifty or sixty persons generally attend. It is worthy of notice that, from time immemorial, this has been reckoned the most uncivilised and wicked part of the country. Surely that promise has been then fulfilled.—The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It would have been worth while to have laboured for a century, only to reap such a harvest as that which there now blesses the enlightened eye.²

A century ago the relationships between the Methodists and other Free Churches were less happy than they are to-day, and Mr. Greatbatch tells of serious hindrances to his work from that quarter in the following passage :—

During all this time the writer resided at Newbro', and visited N. M. every other Lord's Day. About this time [late in 1805] some of the hearers seemed more inclined towards Arminianism, owing to conversation with some Methodists who visited the neighbourhood in the bathing season, than what they had heard. This soon got to the ears of some Methodists, particularly at Leigh, several of whom had visited N. Meols and lodged at one of our friend's houses in the bathing season. A Mr. Gibbons, who then preached at Leigh, came over to N. Meols on one of our vacant Sabbaths, and professed himself to be quite friendly disposed. Soon after, the Methodists proposed sending a preacher on every vacant Sabbath, and as the man who owned the place where we worshipped wished this to be so, it was done. Books were then put into the hands of the people evidently with a design to let them see how much they had been deceived. What these books called Calvinism appeared too shocking to look upon, and many who, if it had been possible, would have plucked out their eyes and have given them to the writer, could no longer hear him with pleasure. He came

¹ "Transactions of the Christian Society at North Meols," by the Rev. George Greatbatch, in the Church Book of Churchtown Congregational Church.

² Slate's "History of the Lancashire Congregational Union," p. 10.

among them just as usual, and never took any notice whatever of what had taken place. His situation at that time was very trying, as many living witnesses can now testify, but he wishes to say as little about it as he can help. Everything is known to God. The man who belonged to the building signified to the Methodists in the summer of 1806 his willingness for them to have the place entirely to themselves. This was immediately attended unto, and one Lord's Day Morning, when the writer came to preach as usual, he found a Methodist preacher in the place. He then retired to the house where he had preached before (John Hooton's) with such persons as chose to hear him rather than the Methodists. During the remainder of that summer and the following winter we were badly off for want of room.¹

In 1806 the Lancashire Congregational Union took the place of the Itinerant Society, and in the first Report, issued January, 1808, North Meols occupies the first and largest place. Previous, however, to the issuing of this Report three events of importance had taken place. One was the erection of a chapel at Churchtown in 1807. It was a very modest structure, cost only some £70, had sitting accommodation for less than 200, and was completed in a month's time. The following interesting account of the opening is taken from the *Evangelical Magazine* for 1807:—

Feb. 10. A small place of worship was opened at North Meols, near Ormskirk, Lancashire. Mr. Parkin, of Wigan, preached from Rom. iii., 28; and Mr. Ralph, of Liverpool, from Isa. lx., 7-8. It is about five years since the Gospel was introduced into the above parish, by means of an itinerant minister. At that time the ignorance and depravity of its inhabitants were awfully manifest. Of late many have been deeply impressed, and are now adorning the Gospel. No house being large enough to contain the hearers, they set to work to build the above of wood and clay, mingled with straw, which was completed in one month to the joy of many.²

¹ "Transactions of the Christian Society at North Meols," by the Rev. George Greatbatch, in the Church Book of the Churchtown Congregational Church.

² P. 188. The Rev. John Alexander, in memoirs of his father, the Rev. William Alexander (p. 199), humorously describes the building thus:—"It was certainly a most remarkable structure, composed of wood, clay, bricks, thatch, and slates; and exhibiting a style of architecture, original and indescribable, neither primæval, mediæval, nor modern; the first and last of its class. Its grotesque form was so unlike any style of earth architecture that no one ever ventured to describe it except a lady, who said it reminded her of Noah's ark."

The second event was the formation of a church on the day on which the chapel was opened, Messrs. Parkin and Ralph conducting the service. The following are the names of those who agreed to enter into fellowship:—George Greatbatch, Helen Hooton, Jane Platt, John Jackson, Roger Platt, John Hooton, James Hooton, and Thomas Ball. The third event was the removal of Mr. Greatbatch in July, 1807, from Newburgh to Churchtown. Here, however, as at the former place, there was some difficulty in obtaining a house, for “the influential men of the village had resolved that he should not reside there;” but at length “a friend, whose heart the Gospel had reached, converted his barn into a dwelling-house for the preacher. It was a very humble abode. The floor and walls were of clay, and the roof of straw. There were only two rooms, one of which, serving both for parlour and study, was so low that the occupant could not stand upright in it; the other, serving for kitchen, &c., was so high that nothing could be hung up in it without a ladder.”¹ The Report for 1808, previously referred to, states that Mr. Greatbatch had as preaching stations, besides Churchtown, “Crossens, Southport, Blowick, Ormskirk, Newburgh, Scarisbrick,² Bretherton, &c.,” and that at the two first-named places he had “established Sabbath schools, where children and young persons are catechised, and ignorant persons of all ages are taught to read.” In 1810 an enlargement of the chapel at Churchtown took place, and the following sentences from Mr. Greatbatch’s pen illustrates the spirit of his people in the matter:—

You will rejoice to hear that we worshipped in the chapel the first Lord’s day [in December, 1810], and being favoured with fine weather and diligent workmen, we had the whole completed in a fortnight. It is now a very comfortable place, and will hold fifty persons more than formerly. All these things rejoice my heart abundantly, but more still that it is very near being filled already on Lord’s Day Evenings.³

Mr. Greatbatch’s letters to the Union officials year by year are

¹ “Congregational Year Book” for 1865, p. 241.

² Vide vol. iv. of “Lancashire Nonconformity.”

³ “Lancashire County Union Report” for the year ending January, 1811.

rich in incidents illustrative of the power of the gospel. He tells about a fisherman being added to the church—"the first of this class who was ever known to object going out on the Lord's day for conscience' sake;" about a medical man declaring that he had been the means of doing more good in the neighbourhood "than had been done for 500 years;" and about many who had "paid off old debts who never would have paid them but for the preaching of the Gospel there." Subjoined I give a lengthy extract from one of these letters because it indicates what important changes his labours had effected, as also some of the hardships through which he had passed:—

It is eleven years this day¹ since I entered upon my labours in this part of the Lord's vineyard, and, I assure you, the circumstance brings many pleasing and painful things to my recollection. I sometimes endeavour to recall those impressions to my mind which I felt when I first saw North Meols, but I cannot. I had for some years previous to that time had a strong desire to be a missionary to the Heathen (*a cause which still lies near my heart*), but little thought there was a station for me at home, which so much resembled the ideas I had formed of an uncivilised heathen land.² I recollect the awkward gaze wherewith the people looked upon me, and the

¹ December 11th, 1813, vide ante p. 10.

² From the Rev. John Alexander's "Memoirs" I transcribe the following passage as further illustrative of the benighted condition of this now fashionable part of Lancashire: "At the beginning of this century, when Mr. Greatbatch began his itinerant ministry among them, most of the people were unable to read, very few of them possessed a Bible, and multitudes devoted the Sabbath day to the practice of all iniquity. In North Meols stalls for the sale of cakes, toys, and other articles, and for purposes of gambling, were erected every Sunday on the way to church. After the service the bellman stood on a gravestone and gave notice of the business to be transacted during the week; and the clergyman spent the evening of that holy day with his jovial companions in the alehouse. Mr. Greatbatch having urged the people to read the Bible, an effort was made to find one in some of the houses, but for some time unsuccessfully. The churchwarden, it was said, had one, but when his family were asked the question they stared with all the astonishment of ignorance, and said 'they had none such a thing.' At length, however, a copy of the New Testament was found at the bottom of a chest in a farmer's house, and the man, who was able to read, opened it towards the middle of one of the Evangelists. After he had read aloud for some time of the treatment which Christ received from the Scribes and Pharisees, one of the party, who was listening, said within himself, 'They'll kill that fellow before they have done with him,' and then asked the reader

painful feelings of my heart when I retired to a little hovel from among them. The impressions I feel at this moment are so powerful, that I can scarce believe I am in the same place now that I was then. Poor creatures! such was their ignorance and general behaviour that for a long time my heart sunk within me when I must leave my family at Newbro' to preach among them. The thought of living among them would at that time have overwhelmed me. You will perceive, sir, how unfit I should have been for a missionary station; for, compared with many such stations, mine, with all its unpleasantness, was comfort itself. Thus cast down, but not in despair, I continued to labour for upwards of two years, when the Lord was pleased to revive His work, and I was animated with pleasing prospects. . . . In a little more than two years after this pleasing revival I was sorely tried from another quarter, and He who has promised never to leave His people knows best what I endured. I then preached in a little cottage, which was very humbly fitted up with benches and a pulpit, and had been once enlarged to accommodate the pleasing numbers who flocked to hear the Word. I recollect telling Mr. Roby in a letter, when this place was first opened for preaching, that I hardly thought Solomon felt greater pleasure in dedicating his temple to God than I did when I first preached in this place. Little did I think that I must ever be forced from it; and little do my dearest friends know what I felt when this was the case. I was then seen again preaching in the house of one of the few who still chose to hear me. "Notwithstanding all these things the Lord stood with me and strengthened me," and I was enabled to go forward "preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Early in 1807 our present chapel was built, and I find, by looking at some memorandums, that we had in the summer of that year about 50 regular hearers. Soon after the opening of our chapel a church was formed, consisting of 7 persons, and in the following July I came to reside among them. In weakness and in fear and in much trembling I have continued among them to this day, and can review another year with peculiar pleasure, because it reminds me of the tender mercy of God in sparing an unworthy servant, and restoring me to health, and, I hope, to usefulness again."¹

how long it would be before they would hear of 'the mon being kilt.' He took hold of about half the leaves of the book and replied, 'He should have to read haply all that before they came to the part which told about his being kilt.' As the history was deemed to be too long to be continued then, the book was closed. The man who asked the question was afterwards converted under Mr. Greatbatch's ministry, and continued a consistent member of the church for more than forty years. In that same parish, when Mr. Honeywood and Mr. Hacking, the first itinerants, had preached a few times, one of the people said to his neighbours: 'You may think what you like, but I think they are *highwaymen*, for every time they have come to preach there has been a *storm of wind*.'" (Pages 183, 184.)

¹ "Lancashire County Union Report" for the year ending January, 1814.

A new difficulty confronted the infant church in 1816, of which Mr. Greatbatch thus writes :—

Our little chapel was built on a lease of two lives, and the Great Head of the Church has been pleased to remove both of the persons whose lives were in the lease in a few weeks, viz., Edward Hunt and Marg^t. Sutton. The last (M. Sutton) died April 24, 1816. As the place is too small for the congregation, a meeting of a few friends was held a few days before to consult on the propriety of enlarging it. What we shall do now we cannot tell, but we commit our case to the Lord. We only hope He will not leave us nor forsake us. Many in the neighbourhood are rejoicing to see us in difficulty. May we have grace to return good for their evil.

N.B.—We are now occupying our chapel with a promise from Mr. Heselth's steward that the rent shall be moderate. Make us very thankful, Lord, for all Thy goodness. Aug., 1816.¹

Mr. Greatbatch records in the Church Book an interesting account of his ordination at Orrell, in 1823, more than twenty years after he had begun ministerial work :—

1823, Dec. 5. Church meeting. This evening the pastor informed the Church that he had been ordained at Orrell, near Wigan, together with Mr. John Holgate, of that place. This solemn service had been delayed so long in his case that he felt uncomfortable, and embraced the opportunity, the place being near, and the ministers engaged being the pastors he wished for on such an occasion. Mr. Roby gave the charge from 2 Tim., iv., 12, in a most impressive manner. The following is a copy of Letters of Ordination, viz. :—

Orrell, near Wigan, Nov. 25, 1823.

This is to certify that the Rev^d. George Greatbatch was this day ordained to the pastoral office over the Church of Christ of the Independent Denomination at North Meols, in the County of Lancaster, by prayer and laying on of hands in this place.

Alex. Steill, Wigan; P. S. Charrier, Liverpool; W. Roby, Manchester; John Toothill, Rainford; Thomas Raffles, LL.D., Liverpool; James Widows, Liverpool; Wm. Turner, Hindley.²

Mr. Greatbatch continued his labours at Churchtown until 1824, when he removed to Southport, to take charge of the church which

¹ "Transactions," &c.

² Ibid.

had grown out of his labours there. His subsequent career is given in the account of that church, where he ministered until incapacitated by infirmity and age. For a few months during 1824 Mr. Giles Hoyle,¹ "a member of the Church in Fishergate, Preston, and sent out by the Church as an occasional preacher," was engaged to assist Mr. Greatbatch in his work, preaching in Scarisbrick and Halsall. When his time expired "the prevailing sentiment" was that an effort should be made to have a resident minister at Churchtown. Accordingly Mr. Greatbatch was followed at Churchtown by the Rev. Wm. Alexander, from Leigh—a man much after his spirit, who for over twenty years had been the apostle of South Lancashire Congregationalism. He received the call to Churchtown on the 10th of October, 1824, but, though he replied accepting in November following, he could not make up his mind to leave his people at Leigh until May 1st, 1825,² when he entered upon duty as Mr. Greatbatch's successor.

Mr. Alexander's efforts, like those of his predecessor, were not confined to Churchtown. It is recorded that he visited some "thirty places at various distances" for the purpose of preaching the gospel. The growing congregations which waited upon his ministry led to the erection of a new and larger building in 1830. The foundation stone was laid on October 27th of that year by

¹ Mr. Hoyle subsequently became the Congregational minister of Milnthorpe, near Carnforth. Vide "*Lancashire Nonconformity*," vol. i.

² For two or three years previous to Mr. Alexander's removal the town of Leigh was in a condition of great political excitement, which seriously affected his church. Without taking sides, he exhorted his people "to patience and peace." "I thought," says he, "that I had done it charmingly, and that I had offended nobody; because I allowed that each had a right to choose his own political principles, only that, as Christians, they ought ever to maintain a Christian spirit. My hopes were disappointed. Almost all the weavers, the poorer part especially, were offended. White hats were instantly worn as flags of defiance. One deacon threatened to resign, and it appears has resigned his office. Some of the hearers, and one member, have left the chapel. Others, who have not left, are as cross and crooked as they can be." ("*Memoirs of the Rev. Wm. Alexander*," p. 169.) Notwithstanding all this, however, between the pastor and people was a strong bond of affection, which made it difficult for Mr. Alexander to leave when the call to Churchtown came.

the Rev. George Greatbatch, and on the 21st of July, 1831, the building was opened for public worship, Dr. Raffles preaching in the morning from 2 Cor., iv., 5; and Dr. McAll in the evening from Acts xiv., 7. Other ministers assisting in the services were the Revs. John Toothill, Rainford; G. Greatbatch, Southport; W. R. Dawes, Ormskirk; J. Bramall, Patricroft; and Wm. Salt, of Lichfield.¹ The cost of the structure was about £950, which Mr. Alexander, after generously contributing himself, largely obtained in his collecting tours. During its erection "neighbouring farmers, some of them not belonging to the congregation, carted the materials free of expense."² It supplied accommodation for about 300 persons. The church about this time entered upon a new and more difficult phase of life. The multiplicity of denominational interests in the neighbourhood sometimes reduced the congregation and school very considerably, and the more earnest and Evangelical labours of the clergy did the same thing; yet Mr. Alexander welcomed this as so much gain to religion in general. On the 21st of February, 1843, he attained to the age of eighty years, and his church celebrated the event by a public meeting, when he received an address, together with a purse of fifty sovereigns. Two years afterwards he resigned, preaching farewell sermons on April 27th, 1845, and on the 23rd of January, 1855, he died within one month of his 93rd year at Southport.³ The Rev. W. G. Nevatt, from Forton,⁴ succeeded Mr. Alexander in 1847. He resigned in July, 1852, and subsequently removed to St. Helens, where he resided without charge until his death in 1877. His successor was the Rev. James Lee, M.A. He was educated at Western College, and settled first at Broseley, in Salop, whence he removed in May, 1852, to Churchtown. His ordination took place on Tuesday, September 7th, of that year, when the Rev. George Greatbatch, "the first minister of the place, opened the services of the day by reading the

¹ The Rev. Wm. Salt married Mary, sister of the Rev. George Greatbatch, August 3rd, 1809, in the North Meols Parish Church.

² "Evangelical Magazine" for 1831, p. 402.

³ For additional information respecting this good man, vide vols. i. and iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

⁴ Vide vol. i. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

scriptures and prayer," and "the venerable and Rev. W. Alexander of Southport, the second minister of the place, and now in his ninetyeth year, offered up the ordination prayer."¹ The charge was given by Dr. Halley, and the Revs. J. E. Millson, of Southport, and Richard Slate, of Preston, took other parts of the interesting services. Mr. Lee resigned in 1854, and subsequently settled at Crick, in Northamptonshire. He is now resident in Stretford, near Manchester, without charge. After his removal "an altered procedure" in regard to the church became necessary, and the Executive Committee of the County Union suggested that it should have the pastoral oversight of the minister at Southport, and that an Evangelist should be employed to labour in the several villages around. In accordance with this the Rev. William Hackett, "an efficient agent of the Manchester City Mission," was appointed in 1855. He removed to Chipping in 1861.² In the same year the Rev. William Jowett, from Martin Top,³ who had also previously been a Town Missionary, settled at Churchtown. During his ministry a manse was erected at a cost of nearly £200. In May, 1866, Mr. Jowett removed to Stanningley, in Yorkshire, and in October following the Rev. J. A. McCormack was appointed Evangelist. He remained until January, 1874, when he resigned for Boston Spa, and subsequently laboured at Reeth. In 1875 the Rev. T. E. Sweeting, educated at Bristol, and formerly of Tipping Street, Manchester, became the pastor. Through his efforts the present structure, which is the building of 1830, was considerably enlarged, the cost with decorations being about £1,000. It was reopened for worship in March, 1878. In May, 1887, Mr. Sweeting resigned, but before doing so he had inaugurated a movement for the erection of a new school. Towards this object Mr. Abraham Ward, of Southport, gave £500—"first, for the purchase of the freehold; and secondly, as a first offering to the new School fund." The present minister, the Rev. S. Firth, formerly of Middleton, began his labours here in February, 1888, and continues amidst many signs of success. The church has been a recipient from the

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1852, p. 664.

² Vide vols i. and ii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

³ Vide vol. ii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

Union Funds, one or two years excepted, since its commencement, over eighty years ago, but this year (1893) it has attained to pecuniary independence. It has rendered splendid service to Lancashire Congregationalism, and as the mother of the vigorous societies of which Southport can now boast, it will ever be deserving of generous consideration and warm affection. The present building will accommodate 440 worshippers. The old school, which is about to be superseded, is the old chapel of 1807, enlarged and improved for Sunday School purposes. Memorial stones of the new building were laid November 28th, 1892, by the Mayor of Southport and others.

It is needful to add a few sentences about one or two out-stations which were worked by the Churchtown ministers for some years. The first in importance is Crossens. It is mentioned as one of the preaching places of Mr. Greatbatch as early as 1808. Respecting the Sunday Schools here and at Churchtown, at that date it is thus recorded :—

Upwards of one hundred are taught. Several of them are young men and women, and some of them married. We have one upwards of thirty years of age, now learning his letters with as much humility as his own little boy in the same class.¹

The place was a most unpromising one for some time because of the ignorance and superstition of the people ; but the ministers held on to it, more or less, for fifty years.

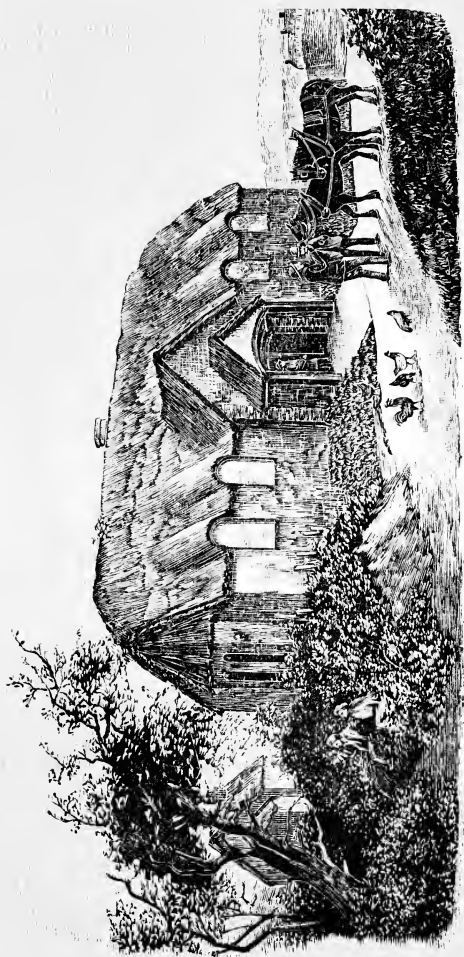
Little London was another of these preaching stations. Writing towards the end of the year 1811 Mr. Greatbatch says :—

Since the close of the bathing season I have begun to preach in a village near Southport, called Little London, and find the prospect very encouraging.²

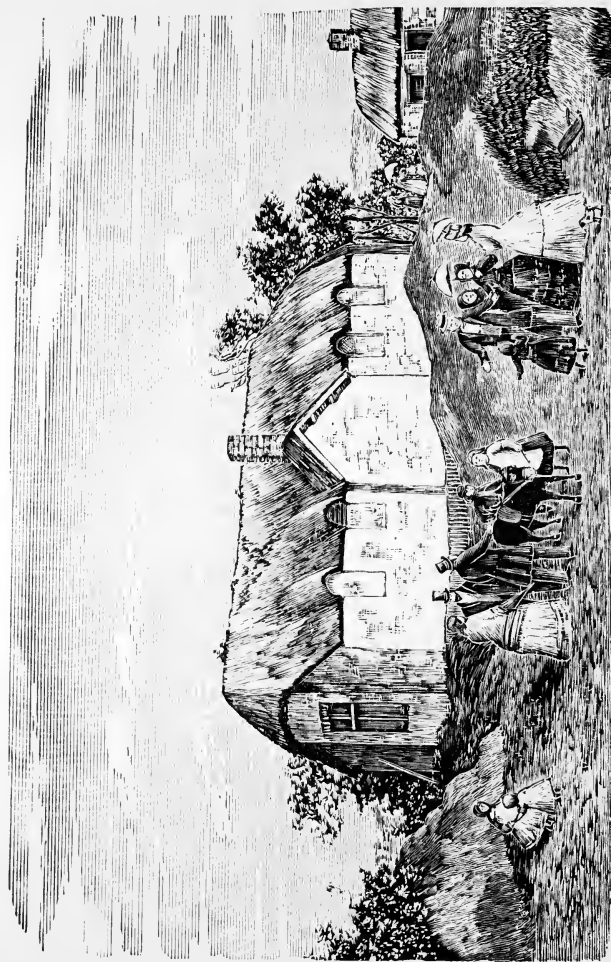
In November, 1813, the Rev. Isaac Sharp, of St. Helens, visited North Meols, and reported that he had preached at Churchtown on the Sabbath Day morning and evening, and in the afternoon at Little London to “perhaps 70” people. This village no longer

¹ “Lancashire County Union Report” for the year ending January, 1808.

² Ibid, for the year ending January, 1812.



HALL'S CHAPEL, LITTLE LONDON, SOUTHPORT. (FRONT VIEW)



HALL'S CHAPEL, LITTLE LONDON, SOUTHPORT. (BACK VIEW.)

exists, having been absorbed into the town whose growth during the last few decades has been so remarkable. Formerly there was a quaint little place of worship here known as "Hall's Chapel," whose history is so far connected with Southport Congregationalism as to claim a sentence or two here. It was built about sixty years ago by Mr. Bartin Haigh, a Liverpool merchant, who had come to reside in Southport, for the Rev. Mr. Hall, "a Church clergyman, who, having adopted Calvinistic doctrines, had sold his living and retired to Southport."¹ Mr. Haigh had been wishful that Mr. Hall should be associated with Mr. Greatbatch in the pastorate of his church, but Mr. Greatbatch declined the proposal. The chapel stood in what is now Hall Street, and the congregation, always small, eventually dwindled away to nothing. Two views of this building are here given, partly because of its primitive appearance, but mainly because it is a good specimen of the style of building which at the time of its erection was not uncommon in the neighbourhood of Southport.²

Banks, Marshside, and Rufford were also interesting stations. At the latter place there was for a brief period quite a flourishing cause.³ Indeed, the one obvious fact about the early history of this church, as of many others, is its intense missionary enthusiasm. Wherever there was a group of houses its ministers, Greatbatch and Alexander, saw therein an opportunity for preaching the gospel and extending Congregationalism.

III.—CHAPEL STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

SOMETIME previous to the year 1808 the Rev. George Greatbatch had begun to preach at Southport, then only a small village containing not more than thirty-eight inhabited houses. With what

¹ Bland's "Annals of Southport," p. 110.

² These have been photographed from paintings in the Atkinson Art Gallery, Southport, kindly lent by the Corporation. Mr. Herdman, the artist, has made them a little misleading by calling them "The Old Independent Chapel, Little London."

³ Vide vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

measure of frequency the services were held is not known, but they were held, and the date brings us within a decade of the year when the town received its name. In the summer of 1812 Mr. Greatbatch was preaching at Southport on Sunday mornings, and the place of meeting was Sutton's "Duke's Folly," then occupied by Mr. Ashall.¹ In the "County Union Report" ending January, 1813, the matter is thus referred to:—

The kindness of Mr. ASHALL, the master of one of the hotels there, who accommodated Mr. G—— with the use of his large room, for which he refused any remuneration, deserves honourable mention. Respecting his labours there, Mr. G—— writes: "We were very well attended; whether any were turned to the wisdom of the just, I cannot tell. I have reason to believe that prejudice, that foul Enemy to Souls, was, in a measure, removed from the minds of some who little thought when they came to South Port that they should hear a *Dissenting Minister*."

A story is told of these preachings in the "Original Hotel," which illustrates the respect in which Mr. Greatbatch was already held:—

He was preaching as usual at the Hotel when a dispute arose amongst some men who were drinking in the tap-room. The argument required to be clenched with fisticuffs, and rather than disturb the preacher the company adjourned to a piece of ground a short distance off, where the battle was duly fought out.²

For two years the services were conducted in this room during the summer, Mr. Ashall generously offering it free. In 1814 it is recorded that Mr. Greatbatch had not been able to preach at Southport during the season; but the Rev. Thomas Smith, of Mill Bank, who spent six weeks there with the family of Mr. Robert Spear, of Manchester, writes thus on November 1st of that year:—

I began to preach in the great room of Mr. Ashall's Hotel with encouraging prospects, but the Curate of the parish interfered, and prevented my further services there. I continued, however, to preach twice every Sabbath for six weeks, in the cottage occupied by Mr. Spear, and I hope the day will declare that it was not in vain.³

¹ Vide ante, p. 5.

² "Southport Guardian" for June 18th, 1890.

³ "Lancashire County Union Report," for the year ending January, 1815.

The Reports are silent until we come to the year 1819, when Mr. Greatbatch writes:—

I have preached at *South Port* during the summer months [1818] as often as I could; but I have often met with considerable difficulty in obtaining suitable accommodation. During last summer we had public service in a neat cottage near this place, and were under the necessity of conducting the worship in the open air, as long as the weather would permit. Our friends will rejoice to know that a Chapel is likely to be built there this spring.

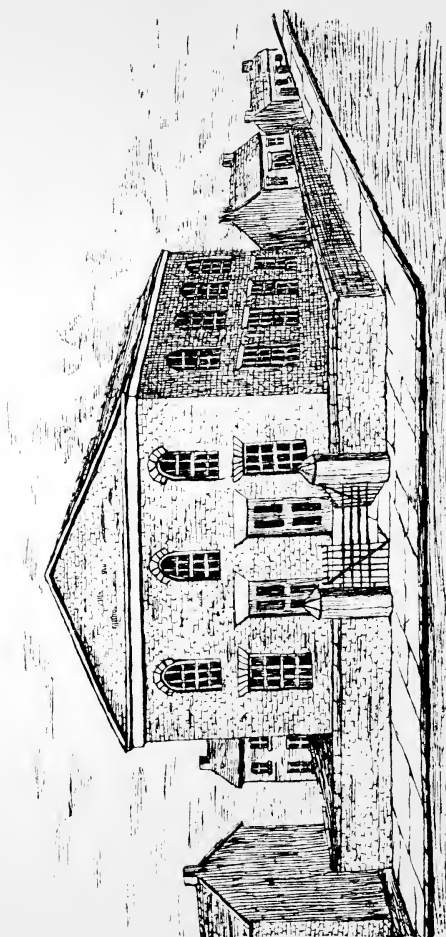
These expectations were not realised; at any rate, not immediately. The feeling against dissent was so strong on the part of the Lords of the Manor, that when application for land was made they said: "We can allow no ground to individuals who wish to build sectarian places of worship." The result was the erection of "a tabernacle of wood,¹ capable of containing 300 hearers," in the summer of 1821. "As the roof," says Mr. Chater, "was not waterproof, it was not an uncommon sight to see the congregation engaging in worship, or listening to the sermon under the shelter of umbrellas put up to keep off the rain."² How land was at length obtained, and the congregation secured better facilities for worship, Mr. Chater tells us in the following passage:—

One of the Lords of the Manor was passing the place one Sabbath with his steward, and seeing a large and respectable congregation issuing from the rude structure, stopped and asked with much surprise who these people were. He was told that they were Dissenters, to whom Mr. Greatbatch had been preaching. Grieved that he had refused land to so respectable a body of persons, he told his steward to intimate to Mr. Greatbatch that he would be willing to give him a site on which to erect a more suitable and convenient structure. The site chosen was a plot of land in East Bank Street, which was granted on very liberal terms.³

¹ This, says Mr. Bland ("Annals of Southport," p. 83), "was erected in King Street, not the street now bearing that name, but another which ran off Coronation Walk towards Duke Street."

² "History of Southport Congregationalism," by the Rev. John Chater, issued in pamphlet form, along with Guide Book, on the occasion of the visit of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1891. To this little work I am indebted for many particulars.

³ Mr. Bland tries somewhat to discredit this story, by saying the name associated with it in the tradition is that of Sir Henry Bold-Hoghton, who had not then succeeded to the estate. It is true that it was Robert Hesketh, Esq., but the confusion of name is not sufficient to stamp the whole thing as a myth.



EASTBANK STREET INDEPENDENT CHAPEL IN 1849.

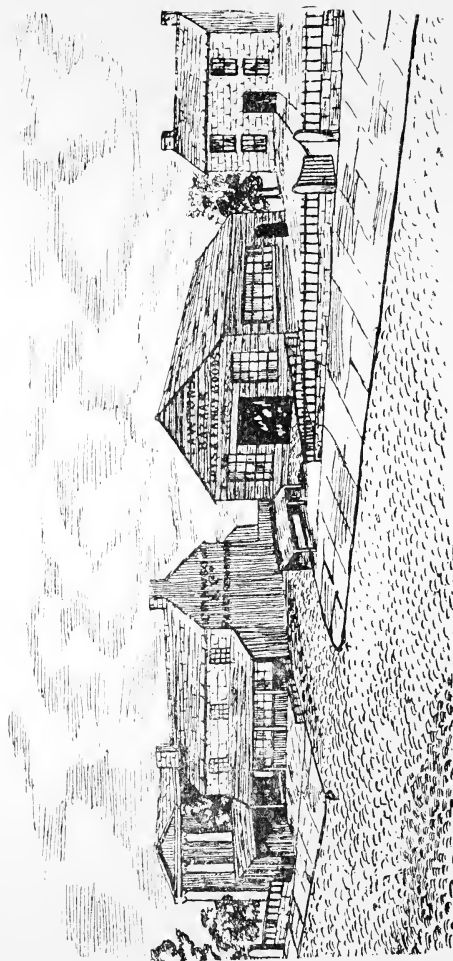
The building, which cost £700, was completed and opened for worship towards the end of 1823. It was called "The Southport Tabernacle" in honour of the humble shed in which the friends had previously met; and of the interesting services connected with the opening the following account has been preserved:—

Mr. Greatbatch having laboured full twenty years as an itinerant in the neighbourhood of Southport, parish of Meols, Lancashire, in 1821 a temporary shed was fitted up, and last summer [1823] a chapel was erected (14 yards by 16) and opened on the 18th of December. After a prayer meeting on the preceding day, three sermons were preached by Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, Revs. A. Steill, of Wigan, and W. Turner, of Hindley. The farmers in the neighbourhood showed their good will to the object by carting bricks, gratis, to the spot while the building was erecting, which caused a saving of £45.¹

Mr. Greatbatch found at Southport enough scope for all his energies, so he resigned his charge at Churchtown, and took up his residence at the former place. During more than twenty years after this he continued his ministry with all its old enthusiasm, and not without success, until failing health led to his resignation in 1847. He remained, however, a resident of the town which had grown up with himself, and towards the making of which he had done not a little, dying there on the 5th of March, 1864, at the age of eighty-four years. It deserves to be noted that he had interested himself in the social as well as religious institutions of the town, especially the "Strangers' Charity," now the "Convalescent Hospital." He was one of its earliest and warmest supporters, and during many years its Secretary. "The noble structure on the Promenade fronting the sea," says Mr. Chater, "will ever remain associated with his name, and will stand as a memorial of his self-denying efforts in the cause of philanthropy. To this day the name of Greatbatch lingers as one of the sacred and fragrant memories of the religious history of the town." Archdeacon Clarke's testimony will fitly conclude the account of this good man:—

I first became acquainted with the Rev. George Greatbatch in the year 1849, when I became vicar of Christ Church in this town, where he had been residing from almost the beginning of the century. He used to dress in the

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1824, p. 113.



LAWTON'S BAZAAR, WITH THE OLD STRANGERS' CHARITY TO THE LEFT.

old-fashioned clerical style, with knee-breeches, gaiters, and swallow-tail coat. He had a face beaming with benevolence, and endeared himself to all who knew him by his kindness of manner.¹

The Rev. John Egarr Millson was appointed minister in succession to Mr. Greatbatch. He was born at Thoones, in Yorkshire, on March 7th, 1800, his mother being "descended from an old Huguenot family of the name of Egarr, which found an asylum in England, and settled first at Sandtoft, Lincolnshire, and subsequently at Thoones Abbey." He was first designed for the ministry in the Episcopal Church, but, changing his views on church government, he entered Rotherham College in his sixteenth year to be trained for the Congregational ministry. His first settlement was Knottingley, in Yorkshire; his next Pontefract, whence he was brought by considerations of health to Southport, beginning his duties on the first Sunday in April, 1847. The success of his ministry showed itself in repeated enlargements of the chapel, until in 1866 the old building was taken down, and the present one erected. The foundation stone was laid on March 30th, by G. Hadfield, Esq., M.P., and those who assisted in the interesting proceedings were the Revs. A. M. Stalker, J. Chater, and J. E. Millson. On the 8th of June, 1867, the new building was opened for public worship with sermons by the Revs. James Parsons, York, and John Kelly, Liverpool. It contains accommodation for 1,000 persons, and is described as of the "Classic Temple style, a useful form much in vogue for Congregational chapels before the late revival of Gothic architecture." Its main entrance is in Chapel Street, and its cost was about £4,500. Attached to it is "a large schoolroom, which was at one time used for the purposes of a Day School, but now only for the large and important Sunday School which meets there every Sunday." Mr. Millson, who, especially in his early years, had several times been attacked by serious illness, was compelled by deafness and a paralytic stroke to resign his charge in 1869. He resided in Southport until his death, which took place on March 30th, 1880, at the age of eighty-one years. Previous to his retirement there had been associated with him in the pastorate for two

¹ "Southport Guardian," for June 18, 1890.

years the Rev. Edwin Walker, a student from Airedale College. He removed in 1867 to Pendleton, where he laboured until his death.¹ The Rev. William Park, from Troutbeck, Windermere, followed, Nov. 14th, 1869, and after a brief but useful ministry removed to Tollington Park, London, in 1872. His present pastorate is Croydon.² The Rev. J. T. Woodhouse, who had been educated at Cavendish College, Manchester, and had laboured some ten years at Stockport, became the successor of Mr. Park in 1873



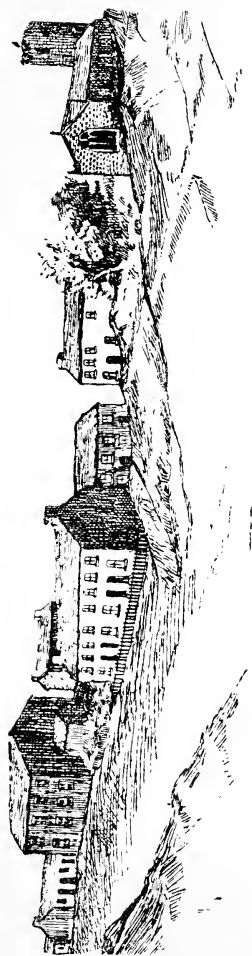
CHAPEL STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

For nineteen years Mr. Woodhouse continued a successful ministry here, during which "upwards of £26,000 was raised for all purposes by the church." He removed at the close of 1891 to Bexley, in Kent, where he now labours. The present minister, the Rev. Adam Scott, from Sale, formerly of Lancaster,³ entered upon his duties as such on Sunday, January 29th, of this year.

¹ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² Vide vol. i. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

³ Ibid.



CHAPEL STREET IN 1844.

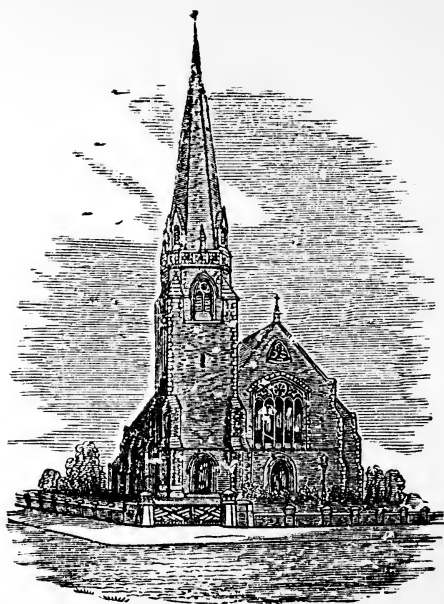
IV.—WEST END AND BIRKDALE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

THE second Congregational Church in Southport proper owes its existence mainly to the efforts of the late Mr. Alderman Boothroyd¹ and Mr. William Hinners, then of Farnworth, but who subsequently came to reside in the town. Southport was no longer a small village, hidden away amongst the sandhills, and so utterly heathen that its earliest religious workers seem at a loss for language sufficiently expressive to describe it, but a large and rapidly-growing town; and in no part of the town had its growth been more real than in the direction of Birkdale. It was in 1860 that a few members of Chapel Street Church "realised the desirability of making larger provision for the growing religious needs of the town and denomination. There was, however, some hesitation on the part of the church itself to move in this direction, and in consequence independent action was taken;" and prominent

¹ In a sketch of Southport Congregationalism a place ought to be found for Mr. Alderman Samuel Boothroyd, J.P., whose life was so largely bound up with the history of the town. He was the son of the Rev. Benjamin Boothroyd, D.D., LL.D., an eminent Congregational minister in Huddersfield, and a Hebrew scholar of considerable repute. Samuel Boothroyd was born in 1814, and when quite a youth was led to serious thought and ultimate religious decision through coming into contact with the Rev. Richard Knill, the well known missionary, who at the time was over on deputation work. In early life he came to Southport, where, from "small beginnings, he raised himself to a high position, occupying many important offices in the town, and being called to fill four times the important office of Mayor." (Rev. John Chater, in the "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" for 1886.) The church at West End is not the only memorial of his efforts to extend Congregationalism in the town, for the Trafalgar Road Church felt at his decease that a generous friend had been taken away. Outside the church, too, his influence was widely known. At the opening of the Southport Pier in 1860, the chairman of the company stated that it "had mainly originated with Mr. Boothroyd, who, with indomitable energy and perseverance, had steadily pursued his object and brought it into shape." He was known also as the "Father of the Council." His death took place on April 26th, 1886, at the age of seventy-two years, after a residence in Southport of fifty-two years. He is worthily represented by his son, Mr. Benjamin Boothroyd, until recently of the firm of Boothroyd, Sons, and Rimmer.

amongst the leaders in this new movement were the two gentlemen just named. A site for the purpose was purchased at the cost of £1,000 by Mr. Hinmiers, which he generously gave. It is at the top of Lord Street, near the entrance to Birkdale, and close by the "Duke's Folly," where Congregationalism, fifty years before, had been accustomed to hold its meetings. On September 26th, 1861, the foundation stone of the West End Congregational Church was laid by James Sidebottom, Esq., of Manchester, and the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., now of London, delivered an address. On the 20th of August following the building was opened for worship with sermons by the Revs. S. Martin, of London, and Dr. Mellor, of Halifax. It is described as of the "early decorated style of architecture, and consists of a nave 42 feet 8 inches wide and 82 feet long, together with a vestibule at the western entrance 9 feet deep, and extending the entire width of the structure." On the north side it has "a tower and spire 135 feet high," has sitting accommodation for about 750 people, and its total cost, including that for the land, was about £6,000. Towards this sum the Lancashire Bi-centenary Committee voted £700. In September, 1862, a church of nineteen members was formed, when the Rev. John Kelly, of Liverpool, presided, and "upwards of fifty members of the parent church and other Christian churches united with them in the celebration of the Lord's Supper."¹ In March, 1863, the Rev. John Chater, the son of a Congregational minister of the same name, trained at Cheshunt, and who had previously laboured a few years at Douglas, Isle of Man, was invited to the pastorate of the new church. The invitation was accepted, and Mr. Chater entered upon duty on the second Sunday in May. "In the course of time," says he, "very handsome and commodious school premises were added to the church at a cost, including the chapel-keeper's house, of £3,500. The value of the church buildings may be estimated at twelve or thirteen thousand pounds, and the money raised by the church for all purposes since its commencement [written in 1891] cannot be much less than forty thousand pounds." Mr. Chater is not only the senior minister in Southport, but in the Liverpool District he shares the seniority

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1862, p. 690.

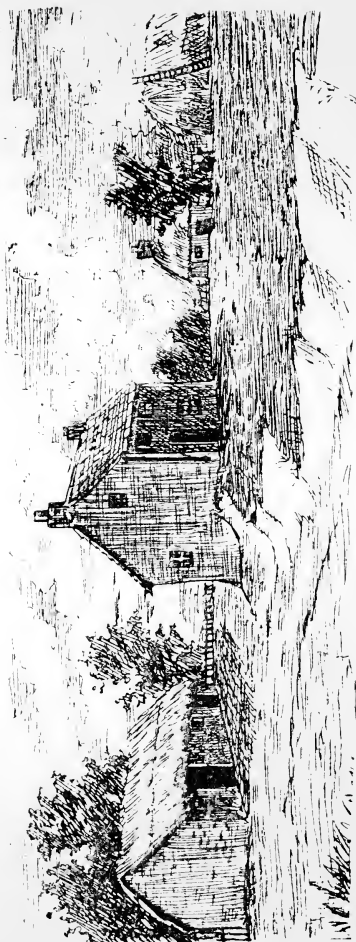


WEST END CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

with the Revs. James Allatt, of Newton-le-Willows, and George Lord, of Stanley. In 1884 the Lancashire Congregational Union placed upon him the highest honour of which it has command by inviting him to the Presidential chair. In the social and moral well-being of the town he has taken a deep interest during his nearly thirty years' residence there, and the denomination has found in him an able and earnest representative. The membership of the church, notwithstanding serious losses by withdrawals in the formation of new interests, has steadily increased.

In 1878 the West End Church purchased and put into repair a building capable of holding about 300 people, which had been erected "in connection with a school, but was suitable for a place of worship," at Trafalgar Road, Birkdale,¹ "a growing suburb of Southport." It was opened for worship on September 20th, 1878, by the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., London, and the cost of the whole was about £1,500. The Rev. J. E. Lucas, B.A., a student from Spring Hill College, took charge of the congregation in 1879. A liberal grant was obtained from the Union Funds, and the West End Church for several years contributed £100 a year to the support of the ministry. To the regret of his congregation Mr. Lucas resigned in 1883. He is now the respected Principal of Claremont College, Blackpool. On the first Sunday in July, 1884, the Rev. C. F. Moss, educated at New College, and formerly a missionary in Madagascar, began his labours here. In the early part of the following year a separate church was formed, the Revs. J. Chater, J. T. Woodhouse, and P. Darnton "lending their kind offices for the occasion." In September, 1889, Mr. Moss resigned. He is still resident in Southport, and acts as agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. During his ministry a schoolroom, vestry, and lavatory, adjoining the main building of the chapel, were erected. The present minister—the Rev. William Scott—a student from New College, entered upon his labours on the second Sunday in November, 1890. Mr. Chater appropriately says:—"This cause has not alto-

¹ It is interesting to note that the Rev. William Alexander, of Churchtown, added to the list of his preaching places Birkdale, "a village five miles distant." He continued to visit the place for two or three years.



A BIT OF OLD BIRKENHEAD.

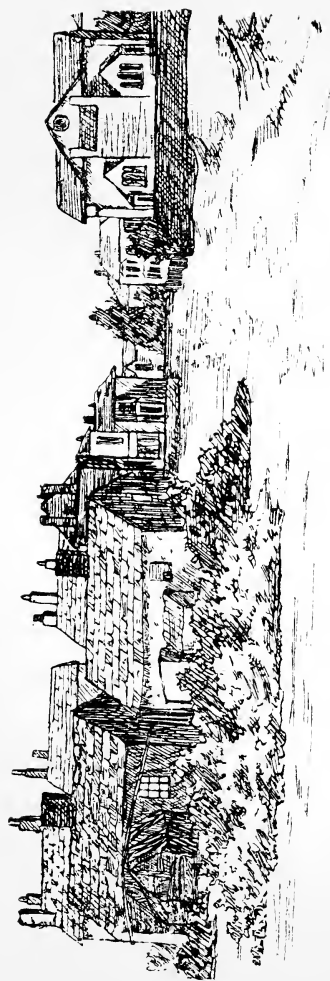
gether justified the sanguine hopes that were entertained at the beginning, but it is still hoped that in coming years a strong and flourishing church will be established in this growing and important district."

V.—PORTLAND STREET AND HAWKSHEAD STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES, TOGETHER WITH THE BOUNDARY STREET MISSION.

PORTLAND Street Congregational Church originated in 1871 with some members of the West End Church who differed from their brethren in regard to the wine to be used at the Lord's Supper. Having separated from its communion, they resolved upon the formation of a separate church in a part of Southport practically untouched at the time by Congregationalism. Meetings were held first in a room in Upper Aughton Road, Birkdale, and the church was formed on the 31st of August, 1871. The Rev. G. Hinds, from Swanage, in Dorsetshire, was at once invited to the pastorate, and on December 17th following a school chapel was opened for worship. New class rooms and infant school were added in 1884, the memorial stone of which was laid by Mr. Alderman Boothroyd, J.P. Mr. Hinds continued until 1876, when he removed to Leeds. He is now resident at Wimbledon without charge. His successor was the Rev. W. H. Dyson, a student from Airedale College, who began his labours January 7th, 1877. On the 20th of February following the present handsome church was opened for worship by the Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A., of Birmingham. The building is Early English Gothic, having a spire 120 feet high, and its sitting capacity is about 650. The school chapel is now used for both Day and Sunday School purposes, and the total cost of all the buildings is estimated at about £8,500. Towards meeting these expenses the Chapel Building Society made a grant of £300. Mr. Dyson concluded his ministry here at the end of 1884, and removed to Wakefield, where he continues to labour. His successor was the Rev. W. A. Blake, educated at Owens College, and who had previously held

pastorates at Over, Crewe, and Stockport, all in the county of Cheshire. Mr. Blake, after a two years' ministry, resigned his charge at Portland Street in 1888, and for some months devoted himself to the work of conducting Missions in connection with our churches. He is now pastor of Upper Clapton Congregational Church, London. In 1889 the present minister, Rev. E. J. Williams, educated at Lancashire College, and who had previously laboured a few years at Horbury, near Wakefield, took charge of the church. "The amount raised by this church," says Mr. Chater, "since its foundation exceeds £16,000," and in an "important district of the town a good work is still being done for the cause of Christ and the denomination."

The Congregational Church at Hawkshead Street, on the east side of the town, is the offspring of Chapel Street Church, and grew out of a cottage meeting. Ground was taken in 1879, and on October 26th, 1880, memorial stones of a school chapel were laid by Mrs. Boothroyd, Mrs. Berry, Mrs. Sidebottom, and Miss Carver; Dr. Parker, of London, preaching in the evening in Chapel Street Chapel. The building was opened for worship in May, 1881, when sermons were preached by the Revs. Dr. Bruce, of Huddersfield, and Dr. Thomson, of Manchester. The cost of the structure, which provided accommodation for 250 worshippers, was about £1,850, including the land, and towards this amount the Lancashire and Cheshire Chapel Building Society granted the sum of £250. The Rev. A. S. Welch, a student from Lancashire College, began his ministry here in August, 1882, and a separate church was formed on October 22nd of that year, consisting of thirty-eight members, of whom twenty-one were dismissed for the purpose from Chapel Street Church, together with some from West End Church. With the growth of the neighbourhood the church increased both in numbers and social influence, and in 1885 it was able to dispense with the help it had received from the Union Funds. Memorial stones of a new church, on part of the land already purchased, were laid on March 28th, 1889. It was opened for worship on January 22nd, 1890, with sermons by the Rev. C. A. Berry, of Wolverhampton. The new building "occupies an angle site at the junction of Hawkshead Street and Zetland Street." It is "designed in the style of



COTTAGES OBSTRUCTING HAWKSHEAD STREET IN 1860.

the thirteenth century, to accommodate 400 worshippers," and, including the expense of furnishing uniformly throughout, in order to make all seats free and open, cost about £3,400. The whole amount was raised before and at the opening services, so that the pastor and his people had the joy of entering into their new and more convenient house without any burden of debt. Mr. Welch still pursues his ministry here amongst an attached people, and this youngest born of the Southport Churches presents "every reason for congratulation at the success of the movement."

In concluding the account of Congregationalism in Southport proper, notice must be taken of some other matters. At Boundary Street, near to the Cemetery, is a Mission Hall, regarding which the Rev. John Chater writes thus in 1891 :—

While anxious to provide accommodation for the religious needs of the middle classes who form the bulk of the population of such a town as Southport, the Congregationalists have not been wholly neglectful of the needs and claims of the working population. Evangelistic work of some kind has for some years been carried on by most of the churches. In connection with Chapel Street, in addition to cottage meetings a mission has been established in a building in Virginia Street, the preaching in which is supplied by laymen from that church. For many years a Bible woman has been employed by the West End Church, in connection with whose work much good has been done amongst the poor and destitute classes. More recently a mission work on a much larger and more important scale has been commenced in a district of the town which has a large and growing population of the working classes. It originated in a prayer meeting established by some members of the Portland Street Congregational Church, held at first in a cottage and afterwards in an upper room. As there seemed a likelihood of a large work being done, the friends at Portland Street proposed to the Church at West End that it should join this movement. This invitation was cordially accepted on the understanding that a wider scope should at once be given to the work, that an Evangelist should be appointed and a large mission hall built. These conditions have been carried out. A committee comprising members of the two churches was appointed to take charge of the work. A very suitable Evangelist, Mr. J. T. Wilkins, was appointed, and a very commodious mission church, with all facilities for carrying on mission work has been built. The land on which the church stands was generously given to the committee by the Trustees of the Scarisbrick Estate. The building, which will accommodate about four hundred in the Central Hall, has cost about £1,500. It was opened for worship in November, 1890, the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., of London, preaching on the occasion. Much of the success of this work, it ought to be said, has been due to the zeal and



HAWKSHEAD STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

generosity of two friends connected with the two churches, Mr. Henry Ball, of Portland Street, and Mr. John Thompson, of West End. The work has already succeeded beyond the most sanguine anticipations, and promises to be one of the most successful and useful of the movements undertaken by Congregationalists in the town.

Towards the amount expended in the erection of the Mission Hall the Chapel Building Society promised £300, of which the sum of £200 has already been given, and for the support of the work here the Lancashire County Union makes a liberal grant yearly. Mr. Wilkins is still the Evangelist.

To meet future contingencies also a valuable site for a Congregational Church has been purchased at a cost of £750, in the vicinity of Hesketh Park, and near the Promenade.

Southport Congregationalism has a history which, if not long, is exceedingly pleasant reading, and full of encouragement. For the most part its extensions have been free from strife and jealousy, promoted by the willing co-operation of already existing churches, and they have been no heavy burden upon the funds of the Lancashire Congregational Union. Care has been taken, too, about the distribution of the churches: they are at a sufficient distance from each other to make success possible for the one without weakening its neighbour, whilst in their contributions to denominational objects they hold a most honourable place. As an illustration of this it may be mentioned that in connection with the fund to commemorate the Jubilee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1881 the Southport Churches raised a sum by which all debts resting at the time upon those churches, amounting to £3,424, were removed.

VI.—CONGREGATIONALISM AT FORMBY AND AINSDALE, TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF DRUMMERSDALE CHAPEL, SCARISBRICK.

THE Congregational interests at these two places, which are on the sea coast a few miles out of Southport, in the direction of Liverpool, are illustrations of the aggressive spirit of the Southport

Churches. But before sketching their history a few sentences may be devoted to a much earlier Congregational movement, which covered a wide area in this neighbourhood. In the summer of 1816 the Rev. George Greatbatch often preached at Formby, and concerning this there is the following interesting statement in the "Lancashire County Union Report" for 1817 :—

If he can procure a place to preach in, he hopes it will become a beautiful link in connecting the coast between *Liverpool* and *Poulton*, and that the exertions in the *Filde* may fill up the chasm between the latter place and Lancaster. Thus, some progress will be made towards that desirable consummation when our island shall be girt about with salvation.

In 1832 we read :—

The friends at *Church Town* and *Southport*, observing the very ignorant and destitute state of the population on the sea coast, from *North Meols* to *Litherland*, a tract of country comprising four whole parishes, with parts of others, and twenty villages and hamlets, inhabited by not less than 14,000 souls, have so far, *at their own expense*, employed a young man, who has proved himself every way fitted for the work, in going about distributing tracts, reading the Scriptures, and conversing and praying in those families to which he can obtain access.

The young man referred to in the preceding extract was, I imagine, Mr. Robert Abram, who two years afterwards is mentioned as having charge of the Formby District, which included preaching stations at Formby, Ainsdale, Altcar, Lydiate, Down Holland, Haskayne, Halsall, Bickerstaff and Sephton, Maghull, Great Crosby, and Thornton. In the autumn of 1837 Mr. Abram removed to Martin Top, and for many years afterwards exercised a useful Congregational ministry in different parts of the county.¹ With his removal preaching had to be confined to Lydiate, which from the first had been the most promising of the stations in the itinerancy, and this was mainly by supplies from Liverpool. The Rev. Edwin Robinson was appointed Mr. Abram's successor in July, 1838, and he "discharged the duties of an

¹ The reader is referred to vol. ii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity" for further information respecting this worthy man who was much after the spirit of Mr. Greatbatch, to whom he owed his introduction to the Congregational ministry.

evangelist" at Lydiate, Haskayne, Down Holland, Barton, Halsall, Maghull, Aughton, Altcar, Little Altcar, and Formby. Kirby, Melling, and Simonswood were added the following year. Concerning the whole district, Mr Robinson says: "I labour in a wilderness in which the bones are very dry." In 1841 he writes that three of the Lydiate people "now stand proposed as candidates for communion with the church at Ormskirk." In that year

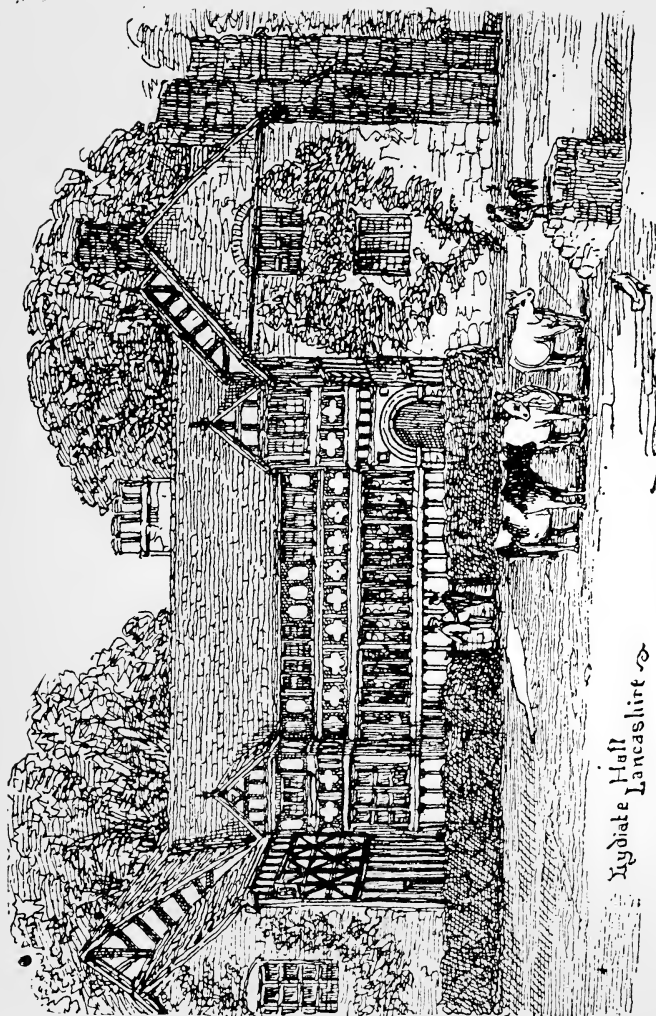


PORCH TO LYDIATE CHAPEL, CALLED LYDIATE ABBEY.

Mr. Robinson removed to Park Chapel, Ramsbottom, where he laboured until December, 1844, when he resigned.¹ He sought no other charge, and removed to Manchester, where he gave himself up to commercial life. Subsequently he went to Sydney where he built up an important business, and died in May, 1892, "one month short of the advanced age of 89." Mr. Barrett² was chosen to

¹ Vide vol. iii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² The Rev. John Barrett, I imagine, who when a young man "entered into public religious work in the Liverpool Town Mission, but soon after undertook the charge of home mission stations in a country district not far from



Wydale Hall
Lancashire

A RELIC OF THE WARS OF THE ROSES.

succeed Mr. Robinson, and the station came to be known as the Kirby Itinerancy. He removed about 1845, and shortly after the station seems to have been abandoned.

As already indicated, the second and more successful attempt to introduce Congregationalism into this district, like the first, originated with the Southport Churches. A committee representing these churches was formed, and work commenced in the Ainsdale Assembly Room on September 20th, 1877. On September 24th of the following year, the foundation stone of a school chapel was laid by Mr. Alderman Boothroyd, and on May 5th, 1879, the building was opened, Dr. Macfadyen, of Manchester, being the preacher. The accommodation was for 250 persons, the cost about £800, towards which the Chapel Building Society voted the sum of £200. The Rev. S. H. France, educated at Airedale College, and who had laboured a few years at Thirsk, in Yorkshire, took charge of the congregation in 1880. In 1881 work was commenced in the Formby Assembly Room, and on October 6th, 1882, memorial stones of a school chapel were laid, the Rev. Samuel Pearson, M.A., of Liverpool, giving the address on the occasion. The building was opened free of debt on Thursday, April 5th, 1883, by the Rev. W. J. Woods, B.A., of Manchester. In the evening, at a public meeting presided over by Wm. Dixon, Esq., addresses were given by the Revs. John Chater, T. Hodgkinson, W. L. Roberts, S. H. France, Councillor Rimmer, and others. The opening services were continued on Sunday, April 8th, when the Revs. John Chater and W. H. Dyson were the preachers; and on Sunday, April 15th, when the Rev. S. H. France conducted the services. The building is described as "exceedingly pretty and commodious," erected in the "rear part of a piece of land held on lease from Mr. Weld-Blundell, sufficient room being reserved in front for the erection of a larger structure when the growth of the neighbourhood demands it." It has sitting capacity for some 250 people, and cost about £800. Mr. France had charge of the two congregations until his Liverpool." He was at Little Lever, near Bolton, in July, 1848, and subsequently held Congregational pastorates at Sedgley and Coleshill (vide vol. iii. of "*Lancashire Nonconformity*" and "*Congregational Year Book*" for 1885, p. 179.

resignation in 1886. Subsequently he went out to Berbice to become the minister of a large church there, where he died suddenly on the 25th of February, 1888, at the early age of thirty-five years.¹

After the removal of Mr. France, the two congregations became separate, and the Rev. F. Smith, then resident in Southport, took charge of Ainsdale towards the end of 1886. He was educated at New College, London, and had previously laboured at Springhead, near Oldham, Liverpool, Sidcup in Kent, and Glasgow. "Additions and improvements to building," says Mr. Chater, "have been made from time to time at a cost of £300, and at the present it is one of the most elegant places of worship in the district." Mr. Smith, who had served the congregation faithfully not only in the matter of work, but by generous gifts, was compelled to resign on account of failing health in 1891. His successor, the Rev. J. W. McEwen, M.A., a student from the Edinburgh Theological Hall, entered upon duty the same year, and is still the pastor. No separate church has yet been formed, and the County Union makes a yearly grant to the station.

The congregation at Formby, after the separation from Ainsdale, sought and secured the services of the Rev. W. Elstub as pastor. He received his ministerial training at Airedale College, and previously had held pastorates at Hull, Market Weighton, and Wakefield, in Yorkshire. He began his labours at Formby in May, 1887. A church was formed on the fourth Sunday in January, 1888, when fifty persons were enrolled as members, the Southport ministers conducting "a deeply interesting service." A larger building became necessary, and, pending its erection, an iron chapel, capable of seating about 500 people, was set up at a cost of £752. Mr. Elstub removed to St. Annes-on-the-Sea in 1892, but before doing so the Formby Church had attained to independence of the Union Funds. The present minister, the Rev. W. J. Humberstone, from Richmond, in Yorkshire, entered upon his labours here on the first Sunday in January, 1893.

¹ It may interest the reader to know that the Rev. L. Crookall, formerly of Egerton, near Bolton, assumed the pastorate at Berbice, rendered vacant by Mr. France's death, who was his brother-in-law. (Vide vol. iii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity.")

At Drummersdale, Scarisbrick, for more than half a century there has existed an interesting religious movement, which, though not distinctly Congregational, is sufficiently so to deserve notice here. Fifty-five years ago the scattered population of the Township of Scarisbrick was largely Roman Catholic, and not of high moral character. It was about this time that a youth named Richard Sephton, son of a farmer, and a member of the Congregational Church at Ormskirk, began to gather a few children together and teach them on Sundays. The first meeting place was a kitchen, and as this became too small they moved into a gig house and then into his father's farm, where the scholars numbered about ninety. Mr. Sephton tells a good story of one of his early helpers. John Halsall was a man who had enjoyed no educational advantages, but who was possessed of much natural shrewdness. Being set to teach a class of lads, he protested: "I cannot read myself." "Never mind, you'll get on," was the reply. The start was not very promising, for it was noticed that he held his Bible *upside down* to read. A lad laughingly pointed this out, and, with perfect good humour and self possession, John said: "There's a sharp lad! Of course its upside down." The lesson proceeded. "What letter is that?" he asked one day. "A." "Is he right?" "Yes!" "How many say that is A?" All said so. "That's right," said John. "Now go on." And they went on, he teaching them what he knew of Christ, while they were unconsciously teaching him first the alphabet and afterwards how to read. Mr. Sephton further says: "I was never in a Sunday School before I started this one. We could not sing, as we did not know a tune. So we *made a tune* and sang out of "Watts's Divine Songs" always the same hymn—

Lord I ascribe it to thy grace,
And not to chance as others do.

Mr. Charles Scarisbrick, the squire, himself a Roman Catholic, one day sent for young Sephton, and said:—"I can trace an improvement in those village lads since you began to teach them. Now, go on. If any one interferes with you let me know. And if you need a schoolroom you shall have land and brick to build one." A modest structure was erected in 1843, and Mr. Sephton's account of how

this came about is interesting. "One day," says he, "I was with my father, looking at a small plot of land that he said he would sow with corn. I said 'it would give potatoes well.' He said, 'I will give it you for spending money.' We planted the potatoes, they came up, father looked at them, and said he never saw potatoes look so well. While they were growing we were converting the cart-shed into a chapel. They were a very large yield, and were sold for £21 10s., and this amount, with what was given at the opening service, paid all the cost of the building, and we were not a shilling too little, nor a shilling too much." Several generations of scholars have passed through this little school, and are filling useful positions in different parts of the country, whilst some have found homes in America, Australia, and New Zealand. In addition to the Sunday School, divine service has been conducted weekly, generally by lay preachers from Liverpool and Southport. For some years the Rev. G. Compton Smith, M.A., formerly a deacon of the West End Congregational Church, Southport, went over to Scarisbrick periodically and administered the Lord's Supper, but during the last three years the Rev. A. S. Welch,¹ and other friends from the Hawkshead Street Church have been closely in touch with the people, and have given them such help as they have needed. Mr. Sephton, in this quiet out-of-the-way place, has worthily served the interests of Evangelical religion. During all the years, so long as strength permitted, he attended every service and acted as superintendent, deacon, and occasional minister for much of that time. It is probable that ere long this interesting little cause will be even more closely allied with Congregationalism than as yet it has been.

¹ It is to Mr. Welch, who takes deep interest in this movement, that I am indebted for the particulars of its history.

CHAPTER II.

NONCONFORMITY IN LIVERPOOL.

I.—LIVERPOOL AS IT WAS; AND EARLY NONCONFORMITY.

NONCONFORMITY in Liverpool has a history which is as honourable as it is long. Its beginnings make their appearance about the commencement of the seventeenth century, when this far-famed city on the Mersey was very different in appearance from what it is to-day. Then it was little more than a good-sized village, without harbour and ships of note, and was "considered but as a creek of the port of Chester."¹ Its growth, like most other Lancashire sea-side towns, has been rapid. Leland, writing during the reign of Henry the Eighth, says:—

Lyrpole, alias Lyverpoole, a *paved* towne, heth but a chapel, Walton, a iiii miles off, not far from the Se is parochie church. The King hath a castelet ther, and the Erle of Darbe hath a stone house ther. Irish marchaunts come much thither as to a good *haven*. Good marchandis at Lyrpool, and much Yrish yarn that Manchester men do by ther. At Lyrpole is *smaule* custume pay^d that *causith* marchauntes to resorte.²

The passage just cited seems to suggest that the "towne," in the time of the writer, was of considerable importance, but how exceedingly miniature it was will be evident from the fact that it "contained only 138 householders and cottagers." A few years after, during Elizabeth's reign, it is described as "her Majesty's poor, decayed toun."³ An improvement appears to have set in

¹ Baines's "History of Lancashire," vol. ii., p. 302 (Edition 1870).

² Britton's "Beauties of England and Wales," vol. ix., p. 183.

³ At this time there were not more than twelve barks, estimated at 223 tons burden, with seventy-five men, belonging to the port.

when Camden wrote about the end of the sixteenth century. His description is interesting, because it gives also a brief history of the place :—

The Mersey spreading, and presently contracting its stream from Warrington, falls into the ocean with a wide channel very convenient for trade, where opens to view Litherpole, commonly called Lirpoole from a water extending like a pool, according to the common opinion, where is the most convenient and most frequented passage to Ireland; a town more famous for its beauty and populousness than for its antiquity; its name occurs in no ancient writer, except that Roger of Poitou, who was lord, as then stated, of Lancaster, built a castle here, the custody of which has now for a long time belonged to the noble and knightly family of Molineux, whose chief seat is in the neighbourhood of Sefton, which Roger, aforesaid, in the early Norman times, gave to Vivian de Molineux. This Roger held, as appears by Domesday book, all the lands between the rivers Ribble and Mersey.¹

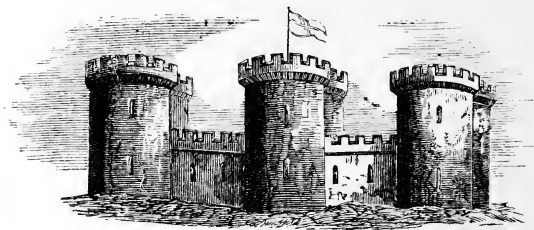
With its sister towns of the county Liverpool shared in the Civil War, which ended in the establishment of the Commonwealth in England—with Cromwell as Protector. Its siege and capture by Prince Rupert, in 1644, when it was held in the interest of Parliament by Colonel Moore, M.P., form not the least romantic episode in that grim struggle for supremacy between the king and the people. The following account by Seacombe ("Memoirs of the House of Stanley," published in 1741) is here inserted partly because it gives some idea of the appearance and extent of the town at that date, as well as because of its own intrinsic interest.

Upon the Prince's arrival near *Liverpool*, he was inform'd that it was well fortified with a strong and high mud wall, and a ditch of twelve yards wide, and near three yards deep, inclosing the town from the *East* end of the *Street* called *Dale Street*, and so *Northward* to the River, and from *Dale Street*-end *East*, and *South East*, being a low, marshy ground, was covered with water from the *River*, and Batteries erected within to cover and guard against all Passage over or thro' that water. All the *Street Ends* to the *River* were shut up, and those to the Land inclosed with strong gates, defended by Cannon: all useless² women and children were sent to their Friends in the Country, on both sides the *River*. There was also a strong Castle on the

¹ "Britannia," copied from Baines's "History of Lancashire," vol ii., p. 300 (Edition 1870).

² These old writers had odd ways of putting things.

South, surrounded with a Ditch of twelve yards wide and ten yards deep, from which to the *River* was a cover'd Way, thro' which the Ditch was fill'd with water, and by which, when the Tide was out they brought in men, Provisions, and Stores of War, as occasion requir'd. In and upon this Castle were planted many Cannon, as well to annoy the Besiegers at a Distance, as to cover the Ships in the Harbour, which was then where the Dock is now, and at the Entrance whereof was a Fort of eight guns to guard that, and to prevent all Passages by the *River* side at low water. Besides all these advantages of Defence, there was one most unhappy circumstance to many distressed Families, but very lucky to the Besieged; for in those distracted confused, and rebellious Times, the *English Protestants* had great numbers of them been massacred in *Ireland*, and those who escap'd with Life obliged to fly to *England* for refuge and safety, bringing with them all the Effects they possibly cou'd for support, amongst which was great quantities of wool. The Besieged covered the tops of their Mud Walls with bags of wool, which saved



LIVERPOOL CASTLE IN THE 17TH CENTURY.

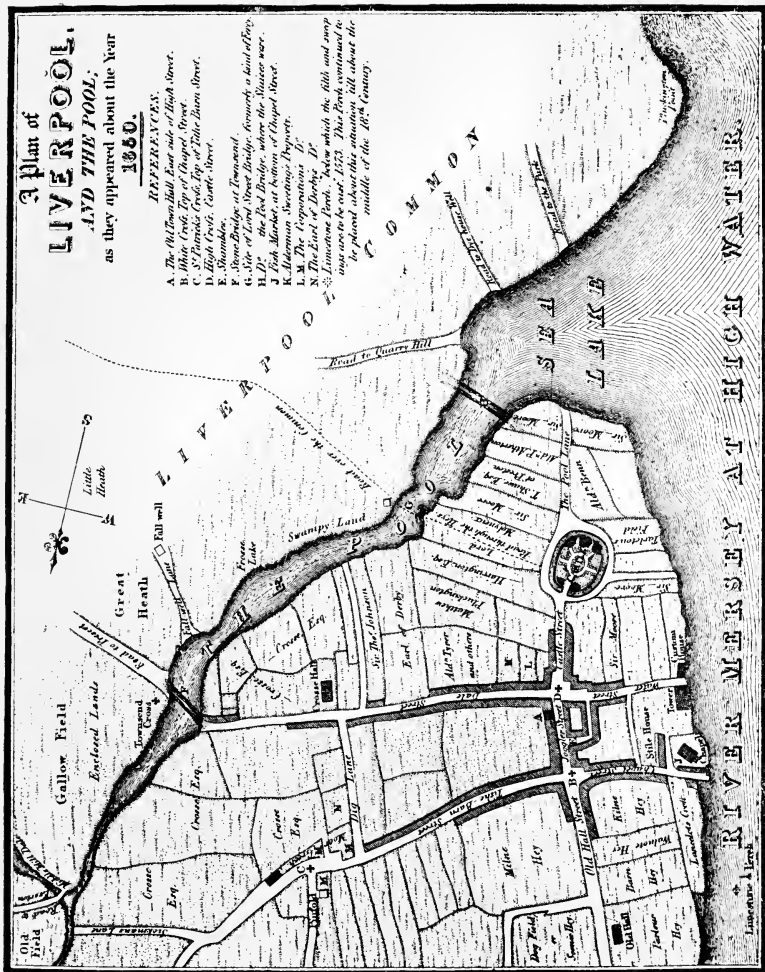
them greatly from the small shot of the Besiegers. The Garrison within was numerous, and stor'd with Arms and Ammunition of all kinds, and in this state thought themselves able to give the Prince a hearty welcome on his visitation of them.

Liverpool is scituate upon a ridge of land on the *East* side of the *River Mersey*, running from the *North* side of the Town for about a mile to the *South* side thereof, where it falls to a flat; but in its form for the most part declines on the *West* side to the River, and on the *East* side to the country. The Town was at that time but small, either in appearance or reality, to what it is now. However, the Fortifications of it now included most of all the Town as it is at present. The River is about a mile broad from bank to bank, and of depth sufficient for reception of the largest ships up to the Town. The Country near it is high land, which renders it unfit to sustain a long Siege. Which made the Prince, upon his near approach and view of the Town, being unacquainted with its situation (one side declining to the Country and the

A Plan of LIVERPOOL, AND THE POOL; as they appeared about the Year 1660.

REFERENCES.

- A. The Old Town Hall, East side of Church Street.
- B. White Cross, Top of Chapel Street.
- C. St Patrick's Cross, Top of Elder Street.
- D. Right Cross, Church Street.
- E. The Cross, Church Street.
- F. Stone Bridge at Incewood.
- G. Site of Lord Street Bridge, formerly a kind of Ferry.
- H. D. the Foot Bridge, where the Wharves were.
- I. Fish Market, at bottom of Chapel Street.
- K. Alderman Sweeting's Dyewet.
- L. M. The Tugboat's Dock.
- N. The East of Derby D.
- O. Luncheon Dock, below which the fill and ramp was erected over 1753. This Dock continued to be placed with the same name till about the middle of the 18th century.



Copied from the Original Drawing as deposited in the Court of the Duchy of Lancaster and from other authentic and original documents.
for The Stranger in Liverpool. Published by Thos. Kaye, 1829.

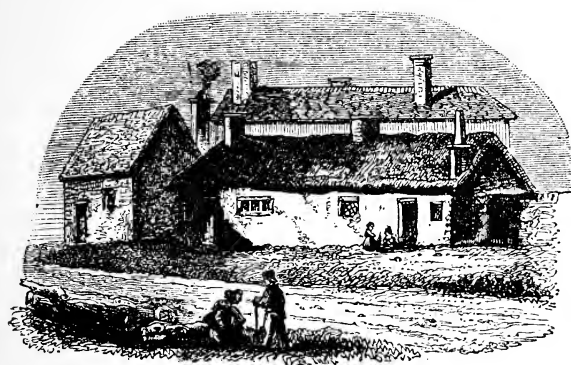
other to the river, as above, so that he cou'd see but little of it), to compare it to a Crow nest ; but e'er he became Master of it, he said it might have been an *Eagle's* nest or a one of *Lyons*. He fix'd his main Camp round the *Beacon*, a large mile from the Town, and his officers in the villages near it ; from whence he brought a Detachment every day to open the Trenches and erect Batteries. The latter were mostly placed upon the ridge of ground running from the *North* of Townsend Mill to the present Copper Works and Mills, and the Trenches in the lower ground under them. He relieved his Trenches and Batteries from his Camp twice every twenty-four hours, and from thence he battered the Town, and attacked the Besieged and their works very frequently by way of Storm, but was always repulsed with great slaughter of his *Soldiers* for the space of a month or near it, when some say the Besieged on the *North* side deserted the Works and guard of them ; but others I have heard say that Collonel *Moor*, observing they wou'd be taken, he, to ingratiate himself with the Prince, and to save his House and Effects at *Bank Hall* near it, gave direction to the *Soldiers* to retreat from those works ; but be that as it will, deserted they were on the *North* side, and the Prince's Army entered the Town on that side about three in the morning, and put all to the sword they met with, from their entrance to the High Cross, which stood where the Exchange is now ; and there they found a regiment of Soldiers from the Castle drawn up in battle array, who beat a parly, and demanded quarter ; which on treaty they were allowed, but without any other articles than Prisoners of War, and Surrender of the Castle, with their Persons and arms ; upon which they were all sent to the *Tower*, *Saint Nichols's Church*, &c., the Prince taking possession of the Castle himself.¹

The headquarters of Prince Rupert were fixed at Everton, then a small village lying to the north of the town, and the house which he used is thus identified and described by a writer of fifty years ago :—

The Everton-road passes along the western side of the Necropolis leading into Everton village—an agreeable place, out of the bustle of Liverpool—and here, down what is called Rupert-place, yet stands the cottage occupied by Prince Rupert as his head-quarters during the siege of Liverpool in 1644. It consists of one story, and most probably stood alone in the fields at that period, though now surrounded by dwellings. It is whitewashed, and appears to be carefully preserved as a relic of the contest for absolute power in this part of the country between a monarch and his people.²

¹ "Civil War Tracts" (Chetham Society publications, vol. ii.), pp. 199-201.

² "Lancaster Illustrated," p. 119.



HOUSE AT EVERTON, THE HEADQUARTERS OF PRINCE RUPERT.

The comparative unimportance of the town in the seventeenth century will be further evident from the fact that it had to wait until 1699 before it was "elevated to the rank of an independent parish." Previous to this time it was only a chapelry belonging to Walton-on-the-Hill. Liverpool Nonconformity is closely associated with the chapel of St. Nicholas, of very ancient date, and near which "stood a statue of St. Nicholas, a tutelary deity of the maritime part of the place, to which seafaring people usually made a peace offering previous to their embarking, and another as a wave offering on their return for the successful issue of the voyage."¹

On the 20th of October, 1622, the Corporation of Liverpool appoint—

James Hyatt, Batchelor of Divinity and preacher of God's word, and covenant to provide him a house and to pay him the some of tenn pounds curraunt English money at the feasts of the Annunciacion of o^r blessed ladie St. Mary the virgine and St. Michell the Archannngell, by even porcons. In consideracon whereof the said James Hyatt doth assume and promise that he will continue preacher and lecturer at Liv'pool soe longe as the Lord Bushoppe of Chester for the time beinge, and John Parker, of London, Esquier, or his executors, shall not enforce the said James Hyatt to leave his living at Liv'poole. Or els that he, the said James Hyatt, be not p'ferred unto some p'sonage or vicarage of his owne.²

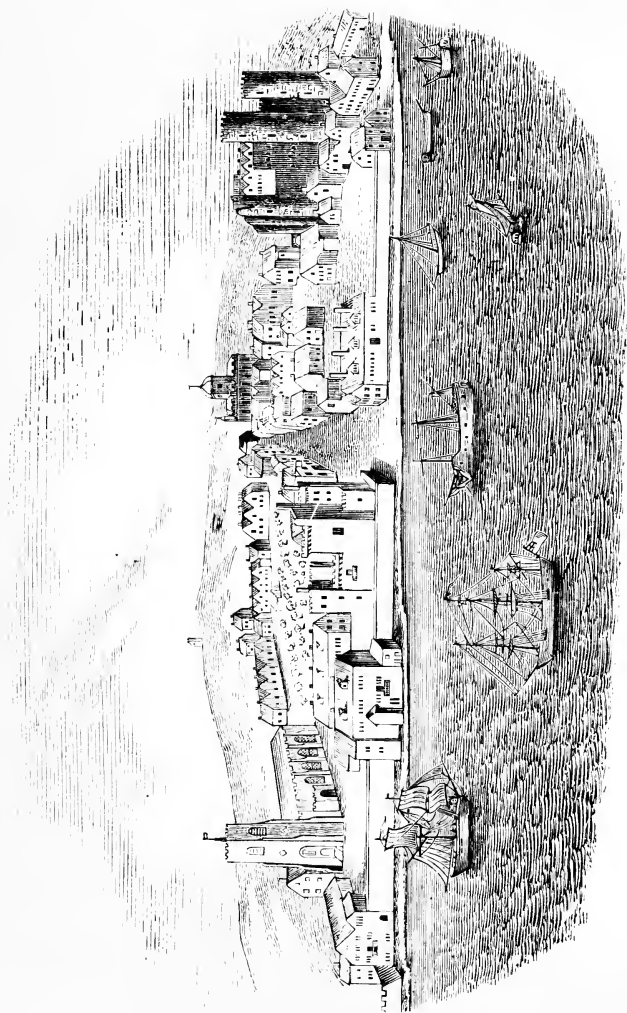
The following from the Corporation minutes fixes the place of his abode :—

At an assemblie it was conceived and agreed y^t Mr. Hyatt shall enjoy dureing the term of fyve years that p' te of the Old Hall³ whereof he is now possessed, and being the inheritance of Edward Moore, Esquier, and the said

¹ Britton's "Beauties of England and Wales," vol. ix., p. 202.

² Sir J. A. Picton's "Municipal Archives," vol. i., p. 197.

³ The Old Hall, "an ancient house formerly called More Hall," was the town residence of the Moore family, their country mansion being at Bank Hall, in Kirkdale. The declining fortunes of the family led to its being leased in 1667 to Thomas Andow, mayor in 1665, and its subsequent history is thus given by Sir J. A. Picton :—"The Old Hall continued to flourish, patched up, repaired, and partially rebuilt, though cribbed and shorn of its pleasant fields by the progress of building. About 1712 it passed, with the remainder of the Moore estates, into the possession of the Earl of Derby, and down to the



LIVERPOOL IN 1680.

Maior and Aldermen doe undertake for to discharge the rente thereof yerely, beinge foure pounds thirteene shillings and four pence. And the said Maior, Aldermen, and Comon Councell doe undertake for them, and their successors, that after the expiracon of the said terme of fyve yeres they will pay unto the said Mr. Hyatt yerely the some of fourteene pounds for soe long tyme as the said Mr. Hyatt shall continue his teachinge and ministrie at Liv'poole. To be paid at such tymes and feasts as the said Mr. Hyatt is to be paid X^{li} yerly dureinge the said fyve yeres w^{ch} he is to hold the Old Hall.¹

Mr. Hyatt did not, however, remain at Liverpool, "the said fyve yeres;" for about 1625 he became rector of Croston, near Preston. There he laboured until his death, which occurred at Preston, Monday, April 6th, 1663, in the 73rd year of his age. The Rev. Henry Newcome, M.A., of Manchester, an intimate friend, was "most earnestly sent for" by Mrs. Hyatt, whilst her husband "lay sicke at Preston;" and in his diary under date April 7th, 1663, Mr. Newcome thus writes:—

I rose early, & tooke horse before 7. It proved a fine day. Wee got to Chorley by 10, but y^r I heard y^t Mr. Hiet dyed y^e day before at Preston, and so I turned over tow: Croston, called at my friend's house, n^r Eccleston, and staid y^r 2 houres or more. It was someth: y^t y^{nce} I wrot to Mr. Illingw: Min. at Camb: about Edward's removal to Oxeford, to aske him to get a certificate for his time in Camb: Wee met y^e corpse from Preston, & came to Croston, wth y^m about night. Mr. Loe lay in y^e chamber wth mee, who told mee many thgs of y^e pretious man of God y^t is gone, haveinge lived wth him.²

early part of the nineteenth century it was always occupied by some branch of the family. In 1766 it was the residence of the Hon. and Rev. John Stanley, one of the rectors, and after his decease was occupied by his widow to the time of her death, about 1804. In Perry's map of 1769 it is shown as a large house with centre and wings, set back from the street; and, though built up on the north and south sides by the houses fronting Union and Queen streets, still possessed of a pleasant garden at the back. Thirty-four years later, in 1803, according to Horwood's map, it had undergone little change. When the street was widened, under the Improvement Act of 1820, a portion of the Hall was taken down, and some years afterwards the remainder was leased and demolished, to be rebuilt for commercial purposes. Not far from the Old Hall, somewhere about the corner of Queen Street, the ancient fortifications crossed the line of Old Hall Street ("Memorials of Liverpool," vol. ii., p. 38; vide also "The Moore Rental," being vol. xii. of the Chetham Society Series).

¹ Sir J. A. Picton's "Municipal Archives," vol. i., p. 201.

² "Diary" (Chetham Society Series, vol. xviii.), p. 175.

Mr. Hyatt was interred in Croston Church the following day, when his "old friend & neighbour," the Rev. Henry Welch, of Chorley, preached his funeral sermon from 2 Kings, ii., 12. In the north wall of the chancel is a brass containing a long Latin inscription, which, amongst other things, declares that he had been thirty eight years "vicarius in hac Eccles." at the time of his death. Calamy places him in his list of ejected ministers, and says that he was a native of London, "an able preacher, had a considerable estate, and was given to hospitality."¹

On September 22nd, 1643, it was ordered that the Rev. Joseph Thompson "shalbe minister," and that he "shalbe content wth such allowance as y^e Connells and deputie Leivetennts shall approve."² In November following, Liverpool being "a m[']kt towne, and of great resort, a garrison towne, and the Chiefe port of these parts, the inhabitants manie and well affected, It is, therefore, thought fit and soe ordered that twoe able and orthodox ministers be p[']vyded to officiate there, and shall have out of the sequestracons of the tithes of Walton one hundreth pounds a year, to be divyded betweene them by the Maior and the Comon Councill of Liverpoole as they shall see cause."³ Mr. Thompson retained his position as "chiefe minister" under this new arrangement, and Mr. David Ellison was appointed in January, 1644, "to serve as the other minister, and assistant." Shortly after this Mr. Thompson removed to Sefton, where, Calamy says, "he had a pleasant seat and a riche parsonage, which he quitted in 1660." He spent the latter part of his life in Ormskirk, where he died about 1669.⁴ The Rev. John Fogg, born at Darcy Lever, near Bolton, and who had previously officiated for some time at Wigan, was appointed to be minister on October 20th, 1645, as the following shows :—

At an assembly, &c., Mr. Fogg was p[']pounded to be minister heer, and is approved of by this assemblie and elected accordingly, and is to have all the

¹ "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802), vol. i., p. 359; vide also "Lancashire Nonconformity," vols. ii. and iv.

² Sir J. A. Picton's "Municipal Archives," vol. i., p. 201.

³ Ibid, p. 202.

⁴ "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802), vol. ii., p. 377.

allowance of tythes if that will satisfie him, or otherwise a competent some is to be raysed by way of tax for his wages for his p'sent yeare.¹

The Corporation had some difficulty with Mr. Fogg in the matter of salary, as the following minutes show :—

1647, May 31st. P'pounded concerning Mr. Fogg after y^e draught of an ord^r red for y^e towne to pay him 90^{li} yearly, and in lew thereof the towne to have all y^e tythes, it was respyted till another full meeting.

1647, Dec. 23rd. Memorand' that a former order of this house made concerning the paym^t of seaven pounds unto Mr. Fogg by Mr. Balliol Cornell is confirmed, yet nevertheless upon his and Mr. Blackmore's allegac'ons it is referred unto Mr. Ball' Massam & William Lurting to examine the rolls and vallue of corne at that tyme, and to ord^r and compose the same business, or to report their oppinnions to this house, who have since ord^red und^r theire hands and reported accordingly, doe thereupon againe ord^r him to pay 6^{li} in full of the 7^{li} formerly ordered and afterwards the 17th of 8^{br}, 1648, this house upon a further debate ord^red them to pay V^{li} in full for y^e 7^{li}, & the other xls to be paid by y^e towne.²

Concerning him and his charge, the Parliamentary Commissioners of 1650 thus report :—

Wee present and find that in the Towne and Borough of Liv'poole, wthin the said pish of Walton, There is an annient p'ochiall chappell, called Liv'poole church, and neither p'sonage nor viccarage thereunto belonginge, and that M^r. John flogg, a godly painfull minister, supplyes the Cure there, and came in by Elleccon of the Maior and Comon Councell, and that the said Mr. Fogg receiues for his Sallary all the beniffitt of the Tythes growing and aryseing wthin the Libties and p'cincts of the said Towne by an order of the Committee of plundred Minist^{rs}, w^{ch} Tythes are of the yearly value of Seaventy ffyve pounds p. ann. Alsoe, he further receiues the sume of Tenn pounds p. ann. by way of augmentac'on from Walton, or the Recto^r thereof, and also the annient yearly Allowance of fflower pounds 15s. yearly from the receiv^r of the late King's revenues, fforth of the publique receipts of the same Revenues, save and except that the said Mr. Fogg payes out of the Tythes of Liv'poole Elleaven pounds Tenn shillings vnto Doctor Clares wiffe, according to an order of the honno^rble Comittie of plundred Minist^{rs}; and wee doe find that the said p'ochiall Chappell is farr remote from any other Church or Chappell, and therefore doe conceiue itt fitt to bee made a p'ish of it selfe.³

¹ "Municipal Archives," vol. i., p. 203.

² Ibid, p. 204.

³ "Commonwealth Church Survey" (Record Society Series, vol. i.), p. 84.

Mr. Fogg shortly after this was deprived of his post because of his attitude towards the Engagement, an instrument which promised loyalty to Cromwell's Government. On October 21st, 1650, the Council of State ordered:—

Mr. Fogg to be required to leave the garrison of Liverpool within ten days, and not return thither or repair to any other garrison within the nation until further order. Colonel Birch to put this in execution unless Fogg takes the Engagement on its being tendred to him.¹

The Corporation minutes, under date October 31st, 1650, give the following:—

Forasmuch as it is made to appeare unto this house that the some of fiftie pounds, p'te of a yeere's tythes belonging to this towne remains in the hands of Mr. Thompson after hee was p^r feered unto Sefton, w^{ch} said some Mr. Fogg o^r minister challenged to be due and payable to him, and now having relinquished the same soe that it becomes payable to the Maior and Ballives to be desposed of to the use of such minister or ministers as shall happen to officiate hereafter, It is therefore now ord^red that y^e said Mr. Thompson shall pay the said some of 50^{li} by ten pounds in hand and xli^{li} at the next monethe's end to be desposed of as above said ord^r by without detrackon or diminution in aniewise to such minister or ministers as shall suply the place in the tyme of vacansie.²

The "vacansie" was not easily filled up as the following under date June 30th, 1651, shows:—

It was propounded by Mr. Maior concerning the Elleccon of a Minister who (by the Anntient Custom heere tyme out of mynde used) is to be elected, chosen, and approved of, by the said Assembly. Upon full debate it was Ordered and agreed upon that twoe Orthodox Ministers shold be elected to officiate heere for the future, in regard there is hopes of better meanes and allowance for their maintenance in this Place than formerly, it being the Cheefe Port and the only garrison in these parts and a place of great *resort*; That Mr. Peter Stanynough and Mr. Michael Briscowe, who are p^r pounded and approved of shall stand and be elected Ministers joyntly to officiate and serve the Cure heere; they divyding the meanes and allowance as it shall falle equally betwixt them; according to the Comittie's order and for p^r cedence as they can agree, dureinge their good demeano^r only and untill further order in this behalfe.³

¹ "Manchester Classis" (Chetham Society publications, New Series, vol. xxii.,) p. 135.

² "Municipal Archives," vol. i, p. 204.

³ Ibid, p. 205.

With Mr. Briscoe we shall meet again in the history of Toxteth Chapel, and Mr. Stanynough held the office only about two months, resigning for the rectory of Aughton. On the 10th of September following the minutes read thus :—

Mem^d. That Mr. Briscow hath sent a letter of resignac'on, and refuses to come, being otherwise ingudged, to the Place where hee formerly lived [Walmsley, near Bolton]. Mr. Rigby [appointed in Mr. Stanynough's place] discontinues by reason of the Sicknes; since w^{ch} tyme the towne (being disapoynted) some overture hath beene made concerning M. Fogg's retorne w^{ch} may be effected if hee (by subscribeing the ingudgmt) put himselfe in a capacitie to officiate in this garrison w^{ch} the towne is very desireous of, and have written to him to that purpose.¹

Mr. Fogg's recall and subsequent stipulations as to stipend are given in the subjoined extract from the Corporation minutes :—

1652, Januy 14th. Att an assemblie held this day, before Thomas Williamson, Maior, &c., it was p' p'ounded concerning the electing of a minister, whereupon, by a general consent of this house, they doe nominate and elect John Fogg, clerk, to be minister hereof, p'vyded that hee subscribe the ingudgem^t, and declare his consent and submission unto the p'sent governem^t, w^{ch} afterwards hee did accordingly p'form, and is established.

1653, Januy 31st. Mem^d. At an assembly, &c., it was p'pounded by Mr. John Fogg, minister of the Corporacon, to have y^e overplus of a yeare's p'fitt in his absence to be p^d him, and of y^e 50^{li} paid in by Mr. Joseph Tompson.

2. To be freed by the Corporacon of all leyes and taxacons w^{ch} hee alladged was p'mised at his comeing to be doune.

3. To have all y^e Church dues paid unto him, and to have y^e towne's assistance in y^e collecting of them, and to have y^e arrerres of the Xⁱⁱ p. ann. due to y^e minister heere, to be paid him by Mr. Ward, parson of Walton.

4. To have six moneth warning given him whensoever he is to be removed.

All w^{ch} p' positions being made by y^e said Mr. Fogg, wth a long apologie after he was withdrawn and departed. The said p'ticulars were taken into consideraçon, and ord'red and answered as followeth, viz^t :—

To the first, that there is noe ov^rplus at all left, the said moneys being wholly bestowed upon such ministers as supplied here in his absence, and in y^e beginning of y^e tyme of y^e visitacon heere.

And to y^e seacond, it was ord'red formerly by this assembly y^t hee shold pay his porpon in all leyes and taxacons, &c.

¹ "Municipal Archives," vol. i., p. 206.

To the third it is readily granted him that all Church dues shalbe paid him, and that y^e towne's officers wilbe readie to assist him in y^e collecting of them if they be denied, and y^t if anie bee in arreare it is his owne fault in not calleinge for them.

To the fourth they will not be bound to anie other notice but in curtesie.

1655, July 11th. At an assemblie, &c., Mr. John Fogg, minister, presents a petition, whereby he desires that the house and backsyde, called Cooke's house, situate in Tythe Barne Streete, lately confiscate and fallen into the towne's hand may be allowed, and sett appart unto him for a habitation, and soe continue unto all other ministers. It is therefore ordered and agreed that the said house shalbe allowed unto him and his successors, provided they shall inhabite and dwell there, and shall keep the same in repaire; and this gifte to stand, and be in lewe and satisfaccon of all moneys and legacies heretofore given and bequeathed unto the ministers here.¹

Mr. Fogg's mercenary character in all this is more prominent than one could wish; yet like many of his Lancashire brethren he was sufficiently staunch to principle to accept ejectment in 1662² rather than sacrifice conscience.

After this, Calamy says, "he and his Father-in-law, Mr. *Glendal of Chester*, liv'd together in the Parish of Great *Budworth* in *Cheshire* in great Amity, and useful as they had opportunity; he dy'd in 1670. *Ætat* 48."³ He is described as "a Man of fine Parts, good Learning, a serious Christian, and a useful preacher."⁴ To what extent Liverpool Nonconformity is indebted to the three ejected ministers whose names have been given is not clear, but they deserve a place in the religious history of the town. With Bishop Gastrell's notice of ecclesiastical Liverpool, written early in the last century, the present section may be concluded:—

¹ "Municipal Archives," vol. i., pp. 206, 207.

² Why Dr. Halley ("Lancashire Puritanism," vol. ii., p. 186) says that Mr. Fogg is omitted from Calamy's list of ejected ministers I do not know, for such is not the case. A full account of him is given in the edition of 1713, and and even in Palmer's abridged edition of 1802 he finds a place at the end of vol. iii. Can it be that Dr. Halley, not finding him in the Lancashire list of vol. ii., did not trouble to consult the index or acquaint himself with an earlier edition of Calamy?

³ This cannot be correct, because he was officiating at Liverpool in 1645, according to which he could only be thirteen years old at the time.

⁴ Calamy's "Account of the Ejected or Silenced Ministers" (Edition 1713), vol. ii., p. 408.

LIVERPOOL: TWO CHURCHES AND ONE CURE.—Here was formerly only a Chapel of Ease, belonging to Walton Parish; but now this chapel is enlarged, and another church built called the New Church, consecrated [June 29th] anno 1704, and dedicated to St. Peter; and both these Churches are made Rectories by Act of Parl^t 10 and 11 of William 3. The old Chapel is called the Parochiall Chapel of our Lady and St. Nicholas. The additionall building of this Chapel was made by Order granted Anno 1718.

The two Rectours of these medietyes are to have by Act of Parl^t 100^l per annum each, wthout any deduction assessed upon Houses, and are to divide y^e Duty and the Surplice Fees between them: but upon y^e Rector of Walton's death, the Tythes of this Towns^p are to goe to y^e Corporation in case of y^e assessm^t upon Houses. Value 60^l per annum.

The Patronage (w^{ch} was purchased of L^d Molineux, Patron of Walton) is by y^e Act vested in the Mayor and Aldermen, such as have been Aldermen or Bailiffs, Peers, and y^e Common Councill, for y^e time being; But it not being said by the Major part of y^m; and a dispute happening upon it, between y^e B^p and y^e Town, another Act was obtained, wth y^e consent of the B^p, in w^{ch} these words are added.

Anno 1675 1 warden and 1 Assistant.¹

II.—THE ANCIENT CHAPEL OF TOXTETH PARK.

TOXTETH PARK, now a wilderness of streets and part of a great city, as its name implies, was formerly charmingly rural, and some three miles south of Liverpool. In early documents it appears as "Stochestede," the "wooden station,"² and was formed into a park for his "recreation and amusement" by King John, who early in his reign bought it from the Molyneux family. In Queen Elizabeth's day it was waste land without inhabitants, but in 1604 it was disparked, and became the home of a number of farmers who undertook its cultivation. The Puritan character of these first settlers may be inferred from the names which still linger about here. The river "Jordan" runs by a farm called "Jericho," and "David's Throne" is a rock standing out between the two branches of the Dingle, whilst "Adam's Buttery" is a

¹ "Notitia Cestriensis" (Chetham Society publications, vol. xxi.), pp. 190-192.

² Sir J. A. Picton's "Memorials of Liverpool," vol. ii., p. 527.

cave hard by. At one time it is said that the whole district was called "The Holy Land."¹ Evidence is lacking as to the precise date when the chapel was erected to meet the religious requirements of the people, who, besides finding the chapel of St. Nicholas, in Liverpool, to be too distant, probably also found themselves out of sympathy with the character of its worship. Mr. Henry Taylor,² who is followed by Mr. Davis, thinks about 1618, but Sir J. A. Picton inclines to an earlier date, as the following shows :—

A chapel was built not far from the dell of the Dingle, in whose shady recesses tradition reports that in times of persecution the faithful disciples were wont to assemble for worship. This structure was certainly in existence early in the reign of James the First, and was most probably erected in the days of Elizabeth when Bishop Chadderton made such friendly overtures to the Puritan party.³

The one certain fact is, that in 1611 the "prudent and religious people" of Toxteth Park, "being desirous of their own good and of their posterity after them," had established a school for the "better education of their children;" and at this date we are introduced to two interesting persons, who may be called the fathers of Nonconformity here. Edward Aspinwall, "one of the most considerable landowners in the neighbourhood," whose son married the sister of Sir Gilbert Ireland, of Hale, is described by Dr. Halley as "the intimate friend of the sainted Mrs. Brettargh,⁴ and her comforter in her last hours of mortal sickness."⁵ He was both learned and pious, and the following appreciative notice of him by Dr. Halley is well deserved :—

¹ "Some Account of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth Park," by the Rev. Valentine D. Davis, B.A., p. 1, note.

² MS. History of Toxteth Park Chapel, now the property of the Renshaw Street Congregation, printed in the main in the *Christian Reformer* for 1862.

³ "Notes on the Origin and History of the Congregational Churches in Liverpool," p. 5.

⁴ Mrs. Brettargh was the wife of William Brettargh, of Brettarghaugh, near Liverpool, and sister of John Bruen, the celebrated Puritan preacher.

⁵ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. i., p. 245.

The Church of Christ has some reason to venerate his memory, for by the influence of his holy conversation, his beautiful example, and his domestic piety, the young schoolmaster, Richard Mather, was won over to the Puritan cause, and prepared for the great work which he did so well in New England. What the Mathers, father and four sons and many grandsons, did for New England may, under God, be attributed in no small degree to the holy life of Edward Aspinwall.¹

Mr. Aspinwall was interred in Toxteth Chapel, with whose foundation he had so much to do; and in the main aisle is the stone covering of a vault, on which is a brass plate thus inscribed:—

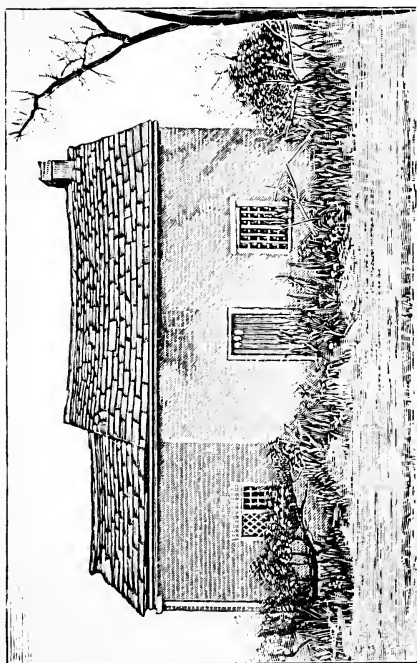
“Edward Aspinwall, of Tocksteth Park, Esquire, Departed this life in March, the Twenty-ninth, A.D., 1656. It is sown a naturall, it is raised a spirituall, body: for this corruptible must put on incorruption; so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.”—1 Cor., chap. xv., verses: xlv., liii., liv.²

The second of those interesting names is the Rev. Richard Mather. He was born in 1596, at Lowton, in the parish of Winwick, a few miles from Warrington. His parents were Thomas and Margaret Mather, “of ancient families in Lowton aforesaid; but by reason of some mortgages they were reduced into a low condition in regard to their outward estate.”³ Anxious that their son should become a “scholar,” he was sent at an early age to Winwick Grammar School, “in great repute as a seminary of learning.” Mather’s school days were so unhappy, because of the “cruel severity” of the schoolmaster, that he earnestly besought his father to take him away and devote him to some secular calling; but his “father’s wisdom and firmness” prevailed, and the young lad pursued his studies with such diligence, that when only fifteen years of age he was recommended by his master to take charge of the newly-established school of Toxteth Park in

¹ “Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity,” vol. i., p. 245.

² There were two Nonconformist ministers in the seventeenth century, both natives of Lancashire, Peter and William Aspinwall. Were they connected in any way with Mr. Aspinwall, of Toxteth Park?

³ “Christian Reformer” for 1862, p. 346.



MATHER'S HOUSE AT LOWTON.

1611. He found a home in the house of Mr. Edward Aspinwall, through whose "eminent piety and most exemplary walk," together with the preaching of Mr. Harrison, of Huyton, and the reading of Perkins's work, showing "How far a Reprobate may go in Religion," he was led to "apply the precious promises of the Gospel to his soul." Doubtless it was, as Dr. Halley suggests, Mr. Aspinwall's influence also which led him to think of the Christian ministry, and assisted by his good people, he entered Brasenose College, Oxford, where he was rejoiced to find many who had been his "quondam schollars." Mather was, however, prevented from completing his college course by the importunity of his people, who desired that he "would return to them, to instruct, not so much their children as themselves, and that not in mere human literature, but in the things of God." This call he accepted, and on November 30th, 1618, he preached his first sermon. "There was a very great concourse of people," says his biographer " (the word of God being precious at that time in those parts), to hear him, and his labours were highly accepted of by those who were judicious. Such was the vastness of his memory, as that the things which he had prepared and intended to deliver at that time, contained no less than six long sermons." Whether, however, all the "prepared things" were delivered on the occasion is not clear, but our fathers could stand much longer sermons than we can. As already noted, this is the date fixed upon by several writers on Liverpool Nonconformity for the erection of the first Toxteth Park Chapel. The land was obtained from Sir Richard Molyneux, a Roman Catholic, and its situation is thus described by Mr. Davis in his admirable little book :—

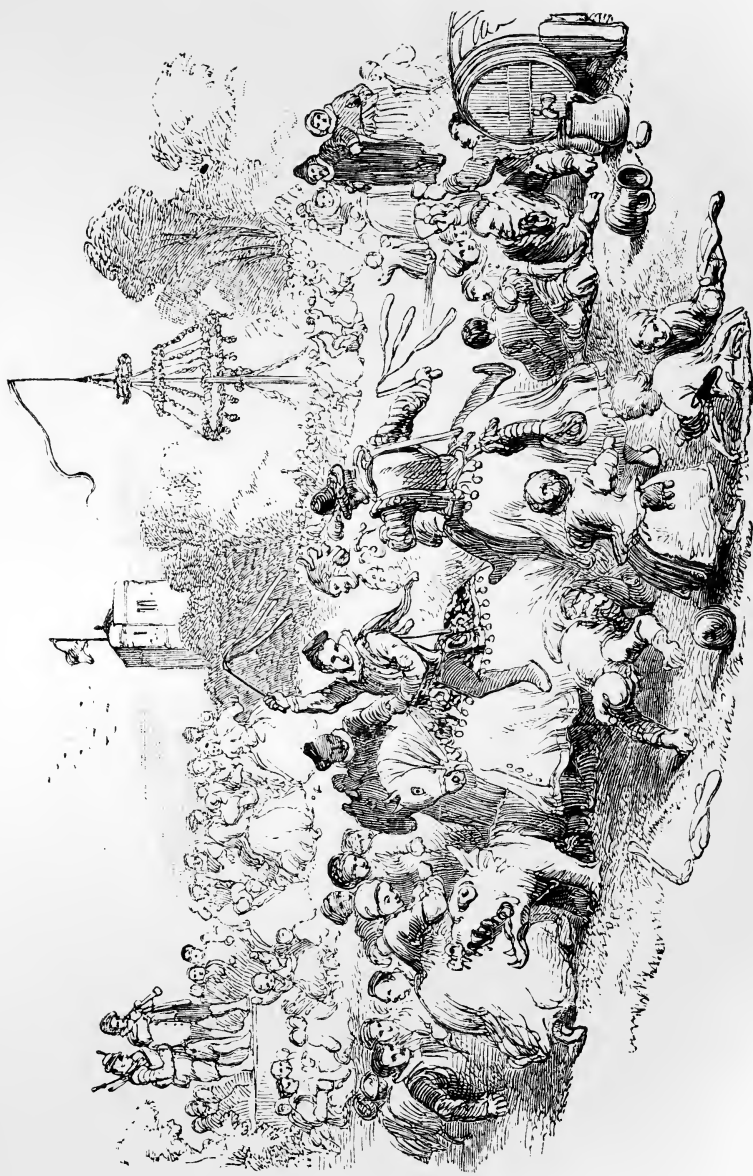
The humble little chapel was built by a stream which ran down the course of what is now Park Road, the sources of which have long since been dried up. The rising ground towards Liverpool shut out the view of the Church tower and the turrets of the old castle, and it must have been a beautifully secluded spot.¹

The chapel does not seem to have been consecrated, but Puritanism was not yet sufficiently advanced amongst the people to

¹ "Some Account of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth Park," p. 3.

object to Episcopal ordination, and Richard Mather was advised to apply for such to the Bishop of Chester. This was Morton, a churchman of high order, and the author of the famous "Book of Sports," which arose out a sermon he preached before King James, amidst the frolics and fooleries of his visit to Houghton Tower. "Grave apprehensions," says Sir J. A. Picton, "were entertained of an unfortunate issue, owing to the young preacher's Nonconformity,¹ and when, at the conclusion of the service, Morton singled out Mather from the others who were being ordained with the words,—“I have something to say to you, between you and me alone,” it was thought that the Bishop meant to rebuke him for his Nonconformist irregularities. Mather, however, was surprised to hear the Bishop say, “I have an earnest request unto you, and you must not deny me; it is that you will pray for me; for I know (said he) that the prayers of men that fear God will avail much, and such an one I believe you to be.” This acceptance of ordination at the hands of a prelate was ever after “no small grief of heart to him;” and many years after, one of his sons, noticing a torn parchment in his father's study, asked what it was, and was told that it was the ordination certificate which he had received from the Bishop; “and,” said he, “I tore it because I took no pleasure in keeping a monument of my sin and folly in submitting to that superstition, the very remembrance whereof is grievous unto me.” On September 29th, 1624, he married Catherine Hoult, daughter of Edmund Hoult, Esq., of Bury, when he “removed his habitation three miles from Toxteth, to Much Woolton.” In addition to his duties at Toxteth Chapel he was one of the preachers in the Liverpool pulpit in connection with the monthly lecture; and every alternate Tuesday morning he “kept a lecture at a market town called Prescott.” This latter service especially caused him to be “much taken notice of, and so he became more, to the adversaries of the truth, an object of envy.” In August, 1633, he was suspended, but, by the intervention of several Lancashire gentlemen, reinstated in the following November. In 1634, however, Dr. Neile, Arch-

¹ “Notes on the Origin and History of the Congregational Churches in Liverpool,” p. 6.



KEEPING SUNDAY ACCORDING TO THE "BOOK OF SPORTS."

bishop of York, sent his visitors into Lancashire to enquire into the alleged Nonconformity of some of the clergy. Mather, who had never worn a surplice, was summoned before the court at Wigan, when it was charged against him—

That he never made the sign of the Cross in baptism, nor administered the sacrament to the communicants kneeling. He was treated with great severity by the Commissioners; was prohibited from preaching, and threatened with fine and imprisonment if he officiated again without giving satisfaction for his future conformity. This he refused to do, and consequently never in this country resumed his public functions.¹

During these years Mather's views on Church government underwent an important change. From being a simple Puritan, willing to accept Episcopal ordination, he was led to adopt the "Congregational form," to which he remained loyal to the end of life. It was, doubtless, during this period of suspension and persecution, that the "bosky dells of the Dingle, and the rocky promontory of Dingle Point, resounded occasionally with the voice of melody, and re-echoed the fervid accents of prayer."² From Sir J. A. Picton's "Memorials of Liverpool" is extracted the following passage descriptive of this charming retreat, with which such sacred Nonconformist traditions are associated:—

The Dingle, situated immediately to the south of the borough boundary, which, though limited in extent, is one of the most lovely bits of scenery in the neighbourhood of Liverpool. In the olden time a tiny stream, rising somewhere about the high land not far from the High Park Coffee House, ran its little course down the line of Park Road, past the old chapel, and debouched into the river by a deep gully behind a rocky promontory. The sources of this stream have long dried up, and the little valley no longer echoes to the tinkle of the waters. About 1808 the estate, of which this forms a part, was purchased by the Rev. John Yates, then the minister of the Unitarian Church, Paradise Street. A house already existed on the land, on the site of Dingle Head, now the residence of Mr. Charles Turner, M.P. for South West Lancashire [written about 1873]. This house was occupied in 1768 by Dr. Kennion, or Kenyon, a connection of Lord Kenyon's, and a great collector of antiquities. Mr. Yates was capable of appreciating the beauties of his purchase, and in addition to building several houses for members of

¹ Sir J. A. Picton's "Notes of the Origin and History of the Congregational Churches in Liverpool," p. 7.

² *Ibid.*

his family, he improved the natural capabilities by judicious planting, laying out walks, and opening out the best points of view. About 1821 he sold the western part of the property to Mr. James Cropper, who also built several villas overlooking the river. The proprietors of this little "Vallombrosa" have for many years kindly and liberally thrown open the grounds to the public on two evenings in the week.¹

Mather saw no prospect of again exercising his ministry in England. There were signs of a terrible storm not far away.



ARCHBISHOP LAUD.

Charles had taken his father's place upon the throne, and Laud, a name little less odious than that of Judge Jeffreys, was Primate of all England. The story of the Mayflower and of the Pilgrim Fathers in the New World, who had

Left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God,

¹ Vol. ii., p. 548.



LANDING OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS IN AMERICA.

was quite fresh, and Mather began to look westward for the scene of his future ministry. Very beautiful and pathetic is that picture which represents him on the rocky promontory of Dingle Point, when—

Looking one summer evening over the sea he repeated the words of the Psalmist: "O that I had wings like a dove! Lo! then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."¹

The longing grew into a fixed purpose, and "with much sorrow, many tears being shed by those that expected to see his face no more in this world," he parted from his friends at Toxteth Park. He began his journey to Bristol for the purpose of taking ship there in April, 1635, but he was "forced to change his outward habit, that he might travel incognito, because pursevants were designed to apprehend him." Arriving safely at Bristol, he set sail for New England, June 4th, 1635, and "after a most tempestuous passage" landed at Boston on the 17th of August following. In the land of his adoption not less earnestly than in the land of his birth, whence he had been cast out by persecution, Mather laboured in the cause of truth both by his pen and voice, and very materially assisted in determining the type of religious life there. For well nigh thirty-four years he ministered to the congregation at Dorchester, terminating his labours with his death on the evening of April 22nd, 1669. Until near the close of life he had no serious affliction, and during fifty years never once failed a Sabbath service through ill-health. Latterly, however, he grew deaf, seven years before the end lost the sight of one eye, and for two years suffered from stone, which was the cause of death. He married for a second wife the widow of Dr. John Cotton, an old personal friend, who had preceded him to America, and who died in 1652. Richard Mather left six sons, four of whom became eminent ministers. Samuel crossed the Atlantic with him, being then nine years old, graduated at Harvard College, and returned to England. He was ejected in 1662 from the little chapel at Burton Wood, near the ancestral home at Lowton, and

¹ Halley's "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. i., p. 250.



THE REV. RICHARD MATHER.



THE REV. SAMUEL MATHER.

went to Dublin, where he ministered more or less until 1671, when he died. His successor there was Nathaniel, his brother, five years old when his father took him to America. He also graduated at Harvard, and on the completion of his studies came to England. His first preferment was Harberton, near Totnes, in Devonshire, and in 1656 he was presented by Cromwell to Barnstaple, in the same county. The Restoration led to the loss of all his preferments, and for a time he was pastor of the English congregation at Rotterdam. In 1671 he took charge of the congregation at Dublin, whom the death of his brother Samuel had deprived of a pastor, and in 1688 settled over the Lime Street Independent Church, London. There he laboured until his death, being interred at Bunhill Fields, where a long Latin inscription was placed upon his tombstone, of which the following is a translation :—

Under this tomb is laid
The Rev. Mr. NATHANIEL MATHER,
The honour of both *Englands*.
The County of *Lancaster*, in our *England*,
Gave him birth :
And the *American England*
Trained him up in literature,
And honoured him with the degree of Master of Arts,
To which country, when he was very young,
Through the severity of the times,
He fled with his father.
Returning thence,
He was unanimously Chosen Pastor
Of a church at Dublin, in Ireland ;
Whence being called by a Christian Society
To this city,
He here closed his life and pastorship.
If you inquire his merits,
Take his character in a few words
He had rich endowments of mind,
Was profoundly learned,
Had an exact judgment,
And a most piercing understanding :
In a word, Nature and Science
Enriched him with all their stores,
And all were consecrated to the service of his God.

He was well qualified
 For all the branches of his work.
 He faithfully preached
 The Gospel of his blessed Redeemer,
 And adorned it with a most exemplary life.
 In him benevolence, modesty, and patience
 Mingled their glories,
 And he was a most illustrious pattern of holiness.
 He was equal, and constant to himself;
 A most pious Christian,
 A most tender husband,
 An able and laborious Minister,
 And a faithful and vigilant Pastor.
 In the exercise of his sacred office
 He with an holy art concealed the man,
 That the Lord alone might be exalted :
 In fine, he was ennobled with every virtue,
 And was meritorious of the highest Praise,
 But alas ! how severe the affliction, he is gone.
 But with a full sail of faith,
 He entered his port of glory,
 And began his everlasting triumph.
 He died July 26, 1697,
 Aged 67.

Eleazar Mather was born at Dorchester, educated at Harvard, and became pastor of a church at Northampton, New England, where he laboured eleven years, and died July 24th, 1669, aged thirty-two years. Increase Mather was born in 1639, and after graduating at Harvard and Trinity College, Dublin, preached for some time in England. He returned to Boston, when he became President of Harvard College and pastor of the church at Boston. He was sent to England in 1688 by the patriotic party in Boston to lay before the King the tyrannous conduct of Governor Sir Edmund Andros. He died at Boston, August 23rd, 1723, aged eighty-four years. By a daughter of Dr. John Cotton he had, amongst other children, Dr. Cotton Mather, the learned historian of New England, and assistant to his father in the ministry at Boston for many years.¹ Members of the Mather family have been connected with Toxteth Chapel since at least 1650, for

¹ Wilson's "History of Dissenting Churches," vol. i., pp. 229-234.

there is a pew to the right of the pulpit bearing that date with the initials D.M. The family vault is below, and on the wall is a brass which states that the "ancient family of yeomanry named Mather were settled in Toxteth Park as early as the reign of Queen Elizabeth." There is, however, no direct evidence that the Rev. Richard Mather was related to this family.¹

From the expulsion of Mather in 1634 to the establishment of Presbyterianism in 1646 we have no information respecting Toxteth Chapel, but to this period belong probably those secret meetings in the Dingle of which tradition speaks. At the latter date Robert Port appears as a member of the fifth Classical Presbytery, being then the minister of the chapel here. About him I have no further information; but in 1650 the Parliamentary Commissioners say:—

Wee alsoe present and find that there is in Toxteth Parke a Chappell called Toxteth Chappell, and that Mr. Haggon [Huggins] is ministr^r there, and is an appved Minist^r. and hath for his Sallary or manteynance the pffits of the Tyths of the said Town or hamett, w^{ch} wee conceiue to be worth nearly fforty ffyve pounds p ann, and an Addiconal sune of Tenn pounds from Mr. Ward, Rector of Walton; And that the said Chappell of Toxteth p'ke is farr distant from any other Church or Chappell, and therefore wee think it very fitt to bee made a pish, and that these howses in Aighburgh, formerly w^{thin} the pish of Childwall, to be added vnto it, vidzt, John Walworths, Thomas Seddon, Richard Fisher, Raph Whittfield, Nehemiah Britter, John Holland, George Lawrenson.²

Mr. Huggins is described as "an honest, Godly man, and a graduate,"³ but the dates of his appointment and retirement have not been ascertained. Probably his immediate successor was the Rev. Thomas Crompton, M.A., a native of Great Lever, who was ministering at Toxteth Park in 1657, but how long before I do not know. The Uniformity Act of 1662, which deprived so many ministers in Lancashire of their livings, left him undisturbed, though

¹ The reader is also referred to vols. ii. and iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity" for accounts of the Revs. Benjamin Mather and Tatlock Mather, Nonconformist ministers in this part of the county, of which, I believe, they were natives.

² "Commonwealth Church Survey" (Record Society Series, vol. i.), p. 81.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.



EJECTION OF NONCONFORMISTS IN 1662.

he in no way conformed to the requirements of the Act, but was in "some way privileged." "There was," says Sir J. A. Picton, "evidently some irregularity and laxity on the part of the Government authorities in not resuming possession of the chapel and the income of the benefice, but it is not difficult of explanation. Lord Molyneux was a Roman Catholic, and in a state of hostility to the Established Church. It answered his purpose quietly to appropriate the tithes and allow the Dissenters to retain possession of the building. The population of the locality was small, and consisted principally of Nonconformists, who were quite satisfied with the arrangement."¹ Almost from the commencement of his ministry here there was associated with Mr. Crompton the Rev. Michael Briscoe, from Walmsley. His invitation to join Mr. Peter Stanynough in the pastorate of the Liverpool pulpit has been previously mentioned,² from which it appears that he had a high reputation in these parts. Mr. Briscoe was one of the foremost Independents of his day, whilst Mr. Crompton, his colleague, is described as a Presbyterian, yet they worked peaceably together, each doing duty on alternate Sundays.³ The reader will find in volume three of this work a full account of this worthy man, who continued to labour at Toxteth Park until his death, September, 1685. His place was supplied by the Rev. Christopher Richardson, M.A. He was born in 1618, probably in the city of York, being baptised on January 17th, 1618, at the Parish Church of St. Mary, Bishophill. He was placed in the rectory of Kirkheaton, near Huddersfield, in 1646, whence he was ejected in 1662,⁴ but, buying Lassell Hall, he preached there, using the staircase as a pulpit.

¹ "Notes on the Origin and History of the Congregational Churches in Liverpool," p. 9.

² Vide ante p. 63.

³ The truth is, the difference between the Presbyterians and Independents was not great—the names were often used interchangeably. Time gradually brought about a *rapprochement* between the two bodies, so that, as Sir J. A. Picton says, "Subsequent to the Restoration, Presbyterianism, as a form of church government, can hardly be said to have existed in England, until revived in after years by the influx from Scotland" (Notes, &c., p. 9). It was therefore nothing very unusual for Mr. Crompton and Mr. Briscoe to be joined together in the pastorate of one church.

⁴ So Calamy; but others say he was silenced in 1661.

Oliver Heywood, who was an intimate friend, has preserved in his diary an interesting account of a service at Lassell Hall, which shows the type of man Mr. Richardson was:—

On Jan. 2, 7½, I joyned with Mr. Richardson at an exercise at Lassell-hall, abundance of people came, when Mr. R. was preaching Sr John Kays sergeant came, and thrust through the crowd, made inquiry whether he had a licence to preach there, Mr. R. smartly answered wt have you to doe with that? the man withdrew Mr. Richardson went on, I confesse at first it something affrighted me, and I thought with my self if he came again when I am preaching it will put me quite out. Well, he finished, I succeeded, and when I had prayed and was preaching, he came again, demanded if we had licence. Mr. Rich: ans: sharply saying what authority have you to inquire, he ans: his master sent him, who is your master sd he, he ans: Sr John Kay, and he commanded us both in the kings name to goe along with him to his master, Mr. R. ans: we would not goe without a warrant, we desired

Christopher
Richardson . Minister

AUTOGRAPH OF THE REV. C. RICHARDSON.

to see it, he shewed it us I read it, wherein both our right names were, when I saw that I gave him mild words and desired him to stay awhile till we had done our work and then we would obey him, well sth he I shall wait your leisure, he stood by, I went on with my sermon, and God graciously helped above fear, it was quite gone, and God helpt memory, and elocution and affection,—when we had done our work we went along with that man and two of Sir Johns livery men, came to Woodsome that clark (I suppose he was) was churlish and snappish, told me he thought we had not made such particular reflections as we did. I askt him in wht? sth he, I took good notice of your words, I bade him speak truth, and I cared not what he said.¹

For some years Mr. Richardson acted as chaplain to Mr. Wm. Cotton, of Denby Grange, Penistone; preached at Sheffield and Norton (Derbyshire), and removed to Liverpool in 1687. An

¹ Heywood's "Diaries," vol. iii., p. 119, by J. H. Turner.

interesting love letter to his second wife,¹ Hephzibah Pryme, or Prime, has been preserved, of which the following is a copy :—

My Dearest Love,

I doubt not but since my departure from you, you have found my word too true, I meane that the warrants are forth against us. The Lord preserve and keep us out of their hands. I would gladly hope your father came safely home, and is in safety there. I called at Carr House, but finding the captaine much better I made noe stay not soe much as to dine with him. I have sent by this bearer some bedding and other goods. I feare they will be found very much spoyled, but I cannot help it, we must take them as they are. I commit them to your disposal, not doubting you will order them to the best. I am at my own house at present, and I blesse God in health and wellfare, but not without feare, resolving as soon as I can and hopeinge ere long to see my dearest deare: In the meanwhile, as I desire to doe, soe you also may deceive the weary time with some diversion, a better I cannot commend unto you than in the intervall of other business to intertaine God into your thoughts with something relating unto him either his attributes, words, or works, especially his worke of mercy wherein he aboundeth towards us in Christ Jesus such meditation will purge your minde from vaine thoughts the bane of heavenly mindednesse, the food power & nourishers of corrupt affections and lusts. The quenchers of the Spirit, the grieffe of gracious but the complacency and pleasure of carnall heartes. It will also leave a sweet relish upon your spirit and give more solid delight unto your soul than all the vanities of this world can afford you, which when they have found entertainment in your thoughts having kept out better things leave nothing but emptiness and a sting behind them. As I have been honoured to bee received into your closet, soe that which most appeared and took me there was the sight of your bible layd upon your table, which when I opened I observed marked with pieces of paper to direct unto the places which I conceive were a course in your dayly reading; whence I gathered (and I hope truly) that you keep a constant dayly course of reading the Scriptures. To which I question not but you joyne secret prayer. God Almighty continue you in that good way and bless you; which is and shall bee the prayer of —, who is and hopeth to bee

Yours whilst his owne

C. Richardson.²

Lassell Hall

November 24, 82.

¹ His first wife, Elizabeth Richardson, was buried at Kirkheaton, December 30th, 1668, when the Revs. Oliver Heywood and Joseph Dawson attended the funeral.

² Turner's "Yorkshire Genealogist" for July, 1890, p. 288.



MRS HEPHZIBAH RICHARDSON.

Mrs. Richardson was the daughter of the Rev. Edward Prime, ejected minister of Sheffield. She was born January 3rd, 1654-5, and her marriage with Mr. Richardson took place on January 23rd, 1682. After his death she married, on the 26th of July, 1722, the Rev. Robert Fern, who also had been ejected, and died a widow in 1735, at Hemsworth, near Norton, about three miles from Sheffield.

Mr. Richardson preached fortnightly at Liverpool, and the intervening Sunday at Toxteth Park,¹ and to him, doubtless, belongs the honour of founding the first dissenting congregation in the city, though it is not certain in what year he ceased his connection with Toxteth Park Chapel. He died in December, 1698,² aged about eighty years. Calamy says:—

His preaching was to the last very neat and accurate, tho' plain and popular. He had a healthful constitution, which continued till old age. He was weighty in the Scriptures, being able on a sudden to analyze, expound, and improve any chapter he read in the pious families which he visited. In Yorkshire he was more followed. A neighbouring minister, whose parishioners used to go to hear him, complaining once to him that he drew away his flock, Mr. Richardson answered, "Feed them better, and they will not stray."³

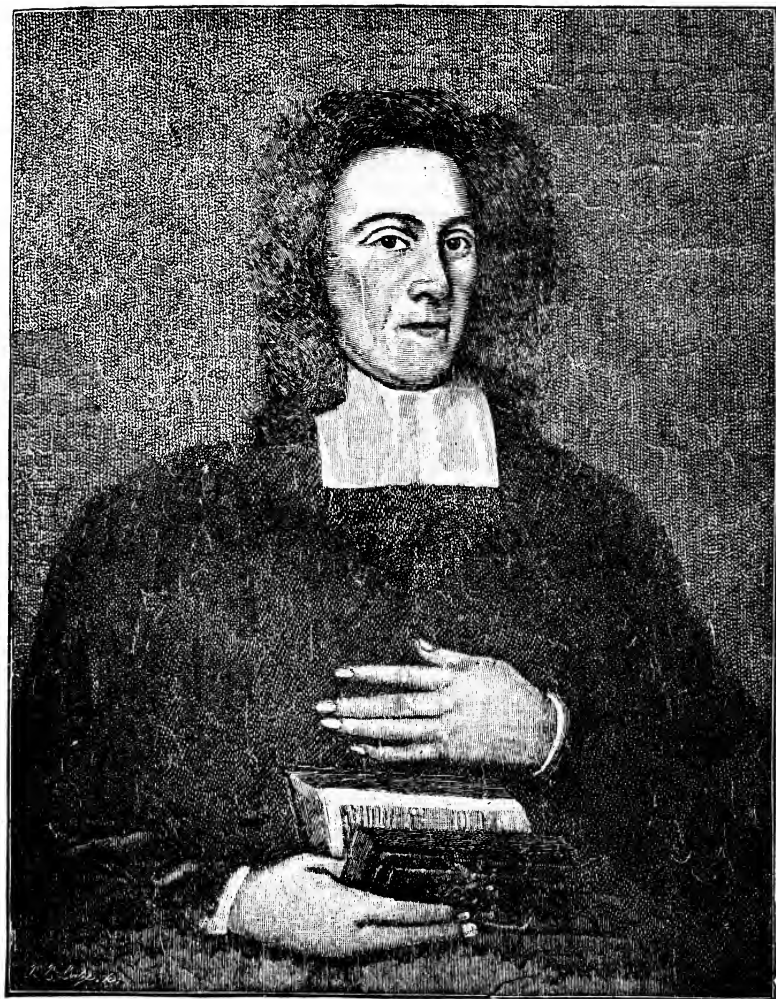
In the Kirkheaton Church a tablet has been erected to his memory, which is thus inscribed:—

To the Memory of
CHRISTOPHER RICHARDSON, A.M.,
Of Trin. Coll., Cambridge, and Lassell Hall, in this parish, Rector of
Kirkheaton 1646-61, in which latter year he was silenced.

¹ So Calamy; but Mr. Davis puts it the other way about.

² So Calamy; and Oliver Heywood, in his "Northowram Register" (p. 95), has the following: "Mr. Christopher Richardson, of Liverpool, dyed Dec., 1698-9, aged 81." Mr. Davis, however, says: "In a chapel register, kept by Samuel Angier, of Dukinfield, from 1677 to 1713, there is the following entry: "Mmd. Mr. Richard . . . of Liverpool, aged 89 years, died in November, 1698, which will have been Richardson, and gives us the more exact age and date of death than Calamy." I think the longer age is doubtful.

³ "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802), vol. iii., p. 439.



THE REV. C. RICHARDSON, M.A.

He established the first Presbyterian Church in Liverpool in 1688, and died in that city in 1698, aged 80.

This memorial was erected by John Richardson, of Bromley, Kent, Frances Richardson, of Ventnor, and Martha Sparks, of Crewkerne,

His descendants in the fifth generation, July, 1884.

Four personal friends, the Revs. Joshua Kirby, of Wakefield ; Oliver Heywood, of Coley ; Christopher Richardson, the ejected minister of Kirkheaton ; and Mr. Cotton, an eminent layman, sent each a son to be trained for the ministry by Mr. Hickman, near Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. The party set out on Monday, May 19th, 1673. They remained, however, only a short time, for in June, 1674, they were under the care of the Rev. Richard Frankland, whose academy was then at Natland, near Kendal. Christopher Richardson, junior, completed his studies at Edinburgh University, but he does not seem to have been ordained, living and dying at Lassell Hall.¹

A short time previous to the death of Mr. Richardson, senior, the Rev. Thomas Crompton had removed to Eccles, to take charge of the congregation then worshipping at Monks Hall. The precise date of his removal cannot be given, but it was shortly after 1695, in which year the Rev. Thomas Baldwin died, whom he succeeded at Monks Hall. Four years after this he himself died. The following appears in the "Northowram Register" :—

Mr. Thomas Crompton, of Toxteth Park,² having been in Darbshire, returning, dyed at Apothecary Holbrooks, in Manchester, was carried thence to be buried at —, Sept. 2, 99, aged 64.

The Rev. Samuel Angier probably took Mr. Richardson's place as assistant to Mr. Crompton. He was a relative of the Rev. John

¹ Calamy mentions "Mr. Richardson, a competent scholar, and a pious man," who, by nature of a license obtained in 1672, preached at Chorlton, and died in 1680 ("Nonconformist's Memorial," 1802, vol. ii., p. 369).

² Page 97. He was so described, though resident near Manchester, because of his long connection with Toxteth Park. He is to be distinguished from the Rev. Thomas Crompton, of Astley, in the parish of Leigh, who was ejected in 1662, and died January 17th, 1690.

Angier, of Denton; and Oliver Heywood, who married John Angier's sister, calls him both "nephew" and "cousin."¹ Probably this was the Samuel Angier who entered the academy of the Rev. Richard Frankland when it was at Natland, April 24th, 1676, and was ordained, along with Matthew Smith, Eliezer Heywood, Edward Byrom, and Nathaniel Heywood, at Oliver Heywood's house, June 1st, 1687. Samuel Angier, along with Mr. Thomas Crompton, appeared at a meeting of the United Brethren, held at Bolton, May 7th, 1694, as representing the church or churches of Liverpool, and Angier's name is continued as such until August 10th, 1697. Shortly after this he died, as the following from the Register of the Rev. Samuel Angier, of Dukinfield, shows :—

1698. Mr. Samuel Angier, of Toxteth Park, minister of y^e Gospel, died Feb. 20, and was buried Wednesday, y^e 23rd.

In Oliver Heywood's "Northowram Register" also appears the following :—

Mr. Samuel Angier, my nephew, a N. C. minr. at Liverpool, bur. Wednesday, feb. 23, 1698, aged 40.²

In a small Goldsmith's Almanac for 1682, which formerly belonged to the Rev. Samuel Angier, of Dukinfield, are some interesting notices of his family connections, amongst them being these two, which I imagine refer to Samuel Angier, of Liverpool :—

Sept. 21. Cousin Sam. Angier came to my house 26 of Nov. — Cousin Sam. went from my house.³

¹ Oliver Heywood used these terms quite loosely, so that no certain conclusions can be drawn from them.

² Page 92.

³ This curious little volume, which formerly belonged to the Rev. Richard Slate, of Preston, is now in the possession of Mr. John Hargreaves, of Rock Ferry.

Near the south entrance of the chapel is a gravestone which records the burials of several members of the Angier family, during the last century, amongst them Samuel Angier, M.D., Ob. 1767 (?)¹ In the "Dukinfield Register" is also the following entry respecting the widow and son of Mr. Samuel Angier :—

May 7, 1700. I heard that William, son of Cousin Samuel Angier, of Toxteth, deceased, and Rebecca, his now widow, was dead, falling into a well the 14 of Aprill, being Sab. evening, when his mother was catechising the rest of her children, which is the fifth breach amongst the relations of that family in a short time.

The Minutes of the United Brethren, under date August 13th, 1700, state that—

Whereas two persons coming from Liverpool did desire our opinion whether Mr. Parr should come to them to be their minister, we judged it not proper to determine anything about it without hearing both sides, the case not having been already before the classes to which it belonged primarily.²

The "Brethren" never again met, and Mr. Parr, I imagine, made Preston his home instead of Liverpool,³ the Rev. John Kennion, becoming the minister of Toxteth Park. He entered Mr. Frankland's Academy at Rathmell, January 9th, 1691, and settled at Toxteth Park about 1700. During his ministry there was a congregation of 249 persons, of whom twenty-four were county voters, and this is the period into which falls Bishop Gastrell's description of the place :—

Park Chapel in Toxteth Park, near Childwall, supposed to be extra-parochial, or in y^e Parish of Lancaster, possessed by Dissenters, held by a Lease from L^d Molineaux, and was given in as a house belonging to his L^p by

¹ It is much to be regretted that this gravestone is now broken, and the inscription upon it in places quite undecipherable. There appears upon it a coat of arms, which shows that the owners of the grave were a family of considerable importance.

² "Manchester Classis" (Chetham Society, New Series, vol. xxiv.), p. 364.

³ Vide vol. i. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

his Agents, wⁿ they Registered his Estate. Anno., 1718. This was a Park and waste land wthout Inhabitants in Queen Elizabeth's reign. There is a Tradition that an Irish Bishop has preached several Sundays in this Chappell.¹

Mr. Kennion continued to serve the congregation until his death in 1728. He was buried in the graveyard of the chapel, and on his tombstone is the following inscription :—

The REV^D. MR. JOHN KENION, died Aug^t.
16th, 1728, Aged 55.
MILICENT KENION, his wife, died Decbr.
15th, 1732, Aged 58.
JOHN KENNION, ESQ^R., Collector of
Customs, Liverpool, died the
20th of June, 1785, Aged 59 years.
ALICE KENNION, his wife, died
the 27th of Jan^y., 1813, Aged 83 years.

A brother of the Rev. John Kennion was an eminent physician in Liverpool, and members of the family, as the tombstones and tablets show, continued to be associated with the chapel long after his death. Dr. Raffles says that he was “a man of finished education and polished manners, and withal an excellent preacher, so that the chapel was well attended during his ministry.”² On the authority of Dr. Raffles, a Rev. Mr. Gillibrand is included in the list of ministers here, and is mentioned as Mr. Kennion's immediate successor. Little is known of him beyond the fact that he was “an amiable young man,” and was carried away after a few years by a decline. He is to be distinguished from the Rev. Joseph Gillibrand, long the popular minister of St. Helens.³

The Rev. William Harding comes next. He is described as a Cheshire farmer from the neighbourhood of Congleton, but it is certain that he underwent some training for the ministry at Dr. Charles Owen's Academy, Warrington. The Minutes of the Cheshire Classis contain the following :—

¹ “Notitia Cestriensis” (Chetham Society Series, vol. xxi.), p. 171.

² “Christian Reformer” for 1862, p. 356.

³ Vide vol. iv. of “Lancashire Nonconformity.”

April, 1714.—Mr. William Harding was examined, approved, and allowed to preach as a candidate by Mr. Risley and Mr. Owen, with whom he had then lived.

The next meeting is to be, if the Lord will, upon the first Tuesday in August, 1716, and Mr. William Harding, who hath officiated at or near Middlewich for some time, is then to be ordained.

In 1715 he was settled as minister at Partington, Cheshire, and on August 7th, 1716, his ordination took place at Knutsford, of which we have the following account :—

Mr. William Harding was then ordained. The evening before he exhibited his thesis, and defended it. His question was "*Quanam est consecratio Eucharistiae et qualis consecratio sit necessaria ?*" The day following, namely, August 7th, in a very numerous assembly of ministers and people, met together in the new chapel (at Knutsford), he was solemnly set apart to y^e office and work of y^e ministry. The minister of the place began with prayer and reading some portions of Scripture. Then Mr. Waterhouse prayed before y^e sermon, which was preached by Mr. Fletcher from Matthew v., 16. After sermon ended, Mr. Irlam called for a confession of his faith, which he made before y^e congregation; and then put the usual questions to him, to which he answered *verbis conceptis*: and so he was set apart by prayer and imposition of hands of Mr. Owen (who also prayed over him) Messrs. Irlam, Gardner, Fletcher, Waterhouse, and Lea. Then Mr. Owen gave y^e exhortation from 1 Timothy vi., 20. *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.* So, concluding with prayer, thanksgiving, singing, and pronouncing y^e blessing, y^e congregation was dismissed.¹

Up to 1730 Mr. Harding confined his labours to Partington, but after that he gave one fourth of his time to Cross Street (Sale). Respecting his Cheshire ministry we have the following :—

He was a regular attendant at the ministers' meetings till August, 1737, taking part at ordinations and other services of importance, and he appears to have been a man of acknowledged worth.²

In 1737 he removed to Toxteth Park, where he continued his ministrations until his death in 1776. Dr. Raffles, in his valuable MS. collection hardly does justice to Harding's educational attain-

¹ Urwick's "Nonconformity in Cheshire," p. 376.

² Ibid., p. 377.

ments when he describes him as "a man of no education or regular training for the ministry." Dr. Halley seems equally at fault when he says :—

He seems to have mistaken his proper gift of God. Having been useful as an exemplary extemporaneous preacher, he became ambitious of a higher distinction, and, to show that he was no longer a Methodist itinerant, but a regular dissenting minister, he assumed a clerical dress, wore a becoming wig, and betook himself to the reading of long and elaborate sermons."¹

The Cheshire minutes previously cited show that Harding received a training not inferior to that of many of his day, and that his being "a Cheshire farmer" must not be understood to imply lack of culture. It does, however, seem clear that his Lancashire ministry was not a success. Dr. Raffles says :—

He was in the habit of reading his sermons, which are described as being long and tedious, seldom less than an hour and a half, and so destitute of evangelical truth that no one could gather his theological sentiments. It is no marvel that under him the congregation should decline, and during the greater part of his ministry be very small.²

Pointing to the same conclusion is the following passage from Dr. Halley's pen :—

On his death a pleasing memorial of the old times, or what would have been so, had it not through his negligence lost its significance, was discontinued by the congregation. In the time of persecution, the good people of the Park were accustomed to meet for religious worship in different houses, in order to elude the observation of the informers. On the passing of the Act of Toleration, they perpetuated the memory of their sufferings by licensing those houses (no fewer than twelve), having monthly prayer meetings in them successively, and so completing the rotation every year. In may seem strange that these assemblies should have been continued throughout Mr. Harding's long and negligent ministry. They were so, because he allowed them to degenerate into convivial meetings, in which drinking ale and smoking tobacco took the place of exhortation, psalm singing, and prayer.³

¹ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. ii., p. 457.

² "Christian Reformer" for 1862, p. 356.

³ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. ii., p. 458.

It was this ministerial laxity which brought on ministerial failure and diminished congregations,¹ and to "recruit his resources" Mr. Harding "resumed his old occupation of farming; the milk and butter being taken by his daughters for sale to the Liverpool market."² Towards the end of his days, however, an important event took place, viz., the rebuilding of the chapel. Dr. Raffles says :—

It first underwent considerable repairs, but these were scarcely completed when the walls began to give way, and it was found necessary entirely to rebuild it. So much had the building been neglected that prior to the first repairs bushes actually grew out of the walls and within the pews. After the completion of these repairs some incendiaries endeavoured to burn it down, but the combustibles did not ignite, though matches which had evidently been alight were found among them.³

As anything which can help us to understand what the old chapel was like will interest the reader, I venture to transcribe the following passage from Mr. Davis's little book :—

There is a statement of Josh. Mercer and W. Lassell's (1803) about the old chapel : "It was originally built of rough stone, set in clay. In 1774 its state was such that it was fixed on by the trustees to take it all down and rebuild it." The old tombs in the chapel show that the original site was retained. The only other approach to a description of the old chapel that I have been able to find is in a deposition made in 1833 by John and Thomas Dickenson with reference to the school house, preserved among the congregational papers. These two remembered being sent as boys to the old school house adjoining the Toxteth Chapel. Occasionally the burial of a member of the congregation took place in the school house, on which occasion the boys, of course, had a holiday. They state that the old chapel

¹ Mr. Davis, in his "History of Toxteth Chapel," attributes the falling off in the congregation of Mr. Harding to the multiplication of dissenting interests in Liverpool. Hardly so; for, besides the growth of population which made those interests necessary, all except one (The Octagon) had been in existence fifty years or more at the time of Mr. Harding's death, thus covering some of the most prosperous years of Toxteth Chapel. It must be remembered, too, that Dr. Raffles, who is our principal authority in these adverse views of Mr. Harding's ministry, lived amongst those unto whom that ministry was a very clear memory.

² Sir J. A. Picton's "Notes," &c., p. 11.

³ "Christian Reformer," for 1862, p. 357.

stood about on the site of the present building, but that the south gallery was approached only by means of stone steps outside the chapel, and the north gallery by a wooden staircase passing up through the school house. There is also an old plan of the chapel in 1773 which confirms this statement. From this it appears that approaching from Liverpool along the lane, which is now Park Road, you come first to the entrance porch, and passed through this into the school room, where there was the staircase up to the north gallery, and also an entrance into the chapel downstairs. It seems that the old school-house was pulled down before the end of last century, and a more elaborate building erected. There is a plan of this, made in 1835, by Charles Whiteside, the last master. The entrance was in the middle of the building, facing Park Road, on the left were the master's apartments, on the right the schoolrooms—the boys' downstairs, the girls' on the first floor. At the south end of the school room was a door leading into the vestry of the chapel, but the chapel itself was now approached directly from Park Road by a new porch. A new staircase leading up to the north gallery was also built inside the chapel. It is not clear whether the whole of the outer structure of the chapel built in 1774 was new or not, but there is a stone over one of the windows bearing the date 1650, and some of the old woodwork was retained, notably the door of the Mather pew, with its carved inscription, "D. 1650. M." There is an old bell, also, which still announces to the congregation the times of service. Tradition, with amusing unlikelihood, ascribed the gift of this bell to Oliver Cromwell. I regret to say that I have mounted the roof and invaded the solitude of our old friend. He claims only to have been born in 1751. There is no further inscription, only the date in old-fashioned figures forming part of an ornamented ring about the upper part of the bell.¹

As we have seen, Mr. Harding survived the rebuilding of the chapel only some two years. His remains lie in the graveyard, and his tombstone reads thus:—

This Stone calls to our re-
membrance ELIZABETH HARDING,
Who died October the 24th, 1766,
In the 75th year of her age.
Also the Rev^d. WILLIAM HARDING, who
Departed this life 15th July, 1776, aged 85
years.

The Rev. James McQuhae, then at Tockholes, subsequently at Blackburn, was invited to the pastorate, but he declined the

¹ "Some Account of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth Park, Liverpool," pp. 39, 40.

invitation, and the Rev. Hugh Anderson was appointed, "much to the dissatisfaction of a considerable minority, who desired to hear more of the evangelical doctrine than he preached to them."¹ Before dealing with the consequences of this choice I shall present the reader with some interesting correspondence respecting the appointment of a successor to Mr. Harding, together with some notes of the Mercer family, members of which frequently cross the pathway of the Lancashire Nonconformist historian. Two or three years previous to Mr. Harding's death his infirmities and negligence gave considerable anxiety to those who were interested in the prosperity of the place. Writing to his brother, Mr. Jonathan Mercer, of Allerton, on December 10th, 1774, the Rev. Samuel Mercer, of Chowbent, says:—

I am surprised to hear Mr. Harding is still living, but imagine there is little probability indeed of his ever being useful again. With respect to the Religious Sy. at Toxteth Park, I have had many thoughts about them in their present situation, and could sincerely wish it were in my power to serve them in any way. I have made frequent enquiries of my friends who come at a distance, whether they knew of any person that would suit the place but at present have not heard of any. When I see Mr. Smalley I will make the proper enquiries of him, but an attempt to remove while Mr. Harding is living, I should think you have it not in your power to give any other minister proper encouragement to settle amongst you. Of this, however, you are much better qualified to judge than I am. But if you cannot, I should think it more advisable, as I told Sister Bradley, to engage as many of the neighbouring ministers as you can to supply the place for a while. This may, perhaps, be the means of keeping the people in good humour for a time, and until you are able to make such proposals to another minister, whether as an assistant to Mr. Harding, or as your stated pastor, which may be thought a sufficient encouragement for him to come and settle among you. Would it not be much better to drop all thoughts of it at present, especially as a period of six or eight months possibly may not elapse without producing some important change or changes. I wish not to be understood as advising you against fixing with another minister, so soon as you can either meet with one that will be agreeable, or you are able to make a decent and comfortable provision for one. But if you cannot, besides the £20 per an. which you propose giving to Mr. Harding during his natural life, afford to pay a supply constantly after the rate of 15s. per day (which I am afraid will not be in your power), it is not very probable I think that you will meet with any person, much more such a one as you could wish, who would pay

¹ Halley's "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. ii., p. 458.

much attention to your proposals. Mr. Boulton is going into Derbyshire next week to settle, Mr. Horrox is gone to Cottingham, near Hull, and I think it not improbable that Mr. Valentine may soon be engaged to supply Tunley every other Lord's Day. Possibly it may be in my power again to assist you two or three days by way of exchange.

P.S.—If the Rev^d. Mr. Dewhurst, of Oswestry, would suit you, I doubt not but he would be willing to remove. At present he's only an assistant to an old gentleman with whom, I believe, he is not on the most friendly terms. I have been informed that he would be very willing to accept of Tunley. Mr. D. had his grammar learning under Mr. Smalley, was educated at Daventry, but hear he is not a popular preacher.

Mr. Mercer's next letter, dealing with the same subject, is dated January 23rd, 1775, and reads thus:—

Yesterday I rece^d a letter from the Rev^d Mr. Nisbett, of Congleton, &c. Here comes the following extract from it:—"The other place you mention, to wit, Toxteth Park, has circumstances to recommend it the reverse of Tunley. A pleasing situation and an agreeable neighbourhood, but a people rather stiff in their sentiments. I freely own, Sir, that some of the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism are too hard for my digestion. I can see no foundation for them in the N. T. Nevertheless, I ministered for two years to people much of their turn of mind with general approbation. Mr. John Angier, my predecessor at Swanland, nr. Hull (a gentleman known well at Liverpool), was their minister near 32 years. The ruling principle in my public performances has been to drop all controversies and confine myself to confessedly important themes. If I hear nothing further to forbid me, I shall endeavour to wait upon them at the time appointed, *i.e.*, the 2d Sabth in Feby." Mr. Mercer goes on to express his opinion that "a man of moderate sentiments like Mr. N. would suit them best, and be more likely to draw a congregation from Liverpool than a flaming bigotted Calvinist." He concludes his letter thus: "Should be glad to know in your next whether Mr. Priestley preached for you last Lord's day, and what the sentiments of your society were of him."

Writing on November 21st, 1775, Mr. Mercer says:—

Last Sunday Evg. I received a letter from Mr. Fenner, which I have enclosed for your satisfaction and the rest of the members of your Socy, and from Mr. F.'s account of Mr. Darracott am sorry you have met with such a disappointment.

The letter of the Rev. John Ludd Fenner, who had recently

settled at Monton Chapel,¹ near Manchester, is dated November 17th, 1775, and reads as follows :—

Dr. Sir,

I last night received a letter from Mr. Darracott, the contents of which are as follows :—That he esteems himself obliged to his friends, but is now situated amongst all his relations, and upon the whole is as happy as he ever expects to be, and therefore cannot think to move. You will please to return this answer to the people at Toxteth Park. I am sorry both on their account and my own. Mr. D. is a worthy man, and worth gaining, or I would not have recommended him. I hope the great Head of the Church will direct them to a suitable choice.

Messrs. Mercer and Lassell received a communication from Dr. Fisher, Tutor of Homerton College, dated January 25th, 1775, to the following effect :—

Sirs and Vⁿ friends,

In yours dated the 16th inst., you in some particulars state the case of the church under the pastoral care of the Rev Mr. Harding, who is now far advanced in life, &c. One Mr. Kello, a hopeful, promising young person, now a student here, will probably some time in April or May pass his trials for the ministry, but till that period and probation he cannot, according to established rule, preach in any place save in the church where he is in special communion. But if after or about that time the good people at T. P. should be in want of a supply Mr. R., upon application made, will have no disinclination to make you a visit.

The next correspondent is the Rev. James McQuhae, an extract from whose letter, dated from Tockholes, April 13th, 1776, is here given :—

I understand you have got a young gentleman from Galloway to supply for you at the Park. Please write me what encouragement he meets with ; if he is evangelical and likely to be useful, and if he desires to be ordained among you.

Mr. Mercer replies :—

You'll please to excuse my enlarging on the Toxteth Park affair. I heard Mr. Anderson deliver 8 discourses before my friends gave him an invitation to fix among them, the substance of which discourses did not appear to me and others *evangelical*. The consequence was we were excluded in the

¹ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

choice because we would not—the truth is we could not—fall in with a party. It is annoying to hear the language of professors in our day. For my own part I claim, what I will freely grant, a right of private judgment, which I think no man on earth has a power over ; but, alas, by far the greater part of professors either don't understand themselves, or their language betrays gross ignorance in this as well as other religious matters.—I remain, &c.

The Rev. James Scott, of Heckmondwike Academy, writes to Mr. Jonathan Mercer, on the same subject, June 6th, 1776.

Sir,

Mr. Thos. Priestley, of Birstall, informed me that you lately had some converse with Mr. Hudson, of Gildersome, about sending one of my students to preach at Park on trial. Mr. H. had not an opportunity to hear Mr. Cockin, &c. Mr. Cockin is a hopeful young man, but is not yet far advanced in learning, so that it would be a great disadvantage to him to be interrupted and broke off from his present studies, and an hindrance to future usefulness. I have another student who is more advanced in learning, who hath preached in our meeting and in several places acceptably. His name is Bruce. He's, I believe, truly serious and sound in the doctrines of Christianity. According to our ordinary course of education he should continue some time longer with me, but several of my students being acceptable to congregations upon trial have, upon the earnest desire of the people, been dismissed at the same period with respect to learning that Mr. B. hath attained. Now, sir, if you think it proper to take a trial of him, I shall send him to you at the time you appoint,¹ if the Lord spare life and health, and you may take trial of him for a month or two, and then do as you and the people think proper, for a dismission will be no disappointment. My students have always had invitations to places as soon as they were prepared for them, &c.

The letters above given serve to show how important was the place which members of the Mercer family held in Nonconformist circles during the eighteenth century. Their home was at Allerton, near Liverpool. Samuel Mercer, of Allerton, is mentioned as trustee in a deed of gift to Gateacre Chapel in 1715. The Rev. Jonathan Mercer,

¹ Dr. Raffles says, "Previously to Mr. Anderson's being chosen pastor, Mr. Jonⁿ. Mercer sent to Mr. Scott, of Heckmondwike, for a student from his academy. He sent Mr. David Bruce. He preached but one sermon, however, in the Park Chapel. His text was somewhat singular for such an occasion, and under such circumstances—Cant. 7. 1. Many came from Liverpool to hear the young divine, and the sermon caused much stir and debate. Those who were for Mr. Bruce took the Jews' synagogue in Liverpool, and finally built Newington Chapel."

ordained at Long Melford, in Suffolk, July 18th, 1733, minister for many years at Spalding, in Lincolnshire, invited to become assistant to the Rev. C. Bassnett, of Liverpool, and who subsequently laboured twenty-nine years at St. Helens, in a letter to his family at Allerton, dated from Spalding, September 24th, 1726, gives an account of his invitation to Liverpool, with reasons for not accepting the same. Mr. Joseph Mercer, of Allerton, writing June 2nd, 1770, to some one unknown, about the appointment of a successor to his brother at St. Helens, says that if a person could be sent as minister who would be "orthodox, sound in his principles, I should much rejoice and be thankful to you for the sake of the people, who have always since I knew them been a quiet, peaceable, and well-behaved congregation towards their ministers." The Rev. Samuel Mercer, extracts from whose letters have already been given, was the son of Mr. Joseph Mercer, of Allerton. His brother was Mr. Joseph Mercer, and he was nephew to the Rev. Jonathan Mercer, of St. Helens. Samuel Mercer was educated at Dr. Doddridge's Academy, Northampton, and the following interesting letter to his parents whilst he was a student there has been preserved:—

Novr. 12, 1750.

Hon^d. Parents,

I rec^d. your last, which I had intended to have answered sooner, had I not had so much business upon my hands, which to have omitted would have been to my disadvantage, &c. As for seeing you and my brother at Northampton I should be extremely glad, but, perhaps, you may think that may be an excuse for my not coming home, for, I will assure you I cannot go to London along with you, for our vacation will begin the latter end of June, so that if you come it will but be unnecessary charges for you to come through Northampton, but I should be very glad if you would send me word in your next letter whether you would have me come home or no, &c.

If I have been extravagant in my expences I am not sensible of it. You see always all my bills that are of any importance, and as I have sent you some enclosed in this letter, which I hope you will have no objection to. The everlasting which you see is for two pair of — waistcoats, one pair of which I have worn out almost, and my gown is so far gone that it will scarce last me till a few weeks longer. I have bought a new wig, which I stood in great want of. I wore my old one till it was not worth a penny, and that wig which I had when I came first is almost done. And I have bespoke a new pair of boots, which I cannot possibly do without, for if you knew what I undergo by going into the country towns to repeat sermons and pray. It

happened I and another of my fellow pupils were gone out to repeat a sermon, and being without boots we were two hours in a storm of rain and wind. We were lost in a country where we did not know nothing at all of,¹ so that I think it is not only useful but necessary to have a pair. I have, according to your desire, bought a quantity of coals, of which I have bought 10 Hund., which cost 12s., which I borrow'd of my mistress. I should be very glad to know, in particular, whether Mr. Harding preached from that text, and whether he has converted any of the new notioners by preaching. I should be very glad if you would desire Mr. Harding to let me have a few of his most orthodox sermons to go to repeat.² I wish you would be so good as to ask of him that favour, if you think it would not be improper. If he could I hope you would send them immediately. Let me know in your next how the affair is, since sermons of the same kind are so very scarce that we can scarce light of a book to write a good sermon out of, but one or another has heard. Pray let me know in this particular the next letter. And I should be very glad if you would send me my watch, and send me a box with a few of your best books, which will be the most convenient for me, as soon as possible. And let me know how my brother Robert goes on, whether he is gone to St. Helen's school, and if he is pray dont, and I earnestly beg you would board him at William Claughton's, for if you do, so young as he is, he will certainly be ruined;¹ for I have seen the many dangers and difficulties, and have wondered since how I broke through them; so that for your own happiness,, and his everlasting happiness, do not send him thither, for if I thought you would send him thither I should never be easy, &c. So I must beg leave to conclude with my respects, as due.

From your very dutiful son,

S. MERCER.

¹ These letters from the MSS. of the late Dr. Raffles are copied almost exactly as they appear there. They do not always read easily or grammatically, and sometimes they present omissions, but I have not cared to assume the responsibility of altering them.

² The practice of preaching other men's sermons does not appear to have been uncommon amongst the Dissenters of the last century. The Rev. J. Wilding, at one time minister at Elswick, and afterwards at Prescot (vide vols. i. and iv. of "*Lancashire Nonconformity*"), writing to the Rev. John Seddon, of Warrington, from Derby, on January 17th, 1766, says:—

"Sir,—I took the opportunity of returning by Master Compton [Crompton?] the MSS. you lent me. Along with them I have sent half a dozen of my own. But I don't know whether you will think proper to make any use of those I send you. However, I determined to send them, if for no other reason that I might at least with a better grace be entitled to some of yours; for you must give me leave to tell you that I find more satisfaction in delivering yours (as well likewise as I know they please our congregation better) than any I can pretend to make of myself. I shall, therefore, thank you for as many of your MSS. as you choose to spare me." (Waddington's "*Congregational History*," vol. iii., p. 506.)

The following appears to have been a kind of postscript to his father only :—

Dr. Father,—I should esteem it not only as a great favour, but as a great honour paid to me, if you would be so good, as it is for my interest, to make a present to the doctor of a couple of Cheshire cheeses, not strong, but mild and fat, which will be very acceptable to the doctor, as he provided me a tutor last year, and I do not know whether he will be paid for it, and likewise, if you please, that I should make a present of something, about a crown value, to the Drs. assistant, who, when he should have been taking recreation, has been instructing me, so that it would be a means of my further improvement; and likewise to send my Dame, for she is a widow, and she behaves very well to me. I hope, father, you will not forget. And I must beg the favour in particular to send a Cheshire cheese to one of my particular acquaintance, a shop keeper, where I buy my stockings, and where I am positive of it, I am used as if I were almost some of their family, whose son I have under my care to teach Latin, and, who, if it lay in their power, would help me in the greatest extremity, who have made me several handsome presents, and sell me their goods, as I have seen with my own eyes—a pair of stockings I have bought 6d cheaper than they have sold to any one of our gentlemen—who are very religious people, not those who cant people out of their money, and give them fair words.

Mr. Mercer, on the completion of his ministerial duties, settled for a short time at Tockholes, near Blackburn, and subsequently at Charlesworth, Gee Cross, and Chowbent.¹ Mr. Jonathan Mercer, his brother, was a not less prominent member of the family than its ministerial members. He was the recipient of several of the letters above given and some others which follow, for many years a leading spirit in the Toxteth Park congregation, and helped to originate Independency in Liverpool and Warrington.

The appointment of the Rev. Hugh Anderson as Mr. Harding's successor was to Mr. Jonathan Mercer and a "considerable minority" a sore grief; and eventually advised by the Rev. James McQuhae and some others, unto whom they applied for help, they seceded from the church of their fathers, and erected the first Independent Chapel in Liverpool, of which an account will be given subsequently. Mr. Anderson was a Scotchman, coming to Liverpool from Galloway in the summer of 1776, and was ordained on October 1st, 1777, in Key Street Chapel, along with

¹ Vide vols. ii. and iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

the Rev. John Yates, recently settled there. The Rev. Dr. Enfield preached a sermon on the occasion, and the Rev. Richard Godwin, of Gateacre, gave the charge to the minister. This was the longest ministry in connection with Park Chapel, and it was "the period," says Mr. Davis, "in which the question was decided whether the Presbyterians, who, like so many of their brethren throughout the country, had developed doctrinally into Unitarians, should retain possession of their Meeting House, or whether it should pass into the hands of the Independents." During the closing years of Mr. Anderson's ministry the congregation was very small, as the following, written about 1825, shows :—

The congregation is literally gone to nothing, consisting often entirely of official persons, viz., the doorkeeper, the gravedigger, the singers, and the preacher. I have been there when there were only a dozen persons present.¹

In 1827 the Rev. John Porter, born in 1800, and educated at Belfast, was chosen colleague to Mr. Anderson, but practically was sole minister. Mr. Anderson, now quite infirm, could only take occasional duty at a baptism or funeral. He died in 1832, and in the graveyard of the chapel is a tombstone thus inscribed :—

Mrs. MARY BREW,
of *Liverpool*,
Obiit. Oct. 25th, A.D. 1793, Æta. 77.
Here lie the Remains of SAM^l.
WEBSTER, who died 12th May, 1801,
Aged 64 years.
MARY, Relict of Samuel Webster,
Died 28th March, 1813, Aged 71 years.
MARY, wife of the Rev^d. Hugh
Anderson, Died Sept. 29th. 1816,
In the 47th Year of her AGE.
Also the Rev^d. HUGH ANDERSON,
Died 6th April, 1832, Aged 86 years,
And 56 years minister of this Chapel.

In 1829 Mr. Porter left Toxteth Park for Belfast, and died in 1874. His successor was the Rev. John Hamilton Thom, son of the Rev. John Thom, of Newry, in Ireland. Educated, like

¹ "Manchester Socinian Controversy," p. 158.

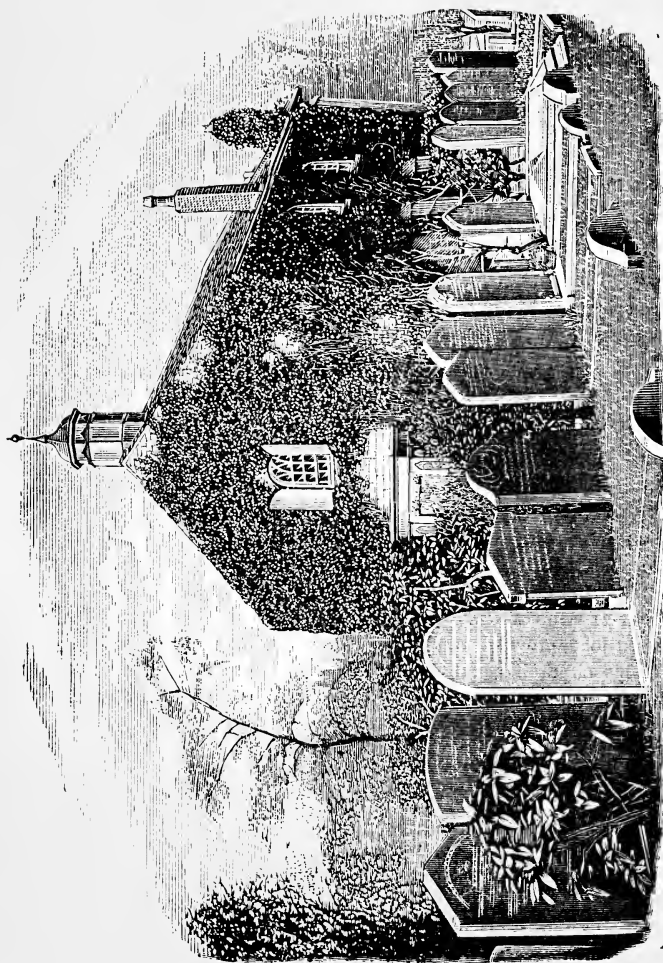
his predecessor, at Belfast, he assumed the pastorate of Toxteth Chapel in 1829, and remained until 1831, when he became the minister of the Renshaw Street congregation. The Rev. Charles Wicksteed, B.A., was the next minister. He was educated at Glasgow, and began his labours at Toxteth Park in 1831, terminating them in 1835, in which year he removed to Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds. Subsequently he was at Hope Street, Liverpool, and died in 1885. The Rev. Henry Giles was minister from 1835 to 1840, sailing in the early part of the latter year for the United States, where he became a popular lecturer. Several of his lectures have been published in volume form. He died in 1882, aged seventy-three years. In 1840 the Rev. John Robberds, B.A., who had been educated at Manchester College (York), and had previously laboured at Yeovil, Somersetshire, became Mr. Giles's successor. In December of that year Mr. Charles Whiteside, who had held the position of schoolmaster for thirty-seven years, resigned "from infirmity, and losing all his scholars." "In the following year," says Mr. Davis, "the old school-house was pulled down, and the present north front, with vestry and library attached, was added. About the same time a considerable piece of land adjoining the old burial-ground was bought by Mr. Richard Vaughan Yates, a member of the congregation, and laid out as a garden cemetery. This ground is now held by trustees separate from those of the chapel, and is retained for the use of the members of the Liverpool Unitarian congregations."¹ Mr. Robberds left in 1866, and for many years was resident at Cheltenham, without charge. He died at Bridgwater, February 8th, 1892, aged seventy-seven years. The Rev. Charles Barnes Upton, B.A., B.Sc., of the Manchester New College, London, followed Mr. Robberds, in 1867. In 1875 he resigned to become Professor of Philosophy in the college where he had received his training. He is now resident, without charge, at St. George's, Littlemore, near Oxford. The Rev. James Harwood, B.A., was minister from 1875 to 1878, removing in the latter year to Monton,² near Manchester. The Rev. J. E. Odgers, M.A.,

¹ "Some Account of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth Park, Liverpool," p. 49.

² Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

educated at Manchester New College, London, and who had previously been assistant minister at Renshaw Street, Liverpool, and in charge of the congregation at Kendal, began his labours at Toxteth Park in 1878. He removed to Altrincham in 1882, where he still ministers; and in the beginning of 1883 the present minister, the Rev. Valentine David Davis, B.A., educated at Manchester New College, London, and who had previously spent three years at Nottingham, entered upon duty as successor to Mr. Odgers. The chapel, which stands at the junction of Park Road and Dingle Lane, has still a very primitive appearance, both internally and externally. It is a low structure, in the centre of a graveyard of considerable size, which is rich in interesting memorials of Liverpool worthies of many generations. The pews are all straight-backed, made of oak, chiefly square, and lined with green baize. Its sitting accommodation is barely for 200 people, consequently whatever alterations it has undergone in the course of time it is much the same size as it was when the fathers of Liverpool Nonconformity preached therein. There is a small pulpit fixed against the wall, from which the minister may almost reach the people in the galleries, which go round the chapel, except on that side. The windows are composed of small square panes, and marble tablets adorn the walls, whilst tombstones partly make up the flooring of the main aisle. One would fain linger over the names which arrest the eye of the visitor, nearly all of which could recite a story of thrilling interest, but neither time nor space permits. One name, however, demands exemption from such treatment. It is that of Jeremiah Horrox, who was both minister and scientist, and whose connection with the district is appropriately commemorated by a handsome tablet in the chapel. It consists of a white marble disc, with a square of dark dove coloured marble as background, and a white star in each corner. The inscription upon it shows in what way the celebrated astronomer was connected with Toxteth Chapel:—

This Tablet is erected
to the memory of
JEREMIAH HORROX,
Who foretold, and was the first to observe,
The Transit of Venus across the Sun's Disc,
On the 24th Nov., 1639.



THE ANCIENT CHAPEL AT TOXTETH AS IT NOW IS.

He also made other valuable Discoveries
in Astronomy.
He was born in Toxteth Park, near Otterspool,
About 1618,
And died there 3 January, 1641.
It is believed that before going to Cambridge,
He was a pupil of the Rev^d. Richard Mather,
The first minister of this Chapel,
And that within its precincts
He was buried.

The tablet was erected in 1891, and on Sunday, October 11th, of that year, the Rev. V. D. Davis, pastor, preached an appropriate sermon from Gen. I., 1, 3. It is surely to be regretted that the tablet contains no reference to his ministry at Hoole Church, near Preston, where his most important astronomical observations were made. The late Mr. J. E. Bailey says that Jeremiah Horrox was probably the son of "William Horrockes, of Toxteth Park," a small farmer of Puritan stock, an abstract of whose will is here given, because of the interesting names it contains:—

Will of *Wm. Horrockes, of Toxteth Parke*: He makes his executors, Joane, his wife, his brother, John Horrockes, and his "cosin,¹ Alexander Horrockes, preacher of God's word." Of his messuage tenement, and lands, &c., whereon he then dwelt, he left a fourth part to his wife during life, and the residue for the education of his son John and the rest of his children, until John was 21 years of age. The remainder of the estate was to go to the use of his son John, provided he gave 100 marks, when 21, to the use of all the rest of his children equally among them. In providing for the family his executors were to consult his beloved friends, Mr. (Richard) Mather, Edward Aspinwall, William ffox, and Thomas Aspinwall. (They attest the will.) Of the rest of his goods his wife was to have £100, and the residue was to be equally divided amongst his younger children, "and by the endeavour of my executors, with the best advice of my forenamed friends, be ymployed faithfully, with feare of God, to the most preferment in their understandings of my said younger children."

An inventory of Farming stuff, with list of leases granted to William Horrockes, is appended, and is said to be "given by William Horrockes, the 3 March, 1618-[19]," upon trust to John Horrockes, Tho. Aspinwall, Alexander Horrockes, and the other friends. The £100 which was bequeathed to the wife is referred to.

¹ Probably the noted Puritan Vicar of Deane, near Bolton, who died before 1650, and was spoken of by the Royalist soldiers as "that old rogue that preaches in his grey cloak." A relation of his, Elizabeth Horrocks, married the Rev. Dr. John Cotton, of New England fame (vide ante p. 76).



THE BIRTHPLACE OF JEREMIAH HORROX, AT OTTERPOOL, NEAR TOTTEH.

A memorandum, dated 23 April, 1619, states that the goods and estates remained "in the hands of Jenet Horrockes, widow, late wife of the above-named William Horrockes, in trust for the children, &c. It is signed by the widow and the friends named in the will. The agreement was exhibited in June, 1646."¹

III.—RENSHAW STREET CHAPEL.

ALL writers on Liverpool Nonconformity claim the Rev. Christopher Richardson, M.A., as the founder of the first Nonconformist congregation in Liverpool proper, to which it is said he ministered until his death in 1698. In the account of Toxteth Chapel just given I have not ventured to differ from other writers in the story of his life, because of insufficient evidence, but I have grave doubts as to its accuracy. I regret that I can only express doubts: my researches have not enabled me to throw any fresh light upon Mr. Richardson's connection with Liverpool. It would be interesting to know what brought him to Liverpool when about seventy years of age² to endure all the hardships of the ministry at Toxteth Park, when he might have spent the closing years of his life in peace on his own estate at Lassell Hall. Strange, too, it is, that he never seems to have returned to Lassell Hall; for it is said that he died at Liverpool, and was buried in the graveyard of St. Nicholas Chapel. As the facts stand, and I am not able to dispute them, though they call for some further explanation, they present unto us a deeply interesting picture; they show what fine material our Nonconformist fathers were made of; and how deep and strong was their passion for the service of Christ. It is said that, in addition to assisting the minister of Toxteth Park Chapel, for the convenience of the people Mr. Richardson preached in Liverpool on alternate

¹ Copied from "The Palatine Note Book," for December, 1882, p. 254.

² Dr. Halley ("Lancashire Puritanism," &c., vol. ii., p. 323) says that he was invited to Liverpool in 1672. That, of course, is wrong. He certainly was at Lassell Hall in 1682, and both Mr. Briscoe and Mr. Crompton were at Toxteth Park in 1685.

Sundays; that these services led to the erection of Castle Hey Chapel about 1688; and that the two places were worked together until his death in 1698. It is this statement, especially the date of the erection of the chapel, which seems most open to question. Sir J. A. Picton, in his "Municipal Archives," has the following:—

1692, Februry 14th. Upon y^e request of Mr. Thomas Collins, Mr. Richard Mercer, and Lawrence Fletcher, who desire a house at y^e end of Lord Street, Liverpool, belonging to Mr. David Poole, of y^e same, merchant, to be sett apart for y^e exercise of religious worship, it is agreed by the justices that they may be enjoy'd to that end, according to y^e intention of y^e Act of Parliam^t and the said Mr. Thomas Collins is to be allow'd to preach there.¹

If already a chapel had been erected for the convenience of the Liverpool Nonconformists, it is difficult to see what the meaning of that passage is. Then, in the minutes of the United Brethren, extending from April, 1693, to August, 1700, Mr. Richardson's name never once appears. Mr. Crompton and Mr. Angier are both mentioned as representing Liverpool, and Mr. Holt's name occurs in 1699; but the minutes are absolutely silent respecting Mr. Richardson. The silence is singular if at the time he was actually minister of a congregation in Liverpool; for the "Brethren" did not readily overlook absence from their meetings. Yet another thing: Oliver Heywood, in recording Mr. Richardson's death (*vide ante* p. 87, note 3), contrary to his usual practice, does not call him a minister. He says simply "of Liverpool." I have already stated my inability to make all this read clearly, and it is only inserted to show that there is yet considerable room for research respecting Mr. Richardson's life in Liverpool and the origin of the first Nonconformist foundation here. I am inclined to think that Mr. Richardson had retired from active duty some time before his death, and that whilst he may have conducted services in Liverpool—as well as at Toxteth Park Chapel, it was well on towards the end of the century before the Castle Hey congregation had a definite existence. As to the site of this first building nothing is known. "No local tradition even," says the Rev. Geo. Eyre Evans, "remains to identify it. Henry Taylor,

¹ *Vide* vol. i., p. 330.

in his valuable manuscript volume, says:—"Castle Hey Chapel was probably pulled down, as no trace of it can be remembered, nor can the spot on which it stood be ascertained."¹ About 1699 the Rev. Richard Holt became the minister. He was educated by the Rev. Richard Frankland, becoming a student in his academy at Rathmell, February 6th, 1690, a month after the Rev. John Kennion, subsequently of Toxteth Park Chapel. With his advent it is said that the Castle Hey congregation ceased to be worked in conjunction with the one at Toxteth Park. Mr. Holt continued to be the minister until his death in 1718. In the "Northowram Register" appears the following:—

"Mr. Richd. Holt, minr. in Leverpool, died Mar. [1718]."²

His successor³ was a man of considerable eminence, Dr. Henry Winder. Born at Hutton John, near Graystock, in Cumberland, May 15th, 1693, educated in part by Dr. Dixon, of Whitehaven, and afterwards by Mr. Boyse, at Dublin, he settled at Tunley in 1714. On the 11th of September, 1716, he was ordained at St. Helens, when the Rev. Christopher Bassnett³ preached the sermon, which was published the following year under the title of "Church Officers and their Missions." About 1719 he removed to Liverpool, where he continued to labour until his death, August 9th, 1752, and was interred in the graveyard of St. Peter's Church, the following inscription being placed upon his tombstone:—

Here lieth the Body of the
Rev^d. HENRY WINDER, D.D.,
Who died Aug. . . . 1752.
. . . 60th year of his age.

¹ "History of Renshaw Street Chapel," p. 2. To this work I am indebted for much of the information about Renshaw Street Chapel here given. Dr. Thom ("Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 20 and note 1) conjectures that a "Dissenting chapel" in Harrington Street (originally Castle Hey) opened as a church in 1776 by the Rev. Mr. Bragg, and called St. Mary's, was the building where the Castle Hey congregation worshipped.

² P. 274.

³ This is the correct spelling according to Mr. Bassnett's own signature, and so previous forms must give way to this.

He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1740 from the Glasgow University. It was owing to the success of his ministry that the congregation removed from Castle Hey to a new building erected in Benn's Garden, South Castle Street, which was opened for public worship in 1727. Dr. Winder "bequeathed his valuable library to the congregation for the use of the members," and amongst his papers still preserved in the library is a small manuscript book thus entitled:—

"My last Sermon preached in y^e Old Chapel, on Wednesday, June 28, 1727. 1 Peter 4, 8."¹

The Rev. John Henderson, afterwards Dr. Henderson, who was educated at Glasgow University, and who had been Dr. Winder's co pastor a short time previous to his death, assumed the sole charge of the congregation in 1753.² In 1763 he conformed to the Established Church, and in 1769 was appointed incumbent of the newly completed Church of St. Paul, in Liverpool, where he had as curate for a time the Rev. Gilbert Wakefield, B.A., subsequently one of the tutors of Warrington.³ Here Dr. Henderson continued his labours until July 4th, 1779, when he died, and was interred at the south end of the church. Dr. William Enfield, who had been educated at Daventry, was the next minister, being ordained as such in November, 1763. He remained until 1770, when he removed to Warrington to take charge of the congregation there, and become tutor of the academy. In 1785 he settled at the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, when death terminated his labours, November 3rd, 1797. He was the author of several works, not the least interesting amongst them being a "History of Liverpool," now somewhat scarce.⁴ The Rev. Robert Lewin followed. He

¹ Vide vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity" for additional information respecting him.

² In the Baptismal Register of the Benn's Garden congregation are several entries by the Rev. Mr. Owen between the years 1751 and 1757. This was probably the Rev. John Owen, who succeeded his father, Dr. Charles Owen, at Warrington. Whether he was more than an occasional supply for the Liverpool congregation is not clear.

³ Vide vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

⁴ Ibid.

was born in London, though descended from an ancient family in Oxfordshire, "and after being for some years head master of a considerable classical school near the Metropolis, he was admitted student at the academy under the Rev. Dr. Jennings, the learned author of the Jewish antiquities, though he resided all the time under the parental roof."¹ On September 1st, 1762, he was ordained pastor of the church at Debenham, in Suffolk, removing two years afterwards to Ipswich in the same county. There he remained until November, 1770, when, "with his wife and three young children, he arrived in Liverpool, having, out of three invitations to large congregations, selected that of becoming sole minister of Benn's Garden Chapel." In 1811 the congregation left Benn's Garden for Renshaw Street Chapel, erected "in a more central and convenient situation." Mr. Lewin preached the last sermon in the old building on Sunday, October 13th, 1811, and on the Sunday following the first sermon in the new one, the Rev. John Grundy, of Manchester, preaching in the afternoon from Rom. xiv., 4. Benn's Garden Chapel was sold to the Welsh Wesleyan Methodists, who occupied it until 1866, when it was again sold and put to commercial uses. Mr. Lewin remained the minister until the close of 1816, when he resigned. His death took place in January, 1825, at which time he was "aged 85 years and 5 months," being interred in the graveyard of Toxteth Park Chapel, where his tombstone bears this record:—

Hallowed
To the Memory of
ROBERT LEWIN,
Nearly half a century minister to the congregation of Benn's Garden
Chapel, born in London, Aug. 14, 1739,
Died Jan. 15, 1825;
and to
MARY,
His wife,
Born 25th Dec., 1745, died 13th Jan'y, 1816.
Eheu! Olim!
Also to
RACHEL, HARRIET, & THOMAS,
Their Children.

¹ "Monthly Repository" for 1825, p. 180.

Mr. Lewin had associated with him in the pastorate from 1776 to 1781 Dr. Nicholas Clayton, from the Octagon Chapel, in Liverpool,¹ and from 1781 to 1801 the Rev. Joseph Smith. Mr. Smith was a native of Hyde, educated at Warrington Academy, and settled at Shrewsbury in 1774 as assistant to Mr. Fownes on the removal of the Rev. Ralph Harrison to Manchester. His next charge was at Liverpool, where for twenty years, as co-pastor with Mr. Lewin, he served the Renshaw Street congregation. Failing health led to his resignation in 1801, but he continued to worship with the congregation till his death, August 8th, 1815. He was buried in the graveyard of Toxteth Park Chapel, his tombstone being thus inscribed :—

In memory
of the Rev^d. JOSEPH SMITH, of Liverpool,
who died Aug. 8, 1815, aged 60.

The Rev. George Harris entered upon his duties as pastor in succession on July 12th, 1817. Mr. Harris was born at Maidstone, in Kent, May 15th, 1794, his father being the Rev. Abraham Harris, a Dissenting minister. In November, 1812, he entered the Glasgow University, to be educated for the ministry. It was while Mr. Harris was touring in England to raise funds for a contemplated chapel at Greenock that he was brought under the notice of the Liverpool congregation, mainly through the influence of the Rev. Thomas Belsham. Shortly after his arrival in Liverpool he commenced the delivery of Sunday evening lectures on doctrinal subjects, which created quite a sensation in the town,² and gave rise to a heated controversy, in which many eminent ministers of all shades of theological thought took part.³ "The spirit of missionary zeal," says Mr. Evans, "burned strongly in Mr. Harris's breast. He was the

¹ Vide p. 136; also vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² It is recorded that for several months the walls of the town were chalked with allusions to the subjects of the lectures—"Harris kill the devil," "No hell-fire," &c., &c., and the chapel was called "No-Devil Chapel."

³ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity." It was the speech of Mr. Harris at the farewell dinner given in honour of the Rev. John Grundy, on his removal from Manchester to Liverpool, which gave rise to the Manchester Socinian Controversy.

promoter of the Lancashire and Cheshire Unitarian Association, one of the objects of which was to promote the principles of Unitarian Christianity by means of popular preaching. Soon after it was founded, Mr. Harris made a fortnight's missionary tour through East Lancashire, travelled over 220 miles, and preached thirteen times to large gatherings of eager hearers. The mode of action adopted by Mr. Harris was disapproved of by many of his ministerial and lay friends, who became alienated from him. The result of this was to make him redouble his labours in the missionary work. At the close of a highly successful course of lectures in the winter of 1821-22, Mr. Harris tendered his resignation to the congregation, and preached for the last time as minister of the chapel on 31st March, 1822."¹ He removed to Bolton, where he took charge of the congregation worshipping in Moor Lane Chapel, an offshoot from Bank Street. In 1825 he left Bolton for Glasgow, went afterwards to St. Mark's Chapel, Edinburgh, and next to Hanover Square, Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he laboured until his death, December 24th, 1859. The Rev. William Hincks followed. He was the son of the Rev. Thomas Dix Hincks, LL.D., and was born at Cork in 1793, when his father was minister there. On completing his education at Manchester College, York, he settled at Cork in 1814, as co-pastor with the Rev. William Hort, his father's successor. In 1816 he removed to Exeter, where he remained until November 3rd, 1822, when he began his labours at Liverpool. He resigned in 1827, and became Tutor in Mathematics, and Natural, Mental and Moral Philosophy, in Manchester College, continuing to be such until 1839, when he removed to London, where he gave "valued aid to the chapel in Stamford Street." Subsequently, he became Professor of Natural History in Queen's College, Cork, and afterwards Professor of Natural History in University College, Toronto. He died September 10th, 1871, aged seventy-eight years, "a few weeks after he had resigned his college post." From 1842 to 1849, Mr. Hincks edited the *Inquirer*, "bringing it safely through the many trials and difficulties which generally attend the early years of such a newspaper." The Rev. John Hincks was appointed his successor, and began his ministry as such on August 26th, 1827.

¹ "History of Renshaw Street Chapel," p. 16.

He was the brother of the Rev. William Hincks, just named, born at Cork in 1804, obtained his early education at Trinity College, Dublin, and subsequently pursued his studies at the Belfast Academical Institution, under his father. He declined an invitation to the Toxteth Park congregation, and accepted as his first charge Renshaw Street. Death terminated his career after three years, and in the burial ground of Renshaw Street Chapel his tombstone may be seen thus inscribed :—

Sacred

To the Memory of

THE REVEREND JOHN HINCKS,

Pastor of the Unitarian Congregation, Renshaw Street.

He lived beloved and revered,

A beautiful example of gentleness, holiness, and piety.

He sustained with fervour and love the devoted character of a minister of Christ.

He was consecrated to religion ; a living sacrifice to his God.

His meek and pure spirit, tempered for heaven, was released from its earthly discipline to enter upon immortality.

Born Feb. 24, 1804.

Died Feb. 5, 1831.

The Rev. John Palmer, a convert from the Church of England, a Trinity College man, was engaged for four months, immediately after Mr. Hincks died. On leaving Liverpool he became minister of Dudley, where he laboured eighteen years, when he accepted the appointment of Treasurer of the Island of Dominica. He returned to England in 1866, and died at Waterford, March 8th, 1869. The Rev. John Hamilton Thom, of Toxteth Park Chapel,¹ accepted the invitation of the congregation, and began his labours on August 6th, 1831. His marriage with Hannah Mary, second daughter of William Rathbone, Esq., of Greenbank, Mayor of Liverpool, took place on Tuesday, January 2nd, 1838. After twenty-three years of ministerial service Mr. Thom intimated to his congregation his intention to go into retirement for some time, and accordingly he preached his farewell sermon on Sunday, June 25th, 1854. The Rev. William Henry Channing, educated at Harvard, U.S.A., the nephew and biographer of Dr. Channing, was engaged to officiate as minister twelve months. He came to Liverpool in the autumn of 1854, and at the end of the

¹ Vide ante p. 104.

first year was unanimously invited to remain as minister for two years longer. On the completion of this period he became the pastor of Hope Street Church, Liverpool, and in November, 1857, Mr. Hamilton Thom commenced a second ministry at Renshaw Street Chapel. The Rev. Edward Samuel Howse, B.A., educated at Manchester New College, London, was Mr. Thom's assistant from October, 1864, to October, 1865. Subsequently he was at Southport and Altrincham, and is now resident at Hampstead without charge. The Rev. James Edwin Odgers, M.A., served in the same capacity from 1865 to 1866, becoming afterwards the minister of Toxteth Park Chapel.¹ Mr. Thom withdrew finally from the ministry at the close of 1866, and is now resident at Wavertree, near Liverpool, without charge. The Rev. Charles Beard, B.A., educated at Manchester New College, and who had previously laboured some seventeen years at Gee Cross, Cheshire, became Mr. Thom's successor on the first Sunday in March, 1867. He continued in charge until his death, which took place April 9th, 1888. The present minister is the Rev. Lawrence P. Jacks, M.A. He was educated at Manchester New College, and assumed the pastorate in 1888. Connected with the chapel is a very considerable library, which is rich in scarce works, and interesting MSS. relating to the early history of Liverpool Nonconformity. The congregation has been Unitarian for many years.

IV.—HOPE STREET CHURCH.

THE second Nonconformist place of worship in Liverpool was probably necessitated by the growth of population caused by a large "influx of settlers from Scotland and the north of Ireland."² It was erected in Key Street, and was licensed as a meeting house for worship November 24th, 1707, the first minister being the Rev. Christopher Bassnett. He was educated by the Rev. Richard Frankland, entering his academy at Rathmell, April 1st, 1696, and doubtless had held a pastorate previous to his settlement at Liver-

¹ Vide ante p. 105.

² Thom's "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 6.

pool, but where is not known.¹ Mr. Bassnett appears to have been a man of considerable ability, who "long ministered," says Dr. Halley, "to the satisfaction and benefit of a large and influential congregation. He seems to have preserved the old Puritan habit, which was then becoming unusual with Presbyterian ministers, of preaching extemporaneously."² His sermon on "Church Officers and their Missions," at the ordination of Dr. Winder, in 1717, "sufficiently proves the high notions he entertained of the efficacy of the hands of the Presbyters."³ Three years previously he had published a small volume of sermons, entitled "Zebulon's Blessings opened; applied in Eight Sermons." It was dedicated "to all that have friends at, or deal to sea, merchants, and others, belonging to Liverpool,"

¹ It has already been stated that there is much which requires explanation in the history of early Liverpool Nonconformity as given by all previous writers, and of this we have here another illustration. Christopher Bassnett is said to be the first minister of Key Street Chapel, built, according to the usual accounts, in 1707; but either here or in the history of the Castle Hey congregation room must be found for the Rev. James Lawton. He was educated by the Rev. Richard Frankland, entering his academy at Rathmell, March 29th, 1698, and was ordained at Warrington along with seven others, June 16th, 1702. He is mentioned in connection with Greenacres Chapel, Oldham, probably only as a supply, some time after the death of the Rev. Robert Constantine in 1699, and it is recorded that he removed to Liverpool (vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity.") In the "Northwram Register" (p. 239) appears the following:—"Mr. James Lawton, minr. at Liverpool, died May 7, 1706; buried May 10, 1706. A young man had preached about five years, and was married May 10, 1705." Matthew Henry, also, who had taken part in Mr. Lawton's ordination, has the following respecting his death:—"Mr. Lawton, a minister in Liverpool, died on Monday last, May 6 [May 7, says the N. R.], 1706, after long weakness. He is the second of the eight who were ordained at Warrington four years ago that are dead. He was buried at Toxteth Park Chapel last Friday, May 10, and on the 13th Mr. [Charles] Owen was at Liverpool, preaching his funeral sermon." ("Memoirs of the Rev. M. Henry," p. 263, by J. B. Williams, F.S.A.) One of the early ministers of Newton Heath, near Manchester, was a Mr. Lawton, who died in 1688, but whether he was related to James Lawton, of Liverpool, I do not know (vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity," p. 39). The Rev. Joseph Lawton, of Gateacre, is to be distinguished from The Rev. James Lawton, of Liverpool (vide p. 194).

² "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. ii., p. 323.

³ "Monthly Repository" for 1822, p. 23, note 2.

and allusion is made to "the dock," not then finished. Mr. Bassnett married, February 9th, 1714, Mrs. Cheney, widow of John Cheney,¹ of Warrington, and daughter of the Rev. Samuel Eaton, of Stand. He continued to serve the Key Street congregation until the time of his death, which took place July 22nd, 1744,² his wife having died September 13th, 1737. Mr. Bassnett kept most carefully a register of Baptisms, which is now at Somerset House, London. It begins with September, 1709, two years after the Key Street Chapel was licensed for worship, and gives the approximate date of the commencement of his ministry, pointing also to the probability of a predecessor in the pastorate.³ On the front page appears the following:—

A

Catalogue of all that have been baptised by me in ye congregation to wch I stand related, from Sept. 13, y 1709.

Very interesting are many of its entries, as for instance:—

My daughter, Francis Bassnet, was baptis'd in ye P. [Presbyterian] congregation by me, C. Bassnett, Dec. 11, 1715, Lev'pool. [Note the difference in the spelling of the name.]

¹ John Cheney is to be distinguished from the Rev. John Cheney, of Warrington, a remarkably clever writer against the Quakers, though it is quite probable that he was a relation. John Cheney, whose widow married Mr. Bassnett, was an intimate friend of Matthew Henry, who refers to his death in the following terms in his diary:—"Mr. John Cheney, of Warrington, died January 22, 1709-10, or thereabouts. He was a mercer, aged about twenty-nine; married Mr. Eaton's daughter, of Manchester. He was an eminent Christian, very intelligent, obliging, and judicious. Mr. [Charles] Owen preached at his funeral, on Ps. xii. 1.; 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men.' He only left one son, a month old."—(Memoirs of the Rev. M. Henry, p. 267).

² Dr. Raffles says: "It is supposed that Mr. B. lost himself towards the close of his life. It is related of him that he used to wander amongst the caves and rocks in the Park on the sea shore—and once he had resolved to drown himself, but just as he was about to throw himself into the sea it thundered. He started at the sound, and cried, 'Can I do this and hear that voice?' He immediately left the shore, and went to Mr. Angier's. He was buried in Toxteth Park Chapel."

³ Vide ante p. 119, note 1.

A child of Hilton's, y Baptist, the mother answering for it. March 16, 1724.

Under date March 26, 1711, Mr. Bassnett writes :—

God having been *pleased* to lay me *under* a sad *melancholy indisposition*, which lasted for above 3 quarters of a year, w^t were *baptised* belonging to the congregation in y interval were baptised by other hands.

His last entry was inserted April 16th, 1743-4, and after it the Rev. John Brekell, his assistant and successor, places the following note :—

Here ends y^e Register of y^e late Mr. Christopher Bassnett, minister of y^e congregation of Protestant Dissenters meeting in Key Street, Liverpool. As I was co-pastor with him, I kept a Register also of y^e children baptised by me w^{ch} I shall insert in y^e following Pages : y^t So both may be preserved together for y^e Information of Posterity. Witness my hand this 31 day of December, 1744. John Brekell.

N.B.—The age of my own children is registered at y^e beginning of my Field's Bible, interleaved, in 2 vols Folio, which according to my design will be deposited at Ben's Garden meeting in Liverpool aforesaid, or y^e Library in John's Street.

Brekell's Bible, containing many MS. notes from his own pen, is in the valuable library of Renshaw Street Chapel, successor to Benn's Garden Chapel.

Mr. Bassnett's Register also contains several entries of collections on "Briefs," ranging over nearly the whole of his ministry. The following is a specimen :—

June 4, 1711, Two Briefs were put into my Hands.

Edinburgh—loss by fire, 3572 *l ster*,

St Helens alias Edington, in y^e Isle of Wight :

Charge 1203 and upward. JOHN RICHARDSON, Collector.

Aug. 5. Was collected upon y same Briefs, viz. :—

	1	s	d
Edinburgh	0	18	6
St Helens alias Edington,			
in y ^e Isle of Wight.....	0	2	6

Nov. 30. Three more Briefs were put into my Hands.

Fradmore—loss ... 1169 *l*

Long-Melford..... 1800 *l*

Woolwich 5069 *l*

Thomas Hitchcock, Collector.

Dec. 2. Was collected upon the foresaid Briefs:—

	l	s	d
Fradmore.....	0	9	0
Long-Melford ...	0	3	6
Woolwich	0	3	6

His growing years and consequent infirmities led the people to look in the direction of an assistant for him some time before his death. An attempt was made in 1726 to secure the Rev. Jonathan Mercer, of Spalding and Holbeach, who was offered £40 a year; but he declined the invitation, and settled subsequently at St. Helens.¹ "An assistant of greater ability," says Dr. Halley, was obtained in the person of the Rev. John Brekell. He was a native of Lancashire, his birthplace being North Meols,² and his ministerial training is supposed to have been received from the Rev. John Hardy, of Nottingham. The date of the commencement of his co-pastorship at Liverpool is variously put down at 1728, 1730, 1732,³ and on the death of Mr. Bassnett, in 1744, he became sole minister, remaining such until 1767. With the help of an assistant he continued his labours until his death in 1769. In the graveyard at Toxteth Chapel is his tombstone, partly covered up, from which the following has been taken:—

. Rev.
JOHN BREKELL, who died 28th Dec.,
1769, aged 73.

¹ Vide vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity," where part of the interesting correspondence is given which passed between Mr. Mercer and the Key Street authorities.

² In the Baptismal Register are the following interesting particulars respecting Mr. Brekell and his family:—

Rev^d. John Brekell, born 1697.

J. & Eliz. Brekell, married A.D. 1736, 11th November.

1 George Brekell, born Feby. 7, 1737-8.

2 Ann Brekell, born Dec^r 8, 1739.

3 Richard Brekell, born June 14, 1742.

4 Alice Brekell, born Nov^r 24, 1744.

5 William Brekell, born July 17, 1746.

6 On (?) June 28, 1747.

William Brekell, died 9 April, 1750.

Richard Brekell, died 2 Aug^t. 1751.

³ Mr. Brekell's first entry in the Baptismal Register is dated April 6th, 1732.

Mr. Brekell was prominent in the controversy on a Public Liturgy, which excited considerable interest amongst the Dissenting congregations of Lancashire last century, and the outcome of which was the "Octagon Chapel" in Liverpool. He published also various pamphlets, principally of a theological character. I doubt if Mr. Henry Taylor in the following passage does justice to his opinions, or correctly describes his theological position :—

Mr. Brekell's congregation never distinctly understood what his real sentiments were on doctrinal points, but I judged from his private conversation that he was an Arian. My friend, Dr. Enfield, who, some years after his death, had access to his papers, however, told me that from them he could ascertain him to have been in fact a Socinian. He passed with his people as an orthodox man; and from an idea, then very prevalent among free thinking ministers, he considered it his duty not to endanger his usefulness among them by shocking their prejudices.¹

From a lengthy pamphlet before me, published in 1749, and entitled "The Divine Oracles; or, the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, as a rule of Religion, asserted according to the Sixth Article of the Church of England, &c.," I should judge that Mr. Brekell neither tried to conceal his theological position, nor did it at all approximate to that of the Socinian. Quoting from Irenæus with evident approval, he says :—

Learn this great truth from a most venerable father that "The Scriptures are perfect, as being dictated by the word of God and his spirit." Therefore, to borrow a distick from a modern author: "Charge imperfection on the written word, and you arraign the spirit of the Lord." It is the doctrine of the Church of England that the "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary; so that what is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man." Here, then, let us stick; here let us all abide with unshaken confidence, with a firm and rational assurance that the infinitely wise and good God would never exhibit to the world a written inspired rule of religion, incapable of answering the proper end of a rule, without being beholden, after all, to the uncertainties and contradictions of oral unwritten traditions.

The Rev. Philip Taylor was the next minister. He was the grandson of Dr. John Taylor, of Norwich, being born there May

¹ "Monthly Repository" for 1822, p. 24.

11th, 1747, and was sent to the Warrington Academy in 1761; but in the autumn of the following year he was removed to the Academy of the Rev. Micaiah Towgood, at Exeter. In 1765 he returned to Warrington Academy, where he finished his theological training. In April, 1766, he preached for the first time in public at Blackley,¹ near Manchester; and in September, 1767, was chosen assistant to Mr. Brekell, at whose death, in 1769, he assumed the sole pastorate. In July, 1770, he was ordained, and in 1777 removed to Eustace Street, Dublin, where he laboured until 1828, when his infirmities and age led to his retirement. He died at Harold's Cross, Dublin, on September 27th, 1831. The Rev. John Yates succeeded Mr. Taylor at Liverpool.² A native of Bolton, and educated at Warrington Academy he accepted the invitation of the Key Street congregation on the completion of his college course in 1777. His ordination, along with that of the Rev. Hugh Anderson, of Toxteth Park Chapel, took place on October 1st in that year. It was during his ministry that a new place of worship was erected in Paradise Street to meet the growing needs of the congregation, which was opened September 11th, 1791. The old chapel in Key Street was sold, consecrated, and opened in 1795 as St. Matthew's Church. Writing in 1854, Dr. Thom says of it:—

It was substantial, although plain in its appearance; stood on the western side of Key (Kay or Kaye) Street, about fifty or sixty yards from Tithebarn Street; and was taken down three or four years ago, its site, and the site of the land or yard connected with it, having been required for the *terminus* of the East Lancashire and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railways. The traveller leaving the railway by the incline on the eastern side of the station now passes unconsciously over the spot where once the praises of God ascended from the lips of devout worshippers.³

¹ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² The Baptismal Register contains the following: "On the 1st of August, 1777, Philip Taylor gave up his charge as minister of Key Street Chapel, Liverpool, to the Rev. Mr. Yates in compliance with an invitation given him to succeed his father-in-law, Dr. Isaac Weld, as one of the Pastors of Eustace Street Congregation in the city of Dublin."

³ "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 5.

After a ministry of forty-six years, during which he was "acceptable as a preacher and much esteemed for his private virtues," Mr. Yates resigned in the spring of 1823, on which occasion he was presented with a piece of plate by his congregation of the value of one hundred guineas. He died November 10th, 1826, on the 71st anniversary of his birthday. Some years before his death Mr. Yates bought the Dingle estate, so interesting because of its association with Nonconformity in the dark days of persecution. One of his children was Mr. Richard Vaughan Yates, whose marble tablet in the graveyard of Toxteth Park Chapel names amongst the "monuments of his benevolence" which "remain," Prince's Park, which he gave "for the enjoyment of the people." The Rev. Pendlebury Houghton shared the pastorate of Paradise Street Chapel with Mr. Yates from 1812 to 1823. He was the son of the Rev. John Houghton, of Platt Chapel, near Manchester, for a short time assistant tutor in the Warrington Academy, where he was educated, and exercised his ministry, amongst other places, at Dob Lane, Shrewsbury, and Norwich. He resigned when Mr. Yates did, and died April 3rd, 1824.¹ "Abilities of a superior order," writes Dr. Thom, "combined with great taste, have uniformly been ascribed to him by his admirers. While at Norwich, in 1790, he published a volume of sermons, a second edition of which appeared in 1809, having annexed to it *Essays on the natural argument for a future state*, and a discourse for a charitable purpose which he had preached and published in 1801. Two additional volumes of sermons were prepared and sent to press by Mr. Houghton a short time before his decease, but did not appear until after that event, in 1825. They were published by Rowland Hunter, London, are embellished by a portrait of the author, and have prefixed to them a sketch of his life and character, by Mr. J. G. Robberds, of Manchester."² The Rev. John Grundy, from Cross Street, Manchester, succeeded in 1823. It was on the occasion of his removal that the Rev. George Harris made the aggressive speech, previously referred to, which originated the "Manchester Socinian Controversy."³ He resigned his charge at

¹ Vide vols. iv. and v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 62.

³ Vide ante p. 114, note 3; also, vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity," for further particulars respecting Mr. Grundy.

Liverpool, in 1832, owing to impaired health, and died at Bridport, May 9th, 1843. The Rev. James Martineau followed. He is a native of Norwich, and brother to the talented Miss Harriet Martineau. He was educated at Manchester College (York), and had for his first charge Eustace Street, Dublin, in succession to his aged relative, the Rev. Philip Taylor, one of his predecessors also in the ministry at Liverpool. After about four years he removed from Dublin to Liverpool in 1832, and remained until 1857. It was during his ministry that the congregation again changed its place of meeting for the present splendid Gothic edifice in Hope Street. The first stone of this building was laid on May 9th, 1848, by Thomas Bolton, Esq., and the opening service was held October 18th, 1849, when the Rev. Thomas Madge, of Essex Street, London, discoursed on Acts i., 13, 14. Sir J. A. Picton records the subsequent history, and gives an interesting description of Paradise Chapel in the following passage :—

At the corner of School Lane and Paradise Street stands the Coliseum Theatre, with its appurtenances. The theatre itself, now hidden from view by the buildings in front, was originally constructed for a Unitarian Chapel by the Congregation from the old Presbyterian Chapel in Key Street. It was opened in 1791 by the pastor, the Rev. John Yates, the founder of a family the members of which have risen to stations of high respectability in the community. The building was, as a piece of architecture, by no means without merit. It was octagonal in plan, a form which seems about that period to have found favour with many Nonconformist congregations. The material was brick faced with stone. Towards Paradise Street there was a projecting portico, with attached columns carried to the height of the building, and finished with a pediment. The roof was conical, crowned at the summit with a small cupola. An open yard surrounded it, and behind were commodious schoolrooms.¹

In addition to his pastoral duties Mr. Martineau held the position of Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy in the Manchester New College from 1840 to 1857. In the latter year he removed to Little Portland Street, London, and continued to serve the Manchester New College, then removed to London, in the capacity of Philosophical Tutor. Dr. Martineau, for such he

¹ "Memorials of Liverpool," vol. ii., p. 167.

now is, has long been one of the most prominent men in the Unitarian world, and both as a preacher and author has won a high reputation far wider than the denomination which he has so long and ably served. He is still resident in London without charge, having attained to the ripe age of eighty-eight years. In 1857 the Rev. William Henry Channing, from Renshaw Street Chapel, became the minister. In the summer of 1861 he was summoned home to America by the Civil War. He stayed at Washington to undertake, as he said, three sets of duties: "His duty to the Unitarian Society, of which he was pastor; to the House of Representatives, of which he was chaplain; and to the wounded soldiers, of whom he was friend."¹ He died in London, December 23rd, 1884, and was buried in Boston, U.S.A., January 24th, 1885. The Rev. Charles Wicksteed, B.A., formerly of Toxteth Park Chapel, and for nineteen years minister of Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds,² was minister from 1864 to 1872, his colleague during that period being the Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A. Mr. Gordon was educated at Manchester New College, and on his removal from Liverpool, in 1872, settled at Norwich, and subsequently at Belfast. He is now the respected Principal of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, and is an authority upon all matters pertaining to the history of the old Dissenting foundations of the country. The Rev. E. M. Geldart, M.A., educated at Balliol College, Oxford, and formerly curate of St. George's, Everton, had sole charge of the congregation from 1873 to 1876. Subsequently he was at Croydon, and died in 1885. The next minister was the Rev. Charles John Perry, B.A., who was educated at Manchester New College. He settled at Liverpool in 1878, and died at Nottingham in 1883. The present minister is the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A. He also is an alumnus of Manchester New College, and had previously laboured at Banbridge, and the High Pavement, Nottingham. He began his Liverpool ministry in 1884, and in addition to his pastoral duties has taken a deep interest in the moral and social wellbeing of the city, having contributed largely towards lessening the size of the "black

¹ Frothingham's "Memoir," p. 322.

² Vide ante p. 105

spot on the Mersey." The congregation here also is "prevailingly Unitarian in opinion, but minister and people most jealously guard the absolute doctrinal freedom which they have received from their predecessors."¹

V.—THE OCTAGON CHAPEL.

THE story of the "Octagon Chapel" is peculiar to Liverpool Nonconformity. It was a bold experiment, so far as I know attempted only here; and had it met with success it would very materially have altered the type of Lancashire Nonconformity. It was remarkable, however, not more for the boldness of its design than for the completeness of its failure. Dr. Thom says that the chapel was erected by "persons disaffected to popular theological dogmas, or, as the phrase then in vogue was, entertaining liberal and rational notions on the subject of religion."² A writer in the "Monthly Repository" for 1813 remarks:—

It is believed to have originated in the desire of some liberal Dissenters (who had not, on the one hand, any particular dissatisfaction with the mode

¹ The above sentence is extracted from a letter kindly sent me by Mr. Armstong, who also supplies the following note:—"It is laid down in the Trust Deed of Hope Street Church, that this society or congregation of Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England deliberately abstains from requiring to be taught or observed, and from forbidding to be taught or observed, any particular doctrines or opinions, or mode of regulating worship in the said church, chapel, or meeting house." I doubt if the open Trusts of these old Nonconformist foundations are capable of the interpretation which many of our Unitarian friends put upon them. They belong to the beginning of the 18th century, when Unitarianism was not any great force in the country. Romanism and Episcopalianism were the two things from which our fathers had most suffered, and these were mainly before them in the making of their deeds. In every case known to me the words "Protestant Dissenters" appear, and they were a sufficient protection as things then were. Whether if the deeds had been made forty or fifty years later the Trusts would have been so open is very doubtful. It seems necessary to state so much, though in the production of this work I have not sought to enter into questions of so controversial a character.

² "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 2.

of worship observed by their own ministers, or, on the other, the objections entertained by their forefathers to a form of public prayer, provided that it were not imposed) to give the many members of the Established Church, whom they daily heard complain of the Book of Common Prayer, but who yet disliked the Dissenters' mode of extemporary prayer, an opportunity of joining in the use of a liturgy that should be free from all objection.¹

Whatever weight these things may have had with the originators of the movement, there can be no doubt that the prime cause of it was the desire for a liturgical service,² which was making itself felt in several Dissenting chapels. About the year 1750 a number of Lancashire Dissenting ministers formed themselves into a society for the purpose of occasionally meeting together "in order to a full, impartial, and public inquiry into the state and conduct of public worship, and all affairs of religion amongst the Protestant Dissenters of that part of the kingdom where we reside, and to consult upon, and put into execution all methods which shall be judged expedient, and conducive to the general advantage and improvement of religion."³ The first meeting of this society was held at Warrington, July 3rd, 1750, and amongst the questions proposed for discussion was the following :—

As Christian Societies have a discretionary power of conducting the public forms of their worship in the manner which they apprehend most agreeable to their own circumstances and the general design of the Christian religion, whether public forms might not be introduced amongst the Dissenters with general advantage.

At a meeting held at Preston, September 10th, 1751, when thirteen ministers were present, the majority declared their opinion to be—

¹ Page 626.

² The following, from the Rev. Josiah Thompson's MS. account of the state of the churches in 1772 and 1773, is additional evidence of this view : "The Society belonging to the Chapel at Liverpool, known by the name of the Octagon, is put down in this list as a Dissenting Congregation, because they call themselves such : tho' the organ and the Liturgy they use, and in short the manner in which the whole service is conducted is so very different from what was ever known among Dissenters, as renders it very difficult by what name to describe them."

³ "Monthly Repository" for 1822, p. 21.

That a proper variety of public devotional offices, well drawn up, in no respect to be imposed, and to be altered at any time as circumstances shall require, might be introduced amongst the Dissenters with general advantage.

The controversy thus begun ran on for several years. The Rev. Job Orton, of Shrewsbury, "whose assistance was desired," warmly opposed the liturgical scheme, so did the Rev. John Brekell, minister of Key Street Chapel, and more vigorously still Dr. John Taylor, formerly of Norwich, and subsequently of Warrington Academy, in his "Scripture Account of Prayer," published in 1761 shortly after his death. The following spirited and eloquent passage from that work is worth insertion:—

The principles and worship of Dissenters are not formed upon such slight foundation as the unlearned and thoughtless may imagine. They were thoroughly considered and judiciously reduced to the standard of Scripture and the writings of antiquity, by a great number of men of learning and integrity; I mean the Bartholomew divines, or the ministers ejected in the year 1662. They had the best education England could afford; most of them were excellent scholars, judicious divines, pious, faithful, and laborious ministers; of great zeal for God and religion; undaunted and courageous in their Master's work; keeping close to their people in the worst of times; diligent in their studies, solid, affectionate, powerful, lively, awakening preachers, aiming at the advancement of real vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, which it cannot be denied flourished greatly wherever they could influence. Particularly, they were men of great devotion and eminent abilities in prayer, uttered as God enabled them from the abundance of their hearts and affections; men of divine eloquence in pleading at the throne of grace, raising and melting the affections of their hearers, and being happily instrumental in transfusing into their souls the same spirit and heavenly gift. And this was the ground of all their other qualifications; they were excellent men, because excellent, instant, and fervent in prayer.

Such were the Fathers, the first formers of the Dissenting interest; and you, here, in Lancashire had a large share of these burning and shining lights. Those who knew them not might despise them; but your forefathers, wiser and less prejudiced, esteemed them highly in love for their works' sake. You were once happy in your *Newcomes*, your *Jollies*, your *Heywoods*, your *Finches*, your *Angiers*, your *Harrisons*, *Pendleburys*, *Cromptons*, *Mathers*, and many others, who left all to follow Christ; but Providence cared for them, and they had great comfort in their ministerial services. The presence and blessing of God appeared in their assemblies, and attended their labours. How many were converted and built up in godliness and sobriety by their prayers, pious doctrine, and conversation? How many days on particular occasions were set apart and spent in warm addresses to the throne of grace,

and how much to the comfort of those who joined in them! But now, alas, we are pursuing measures which have a manifest tendency to extinguish the light which they kindled, to damp the spirit which they enlivened, and to dissipate and to dissolve the societies which they raised and formed.

The principal person on the other side of the controversy was the Rev. John Seddon, of Warrington, and to whose exertions mainly the academy there owed its existence. To him, along with the Revs. Richard Godwin, of Gateacre, and Philip Holland, of Bolton, the work of composing a liturgy expressly for use at the Octagon Chapel was eventually entrusted. Previous to this, however, a "circular letter," with a "set of instructions," was sent to several ministers, soliciting their help "in drawing up a liturgy for the use of a congregation in Liverpool," of which the following is a copy:—

Rev^d. Gentlemen,

A society of Protestants in Liverpool, who do not entirely approve of the present method of conducting the publick devotions in dissenting congregations, and who cannot comply with the terms of conformity to the Established Church, are desirous of introducing a rational Liturgy into their form of worship. And as they would wish it as perfect as possible they make free to solicit the assistance of some of their learned friends in the compilation of it, who may approve of the design; especially you gentlemen, to whom this letter is addressed. They are very sensible of the difficulty of the task; and of the large portion of time and attention that it must necessarily take up; but they are inclined to hope, the great importance of the work, and the agreeable prospect that may be opened by the proposed reformation will induce you to favour their expectations, and to join your abilities in this publick service.

Liverpool, Oct. 16, 1760,

The title of the work, which was published in 1763, is here given:—

A
Form of Prayer
and
A New Collection of Psalms,
For the Use of
A Congregation
of
Protestant Dissenters
in
Liverpool.

Printed for the Society,
And Sold by
Chr. Henderson, under the Royal Exchange, London,
and by
John Sibbald, Bookseller, in Liverpool.

MDCCLXIII.

In the copy before me, which belonged to Mr. Joseph Finney (of whom more presently), has been written the following preface, which, it is said, "was Intended to have been Printed"—

Though all men have an undoubted right to worship God according to their own Judgements and Consciences without being Oblidg'd to give an Account of their Conduct, herein, to any Human Authority, and though our Lord and Jesus Saviour, Christ, hath expressly commanded his Disciples to call no man upon Earth Master, yet out of Respect to many worthy Persons who may have been Led to think Unfavourably of this Society, for whose use the Following Prayers are intended, we have determined to give in this Place a Brief, Plain, and Sincere Representation of our general Principles, and design Not by way of Defence, But to prevent Mistakes, For as we have neither power nor Inclination to Impose any Sentiments upon any Man or Society of Men whatsoever, so we can have no Controversy with any Friend to Christian Liberty and Toleration. These forms of Devotion were at first drawn up and are now Printed for the use of a Society of PROTESTANT DISSENTERS who do not approve of the method of EXTEMPORE PRAYER generally used in Dissenting Congregations, and who cannot Conscientiously conform to the Church Established by Law. We agree with all Consistent Protestants in asserting for ourselves and allowing to others the right of PRIVATE JUDGEMENT in Religious Matters—that Divine and Christian Principle without which there never could have been either Christians or Protestants, and by which principle alone any Religion can be Rationally and Conscientiously profess'd and Defended. OUR PRAYERS are not calculated to oppose or defend any Curious Speculations or Particular doctrines; but drawn up on the most Enlarg'd Principles of natural Piety and Christianity, that every one might be Left to Form his own private creed from the Scriptures and the works of God. It is our Main design, and our Highest Ambition by Plain and Rational Devotions such as every man may understand and every Christian join in, to Exalt our minds to an ardent love and humble Imitation of the Supreme Being, and to arm our Hearts with an impartial and Universal Benevolence, Including our duty to GOD and our NEIGHBOUR, as taught by our Blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

The exact share in the production of this work of each of the

confreers previously mentioned is not known, but it is believed that Mr. Seddon was responsible for the major portion, and that Mr. Godwin's contribution was less than Mr. Holland's. It was ready for use in 1763, and in Mr. Finney's copy is a note which says :—

The following service was first publickly used by the Rev^d. Mr. N. Clayton and Rev^d Mr. Kirkpatrick, June 5th, 1763,¹ in the Octagon Chapel, at



THE OCTAGON CHAPEL.

LIVERPOOL. Which was Designed and Conducted by Joseph Finney, Architect. In Gratification thereof the Subscribers were Pleas'd to Give and Confirm to him and His the seat No. 61 in the Gallery of the Said Chapel.

¹ The Octagon Chapel Register begins with February 15th, 1762, on which date the Rev. Richard Godwin, of Gateacre, baptised Matthew Dobson. It would therefore appear that at that date the congregation had some sort of existence, though more than twelve months elapsed before its proper house of worship was completed.

Having dealt thus lengthily with the Liturgy we must now sketch the history of the chapel for which it was specially prepared. It stood at the angle between Temple Court and Temple Lane, its "vestry was decidedly the most commodious and comfortable of any in the town, and a perfect model of what such an appendage to a place of worship should be. It was large and well furnished, with an ante-chamber adapted for meetings of the trustees and managers, as well as for the use of the clergymen, and by its position at the upper part of the building was exempt from damp and offensive smells. With the edifice there was connected a graveyard in which were burial places belonging to several of the wealthy and influential inhabitants of the town."¹ It was of the octagonal form from which circumstance the worshippers came to be called "Octagonians." The designer was Mr. Joseph Finney, a clock and watch maker in Thomas Street, who so pleased the subscribers with his work that pew No. 61 in the gallery was confirmed to him and his as some acknowledgment of his services. The bell was the gift of a Mr. S. Green. The original worshippers were mainly seceders from the Nonconformist congregations in Key Street and Benn's Garden, but some were from the Established Church. It is recorded that Mr. Seddon met, by previous agreement, on January 6th, 1762, "the friends of the new liturgy, to the number of three or four and twenty persons, consisting both of Dissenters and seceders from the church, at the Merchants' Coffee House in Liverpool, and there exhibited to them the work."² The principal promoters of the movement were Mr. Thomas Bentley, a merchant, who lived in Paradise Street, afterwards known as the friend and partner of Josiah Wedgwood; and W. Wyke, "proprietor of a house and garden situated at the corner of Dale Street and Hatton Garden, as well as of several other houses more to the west in Dale Street."³ The chapel was opened for worship June 5th, 1763. The idea of the promoters had been to have Liturgy, chapel, and minister all ready at once, and they succeeded. Whilst the building was in course of erection overtures were made to several leading ministers to assume the pastorate, amongst them being Dr.

¹ Thom's "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 1.

² "Christian Reformer" for 1854, p. 234.

³ Thom's "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 2, note 5.

Joseph Priestley and the Rev. John Seddon. A pressing invitation was sent to the latter gentleman some time during 1762, which he says "did very much engage my attention ;" but on July 8th of that year he wrote declining the call, and in the following passage gives his principal reason for so doing :—

Very early after your present design was publicly known, there were great pains taken to make the world believe that there was a conceal'd connection between it and the Academy at Warrington, and that the latter was principally instituted not only to facilitate the introduction of a Liturgy in Liverpool, but to extend it to neighbouring congregations, and gradually to bring it into general use amongst the Dissenters. As this was a representation the most contrary to truth, I was always willing to flatter myself no ill effects would arise from it, but in this I was mistaken. It did influence the minds of many ; it awakened jealousies and suspicions, to the very great disadvantage of the Academy, insomuch that great numbers declared their dissatisfaction with it on this account, and refused to concur in its support till this matter was fully cleared up. Every prudent method was pursued to convince the public how much it was abused in this invidious representation, and that it was no more than an artifice of the enemies of the Academy to injure and destroy that useful institution. It must be acknowledged that a good deal has been done towards removing these prejudices, but, after all, such is the state of many people's minds, particularly in London, and that not only amongst the ministers, but many very considerable persons of the laity, that should I engage in the service of your church it wou'd be the means of reviving these prejudices afresh, and fixing them in the minds of those who are otherwise disposed to befriend our little seminary at Warrington. I cannot think myself at liberty to hazard the success of an institution which promises so much publick utility ; and the generous concern which I know you bear to the same valuable object will incline you to admit the weight which this consideration has in my present conduct. I am very sensible how unreasonable these prejudices are, and see with concern the unhappy spirit which has discovered itself upon this occasion ; a spirit very unbecoming the Sons of Freedom, and alike inconsistent with the character of Christian, Protestant, or Dissenter. But there are some circumstances in human life in which it is right to yield a little to popular prejudice.¹

Mr. Thomas Bentley was the correspondent for the Liverpool friends, and writing on July 22nd, 1762, after expressing the disappointment which Mr. Seddon's letter had created, says :—

¹ "Christian Reformer" for 1855, p. 369.

And now for an helmsman! Yes, but who will take us under his care, when he who knew us best, and was well acquainted with the construction of the ship, has refused to come aboard? This is a bad symptom, and yet the reason is so public, that I hope it will do us no mischief. I have a very agreeable letter from Mr. Heywood, of Chesterfield, that looks a little like *nibbling*; but I shall understand nothing about the matter without he speaks plainer. If he wou'd move, he has many qualities very suitable for us, tho' there are many obstacles in the way; but if he was to come, the Heywood's connection wou'd be fixed in our favour, as he's not only a relation, but much admired by them.

The Rev. James Heywood referred to in the foregoing extract, did subsequently speak "plainer," and elected to stay at Chesterfield until 1772, when he retired from ministerial duty, dying August 18th, 1787, at the age of sixty-nine years. Eventually the two ministers were chosen whose names are associated with the opening of the chapel, viz., the Rev. Hezekiah Kirkpatrick and the Rev. Nicholas Clayton, afterwards Dr. Clayton. How Mr. Kirkpatrick was brought before the notice of the congregation is stated in the following letter from Mr. Bentley to the Rev. John Seddon:—

Liverpool, Sept. 25, 1762.

Dear and Rev. Sir,

The two last times I passed through Warrington I had not the pleasure of seeing you, so must be obliged to write what I cou'd have said in conversation.

The time now draws very near when our building will be finished; and if the Liturgy and minister are not ready at the same time we shall grow languid and indifferent, which I am afraid is the case with some of us already. Since I saw you I have been at Derby to hear a gentleman that was much recommended, and very deservedly in many respects; and I also visited Mr. Heywood to sound his inclinations, but found him too fully engaged where he is to think of a removal. I am anxious to know what you have learnt of the gentleman at Boston, or whether you have heard of any other person, for we have no time to lose. With respect to the Liturgy, I think it may be finished soon; as I hope our gentlemen will be prevailed upon to defer the composition of the *particular offices* till we have a minister settled with us. We should have some family prayers at the end, one for Sunday morning, one for Sunday evening, one for either morning or evening, one when any of the members of a family are sick, a thanksgiving for recovery, and a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer. If these were done we could get about printing immediately. There appears to me but one objection of any weight against the Derby gentleman, which is his youth, and a

little juvenile inattention to the dignity and importance of his character. He is an agreeable, ingenious man, and a good preacher. His name is Kirkpatrick. Mr. Hawks, of Birmingham, recommended him to Derby. Can you, in confidence, get Mr. Hawks's opinion of his abilities and character? I heard him preach both parts of the day, and had his company to Matlock, but never proposed anything of our design to him, though I sounded his disposition to a removal by proposing him to come to Liverpool, and take a few gentlemen's sons under his care, which I found he would consent to, and I am endeavouring to get him a few scholars; tho', if upon consideration he should be thought fit for our main design, this must be dropt.

I wish much to hear from you, and am, with respects to Mr. Priestley and compliments to Mrs. Seddon, your most affectionate friend and humble servant,

THOMAS BENTLEY.

Mr. Kirkpatrick had been educated for the ministry at the Academy of Dr. Jennings, London, and when visited by Mr. Bentley was assisting the Rev. Mr. White, of Derby. The result of that visit was his removal to Liverpool in June, 1763, when he assisted at the opening of the Octagon Chapel. His colleague was the Rev. Nicholas Clayton, who was born at Enfield Old Park, Middlesex, in 1733, and educated by Dr. Doddridge, at Northampton, completing his ministerial training at Glasgow. At the time of his invitation to Liverpool he was settled at Boston, in Lincolnshire, and is probably the "gentleman" referred to by Mr. Bentley in his letter. He also began his ministry at the Octagon with the opening of the chapel. In 1765 Dr. Clayton married Dorothy, eldest daughter of James Nicholson, of Liverpool, "an excellent and amiable woman, but of very delicate health." She died in 1785. For thirteen years Dr. Clayton and his colleague laboured here, but the undertaking proved a failure, and on February 25th, 1776,¹ Dr. Clayton preached the last sermon in the chapel from John iv., 19-23. The building was purchased by the Rev. W. Plumbe, rector of Aughton, and licensed for worship as a church of the Establishment under the name of St. Catherine's.

¹ The Rev. Robert Lewin, in his Baptismal Register, inserts the following against March 26, 1776; "They were the first that Mr. Clayton baptized after the union between the congregation of Benn's Gardens & y^e Octagon Chapel." This points to 1776, and not 1775, as some have said, as the date of the closing of the Octagon Chapel.

It is said that when Mr. Plumbe applied to Bishop Porteus, of Chester, for a license the bishop complimented him on having diminished the number of conventicles. "It existed," says Dr. Thom, "until the month of March, 1820. Having got out of repair, and standing in the way of improvements of the town, it was then taken down by order of the Corporation, and its materials sold. Previous to its demolition such bodies¹ as had been interred in the adjacent cemetery were removed to other places of sepulture."² Mr. Kirkpatrick appears to have remained in Liverpool several years after the closing of the Octagon, though how employed has not been ascertained. In 1786 he became the minister of the chapel at Park Lane, near Wigan, where he continued until his death, which occurred on September 19th, 1799, at the age of sixty-one years. The greater portion of the Octagon congregation joined Benn's Garden, and Dr. Clayton was associated with the Rev. Robert Lewin in the pastorate. In 1781 he removed from Liverpool to Warrington to become Divinity Tutor of the Academy, which was fast falling into decay. It was an unfortunate step for himself, for the Academy was beyond recovery. In 1786 the Academy was dissolved, and Dr. Clayton, with "broken spirits and shattered health," retired to his former friends at Liverpool, whose "kind attentions greatly contributed to lessen the blow of an event by himself quite unforeseen." After spending a short time at Nottingham, as the colleague of an old fellow student, the Rev. George Walker, he returned to Liverpool, where he died May 20th, 1797. "Of his sermons," writes one, "few persons have ever heard him preach without being struck with the excellence of the composition, and the originality and importance of the sentiments. It was a common remark of Dr. Aikin's that he never heard a sermon from Mr. Clayton that was not fit to be immediately sent to press."³ The history of the "Octagon Chapel" is not without its lessons for the present day. Dr. Halley

¹ Amongst them was that of Dr. Clayton, which was removed to the burial ground of Renshaw Street Chapel.

² "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 3.

³ "Monthly Repository" for 1813, p. 627. Vide also vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity," for additional information respecting both Dr. Clayton and the Rev. Hezekiah Kirkpatrick

perhaps goes beyond what is permissible when he says: "This failure affords another illustration of what I think is undeniable, that no liturgy, other than that of the English Church, is ever acceptable to English people;"¹ but it is "undeniable" that there is still much to be done before the liturgy will become a Non-conformist institution, and there are grave doubts in the minds of many people as to whether that much is worth doing.

VI.—NEWINGTON CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL.

CONGREGATIONALISM took a new departure on the appointment of the Rev. Hugh Anderson, in 1776, as minister of the Toxteth Park Chapel. A considerable number of persons, dissatisfied with his theological views, seceded, and eventually undertook to erect a place of worship for themselves nearer the town. This step was not, however, taken hastily or without consultation with several Nonconformist ministers, as the following letters to Mr. Jonathan Mercer, a prime mover in the affair, show. The first is from the Rev. Samuel Brabrook, of St. Helens, and is dated February 23rd, 1776:—

My dear friend,

I have been considering your case, &c., with some degree of anxiety. I am very sorry the people at the Park have used you and family so exceedingly ill, and that the future of religion is likely to suffer through the imprudence and rashness of some ignorant people. But as measures are already taken which you disapprove of, and without consulting your opinion of them, they have fairly cast you off. I would not have you frightened with the charge of schism, which, perhaps, some may be ready enough to lay upon you, for the case may so happen that not those who separate from a society of men, but those who by unwarrantable steps force them to withdraw, are guilty of schism. This appears to me to be the exact case in point. You only contest for right of private judgment, and a liberty to follow the dictates of conscience in a matter which concerns your present improvement and future happiness. These are points that must be granted, unless we renounce Protestantism, and especially every principle by which we justify our separation from the national establishment, and considering the part your

¹ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. ii., p. 411.

friends have acted, and the temper they have shewn, and are still shewing, I don't see how you can exercise a sufficient degree of charity to unite with them as church members in future. But you will perhaps say what must we do? Shall we make a representation of our case at London? This is, I confess, a point of some difficulty, but not insurmountable. There are reasons for the measure, but in my judgment, more and stronger against it for the present. Mr. Joseph gave me some hints of some dissatisfaction in town, and it's probable a separate interest may arise upon the Evangelical plan. That, I think, is the providential affair upon which you should have your eye. It may be advisable to feel the pulse of people in a gentle manner, and to leave the thing to ripen by degrees. Whenever it comes to a proper state of maturity you can then throw your whole weight into the scale. This appears to me the most prudent course you can take. Doubt not if it go forward, but it will be so considerable as to be able to support itself. It will be highly desirable to form a society of such persons as engage to support a truly Evangelical strain of preaching, for as to those who may separate only through other causes of disgust, they will be but a dead weight upon you. For men to separate on any other account than conscience and a desire of edification betrays too little a sense of religion to hope much from. It is clear to me if anything permanent is expected it must be from a man well established in the doctrines of human depravity, the sacrifice and atonement of the Son of God, and the influences of the Divine Spirit, to begin and conduct Christians through the whole course of the Divine life. A man who can handle these things in a judicious manner, without cant, that has the happy art of building the superstructure of holiness upon these foundations, and of blending them more or less in his discourses, might, through the blessing of God, make something considerable out. I have given you the best advice I am master of, and with a sincere view to your peace and improvements. I need not add that in cases of this nature especially it is of great importance to imitate the practice of good King Jehoshaphat: "We know not what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee."

I remain affectionately yours,

(Signed), S. BRABROOK.

P.S.—I have heard nothing from Liverpool about my uncomfortable affair. Am afraid nothing more can be expected, and if so I must very soon sink into a state of distress, beyond what I at present can express, and which I fear will be too much to bear. Let none see this letter but those you have an entire confidence in.

On the 2nd of July, 1776, the Rev. James Scott sent the following :—

Dr. Sir,—

I received yours of the 12th inst. in due time, &c. I am sorry to hear the distressing situation of things with respect to Christianity at Toxteth

Park, the name of which place I knew long ago from the account of the life of Mr. Mather, which I have read. The case is very difficult, and as I hope you love Jesus Christ, and are zealous for his glory and your own soul's edification, and the salvation of others, you have good reason to be much afflicted, especially as I suppose you were a principal encourager of the Interest of Christ at Toxteth. While you and others slept the enemy sowed tares. Christ's eye is upon the ways and concerns of his professing people; but it is a matter of grief and sorrow when any thing grievous happens to the Interest of Christ through our mismanagement. The thing is indeed grievous, for if the gospel be not preached all spiritual profiting is at an end. The Lord will not bless what is not his word to the Salvation of sinners.

The first advice I would give you, which I hope you have practised already, is earnest prayer to the head of the Church, not only in secret, but with your Christian friends meeting together for that purpose—that he would shew you the way of duty, and that he would order that you may enjoy the gospel at the old place. An indifferent minister hath been effectively removed upon prayer. You say Mr. Anderson is fixed. I hope he's not ordained. If he is he seems resolved upon continuing. Is there no ground to expect his removing, as so many have left the place? His encouragement must be small, unless others assist. Mr. Bradbury told me that the place was left to those of the Calvinist principles. Cannot the other trustees be convinced that they have not acted as they ought, and so endeavour his removal. If there be any prospect of his removing, it may, perhaps, be best to wait a little; but delays may be dangerous. If the use of the Methodist Meeting could be procured for two months, I would send Mr. Bruce to make a trial for that time; and if the Lord should please to attend his work with power, you would then know what is fit to be done. But I refer the conclusion of this affair to a consultation betwixt you and Mr. Priestley; if any means could be used to get Mr. Anderson removed that would be the most likely means to the establishing the gospel at Toxteth. May the Lord direct, &c.

P.S.—If any assistance should be presently expected from me, I desire to hear as soon as possible, as Mr. Bruce is designing to go to another place.

Shortly after the receipt of this letter it appears the decision to hold separate meetings was taken, and on July 15th, 1776, the Rev. James Scott again writes Mr. Mercer, and at the same time sends Mr. David Bruce, one of his students, as supply. The letter reads:—

Dr. Sir,—

I received yours of the 10th inst, and also a line from Mr. Priestley, wherein he says that he really thinks that Mr. Bruce will be joyfully received among the people at Toxteth, and as yours gives some encouragement to the same purpose, I herewith send him. May the Almighty Head of the Church accompany, and make the Gospel by him the power of God to all that may hear it, &c.

That the monies belonging to Toxteth Congregation were left by the donors in strong terms for an orthodox ministry, is a very strong argument in favour of the attempt. Mr. Anderson may, perhaps, profess to be orthodox, for as I suppose he was licensed in Scotland, their rules oblige him to subscribe the Westminster confession of faith; but this is no evidence of orthodoxy, for I suppose some subscribe to the things contained in it as articles of peace and not of truth. If a man do not know Christ and trust in him for his own salvation, he's not like to preach him as a Saviour to others.

Shortly after this, in 1776, Mr. Thomas Priestley, of Birstall, writes :

I was much rejoiced to hear the good news Mr. Bruce told me about your settling in a separate meeting. I really think it will be better for you to fix in the town than at Park. More people, I think, will be inclined to come there than to go to the Park Chapel. I humbly hope the Lord has work for the young stripling to do in Liverpool, and through his assistance and blessing he will raise a congregation among you. Pray hard for him, which will encourage him a deal, and the Lord be with you and bless you, and make you into a large flock.

Another of Mr. Priestley's interesting letters, dated November 9th, 1776, reads thus :—

I hope I can truly rejoice with you in thanking God for the present appearance of success you have, and I hope is likely to go on. As with regard to your house, you must strive and jam in as close as you can; cold weather is coming on, and if a few of you be staunch and well inclined, Providence, I make no doubt, will provide a new place in time.

It looks well when there is a many bibles used in a meeting; its like as if people wanted to be led into the truth. I am glad to hear you have some praying people among you. Keep close to a throne of grace, and there is not a doubt in your case. I do not wonder you have so many scoffers and reproaches among you. Do ye not know how that serpents hiss when the seed of the woman is pleaded for?

My dear friend, you know I always profess plainness and honesty. I hear you are not for Mr. Bruce speaking the whole truth in the pulpit, but that you rather cramp him for fear he should be too plain with the people, so by that means you cannot get a congregation. If this be the case, you certainly are taking the direct means to ruin my friend, and never to establish the gospel, &c.

In a postscript Mr. Priestley addresses Mr. Bruce, exhorting him to "humility in the prospects of success that were opening before him, to faithfulness in preaching, and to meekness towards any that might oppose him or the truth." In another letter to Mr. Mercer, dated December 28th, 1776, Mr. Priestley enquires how

the subscriptions towards the new meeting house were proceeding, and assures him to his "great satisfaction" that Mr. Bruce had "cleared up all the reflections" that had been thrown upon him. After thus meeting for several months in temporary places, a piece of land was purchased for £107 in what is now Renshaw Street, and Newington Chapel was erected at a cost of £730, being opened for worship on September 3rd, 1777. Renshaw Street is now central enough, but when the chapel was erected it was quite out of the town, and had to be approached by a stile; and on that account Mr. Jonathan Mercer, who made the purchase, had considerable difficulty in overcoming the objections of some of the people. The first minister, as already indicated, was the Rev. David Bruce, from the Heckmondwike Academy, who was a native of that town, his father being a respectable tailor there. He entered upon his duties at Liverpool, in the summer of 1776. In 1778 Mr. Bruce was in London begging for his new place of worship, and on December 22nd he writes Mr. Jonathan Mercer, who was then resident at Warrington, giving some account of the little success which had attended his efforts:—

Can assure you for my part I am most heartily weary of my business. The last week I got but very little. Money, indeed, is very bad to come. Numbers have told me that they could formerly have given £5 towards such a case with more propriety than they can give one now. In all I have got betwixt £90 and £100. Shall not be able to get much more, therefore I think to return into Lancashire in about 2 or 3 weeks. I hope to be at Liverpool upon the third Sabbath from this. You would, perhaps, think it strange were you to see your parson in a gown, and preaching in a place where the Common Prayer is read before sermon. I have preached 8 times in 3 such places. Shall preach next Sabbath evening in one of these places again. For these few weeks past have preached 6 times a week, and sometimes 7. I have received far more favours from what we call Methodists than the Independents and Presbyterians.

It has just been stated that Mr. Jonathan Mercer was resident in Warrington in 1778. What led to his removal thither is not clear, but being there he helped to originate Warrington Congregationalism. The Raffles MSS. give much interesting information hitherto unpublished respecting early Congregationalism in that town, and as this is the closing volume of "Lancashire Nonconformity" I venture to digress somewhat from the story of Newington Chapel that the reader may be put in possession of that information.

The following is a copy of the license permitting Flag Lane, or Stepney Chapel, to be used as a place of worship :—

To the Right Rev^d. L^d. Bp. of Chester.

We whose names are hereunder written, being Protestant Dissenters, of the Independent denomination, do request that a new building on the side of a certain lane, called Flag Lane, in Warrington, in the county of Lancaster, be licensed, according to Act of Parliament, for the religious teachings of Almighty God.

June 26, 1779.

JAMES KENWORTHY,
THOMAS WAINWRIGHT,
JOHN GRIFFITH,
THOMAS HAYES,
JOHN HAYES,
JONATHAN MERCER,
THOMAS JONES.

The same was registered accordingly 29th June, 1779.

Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining a minister for Stepney Chapel. An invitation was given to the Rev. J. Cockin, of Kipping, towards whose support Mr. Mercer and some others promised liberal subscriptions, as the following shows :—

We, whose names are under-written, belonging to the Society meeting at Stepney Chapel, do here subscribe as below, towards a yearly contribution for the Rev^d. Mr. Cockin, as witness our hands, 17th September, 1779.

Thomas Hayes	20	0	0
Joseph Downing	20	0	0
Thomas Gaskell	10	0	0
Jonathan Mercer ...	20	0	0

Sep. 17, 1779. Be it remembered that the above subs^{ns}. are not to be paid annually except necessity require ; it being so agreed.

Mr. Cockin did not, however, accept the invitation, and the Rev. James Grimshaw, of Tockholes, was next approached. His letter from Tockholes to Mr. Mercer, dated January 13th, 1780, is as follows :—

Dear Sir,—

Yours came to hand last night, and at the same time one from Mr. Blackburn at Cave, whom our people had sent for to come hither on trial. He purposes being at Tockholes next Sabbath but one, that is the 23rd inst., so that you may expect me on that day at Warrington. Am sorry that you

have had no supply, but more so if there is reason to think that Mr. Gaskell will prove defective. The number at W. is so small that there are none to lose of, and am well persuaded in my own mind that when the burthen lies heavy on a few, as it must at W., a minister cannot be happy. Since I left W., I have received a letter from a friend of mine, a minister in Yorkshire, in which he dissuades me very earnestly not to go to W. He says that he has been told that some of the Warrington people, that whatever they may promise there is no probability of their giving any minister more than £40 a year. That he has heard Mr. Kenworthy, that he thinks him one of the best preachers that have gone from Mr. Scott's, his language good, and his thoughts judicious. This letter has given me some uneasiness and your hint respecting Mr. Gaskell has rather increased it. Am afraid lest I should have been too hasty in consenting to come. Have been, and still am willing to think and hope for the best.

(Signed.)

Yrs. sincerely.

J. GRIMSHAW.¹

Mr. Mercer after a few years returned to Allerton, and with the two following letters, which the Rev. James Burgess, of Whitworth, sent to him, our notice of him shall end. They contain much interesting matter besides the additional information they supply respecting Mr. Mercer :—

Dear Sir,

Near Rochdale, Oct. 13.

On the footing of old acquaintance and intimacy many years ago, I take the freedom of introducing and recommending to your regards a letter now sending to you by two persons delegated by us of Whitworth vacant congregation, who, having been favoured with two Lord's Days supplied by your former minister, Mr. Kenworthy, are very desirous to have some queries put by them faithfully solved, without either partiality or prejudice. This I am persuaded you will do. If I knew either a fitter or more likely person to do this than yourself I would not have devolved this trouble upon you, tho' I think it will be accounted no trouble by one who has in various peculiar expensive instances, discovered such a public spirit and concern for our Dissenting places of worship and their congregations. Having nearly finished my 76th year, when both head and hand fail me in letter writing, I abruptly conclude,

Your very respectful Friend,

And devoted servant in the Gospel,

JAS. BURGESS.

¹ In vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity," the opinion was hazarded that the first minister of Stepney Chapel was a Mr. Grimshaw. The letters above given, of whose existence I was then ignorant, attest the correctness of that opinion. Mr. Grimshaw was, however, a stranger to me at that time. He did not remain at Warrington, being eventually succeeded by the Rev. James Kenworthy. The account of Mr. Grimshaw in vol. ii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity" will need to be corrected by what is here given.

P.S.—We have been informed that the chief ground of Mr. Kenworthy's uneasiness, and of the diminution of his congregation, is his not running, &c., far into fatalism, and the most rigid parts of Calvinism, as some young persons in his congregation wished him to do. Pray inform us, dear sir, whether this be the true and chief cause of the complaint and uneasiness? If it be it will y^e more recommend and endear him to y^e congregation at Whitworth.

The following is the letter which Mr. Burgess recommends in the preceding paragraph :—

The congregation at Whitworth has been destitute of a minister for some time past, and has had supplies from various parts of the country, amongst whom Mr. Kenworthy, of Warrington, has been applied to, and the congregation in general approve of his ministerial gifts. But they have been informed that there is some uneasiness betwixt him and his congregation, and they wish to be informed what is the real ground thereof, as Whitworth congregation has no design of breaking in upon any other when minister and people are unanimous, and when the Gospel of Christ seems to flourish.

Please to write an answer as soon as possible and oblige your friends in Christ.

(Signed) THOMAS PILLING,
ABM, KERSHAW.

Octr. 13, 1794.

Direct as follows :—

To be left at Mr. James Hamilton's, Rochdale, for the Rev.
Mr. Jas. Burgess.

Probably in the same year, certainly about that time, was the following letter written :—

Nov. 13.

Dear Sir,

Your long and valuable letter was a very acceptable present. It exactly expressed the sentiments of my own head, and the experiences of my own life. I perceive you have met with ill treatment from Professors high in the new light, and others who ran extravagant lengths in the old light. So have I. You have been a great benefactor both to Toxteth Park and the two independent congregations in Liverpool and Warrington, but have met with ungrateful returns from each of them. But this is no uncommon case. I have known various instances of Christians who have done more than any others for the benefit of those congregations of which they were very active members, yet more reflected on than others, and their good deeds misrepresented. But a more especial reward, not indeed of merit, but of grace, awaits such in a better world ; whereof the Apostle Peter speaks, I think, in his former epistle, and which has often been a sweet solace to me

amidst trials and tribulations of that sort. The remarks you make of that soft and indulgent strain of preaching which our independent ministers have of late fallen into, has often given me great uneasiness, and is likely to produce very bad effects amongst their hearers. They who are so constantly fed with sweetmeats, instead of the solid food of repentance—faith, regeneration, and self-denial, must in time have very lean souls. How very different is this, as you justly observe, from the searching sermons of our Puritan divines of the last age. During 8 years last past in which my infirmities have constrained me to be more frequently a hearer than a preacher, I never heard a sermon on relative duties except one, which was preached by a pious Evangelical minister of the Established Church. Nor have I heard the vices of the times largely treated upon by those of our communion, who seem highly to rate themselves on their pretended orthodoxy. This, among other things, has caused a very considerable declension of serious practical religion in my old congregation at Whitworth. However, several regular Christians yet remain in it. They have now given Mr. Kenworthy a call. According to your order I send you by the bearer of it, “*The Reconciler*,” in two parts, and thro’ my wife’s importunity, I also send my comments and meditations on Daniel. They were delivered in a set of Expositions and Sermons to Whitworth Congregation, which made such deep and strong impressions on their minds, that some desired they might be published. They have had such a run that not more than 4 or 5 remain unsold. Their selling price is 2s. 4d. If it does not suit your taste would have you send it back by Mr. Kenworthy, who, I expect will come over hither shortly. My wife, who has long had a bad state of health, retains with me a very thankful sense of the kind usage and hospitable entertainment received from you and Mrs. Mercer at Liverpool. But the bearer is in haste to depart, so I must abruptly conclude this hasty incorrect scrol, &c.

J. BURGESS.¹

Returning from this digression to the account of Newington Chapel, Mr. Bruce during more than thirty years exercised a

¹ The reader will find full information in vols. ii., iii., and v. of “*Lancashire Nonconformity*” respecting the Revs. James Burgess, father and son, who were dissenting ministers in Lancashire during the last century. Writing about 1794, the Rev. James Burgess, author of the letters above given, says: “After I had struggled several years with a constitutional cough and hoarseness, which greatly obstructed my pulpit work I desisted from stated preaching some years ago but have all along carried on pulpit services occasionally, not only at Whitworth where I frequently officiate during their present vacancy, but elsewhere. But I have not, like Demas, forsaken Christ in order to pursue the world. On the contrary I have, in proportion to my growing infirmities, been as diligent as ever in the serving of the best Master by some publications sent abroad into the world since my retirement.”

useful ministry in Liverpool, which death terminated in June, 1808. A plain tablet was placed in Newington Chapel thus inscribed :—

Sacred to the Memory of the late

Reverend DAVID BRUCE,

first minister of this place. And of his faithful and zealous labours, accompanied with a uniform Christian deportment and holy conversation, for more than thirty years, is this Monument respectfully erected by his friends as a lasting memorial how highly they esteemed him as a man, and as an useful and worthy minister of the Gospel of Christ.

Died June 28th, 1808, in the 57th year of his age, and the 32nd of his ministry.

For a few years previous to his death his nephew, the Rev. John Bruce, had been his assistant. He was the son of the Rev. Samuel Bruce, of Wakefield; was born at Great Grimsby, July 7th, 1782, when his father was minister there; studied at Homerton College under Dr. Pye Smith; and on leaving college settled in Liverpool. In December, 1807, he accepted the charge of the Congregational Church at Newport, Isle of Wight, and eventually withdrew from the ministry through failure of health, which affected especially his voice, becoming chaplain of the Necropolis, Liverpool. This post he held for many years. His death took place in January, 1874, at the patriarchal age of ninety-one years. He was the author of "Dorcas," "The Abrahamic Covenant," "Twenty-one Sermons, Chiefly Intended to aid the Devotions of the Closet and the Religious Exercises of the Family," and some other minor works which reached several editions. During the ministry of the Rev. David Bruce, in 1792, several of the Scotch members of his congregation left and erected Oldham Street Church in connection with the Established Church of Scotland. The Rev. Thomas Spencer was called to succeed Mr. Bruce in 1811. He was a mere youth at the time, having been born at Hertford, January 21st, 1791, and so was just twenty years of age when he entered upon his responsible charge in Liverpool. Mr. Spencer had been trained at Hoxton, and towards the end of his student days "preached much in and about London, and wherever his name was announced the crowd that flocked to his ministry proved how extensive and deep the

impression was which it had excited.”¹ Appointed by the committee of the College to spend the midsummer vacation of 1810 at Newington Chapel, Liverpool, Mr. Spencer preached his first sermon there on June 30th, from Luke xxiv., 32. In the afternoon and evening his texts were respectively Heb. xii., 24 i.; 1 Cor. xv., 25,



THE REV. THOMAS SPENCER.

and the following is the testimony of Dr. Raffles respecting the services of that and following days:—

The impression produced by the labours of this Sabbath will be long remembered. The emotion then awakened has not subsided to this day [written in 1820]. Every sermon that he preached tended to deepen the conviction of his piety and talents, and to endear him to the people. His

Life of Spencer,” by Dr. Raffles, p. III.

lively, affectionate manner, and the simple but elegant style of his discourses, captivated all who heard him. Every sermon produced accessions to the congregation. The report of his extraordinary powers prevailed, and all classes pressed to witness them. The chapel soon became thronged to excess, and not alone the thoughtless and the gay, whom the charms of a persuasive eloquence and an engaging manner might attract, but pious and experienced Christians sat at his feet with deep attention and delight. There seemed to be, indeed, *a shaking amongst the dry bones*. A divine unction evidently attended his ministry, and such were the effects produced that every beholder with astonishment and admiration cried—What hath God wrought! ¹

Mr. Spencer received and accepted the “unanimous and pressing invitation” of the church, and began his duties as minister on Sunday, February 3rd, 1811. “The uncommon attention excited in Liverpool by Mr. Spencer’s ministry,” says Dr. Raffles, “soon suggested the necessity of providing more accommodation than Newington Chapel could afford for the numbers who were anxious to enjoy the benefit of his stated labours. At first the idea of enlarging the old place of worship presented itself, but some difficulties arising this was relinquished, and early in March [1811] it was resolved that a chapel capable of accommodating two thousand persons should be erected.” ² On the 15th of April, therefore, Mr. Spencer laid the foundation stone of a new chapel in Great George Street in the presence of an assembly “computed to consist of about six thousand persons.” His ordination took place on June 27th following, and as his own chapel was small the Baptists “handsomely granted” their chapel in Byrom Street for the purpose. The Revs. William Evans, of Stockport; Joseph Fletcher, M.A., of Blackburn; and Joseph Cockin, of Halifax, assisted in the service, whilst the Rev. William Hordle, of Harwich (Mr. Spencer’s former tutor and friend), gave him the charge from Col. iv., 27, and the Rev. Wm. Roby preached to the congregation from Gal. iv., 18. How the brilliant career of this young and saintly minister was terminated a few weeks afterwards the following sentences tell:—

His last sermon was preached on Sunday, August 4th, 1811, from St. Luke x., 42, “One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part

¹ “Life of Spencer,” pp. 162, 163.

² “Ibid,” p. 199.

which shall not be taken away from her." The throng was enormous, hundreds having to go away after vain attempts to enter. It is said that he had never been so fervid and solemn in his appeals. On Monday, August 5th, he went alone, as he had often done before, to bathe in the river, in a sequestered part of the south shore, near the Herculaneum Potteries. He entered the water in a rocky part of the coast, and sank beneath the waves, to be fifty minutes later drawn out a lifeless corpse. The excitement consequent on the circulation of the sad news through the town was such as has been rarely witnessed. All classes and denominations had thrilled with his eloquence, and had hung on his lips, and now joined with his more immediate friends in their heartfelt expressions of sorrow. The funeral took place on Tuesday, the 13th August, attended by crowds of sympathising friends, the streets through which the procession passed being lined with spectators.¹

"Religion, humanity, friendship, and genius," says Dr. Raffles, "mingled their tears at his grave. The procession moved from the Park about eleven in the morning in the following order:—

The Gentlemen of the Faculty ;
Ministers, four abreast ;
The Body ;
The Pall, supported by the Ministers, five on each side ;
The Mourners ;
Friends of the Deceased,
To the number of One Hundred and Thirty,
With White Hatbands and Gloves,
Six abreast."²

The oration at the grave was delivered by the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, M.A., and on the following Sunday the funeral sermon in Newington Chapel was preached by the Rev. Wm. Roby from Hebrews xiii, 7, 8. In the Great George Street Chapel a monument was subsequently erected bearing the following inscription:—

Sacred to the Memory of
The REVEREND THOMAS SPENCER;
He was born at Hertford, January 21, 1791 ;
Was ordained to the pastoral office over the Independent Church,
Then assembling in Newington, but now in this place,
June 27th, 1811,

¹ "Notes on the Origin and History of the Congregational Churches in Liverpool," by Sir J. A. Picton, p. 13.

² "Life of Spencer," p. 238.

And was drowned while bathing in the river Mersey,
 The 5th of August following,
 In the 21st year of his age.
 His remains lie in the burial ground of Newington Chapel.
 This edifice, the result of his successful labours, is his
 Lasting memorial upon earth,
 But his Imperishable Record is on high.

In December, 1811, a call was given to the Rev. Thomas Raffles, M.A., which was accepted, and he entered upon the pastorate in April, 1812. The new chapel in Great George Street was opened the following May an account of which and of Dr. Raffles's ministry must be reserved for another section.

A few friends clung to the old building in Renshaw Street after the removal of the church and congregation to their new premises in Great George Street, and in 1814 the church was reconstituted, and the Rev. Robert Philip was appointed minister. He was a native of Scotland, being born at Huntly, in 1791, and his father was an elder in the church of the Rev. G. Cowie, "the founder and first promoter of Independency in the North of Scotland."¹ At the age of nineteen Robert Philip entered the Hoxton Academy to be trained for the ministry, and on the completion of his college course settled in Liverpool. His ordination took place on August 11th, 1815, of which we have the following interesting account:—

The Rev. Robert Philip was ordained to the pastoral charge of the Church of Newington, Liverpool. Mr. J. Lister commenced the service by prayer and reading the scriptures; Mr. Raffles gave a luminous statement of a gospel church; Mr. Charrier put the usual questions and offered up the ordination prayer in the most impressive manner; Dr. Stewart delivered an affectionate and solemn charge; Mr. Reynolds, of Chester, preached an excellent sermon to the people, and Mr. Fisher concluded by prayer. The solemnity and cordiality which prevailed on the occasion could not be exceeded; all seemed to feel that they were near to the pulpit and sepulchre of Spencer.²

During his ministry in Liverpool, which extended over eleven years, he interested himself in the "spiritual improvement of the sailors frequenting the port of that town," and published a small volume of sermons to seamen under the title of, "Bethel Flag."

¹ "Congregational Year Book," for 1859, p. 213.

² "Evangelical Magazine," for 1815, p. 465.

Owing to his exertions also an important alteration was effected in the chapel of which Dr. Thom gives the following account in 1854:—

It was during the incumbency of Mr. Philip, early in 1820, that the present neat Gothic facade of Newington Chapel, as seen from Renshaw Street, was put up. Previously, the chapel had fronted Cropper Street. To the kindness and generosity of Mr. Benjamin Baker, marble mason and statuary, the congregation were indebted for a present of the stones, by which they were enabled to carry a very decided and desirable improvement of their place of worship into effect. Those now alive who can recollect the not merely plain but unsightly aspect of the Renshaw Street end of the chapel before the alteration took place, and have remarked its present appearance, are thereby qualified to understand how by means of a little taste, enterprise, and pecuniary outlay, a positive eyesore may be converted into an ornament.¹

Mr. Philip removed to Maberley Chapel, London, in January, 1826, of which he remained pastor until his death, May 1, 1858. He was a very considerable writer, amongst his works being—"The Life of Bunyan," "The Life and Times of Whitefield," and "The Life of Dr. Milne of China." The Rev. Robert Maclean followed in 1826. He was one of the Rev. Wm. Roby's students, and had previously laboured at Kendal.² About 1830 he removed to Stone, in Staffordshire, and subsequently to Nantwich. His successor was the Rev. Patrick Thomson, M.A., a student from Highbury College, whose father was the Rev. Alexander Thomson, for fifty years a Congregational minister in Scotland. Mr. Thomson was ordained at Newington Chapel, October 14th, 1830. He removed to Edmonton Congregational Church, London, of which he was recognised pastor November 28th, 1832. Subsequently he exercised his ministry at Chatham, Manchester (Grosvenor Street Chapel), Bristol, Leominster, and Rochester. He died November 8th, 1871, aged sixty-three years. His publications were principally sermons, a volume, issued in 1850, entitled "The Soul: its nature and destinies," bringing help to many.³ The Rev. William Lindsay Alexander, M.A., succeeded.

¹ "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 56.

² Vide vol. i. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

³ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

Born at Leith in 1808, a graduate of St. Andrew's University, where he studied under Dr. Chalmers, he became Professor of Classics and Mathematics in the Blackburn Academy in 1828. At the end of four years he relinquished this position and entered the University of Edinburgh as a student of medicine. A severe illness laid him aside for some months, and sent him to some friends in North Wales with a view to convalescence. Passing through Liverpool on his way home, and the expected "supply" for Newington Chapel being unable to keep his appointment, Mr. Alexander consented to preach. This led to his continuance for over twelve months (1833-1834), when to further fit himself for the ministry he proceeded to Germany and attended theological lectures in Halle and Leipzig. Dr. Alexander, as a Congregational minister in Edinburgh and Principal of the Theological Hall there, did a work whose value it is beyond words to say. After a comparatively brief illness he died December 20th, 1884. "While in Liverpool," says Dr. Thom, "he became favourably known as a controversialist. The Rev. William Dalton, A.M., then incumbent of St. Jude's, having in 1834 published his 'Reasons for Attachment to the Church of England,' Mr. Alexander immediately assailed it in his 'Examination of the Reasons,' &c., a pamphlet displaying his possession of a vigorous intellect and splendid argumentative powers."¹ The Rev. William Dallison, who had previously laboured at Soham in Cambridgeshire, Burslem in Staffordshire, and Sutton in Cheshire, supplied Newington Chapel about midsummer, 1834. This led to his being invited to the pastorate, and having accepted the invitation he began his labours here in April, 1835. He died at the early age of thirty-six years, on Monday morning, September 14th following, and was interred in the tomb of his predecessor, "the late lamented Spencer." In connection with his funeral Dr. Thom tells the following affecting story:—

Immediately behind the corpse, in the procession, was seen Dr. Raffles, condescendingly and affectionately holding by the hand a little boy, the eldest son of the deceased, and apparently from time to time whispering words of consolation in the ear of the youthful mourner.²

¹ "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 57.

² "Ibid," p. 57, note.

The next minister was the Rev. William Bevan, whose ministerial training was obtained at Highbury College, and whose first charge was at Wellingborough. He became pastor of Newington Chapel in 1837, the church being at the time in an enfeebled condition. In 1847 he removed to London to become Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance. His subsequent pastorates were at Snow Hill, Wolverhampton, and Harley Street Chapel, Bow. He died June 4th, 1874, aged sixty-one years. His successor was the Rev. Robert Spence, M.A. Like one of his predecessors, he also was a native of Huntly, being born there September 26th, 1822. After a brilliant University career at Aberdeen he entered Highbury College for his theological training, and having completed his college course became pastor of Newington Chapel, where he was ordained October 26th, 1848. In 1853 he removed to Dundee, where he remained until 1870, when his health suddenly gave way and led to his resignation.¹ He died at London quite unexpectedly, June 24th, 1870. It is interesting to note that about 1863 Mr. Spence was invited to become one of the Professors of Lancashire College, but he "could not honourably or satisfactorily to himself accept the important post."² His brother was the Rev. Dr. Spence, formerly of Preston. The Rev. Henry Griffiths, F.G.S., followed. He was educated at Coward College, and settled first at West Cowes, Isle of Wight, whence he removed to become President of Brecon College. "He was torn away, to his great regret, from his beloved work of tutorship" to assume the pastorate of Newington Chapel in 1853. He removed to Bowdon in 1864, and subsequently to Barnet. His death took place on Friday, August 14th, 1891, aged seventy-nine years. During his residence in Liverpool he rendered valuable service to the Queen's College founded there. "His pen was never idle," says his biographer. "He was always publishing something, apologetic or ethical, scientific or harmonising. But in Barnet he gave to the world his maturest thoughts on life and destiny in his celebrated book '*Faith the Life Root of Science*'"³ The Rev.

¹ Mr. Spence had as assistant minister the Rev. Thomas Hamer, now of Little Lever, from September, 1869, to the time of his resignation. (Vide vols. iii. and v. of "*Lancashire Nonconformity*.")

² "*Congregational Year Book*," for 1871.

³ "*Ibid*," for 1892, p. 176.

James Wayman was the next minister. He held the pastorate from 1865 to the end of 1868, when he removed to Blackpool. Here he completed nearly a quarter of a century of useful service, and removed to Kentish Town, London, where he still labours.¹ The Rev. William Parkes, formerly of Cannon Street, Manchester, and Park Road, Blackburn, was minister from 1870 to 1872. He went to Mexico.² No successor was appointed, and in 1872 the Newington Chapel was sold and appropriated as a German Church.

VII.—GREAT GEORGE STREET CHAPEL.

THE foundation stone of Great George Street Chapel was laid by the Rev. Thomas Spencer in April, 1811, but he was not permitted to see its completion. His death occurred four months after that event, and the building was not opened for worship until May 27th, 1812, the Rev. Wm. Jay, of Bath, preaching in the morning from Ps. lxxii., 6, and Dr. Collyer, of London, in the evening, from 1 John iv., 8. Its cost was about £13,000, and the sitting accommodation was for nearly 2,000 persons.

The first minister of Great George Street Chapel was the Rev. Thomas Raffles, M.A. He was the only son of Mr. William Raffles, of Spitalfields, London, where he was born May 17th, 1788. In 1800 he was sent to a large boarding school at Peckham, conducted by the Rev. Martin Ready, a Baptist minister, where he made the acquaintance of Richard Slate, afterwards Congregational minister in Preston, for whom through life he cherished the deepest affection. In 1805 he entered Homerton College, having as one of his tutors Dr. J. Pye Smith; and, after refusing invitations to several churches, settled at Hammersmith on the completion of his college course. His ordination here

¹ Vide vol. i. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² Vide vols. ii. and v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity." It appears that Mr. Parkes left Blackburn in 1866 for Buenos Ayres, and returned to England for a short time, during which period he was minister at Newington Chapel, after which he again left the country.



THE REV. THOMAS RAFFLES, LL.D., D.D.

took place on June 22nd, 1809. He removed to Liverpool in 1812, and began his labours at Newington Chapel on Sunday, April 19th, preaching in the morning from Heb. xii., 1, 2, and in the evening from John i., 13. On May 28th, the day following the opening of the chapel, Mr. Raffles "was set apart to the pastoral office over the church and congregation," when Dr. Collyer, "who delivered the charge to Mr. Raffles at his ordination at Hammersmith, delivered an impressive sermon from 2 Thess. iii., 1."¹ Dr. Raffles (for such he ultimately became, receiving his LL.D. from Aberdeen in 1820, and his D.D. from Union College, Connecticut) two years later, in a speech delivered on the occasion of his Jubilee, gives a very vivid picture of the condition of Liverpool at the time of his settlement:—

And what was Liverpool when, in November, 1811, I crossed the Mersey from the Cheshire side in an open boat—for they had no others then—and set my foot for the first time upon her shore? The great and rapidly increasing town opposite to us, destined ere long to have its representative in the Imperial Parliament, did not then exist. It was a perfect solitude, a park filled with splendid oaks, and appertaining to the ancient abbey of Birkenhead. And what was Liverpool then? Under 100,000 in its population. Little, reputed as Evangelical preaching, was found in any of the churches of the Establishment save one, perhaps, where the spirit and temper of the preacher were such as greatly to damage the influence of his preaching, and prevent the people from attending it; while such a thing as a Sabbath evening service was altogether unknown. Amongst the Nonconformists of the various denominations, the places of worship were few and far between. I will not pledge myself to perfect accuracy, for I speak from memory, but, as far as I can remember, when I first came to Liverpool our Scotch friends had but two places, the old kirk in Oldham Street, and the Seceders' Chapel (as it was then called) in Gloucester Street; in the former Dr. Kirkpatrick was the minister, and in the latter my old and much loved friend, Dr. John Stewart. Our Wesleyan Methodist brethren indeed, even then, had four chapels, viz., Leeds Street, Pitt Street, Mount Pleasant, and Brunswick, then recently erected and just opened. Our Baptist friends had Byrom Street (then vacant) and Lime Street, where the truly excellent Rev. James Lister occupied the pulpit. Byrom Street Chapel had been rendered famous by the labours of the Rev. Samuel Medley; at that time it had a large and influential congregation, and was regarded as a sort of cathedral of that denomination in these parts. With regard to ourselves, the Independents, we had but two chapels, viz., Newington and Bethesda. In

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1812, p. 320.

Bethesda the pastorate was ably filled by the Rev. Peter Samuel Charrier, one of the most faithful preachers, and, withal, one of the most amiable of men. I esteemed it an honour and a privilege of no ordinary kind to enjoy his most intimate friendship from my first entrance into Liverpool, and I cherish his memory with the truest regard to this day. The first Great George Street Chapel, which was totally destroyed by fire in February, 1840, was only then just covered in; nor were its walls more than a few yards above the ground when the admirable Spencer was carried past them to his early tomb. To his lodgings, as well as to his pulpit, I succeeded, and, seated in his own chair, in his own study, on his own table, and with the last pen he ever used, I wrote his life; and there, after days of labour and hours of study, oftentimes carried on far into the succeeding morning, upon his own couch I laid me down to rest.¹

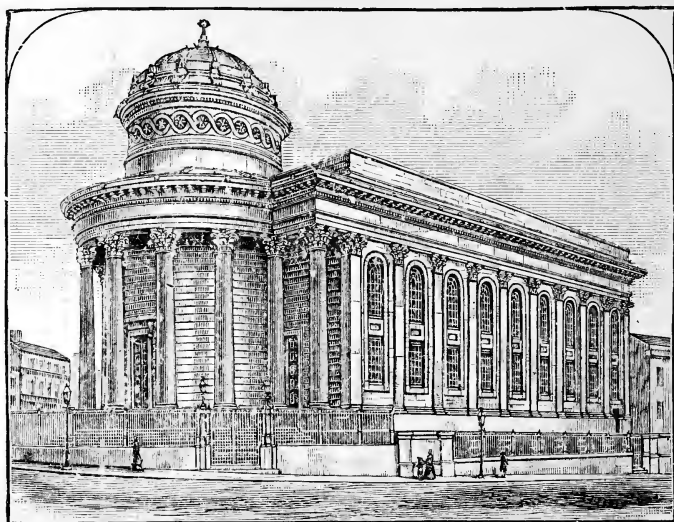
The destruction of Great George Street Chapel by fire mentioned in the preceding passage took place on February 19th, 1840. The sad event, due probably to the recent introduction of stoves for heating the building, occurred whilst Dr. Raffles was at Manchester attending a meeting of the College Building Committee. "The destruction," writes one, "which was greatly facilitated by the gas, which had not been turned off from the main, was the work of only about forty minutes, in which time one of the largest and most commodious of our chapels in the kingdom was brought to ruins."² The building was insured for £4,000, not more than "half of the cost of its erection again," and singularly enough this insurance had only been effected the day previous to the outbreak of the fire. The agent who sent up to London by the same post the notice of the acceptance of the insurance and the destruction of the chapel, said to Dr. Raffles: "Pretty fellows you are to insure your chapel one day and burn it down the next." The resolution to rebuild was "most earnest and unanimous;" the sum of £5,000 was speedily subscribed, and on Thursday, October 21st, 1840, the present Great George Street Chapel was opened for public worship.³ Dr. Raffles took the introductory

¹ "Memoirs of the Rev. T. Raffles, D.D., LL.D.," by his son, Thomas Stamford Raffles, Esq., B.A., pp. 479, 480.

² "Congregational Magazine," for 1840, p. 199.

³ Dr. Raffles and his people worshipped during the interval in the hall of the Mechanics' Institute, where he preached the first Sunday after the fire from Is. lxiv., 11, "Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste;" also from 1. Kings, xix., 12; Ps. xlvii., 10.

part of the morning service, and offered the dedicatory prayer, and Dr. Fletcher, of London, preached. In the afternoon the pulpit was occupied by the Rev. John Kelly, and in the evening by the Rev. James Parsons, of York. On the following Sunday Dr. Raffles was the morning preacher, and Dr. Harris, President of Cheshunt College, evening. Dr. Halley, of Manchester, brought the services to a conclusion with a sermon on Monday evening, October 25th. The new edifice cost, including a few additional yards of land and an organ, £13,922, and the accommodation



GREAT GEORGE STREET CHAPEL.

provided was for about 1,800 persons. Twenty years longer Dr. Raffles exercised his ministry in Liverpool with ever increasing popularity. "In chapel openings," writes his biographer, "preaching anniversary sermons, and taking part in ordination services he was frequently employed. Perhaps no minister amongst Congregationalists ever preached more sermons or travelled more miles in doing his Master's work than Dr. Raffles."¹

¹ Congregational Year Book," for 1864, p. 238.

For many years he was Secretary of the Lancashire County Union, and to his thoughtful care we are indebted for the set of County Reports now in the possession of his successor in office the Rev. R. M. Davies, who has kindly lent them for this work.¹ He was one of the originators of the Blackburn Academy, and a warm supporter of the project to remove it to Manchester in 1843. At the laying of the foundation stone of the Lancashire Independent College, on September 23rd, 1840, he was present, and, along with Mr. George Hadfield, should have given an address, but the giving way of a covered platform, and the consequent serious injury of several ladies, made it impossible to carry out the day's proceedings as arranged. The College was opened on April 26th, 1843, when Dr. Raffles conducted the introductory part of the service, whilst Dr. Vaughan, the President, gave the inaugural address. His biographer thus writes:—

To Dr. Raffles, as Chairman, the satisfactory conclusion of the labours of the Building and Education Committees was a cause of great thankfulness. Much responsibility had devolved upon him, and the editor feels that he may affirm, without any fear of contradiction, that the great influence, the urbane and genial manner, and the ready tact and discretion of Dr. Raffles contributed in no small measure to the establishment, on its present basis, of the Lancashire Independent College. His heart was thoroughly in the work, and the institution occupied a high place in his affections to the last.²

Dr. Raffles used his pen freely, his "Life of Spencer" and "Lectures on Christian Faith and Practice" being valuable contributions to literature; whilst many of his hymns "incorporated with the hymnology of the Christian Church will hand down his name to posterity." Antiquarian in his tastes, and especially interested in Congregational history, he collected much of the material out

¹ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² "Memoirs of the Rev. T. Raffles, D.D., LL.D.," p. 354. The Jubilee of Lancashire Independent College was celebrated in June, 1893, and friends of the College will hardly need to be reminded of the "Raffles Memorial Library" and the "Raffles Scholarship," which witness to the deep and abiding interest which the donor took in the institution. The money raised for the purpose by his friends in Manchester and "other towns in the eastern part of the county" was presented to Dr. Raffles at the College by Mr. G. Hadfield, M.P., on June 20th, 1861, on attaining to the Jubilee of his ministry in Liverpool.

of which Dr. Halley afterwards composed his "Lancashire: its Puritanism and Nonconformity;" and at the time of his death he had one of the most valuable MS. collections bearing on Dissenting history in existence. It was the wish of Dr. Raffles to complete the Jubilee of his ministry in Liverpool, but his manifold labours had told upon his constitution, and under the gentle pressure of his son he was induced to send his resignation to the church in December, 1861. He preached his last sermon from the pulpit he had so long and honourably filled on the 24th of February, 1861, at the beginning of his Jubilee year,¹ and his church generously assigned him an annuity of £400 per annum. He did not, however, long enjoy this; for on August 18th, 1863, he died. His remains were laid in the Necropolis, his successor, the Rev. Enoch Mellor, M.A., conducting the funeral service. A short time previous to the resignation of Dr. Raffles efforts were made, without avail, to obtain a colleague, both his nephew, the Rev. James Baldwin Brown, B.A., of London, and the Rev. William Pulsford, of Edinburgh, refusing hearty invitations. In October, 1861, the Rev. Enoch Mellor, M.A., entered upon his duties as minister. Born at Salendine Nook, near Huddersfield, a graduate of Edinburgh University, and subsequently a student of Lancashire College, on the completion of his college course he settled at Square Church, Halifax. Thence he removed to Liverpool, and after six years, "through the urgent pressure of his old friends in Halifax," he was induced to return to his first charge. Here he laboured until his death, October 26th, 1881, aged fifty-seven years. Dr. Mellor's name will long be remembered in Lancashire not alone because of his eloquence as a preacher, but because of his ability as a Nonconformist lecturer. His degree of D.D. was conferred upon him by his own University of Edinburgh in 1870; in 1863 he was Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales; and his contributions to literature, which are consider-

¹ Reference has been made to the Rev. R. M. Davies, of Oldham, as successor to Dr. Raffles in the Secretaryship of the Lancashire Congregational Union. What was denied Dr. Raffles has been permitted Mr. Davies; for in June, 1893, he celebrated fifty years of faithful service in Oldham.—(Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity.")

able, indicate a "keenness of logical faculty" and "robustness of mind" which make them of permanent value. The Rev. Samuel Pearson, M.A., educated at New College, and who had exercised a brief ministry in Birmingham, succeeded Dr. Mellor at Great George Street in February, 1869. In 1877 the church celebrated its Centenary, in connection with which event Mr. Pearson preached the Centenary sermon on Sunday morning, September 2nd, from the words: "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times," Ps. lxxvii., 5; and Sir J. A. Picton published his pamphlet on "Liverpool Congregationalism," so often referred to in these pages. In connection with the Centenary celebrations also, a fund was started to pay off all the chapel debts in Liverpool, amounting to about £19,000. Mr. Pearson worthily sustained the best traditions of the Great George Street pulpit, but the changing character of the neighbourhood, owing to the removal of wealthy and influential families to the suburbs, increased the difficulties of his position. At a cost of about £3,000, vestries were added to the chapel during Mr. Pearson's ministry. In 1888 he removed to Highbury Quadrant, London, and is now the respected minister of Broughton Park, Manchester. He filled the chair of the Lancashire Congregational Union in 1874, and is the author of several works, of which the following may be mentioned:—"Facets of Truth," "First Steps to God," "Work Day Living—a book for young men," "Thyself and Others," and "Service in Three Cities." The present minister is the Rev. J. K. Nuttall. He was educated at Rotherham College, and previous to his settlement at Great George Street in 1891 had successfully held pastorates at Bradford and Sunderland. To adapt his church to the changed conditions of the neighbourhood, Mr. Nuttall has thrown himself enthusiastically into the P. S. A. movement. The society in connection with Great George Street is one of the largest in the kingdom, having a membership of 2,000. Connected with the church are two missions. The "Raffles Memorial Mission Rooms," erected at a cost of about £5,000, in Greenland Street, by the congregation, to perpetuate, as the name suggests, the memory of their old pastor, were opened in May, 1864. There is sitting accommodation for 600 persons. The "Knight Street Mission" was commenced in 1868.

VIII.—CRESCENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE second¹ Congregational church in Liverpool originated with a number of persons who seceded from All Saints in 1800 because of dissatisfaction with the clergyman, the Rev. Robert Banister. Barton Haigh, William Merriman, Hill Wilson, Samuel Hall, Peter Robinson, and Robert Innes are mentioned amongst these seceders, who rented a small chapel in Maguire Street, and organised themselves into a Congregational church. The Rev. James Macpherson became the minister, but he remained only a short time, and in 1803 he appears at Cockspur Street Chapel with a congregation of Independents. Here he continued until towards the end of 1806, and of him Dr. Thom says, "he has been represented to me as having possessed considerable talents, and is well known to have been at one time exceedingly popular among persons holding strict, or, as some would say, high, Calvinistic sentiments."² The Rev. John Ralph, who had previously laboured at Stone and Cleckheaton, was chosen as the second minister of the congregation. In 1803 Bethesda Chapel in Hotham Street was opened for public worship, an account of the services in connection with which is here subjoined :—

Jan. 3, 1803, was opened Bethesda Chapel, *Liverpool*, a new and commodious place of worship, erected by the Independent congregation under the Rev. John Ralph, late of Cleck Heaton, Yorkshire. Three sermons were preached by the Revs. P. S. Charrier, W. Roby, and S. Bradley, of Manchester, from Ps. xc., 16; Phil., i. 17; and 1 Cor. xii., 27. Messrs. Johnstone, Davies, Sharp, Bruce, and Alexander engaged in prayer in the different services.³

"So limited," says Dr. Thom, "were their numbers and means at this time that it was not until after the lapse of a considerable interval they were able to put up a gallery."⁴ "Certain painful

¹ Great George Street Church is the first Congregational church in continuity. The Church meeting in Newington Chapel was reconstituted in 1814, and so makes the third; but for convenience I have made its history piece on to that of the original Newington Church up to its removal for Great George Street Chapel.

² "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 96.

³ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1803, p. 314.

⁴ "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 101.

disclosures" terminated Mr. Ralph's ministry in 1808, and subsequently he removed to Wigan, where he faithfully laboured until his death in 1822.¹ The Rev. Peter Samuel Charrier, who was ordained as minister of High Street Chapel, Lancaster, on May 9th, 1792, when the Revs. Timothy Senier, of Elswick, Thomas Kennedy, M.A., of Manchester, and E. Parsons, of Leeds, conducted the service, accepted the invitation to the pastorate of Bethesda Chapel, and entered upon his duties in June, 1809. After a devoted ministry of nearly seventeen years, serving not only his church, but his denomination, being Secretary of the Lancashire Congregational Union much of that time, Mr. Charrier died suddenly,² March 29th, 1826, at the age of fifty-six years. His remains were laid in the graveyard of High Street Chapel, Lancaster, and his intimate friend, the Rev. Wm. Roby, of Manchester, preached his funeral sermon at Bethesda Chapel. Dr. Thom hardly does justice to the character of this excellent minister in the following passage :—

Till the close of his life his extraction [of French Huguenot parentage] was apparent in the polished and ceremonious courtesy of his manners, his peculiarly stiff although gentleman-like gait, and the natural irascibility of his temper.³

The testimony of those who knew him best is of another kind. The Rev. Wm. Roby says that he was a "charming companion," a pastor who endeared himself unto his congregation "by the suavity of his manners combined with unbending integrity." The

¹ Vide vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity" for a portrait and full account of Mr. Ralph, who, whatever his experiences in Liverpool, in Wigan proved himself to be "A good minister of Jesus Christ."

² Dr. Raffles says: "Died, March 29th, 1826, between 1 and 2 in the morning, of a mortification in the bowels. He attended the District meeting of the County Union, at Warrington, on the previous Thursday, and on the Friday he gave an address to the Teachers of the Liverpool Sunday School Union at the breakfast in Great George Street School-room, and he prayed in the afternoon of the same day after Dr. Raffles's sermon at the opening of the new Welsh Chapel, Rose Hill. He called on Saturday on 2 of his friends, complained of being poorly that night, and never rose from his bed again, but expired peacefully the following Wednesday morning."

³ "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 102.

Rev. John Alexander, of Norwich, says that he was "faithful and affectionate in his friendships." Dr. Raffles calls him "one of the most faithful preachers, and, withal, one of the most amiable of men."¹ The Rev. John Kelly, a student from Airedale College, was sent "to supply temporarily" in January, 1827. This led to his being invited to assume the pastorate, and on the understanding



THE REV. P. S. CHARRIER WHEN AT LANCASTER.

that he should be allowed to complete his college course he accepted the overtures made to him. He entered upon his duties as minister in July, 1829, and on the 23rd of September following was ordained, when Dr. R. W. Hamilton, of Leeds, gave him the charge, and the Rev. John Ely, then at Rochdale, addressed

¹ A full account of Mr. Charrier will be found in vol. i. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

the church and people. Bethesda Chapel soon became too small for the congregation, and in 1837 the present "Crescent Chapel," on the slope of Everton Brow, was erected. The building was opened for worship in November, 1837, when the Revs. Dr. Fletcher, of London, Dr. Raffles and Dr. McAll, of Manchester, took part in the services. The cost was over £9,000, and the



THE REV. P. S. CHARRIER IN HIS OLD AGE.

sitting accommodation is for 1,200 persons. Bethesda Chapel, after being left by the Congregationalists, was sold to the New Connexion Methodists, who continued in possession until 1869, when it was again sold and converted into a dancing saloon. In 1846 the handsome and commodious Crescent Chapel Day Schools were erected at a cost of over £7,000, providing

accommodation for 700 or 800 scholars. Mr. Kelly's ministry continued until September, 1873, when growing infirmities led to his retirement, and his church presented him with an illuminated address and a cheque for £2,700. He was Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1851; with Dr. Raffles he made many a journey to collect funds for Lancashire College; he was a voluminous writer, and to his exertions some of the Congregational churches in Liverpool and neighbourhood owe their existence. George Gilfillan, in his "Reminiscences of his English Tour," thus writes respecting Mr. Kelly and his congregation in 1847:—

He is a decided specimen of the Scottish school. His preaching is able, clear, critical, and searching, but without ease and without imagination. Mr. K. is a robust, middle-sized, middle-aged person, preaches to a respectable but thin audience, and stands deservedly high in his body. We were struck with the intellectual aspect of his congregation. Large heads and foreheads, brows knitted in profound attention, eyes fixed with piercing glance upon the speaker, and hands ever ready to turn up the Scriptures at his quotations, gave us the assurance of a body of men, not of fashionable fribbles or weak-minded enthusiasts. It seemed such an assembly as Hall would have wished to address; and we are morally certain that it could not have been in this chapel where, according to his own statement, when in Liverpool, he "preached like a pig to a parcel of pigs." There was much in Mr. Kelly, and in his audience, to remind us of Dr. Russell, of Dundee, though *he* is more conversational and practical in his style of preaching.¹

Mr. Kelly died at Liverpool—where he continued to reside after his retirement—on Tuesday, June 12th, 1876, aged seventy-five years. His successor was the Rev. J. M. Blackie, B.A., LL.B. He was the son of the Rev. John Blackie, of Bungay, educated at New College, and settled, on the completion of his college course, at Leamington. He removed thence to Liverpool, in 1873, remaining until 1877, when he became the pastor of the Congregational Church at Sudbury, in Suffolk. His last charge was at Cheltenham. He died December 28th, 1889, aged forty-nine years. The Rev. J. Ogmores Davies, from Sunderland, succeeded in 1878, and removed to Craven Chapel, London, in 1882. His long illness and pathetic end, whilst the minister of Chapel Street

¹ "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 102, note 2.

Congregational Church, Blackburn, will be fresh in the mind of the reader. On February 23rd, 1892, at the age of forty-five years, exactly two years after the death of his wife, and a few days before his intended marriage, Mr. Davies was suddenly called away to his reward.¹ The next minister was the Rev. J. H. Riddette, from Rotherhithe. He held the pastorate from 1883 to 1886, when he resigned. He is now the minister of the New Congregational Church at Haydock, near St. Helens. The Rev. F. A. Russell, educated at Airedale, and for two years minister of the Congregational Church at Inverurie N.B., followed Mr. Riddette in 1887. Mr. Russell has recently accepted an invitation to Salem Chapel, York, and to his new sphere of labour in the sister county he will carry with him the good wishes of a large circle of friends. The pulpit of Crescent Chapel is still vacant. The church has maintained continuously several flourishing mission stations.

IX.—BERKLEY STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

IN 1820 "The Tent Methodist" movement came into being, which gave at least two very worthy men to the Congregational ministry. Bristol was its place of birth, and Messrs. Pocock and Pyer were its two apostles. Anxious to evangelise the dark villages of England, they took with them tents, pitched them wherever they chose, and there preached the Gospel. The Wesleyan ministers of Bristol viewed the movement with suspicion, and required that it should be under the control of the society, which, being refused, a secession took place, and a new sect was formed, bearing the name of "The Tent Methodists." Manchester and Liverpool were the two places in Lancashire which this movement reached. A large chapel was erected at Ancoats, Manchester, where Mr. Pyer, who ultimately became an eminent Congregational minister, preached for several years. This eventually developed into the Ancoats Congregational Church.² To Liverpool a young man

¹ Vide vol. ii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

named George Smith was sent to labour, with the result that here, as at Manchester, a Congregational Church grew up. "Mr. Pocock, of Bristol," says Mr. Smith's biographer, "saw in him a young lad of great promise; his mental capacities were superior, his ready lucid utterance remarkable, his earnest and fervent piety of no common type. He took, therefore, a special interest in his welfare, and, after a course of theological instruction, he was sent out to preach in the neighbouring villages, in the 'Tent Mission' which Mr. Pocock had established." In connection with that mission Mr. Smith came to Liverpool in 1823, and soon gathered around himself a congregation, of which he was requested to take the "entire oversight." A church was formed of the Congregational order in a schoolroom in Heath Street, in 1827, an account of which, together with that of Mr. Smith's ordination, is here given:—

On Friday evening, October 27, 1827, a Congregational Church of Christ, consisting of forty-two members, was formed in Heath Street Chapel, Toxteth Park, Liverpool, and publicly recognised by the different Independent ministers of the town. The Rev. S. Saunders commenced the service by reading suitable portions of Scripture and prayer. The Rev. Dr. Raffles preached on the nature of a Christian Church, and gave to the persons there meeting the right hand of fellowship in the name of the sister churches. The Rev. R. Maclean gave a suitable address to the newly-formed church, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was then celebrated by them and many communicants from other congregations. Dr. Raffles presided at the table, and the Rev. J. Pyer addressed the spectators. It was a season of peculiar enjoyment, and will long be remembered with delight by many who were present. The Rev. George Smith (under whose ministry the congregation had been recently collected in the midst of a neglected population, who previously attended no place of worship), having received a unanimous call from this infant church, was ordained to the pastoral office on Friday, November 16, 1827, in Great George Street Chapel, which commodious building was kindly lent for the occasion. The Rev. James Lister commenced with reading and prayer. Rev. R. Maclean delivered the introductory discourse from John xviii., 36, and received the confession of faith. The Rev. S. Saunders offered the ordination prayer, and the Rev. T. Raffles, LL.D., Mr. Smith's late pastor, gave a most impressive charge from 2 Timothy ii., 15; and the Rev. John Burnet, of Cork, afterwards preached to the people from 2 Cor. viii., 24.¹

¹ "Congregational Magazine" for 1828, p. 390.

On Thursday, January 7th, 1830, the congregation removed to Hanover Chapel, which was on that day opened for divine worship, when the Rev. John Ely, of Rochdale, preached from Ps. lxiii., 1, 2, in the morning, and in the evening the Rev. James Griffin, of Manchester, from Ps. lxxxix., 15. The chapel stood in Mill Street, at the corner of Warwick Street, Toxteth Park, was "51 feet by 45," and galleried on three sides, with two school-rooms underneath. In June, 1833, Mr. Smith removed to Plymouth, and subsequently became Dr. Smith, of Poplar, London. During more than a quarter of a century Dr. Smith filled that important post with ever increasing signs of success, and for eighteen years in addition discharged the duties of Secretary to the Congregational Union of England and Wales. He died quite suddenly on the 13th of February, 1870, aged sixty-six years. Amongst the works which issued from his pen are: "Lectures on the Pentateuch," "Prayers for Domestic Use," "The Origin of Language," and "The Spiritual Life." After the departure of Dr. Smith a succession of brief pastorates ensued. The Rev. William Fletcher followed him almost immediately. He was a native of Gloucestershire, educated at Cheshunt College, and first exercised his ministry at Cheltenham, in one of the Countess of Huntingdon's churches. Subsequently, as a Congregational minister, he laboured at Thornbury and Ringwood, removing thence to Liverpool. "Painful indisposition" had frequently interfered with his work, and it compelled him to resign his charge of Hanover Chapel in the summer of 1834. First at Cheltenham, then at Bath, he sought relief, and died at the latter place on Sunday, May 24th, 1835, aged thirty-six years. The Rev. H. C. O'Donoghue was the minister in 1836, and to him succeeded the Rev. Charles Farnsworth in 1837. Mr. Farnsworth, who was a native of Sheffield, lost his sight at the age of eighteen, but it is said that this "calamity was over-ruled for his spiritual good." Previous to coming to Liverpool he was pastor for a few years of a church at Sutton, near Chester. He remained at Hanover Chapel¹ only about twelve months, and afterwards preached

¹ It is recorded that the communion plate of Hanover Chapel was presented to Mr. Farnsworth on his leaving town, and that it was afterwards sent out to Madagascar, the Queen of the island being the first to receive the sacrament from it.—("Bazaar Handbook of the Crescent Road Congregational Church, Dukinfield.")

in the "small meeting house, Heath Street," then in Pleasant Street Chapel. Eventually he settled at Dukinfield, where he laboured for many years.¹ The Rev. John Whittenbury followed in 1838. He was born at Manchester, November 30th, 1789, educated at Rotherham College, and laboured successively at Darlington and Davenry previous to his settlement at Liverpool. It is recorded that he was urged by friends to come to Liverpool "to attempt the raising of an interest that had fallen into decay. To this object he diligently applied himself, and might have succeeded had he met with the support he was led to expect. He bore up under many discouragements, so long as he had the most distant hope of success, and when that hope failed he honourably relinquished his post."² This was about 1839. Mr. Whittenbury died at Liverpool on January 3rd, 1845. After his retirement Hanover Chapel was closed for a few months. In 1840, however, a new effort was made, and the Rev. George Pridie, M.A., a student from Glasgow University, became the minister shortly after. His ordination took place on Wednesday, July 29th, 1841, when Dr. Clunie, of Manchester, took the devotional part of the service; the Rev. John Kelly delivered the introductory discourse; the Rev. Walter Scott, of Airedale College, offered the ordination prayer; the Rev. James Pridie, of Halifax, the pastor's father, gave him the charge; and Dr. Raffles preached the sermon to the people. Mr. Pridie was succeeded, in 1846, by the Rev. David Loxton, who had been educated at Highbury College, and previously had laboured about six years at Gainsborough. In 1850 he removed to Mount Zion, Sheffield, where he ministered until his death on February 10th, 1876, aged fifty-eight years. The Rev. John Dewsnap, a student from Lancashire College, followed in 1851. In July, 1859, he accepted an invitation to Witham, where he laboured until July 20th, 1869, when he died at the age of forty-five years. It was during Mr. Dewsnap's ministry that Hanover Chapel was destroyed by fire, on June 1st, 1856. The chapel was not rebuilt; and the congregation removed to Berkley Street Chapel. The foundation stone of this new building was laid on July

¹ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² "Evangelical Magazine," for 1845, 341.

22nd, 1856, and the opening services were held on April 14th, 1857, when Dr. Raffles and Dr. Binney were the preachers. The accommodation is for over 600 persons, and the cost was about £2,500. The Rev. J. G. Roberts was the next minister. He was educated at Airedale College, and held pastorates at Horncastle and Merton previous to his removal to Liverpool in 1860. In 1862 he left Liverpool for Howden in Yorkshire, and subsequently laboured for several years at Shepherd's Bush. He died October 12th, 1882, at the age of fifty-eight years. "In May, 1863," says Sir J. A. Picton, "the interest being in a declining condition, the members at their own request were absorbed into the Great George Street Church, and the building remained for four years as a mission chapel connected therewith. In 1867 it again became an Independent Church." The Rev. R. Thomas, M.A.,¹ became the minister in 1865, and continued to be such until 1868, when he removed to Wycliffe Chapel, London. His successor, in 1868, was the Rev. F. Smith, from Springhead, Oldham.² He resigned in 1872, and is now resident at Birkdale without charge. The Rev. Thomas Keyworth, a student from Lancashire College, entered upon his duties as minister in 1873. He left in 1886 for Harrison Road Congregational Church, Halifax, of which he is still the pastor. Mr. Keyworth is well known as a writer of interesting Temperance stories. The Rev. C. Chandler from Walworth, and formerly of Chorley,³ became the minister in 1887, and in 1891 he removed to Cranbrook in Kent, where he still labours. The Rev. R. A. Mines, M.A., a student from Lancashire College, followed in 1891, and resigned early in 1893 to take up work in the Foreign Mission field. The pulpit is still vacant.

¹ "Notes on the Origin and History of the Congregational Churches in Liverpool," p. 17.

² Vide ante p. 49; also vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

³ Vide vol. ii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

X.—TOXTETH PARK AND HARTINGTON ROAD
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

THE origin of the Toxteth Park Congregational Church is given by Sir J. A. Picton in the following passage :—

After the adoption of Unitarian doctrines by the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, the neighbourhood remained many years without a Congregational Church professing Evangelical doctrines. In 1832 the chapel in South Hill Road was erected, to a great extent owing to the liberality of Mr. Wm. Kaye, as a thank offering for an escape from an attack by highwaymen on the Aigburth Road.¹

Sir J. A. Picton is slightly at fault in the date, and it may be well to point out that his little pamphlet on Liverpool Congregationalism, so often mentioned in these pages, loses much of its value because of carelessness in the matter of dates. The foundation stone of the chapel was laid by Mr. Thomas Blackburn on June 1, 1830, and the building was opened for worship early in 1831, as the following passage shows :—

On Tuesday, the 22nd of March, 1831, a new Independent chapel, called Toxteth Chapel, was opened for divine worship at Toxteth Park, near Liverpool, when excellent and appropriate sermons were preached. In the morning by the Rev. T. Raffles, LL.D., from Psalm xliii., 4: and in the evening by the Rev. John Thorp, of Chester, from Psalm lxxxvii., 5. The services of the day were exceedingly interesting and well attended, and the collections amounted to the very liberal sum of £77 11s. 10d. The chapel, which is 51 feet by 39 feet, and will seat from 400 to 500, is most neatly and elegantly built. It is sufficiently high to admit of galleries should they be required, and has two spacious schoolrooms underneath. It is situated in the midst of a rapidly increasing and hitherto neglected population, to whom, from the pleasing circumstances which have led to its erection, and the Christian spirit in which the whole has been conducted, there is every reason to hope it will prove a great and lasting blessing.²

The church was formed about 1833, and the Rev. J. J. Carruthers, from Gosport, and formerly a "missionary to the Crimea," became the first pastor. In 1839 he removed to

¹ "Notes on the Origin and History of the Congregational Churches in Liverpool," p. 18.

² "Evangelical Magazine," for 1831, p. 259.

Canada, and was succeeded in August of the following year by the Rev. W. P. Appleford, a student from Homerton College. On Thursday, October 1st, 1840, Mr. Appleford was ordained pastor, on which occasion Dr. J. Pye Smith, his tutor, delivered the charge to the minister; Dr. Raffles preached to the people; and his pastor, the Rev. Caleb Morris, of Fetter Lane, London, offered the ordination prayer. The other ministers taking part were the Revs. J. Kelly, Dr. Halley, C. M. Birrell, W. Bevan, and T. Rogers. He continued here until his death, which was caused by "a slight burn in his thumb, which speedily took the form of carbuncular erysipelas."¹ He died on Friday evening, March 31st, 1854, aged thirty-nine years. The Rev. William Marcus, educated at Cotton End, and previously minister at Loughborough and Doncaster, settled at Toxteth Park in 1854. In 1860 he resigned, and went to South Australia, where he became the minister of Clayton Chapel, Kensington. His successor was the Rev. A. Bourne, B.A., educated at New College, and formerly settled at Lowestoft, in Suffolk. He began his duties at Toxteth Park Chapel in 1860, and left in 1862. He is now resident in London without charge, having for many years held the post of Secretary to the "British and Foreign School Society." The Rev. Andrew Brown, M.A., a student from Lancashire College, followed Mr. Bourne in 1862. He went to Sydney in 1865, and subsequently entered the Established Church. The Rev. James Wishart, M.A., educated at St. Andrews, and previously minister at Thurso and then Swanland, succeeded Mr. Brown in 1865. He remained until 1880, when he resigned. Mr. Wishart served the new cause at Prenton, Birkenhead, for a few years after his removal from Toxteth Park. He still lives at Prenton, and is without charge, having retired from active duty. The present minister is the Rev. Mark Simon, from Wollerton, Salop. He succeeded Mr. Wishart in 1881. It was during Mr. Wishart's ministry in 1872 that the present handsome building superseded the chapel of 1831. It stands at the corner of Aigburth Road and Ullet Road, "immediately contiguous to the venerable mother church of the Puritan fathers." It has sitting accommodation for 950 persons. During

¹ "Congregational Year Book" for 1855, p. 203.

the ministry of Mr. Simon the old chapel in South Hill Road has been converted into an excellent suite of schoolrooms (the architect being the pastor), and the debt has been removed, the sum of £3,500 being raised for that purpose, together with the renovation of the buildings.

Hartington Road Congregational Church, near Sefton Park, is the outcome of a scheme inaugurated by the Liverpool Chapel Building Society for the extension of Congregationalism. In 1881 a triangular piece of land in Hartington Road was bought for £550, and upon a portion of it a School Chapel was eventually erected. The building was opened for public worship in February, 1885, by the Rev. S. Pearson, M.A., of Great George Street Church. The cost for land, boundary wall, and chapel was about £4,500, all of which was raised more than four years ago, and the sitting accommodation is for 300 persons. A committee appointed by the Liverpool Chapel Building Society, with the Rev. S. J. Baker, B.A., as chairman, managed affairs until 1885, when the Rev. W. L. Roberts, from Seaforth, became the minister. In February of the following year a church was formed, some fifty persons, principally from Great George Street Church, entering into fellowship. Mr. Roberts is still the minister here. The membership of the church is now about 100; number of Sunday Scholars, 200; and efforts are being made to complete the purpose of the Chapel Building Society by erecting a new church with accommodation for 700 persons, to cost about £4,500. For two or three years the church received an annual grant from the funds of the County Union, but it is now self-supporting, and there is the prospect of a large and vigorous interest here in the course of a few years.

XI.—WESTMINSTER ROAD AND CHADWICK MOUNT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

CONGREGATIONALISM in the Kirkdale district, which is now represented by the vigorous church in Westminster Road, made its appearance more than sixty years ago. At that time Kirkdale was a village some two miles beyond the arms of the great city which have since embraced it, and is described as containing “an increas-

ing population, already between 2 and 3,000 souls," but with no place of worship. On Wednesday, October 28th, 1829, however, "a neat and commodious chapel, calculated to accommodate from 3 to 400 persons, and capable of admitting a gallery," was opened for Congregational worship, the preachers on the occasion being the Revs. John Kelly and Dr. Raffles. In 1830 the congregation is given as averaging from "60 to 80 in the morning, and from 100 to 200 in the evening;" in the Sunday School were upwards of "70 scholars;" and the Rev. Joshua Tunstall was the minister. Joshua Tunstall was the son of John Tunstall, of Ashton-in-Makerfield, being one of fourteen children. He was educated at Airedale College, and on the completion of his training, settled at Kirkdale in 1830. On April 25th, 1832, a church was formed, consisting of eight persons,¹ and on the 25th of November following Mr. Tunstall was ordained. The cause prospered so rapidly that after some five years of assistance from the County Union Funds, Mr. Tunstall was able to say that his people had "resolved to make an effort to become independent." In thanking the Union for the help which had been given, he says that without it, "it is more than probable there would not have been at this time an interest of the Independent denomination at Kirkdale."²

For nearly thirty years, Mr. Tunstall retained the pastorate of the church, discharging also some part of that period the duties of Chaplain to St. Mary's Cemetery, Kirkdale. In the early part of his ministry he also preached regularly at Bootle, in "a room capable of accommodating 30 persons," which was always well filled; and for a time at Bevington Hill, "in the afternoon of the Sabbath and on Monday evening."³ Mr. Tunstall resigned in 1858, and shortly

¹ The names of the eight members were:—Joshua Tunstall (minister), John Bisbrown Tetherington, William Duckworth (who built the chapel), James Golding, Elizabeth Frazier, Mary Duckworth, Mary Huxley, and Catherine Pollard. (Raffles MSS.)

² County Union Report, for the year ending April, 1835.

³ County Union Report, for the year ending April, 1836. During the thirties an effort was made to establish a Congregational interest at Bevington Hill. The Rev. Mr. Layhe was minister for about two years, and he preached in addition at Nash Grove on Wednesday evenings. In 1835 the congregation of Bevington Hill is put down at 150, with 180 children in the school, and fifteen teachers, who were "indefatigable in the circulation of tracts upon the loan system."

afterwards withdrew from the ministry. He, however, retained the chaplaincy of the Cemetery until his death, which took place on April 26th, 1869. His successor in the pastorate was the Rev. W. C. Preston, a student from Lancashire College, who began his labours as such in 1858. He resigned in 1862, and removed to Hope Chapel, Wigan.¹ He is now resident without charge at Chiswick. The Rev. John Jones, from Holywell, followed Mr. Preston in 1862, and in 1866 became the minister of the new chapel at Chadwick Mount, Liverpool. The Rev. F. Wallace succeeded. He was educated at Bangor, U.S.A., and had previously laboured in America for several years. In 1872 Mr. Wallace and his congregation removed to the present handsome structure in Westminster Road. The opening services took place on April 22nd, 1872, the preachers being the Revs. J. Baldwin Brown, B.A., and Samuel Pearson, M.A. The accommodation provided is for 1,000 persons, and the cost was £7,000, towards which the Chapel Building Society promised £1,000. At the time of its erection the church stood in a field, not a house being visible when the foundation was laid; but now there are streets in every direction and dense populations. Mr. Wallace continued to hold the pastorate until 1877, when failing health compelled his resignation and withdrawal from active duty. He was appointed Chaplain to St. Mary's Cemetery in succession to Mr. Tunstall, a position which he still holds. The present minister is the Rev. Stanley Rogers. He is the son of the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., of London, was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and settled in his present charge in 1877. Mr. Rogers's deep interest in Foreign Missions led to his being invited a short time ago to the responsible position of Home Secretary to the London Missionary Society, but the claims of his church, which has grown considerably under his efficient ministry, prevented his acceptance of the invitation. It will illustrate the rapid changes of ministry to which our churches are now subject when it is stated that though Mr. Rogers has been in Liverpool only sixteen years, he is by much the senior Congregational minister in Liverpool proper.

¹ Vide vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

There is attached to the church one of the most flourishing missions in the city, which during the ten years of its erection has accomplished untold good.

To supply the wants of a "rapidly increasing district" a new chapel was erected at Chadwick Mount, in Everton Valley, Kirkdale, in 1866. The following description of the building is interesting:—

This building has been designed with special reference to the site it occupies. The terrace serves as a platform for the adjoining buildings, which are of a classical character, and the aim of the architect has been to produce a design that will harmonise with them. The style adopted is the Roman Ionic of the time of Palladio, freely treated. The church is approached by a bold flight of steps, and is entered through a vestibule or recessed portico, which gives access to an aisle at each side, dividing the interior of the building into three parts, the main features of the interior being loftiness and good ventilation, with freedom from draughts. The dimensions of the church are 66 feet long by 33 wide, or an exact double square.¹

Behind the chapel and vestries was a large school room, and the cost of the whole was £1,500. The sitting accommodation was for about 300 persons, and it is stated that the chapel was intended to be "superseded hereafter by a larger structure (the site being sufficiently extensive to admit of both buildings, there being no less than 2,100 yards of land, which cost £1,000), the smaller being then appropriated as a lecture hall and class room."² This building was erected for the Rev. John Jones, of Claremont Grove Chapel, Kirkdale, who accordingly became the minister on its opening in 1866. He removed to Pentonville in April, 1875. It was during the ministry of Mr. Jones in 1870 that the chapel at Chadwick Mount received its present form. It was practically rebuilt, and the sitting capacity was brought up to 650, whilst the accommodation of the school beneath was increased and were improved. The cost of the undertaking was about £3,000.³ The Rev. Joseph Simpson succeeded in September, 1875. He was educated at Richmond, and previous to his settlement at Liverpool

¹ "Congregational Year Book," for 1866, p. 317.

² *Ibid.*

³ In the "Congregational Year Books" for 1866 and 1872 the reader will find pictures of the old and new chapels respectively.

held Congregational pastorates at Fulbourn and Liskeard. He resigned in January, 1879, and shortly afterwards entered the Established Church. His successor was the Rev. R. S. Holmes. He was educated at Cheshunt, and had previously laboured at Northampton, then in London for a few years, becoming the pastor of the Chadwick Mount Church in September, 1879. He removed to Wakefield in July, 1890, where he still labours. The Rev. Arthur May, educated at Nottingham Institute and Rotherham College, and who settled at Heaton Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne, in January, 1883, removed thence to his present charge at Chadwick Mount in November, 1891.

XII.—CONGREGATIONAL INTERESTS AT RUSSELL STREET, GLOUCESTER STREET, BURLINGTON STREET, AND BROWNLOW HILL.

Writing about Salem Chapel in Russell Street, in 1854, Dr. Thom says :—

Situated two houses from Bronte Street (continuation of Dansie Street), and nearly opposite to Warren Street, is one of the neatest places of worship in Liverpool. To say by what sect of religionists this chapel has not at some time or other been occupied would be somewhat puzzling, in consequence of the numerous metamorphoses which its worshippers have undergone. Unpleasant disclosures having terminated, in 1808, in the removal of Mr. John Ralph¹ from the pastorate of the Independent Church, or Society, assembling in Bethesda Chapel, Hotham Street (then Duncan Street East), his friends and supporters, satisfied of his penitence, and considering him to have been harshly treated, built and opened Salem Chapel, Russell Street, the edifice in question. He then took the pastoral charge, and continued to officiate to his followers for a brief period of time. Circumstances, to which a particular reference is unnecessary, led to a termination of his Liverpool career. His pulpit talents, I have been informed, were of a superior order. His dispositions, it is said, were amiable and his sentiments strictly Calvinistic.²

After the removal of Mr. Ralph to Wigan, about 1812, Salem Chapel underwent considerable alterations, its very name being changed, being known for several years afterwards as St. Clement's

¹ Vide ante p. 164.

² "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 89.

Church, under the care of the Rev. Thomas Pearson. Subsequently, the congregation was served by preachers belonging to Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, and in 1821 the Rev. James Widdows, a Congregationalist, was appointed minister. Respecting him, Dr. Thom says:—

Although an Independent in his religious sentiments, finding the prejudices of the congregation, who had for the most part originally been Churchmen, in favour of a liturgy, he consented, for some time, to read the English service in the altered form, and with the omissions to which his flock had been hitherto accustomed. This practice, however, on his and their formally joining the Independents, was abandoned. Until about 1829, he continued to officiate in Russell Street, in a manner very creditable to himself, and acceptable to his people.¹

From Russell Street, Mr. Widdows removed to Gloucester Street, and with him the Congregationalists terminated their connection with Salem Chapel. Two incidents are associated with this building, which deserve mention because of the salutary lessons they offer. Sir J. A. Picton shall relate them both:—

Soon after Mr. Pearson's retirement, a personage arrived in the town described on his visiting cards as the "Rev. Thomas Stretton, A.M.," with the benevolent intention of gratifying the church-going public with a superior style of sacred service. He entered into a contract for the purchase of St. Clement's, and decorated it with much elegance, inserting a fine painted window. He also purchased an organ, lined the pews with cloth, and built out new vestries. When all was completed, the church was re-opened with considerable pomp. Choral antiphonal service was performed by choristers in full costume—at that time quite a new thing in this part of the country—vergers in purple gowns and white wands ushered visitors into the pews. The imposing demeanour of the reverend gentleman had brought tradesmen in crowds to solicit his orders and patronage, and he distributed his favours with an impartial hand. The church was crowded, and all went merry as a marriage bell. I am not aware that any cloud of suspicion ever darkened the sunshine of the sphere in which he moved. Aladdin's lamp scarcely procured for its fortunate possessor a more brilliant *entourage* in a shorter space of time. But, alas! and alack a day! One fine morning, it was found that the "Rev. Thomas Stretton, A.M.," and his household, had—to use an American vulgarism—skedaddled. The bubble had burst, and nothing was left but a *caput mortuum* of debt and disgrace. It was rumoured that the *dénouement* had been hastened by an accidental rencontre in the street with a lady who knew the antecedents of the reverend gentleman

¹ "Liverpool Churches and Chapels," p. 92.

However this may have been, the delusion could not have been much longer maintained. When the catastrophe became known, dismay filled the hearts of the too confiding victims, the tradesmen who had supplied all this luxury, and there was a general scramble to get back, *vi et armis*, such of the articles as were still to be found. For many years, St. Clement's and the Rev. Mr. Stretton were a very sore subject to joke upon in some of the victimised circles. The *soidisant* person was discovered to have been a hair-dresser or a dancing-master—perhaps both—in the Isle of Man. The man must have been possessed of considerable ability and tact to have passed himself off in his parasitical garb with such success.

So much for the first incident, and the second runs thus:—

In 1831, he [the Rev. H. T. Turner, of All Saints] entered into a connection with the Rev. George Montgomery West, who had for some time previously occupied a position of considerable notoriety in the public eye. Originally a preacher amongst the Wesleyan Methodists in Ireland, he had attracted attention by his boldness and eloquence; but, from some cause of difference, he had separated from their communion and visited the United States, furnished with letters recommendatory from Lord Kenyon, and others. Here he became acquainted with Bishop Chase, of Ohio, who conferred upon him priest's orders, and sent him to England to obtain contributions towards the erection of Kenyon Episcopal College, Knox County, State of Ohio. Returning to England on this commission, he obtained admission to the pulpits of the National Church, where he preached with great acceptance, was recognised and encouraged by Bishop Blomfield, Bishop Sumner, and other dignitaries, and raised large sums of money for the purpose for which he was sent over. After a sojourn in England of about a year he returned to America, with the hearty congratulations and good wishes of a large circle of admirers. A rupture soon took place between the Bishop and his emissary, whom he did not scruple to charge with a breach of trust. Mr. West defended himself in a pamphlet published in New York, and soon after returned to England, on the invitation of Mr. Turner to join him in the co-pastorate of All Saints' Church. Here he became for a time exceedingly popular with all classes; but his restless, ambitious spirit could not be satisfied with the ordinary sphere of usefulness now opened out to him. He had returned to England with higher aims than those of a mere incumbent, or priest. He gave out that whilst in America he had received episcopal ordination, and it was his mission to establish, or, rather, to revive, the Primitive Episcopal Church. At a meeting held in All Saints' Church, on February 18, 1831, the validity of Mr. West's orders was recognised. He was requested to act in his episcopal capacity, and the congregation resolved that they would, "to the utmost of their power, support the dignity of his office." So matters remained for another twelve months, down to March, 1832. The church was crowded with attentive hearers. The new bishop delivered lectures on behalf of the Primitive Episcopal Church; he made alterations in the Book of Common

Prayer, which he published for the use of his church; he consecrated another bishop, the Rev. T. R. Matthews, D.D., and conferred orders on several priests and deacons. The chapel in Russell Street, bearing so sinister a reputation as St. Clement's Church, was taken by the body and solemnly consecrated by Bishop West, who was also applied to to perform the same ceremony for the Hebrew congregation in Sir Thomas's Buildings. This brilliant but unsubstantial career was doomed to a collapse as sudden as its inflation. An estrangement had crept in between the bishop and his less prominent coadjutor, Mr. Turner, which soon led to an open rupture. On March 27, 1832, Mr. Turner, as lessee of All Saints, gave legal notice to the bishop that he would be no longer permitted to occupy the pulpit. On the evening of the next day, the church being crowded to excess in expectation of hearing a lecture from Mr. West, Mr. Turner presented himself to conduct the service, and prevented his late colleague from ascending the pulpit stairs. A scene of uproar then took place, which, according to the newspapers of the day, "baffled all description." The shouting and hooting of men, the screaming of the women, and the scramble to carry away the books and cushions from the pews, created such a tumult that the noise resounded to a distance from the church, and attracted the attention of passengers in the neighbouring streets. Mr. West's friends at first rallied round him, and got up a subscription list for the erection of a cathedral in Soho Street. At the dinner, by which the proceedings [laying the foundation stone] were wound up, a split in the camp again took place. Some of the bishop's subordinates rebelled against his assumption of authority, and the whole affair broke up in disorder. Mr. West soon after quitted the town for Birmingham, where, it is said, he met with a gratifying reception. In 1834 he returned to the United States, and associated himself with the Presbyterians, amongst whom he officiated as a minister for some years. In 1844 he returned again to Liverpool, and preached a few Sundays in a room in Newington. From Liverpool he visited Bristol, where, as usual, his talent and eloquence gained him for a time considerable popularity. He was next appointed the minister of St. Paul's Episcopal Chapel, Carruther's Close, Edinburgh, in which he officiated for several months, in spite of the inhibition of Bishop Terrott, who refused to confirm his appointment. On quitting Edinburgh he returned to America, and was not again heard of—at least officially—on this side the Atlantic. Mr. West's career presents a striking instance of commanding talent and great abilities, utterly thrown away for want of prudence and consistency of conduct.¹

The story of Gloucester Street Chapel is soon told, and Sir J. A. Picton is again the narrator :—

Until within the last year or two passengers starting from the Lime Street station might have had their attention arrested by a church tower and spire

¹ "Memorials of Liverpool," vol. ii. pp. 248-250, 368-371.

rising from the edge of a sheer precipice far above their heads, like the far-famed temple of Tivoli on the brink of its roaring torrent. This was the Church of St. Simon, the site of which has a brief, but somewhat fluctuating history. In 1807 a community of the Scottish Presbyterian body, called the Burgher Synod (subsequently merged into the United Secession Church) erected a plain substantial brick chapel, in the then suburban district of Gloucester Street, corner of Silver Street, under the pastorate of the Rev. John Stewart, D.D., a man in his day and generation highly respected. After remaining here about twenty years, in 1827 the congregation removed to a larger edifice, which they had erected in Mount Pleasant. They were succeeded in Gloucester Street by the Independents, who maintained possession until 1840, when the premises were sold to the Established Church, by whom a new church was built from the designs of Messrs. Hay. The deep cuttings of the railway still continuing to extend, the church at length found itself standing on a rocky promontory, almost isolated from the mainland behind. The further extension of the station in 1866 necessitated the removal of the church, which was re-constructed on the same design at the upper end of Gloucester Street, corner of St. Vincent Street.¹

During the occupancy of the building by Congregationalists two ministers successively held the pastorate. The Rev. James Widows, as intimated previously, left Russell Street Chapel about 1829, and laboured at Gloucester Street until his removal to Rainford, in 1838. As minister of this, one of the oldest Congregational churches in the county, which, during a period of nearly 200 years has only had five pastors, he remained until death took him hence on May 1st, 1874.² The second minister of Gloucester Street Chapel was the Rev. Percy Strutt. He was born in the neighbourhood of London, November 5th, 1813, educated at Highbury College, and was ordained at Carlisle in 1836. He removed thence to Liverpool, where Mr., afterwards "Dr. Raleigh was among the young men who gathered around his thoughtful ministry." He was here only some two or three years, removing to Spalding, in Lincolnshire, about 1840. Subsequently he held a brief pastorate at Kilburn, and died quite recently. Mr. Strutt was the last Congregational minister here, the chapel being shortly after sold and re-opened in connection with the Establishment.

In 1859 the Crescent congregation purchased Burlington Street Chapel, which had originally been used by the Welsh Calvinistic

¹ "Memorials of Liverpool," vol. ii., p. 218.

² Vide vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

Methodists. Services were commenced in September of that year, and the Rev. James Mahood, who for many years had been labouring in the neighbourhood as a missionary, was engaged to supply the pulpit, and take the oversight of the congregation. In December, 1861, a church was formed, consisting of sixty-one members, many of whom were the fruits of the labours of Mr. Mahood. The "*Lancashire Congregational Calendar*" for 1869-70 states that the most "glowing anticipations cherished as to this interest" had been realised, that with "a few years' help" it had become strong, and that it had ceased to be a recipient from the Union Funds. For nearly thirty years Mr. Mahood presided over "one of the hardest places for Christian work that can be found," retiring from active service in November, 1888. He is now resident without charge at Seacombe. His successor was the Rev. J. V. Morgan. He was educated at Brecon, exercised a brief ministry at Llanwyddyn, and held the pastorate of Burlington Street from 1889 to 1892. He removed to Pontypridd, the charge of which he has recently resigned. During his ministry at Burlington Street an unfortunate split took place, and the seceding members, who constituted the main portion of the church, started a new effort in Albert Hall, where services are still regularly maintained. No successor to Mr. Morgan at Burlington Street has been appointed. For the last five years the church has been in receipt of generous assistance from the funds of the County Union. The sitting accommodation is for about 500. Burlington Street Chapel has been formed into a Mission Hall, worked by one of the town missionaries under the supervision of Huyton Congregational Church. This arrangement is only temporary and experimental.

In the early part of 1868 Salem Chapel, Brownlow Hill, which had formerly been used by the Welsh Congregationalists under Dr. Rees, was purchased, and work was commenced by the Crescent Church. The success which followed was so marked that the Rev. Colin Brewster, formerly a United Methodist Free Church minister, was "invited to make trial" of the place for a time, and he began his labours in October, 1869. A branch church was formed in connection with Crescent Church and the County Union supported the work by a liberal grant. In June, 1871, a separate church was

formed, twenty-eight members from the Crescent and four from other churches entering into fellowship. The Rev. John Kelly presided on the occasion, and Mr. Brewster was immediately called to the permanent pastorate. At the time it is recorded that a debt of £2,000, incurred by its purchase, rested upon the chapel, and that the Crescent Church had generously promised to give £1,000. In 1880 Mr. Brewster brought to a conclusion a ministry of great usefulness and removed to Heaton Moor, where he laboured until his death, April 4th, 1890.¹ The Rev. C. S. Toone held the pastorate from 1881 to 1889. He resigned in the latter year, and is now resident without charge at Carrington, near Nottingham.

The following passage from the "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" for 1891 gives information as to the subsequent history of the church:—

The year 1890 will be remembered here as a period of great difficulty and anxiety alike both to those in and under authority. By the advice of the Executive of the County Union, the management of the church was delegated to a Committee consisting of members of the Liverpool Ministers and Deacons' Association and members of the church. The pulpit at this time being vacant, the Committee concluded to seek an Evangelist to take charge. This proved to be a task of much difficulty, and it was not until the month of June that Mr. H. A. Roberts, of Bristol Institute, was appointed. At the same time it was determined to alter and renovate the church and change its name at a cost of about £200, the members to raise £50, the Committee £150. This work, which should have been done in March or April, was, through pecuniary difficulties, delayed until September, and it was not until the end of October that the doors of the Congregational Hall were thrown open.

Mr. Roberts resigned in 1892, and Brownlow Hill Chapel was closed. The church, which, with the exception of a few years, has enjoyed generous assistance from the Union, is no longer in existence as a Congregational Church, the members having been transferred to other churches.

¹ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

XIII.—NORWOOD AND EDGE HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

"IN 1862," says Sir J. A. Picton, "the question was discussed in the Crescent Church whether modern Independency did not isolate the congregations to an extent unknown in Apostolic times, and whether a greater amount of union was practicable. Mr. Kelly was requested to state his views on the subject, which he did in an address on "Church Principles," afterwards printed. The principle he laid down was that in Apostolical times the believers in each city constituted a single church, and met in one body for church purposes, and he urged that the adoption of this system would impart greater unity of feeling and purpose, and so give the Church augmented strength and efficiency. To carry out these views the Crescent Church determined to erect a new chapel, the members in which should still continue united with the parent church as one body. The result was the erection of Norwood Chapel, West Derby Road."¹ Mr. Thomas Whitehead, the able and courteous Secretary of the Norwood Congregational Church, says :—

Sir James A. Picton was quite in error in stating Norwood Chapel was erected by the "Crescent Church" to carry out the views put forth in Mr. Kelly's paper on "Church Principles." Several prominent members of the Crescent Church had formed themselves into a committee, and started a fund for the purchase of the site and the erection of the chapel to provide accommodation for the rapidly increasing population of that part of Everton, and in accordance with the 1662 Memorial movement. It was not until 1863, when the chapel was built, that Mr. Kelly's paper was written and the church discussed the advisability of carrying on the two chapels on the principles of church government it advocated. There was a not unimportant minority opposed to it; but the experiment was tried. It did not work well, and Mr. Shillito's resignation of the joint pastorate resulted in its abandonment, and the recognition of the sole right of each church to its own independent management and control.

The foundation stone was laid on February 12th, 1862, by the Rev. John Kelly, minister of Crescent Chapel. The

¹ "Notes on the Origin and History of the Congregational Churches in Liverpool," p. 17.

opening service took place on Thursday, April 23rd, 1863, when Dr. Vaughan was the preacher, Dr. Raffles, then on the brink of the grave, taking the introductory service. On Sunday, May 3rd, Dr. Raffles preached in continuation of the opening services what proved to be his last sermon. His youngest son had urged him not to make the attempt as he was "more fit to be in his bed than to undertake" the service. His biographer says:—

His last words, as he concluded his last sermon, were, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It was a fitting close—the epitome of all his preaching; the great theme of his ministry through life. He frequently referred afterwards to this service, and expressed great thankfulness that he had resisted all temptations to preach one of his more elaborate sermons, and that he had selected one which had embodied so fully what had been the essence of his ministry—Christ and His salvation. He added that when he preached he had no presentiment that it would be his last sermon.¹

The cost of the building, including vestries and lecture room and land was about £7,366, towards which the Bicentenary Committee made a grant of £1,000, and the sitting accommodation is for about 750 persons.

The Rev. Joseph Shillito, educated at Lancashire College, and who had previously laboured for nine years at Dewsbury, entered upon his duties as joint pastor, with the Rev. John Kelly, of Crescent and Norwood Chapels, in November, 1864. After an honourable ministry of six years he removed to Lozells Chapel, Birmingham, and is now pastor of Sutton Coldfield, near that city. With his removal, in 1870, the Norwood Church ceased its connection with the Crescent Church, and became quite independent.² The Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson was the next minister. He is the grandson of the late Rev. Ralph Wardlaw D.D., was educated at Cheshunt College, and in 1870 removed to Liverpool

¹ "Memoirs of the Rev. T. Raffles, D.D., LL.D.," p. 502.

² After several church meetings, at which the question had been anxiously discussed on February 14, 1870, the Church resolved to "terminate the previously existing constitution, and to form two distinct Churches." A resolution was also passed expressing "admiration of the magnanimity with which Mr. Kelly had served the Church during the period of ten years now terminated, and its grateful appreciation of his invaluable ministry."

from Glasgow, where he had laboured about five years. In August, 1880, Mr. Thompson was invited to the responsible position of Foreign Secretary to the London Missionary Society. The invitation was accepted, and he is there still faithfully serving the wider interests of the Divine Kingdom. The present minister is the Rev. E. R. Barrett, B.A. He is the son of the late Rev. W. G. Barrett; brother of the Rev. G. S. Barrett, B.A., of Norwich (President for 1894 of the Congregational Union of England and Wales), and of Professor W. F. Barrett, of Dublin University; and was educated at Lancashire College. On the completion of his college course, in 1873, Mr. Barrett went as a Missionary to Shanghai, where he remained about five years. On his return to England he settled at Leicester, in 1879, whence he removed to Liverpool, in 1882. Under his ministry the church has grown in numbers and usefulness. A branch of the P. S. A. movement is amongst the forms of work to which the church has given itself with most gratifying success, its present membership standing at 500. A recent tempting offer from the Antipodes has been resisted by him to the joy, not alone of his own church, but of the Congregationalists of Liverpool, where his presence is much needed. He is the author of "The Truth about Intoxicating Drinks," a Prize Essay. Connected with the church is an important Mission Station in Boaler Street, commenced during Mr. Thompson's ministry. The room was erected in 1880 at a cost, including land, of £1,000, and was opened in October of that year. It has accommodation for 250 persons.

Edge Hill Congregational Church originated in a Sunday School about 1857, conducted in the immediate neighbourhood by members of the Great George Street Church. Preaching services were also held, and a chapel in Chatham Place, with accommodation for about 400 persons, was purchased in 1868. Concerning this building Sir J. A. Picton gives the following information:—

The fine row of houses called Chatham Place was built about 1820. The chapel immediately opposite, with long lancet windows and porch, was built in 1861 by the New Connexion Methodists. In 1868 it was transferred to the Independents or Congregationalists.¹

¹ "Memorials of Liverpool," vol. ii., p. 522.

The Rev. J. Adam Davies, educated at New College, and who had previously laboured at Brent (Devon) and Kensington, became the first minister of the new cause at Edge Hill in 1869. On April 18th, 1871, the Rev. Samuel Pearson, M.A., presiding a church was formed, about forty members being dismissed from Great George Street Church for the purpose. Considerable prosperity attended the effort, and almost immediately a new chapel was felt to be necessary, the old one being private property rented at £60 a year, the situation not good, and the school accommodation inadequate. Aided by the trustees of the old Newington Chapel, a site was secured at a cost of £1,500, in 1873. Mr. Davies did not, however, remain to see the project completed, but removed to South Croydon in 1876, where he still ministers. His successor was the Rev. J. C. Cottingham, educated at Airedale, and previously at Otley. He held the pastorate from 1877 to 1880, when he resigned. He is now minister of the Tyndale Congregational Church, Gloucester. It was during his pastorate that the long projected new chapel in Marmaduke Street was erected. The cost of the structure, which has accommodation for 850 persons, was about £7,500, towards which the Chapel Building Society promised £500. The opening services took place in September, 1877. The Rev. S. J. Baker, B.A., a student from Hackney College, entered upon his labours here in April, 1881. The "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" for 1884, states that the building held a public meeting on January 15th of that year, to celebrate the extinction of the heavy debt which had been upon the building since its erection in 1878. The debt at the opening services is given at £4,000. Prompted, however, by the "generous challenge grants from the [Liverpool] Centenary Funds of £1,000, and since followed by the further kindly aid of the Liverpool Chapel Building Society, also the Lancashire and Cheshire Building Society, as also the Jubilee Fund," the church put forth a vigorous effort to get rid of its burden, with the result previously named. In the same report the church thanks the Union for "constant and unabated generosity and kindness," and intimates its intention to apply for no further grant. In 1890 Mr. Baker resigned and went to New Zealand, where he still labours as pastor of Trinity Congregational Church, Christchurch. The Rev.

E. G. King, educated at the Guinness Institute, and previously at Sunderland, succeeded Mr. Baker in 1891, and is still the minister. In May of this year (1893) a large new schoolroom, which, including the land, cost £2,000, was opened almost free from debt, and the work all round makes steady progress. During the last two years the church has received an exceptionally generous grant; but "it is expected," says the last issue of the "Calendar," that "the years will not be many before it once more attains independence."

CHAPTER III.

OUTSIDE THE CITY.

I.—GATEACRE OLD CHAPEL.

GATEACRE, a village a few miles south-east of Liverpool, in the ancient parish of Childwall and townships of Much and Little Woolton, has been the home of Nonconformity for about two centuries. There is no information either as to the time or manner of its origin, but probably the chapel was erected to save the Nonconformists of the district the trouble of journeying all the way to Toxteth Park and Liverpool. The building was licensed for public worship in 1700, and in the certificate it is described as newly erected. The following is a copy :—

Lanc. These are to certify that at a general quarter Sessions of the peace, held by Adjournment at Wigan, the fourteenth day of October, Anno Domini 1700, a certain building, newly erected in Much Woolton in the aforesaid County of Lancaster, was recorded for a meeting place for an Assembly of Protestants dissenting from the Church of England, for the Exercise of their religious worship, according to the Act entitled an Act for exempting their Majesties' Protestant subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the penalties of certain laws, according to the above said purport of the said Act. Given under my hand the day and month above written.—Thomas Kenyon, Clericus pacis.

“In a trust deed of 1795,” says Mr. James L. Thornely, “two former deeds are recited, bearing date respectively the 6th and 7th of March, 1701; in one of them it is said ‘that upon the said parcels of ground, or some part thereof, there was erected and built one Edifice, Chapel, or Oratory, at the sole costs and charges of the said William Claughton, John Gill, and several other Protestants dissenting from the Church of England, that the same should be a place for Religious worship as therein-after mentioned,’ and it continues to say that the Trustees are ‘nevertheless upon Trust to convert the said new erected edifice, Chapel, or Oratory, and premises, for a Meeting place and assembly of a

particular Church or Congregation of Protestants dissenting from the Church of England, and accordingly to permit the same to be used and employed for the free exercise of their Divine worship therein, and for such congregations enjoying all the ordinances of the Gospel in such manner, and to and for such other uses, intents, and purposes as in the same last mentioned Indenture, are in that behalf expressed and declared.' The land belonging to Gateacre Chapel was originally in the possession, as it would seem, of a certain John Whitfield, of Little Woolton. Among the Chapel papers there is a deed dated December 26, 1682, in which Henry Whitfield grants to John Whitfield, his son, in 'consideration of the natural love and affeccion, which he hath and beareth unto the said John Whitfield, his said sonne—All that Close, Closure, and Parcell of Land Scituate in Little Woolton aforesaid, commonly Known by the name of Little Meadow.' This land was granted, as the same document tells us, out of some which was let to the above mentioned Henry Whitfield by 'Gilbert Ireland of Bewsey in y^e County of Lancaster, Esquire, and Margaret Ireland his wife, the first day of December, An. Dom. 1658.' The chapel was formerly known as Gateacre or Little Lee Chapel, but the reason of the latter name I have been unable to find out, unless it bears some reference to the 'Little Meadow' mentioned above."¹ It would seem, then, that it was in the closing years of the seventeenth century, when liberty was granted to the Nonconformists after a long period of bitter persecution, that Gateacre Chapel was built. The first minister was probably a Rev. Mr. Lythgoe, who is supposed to have officiated here² in 1697. In the minutes of a meeting of the United Brethren held at Bolton, April 13th, 1697, appears the following, which, I imagine, refers to him :—

An account of the proceedings of the Warrington district against Mr. Charles Lithgow, with several papers thereto pertaining, was read, and the said proceedings were approved of by this assembly.

¹ MS. History of Gateacre Chapel, by James L. Thornely, Esq., of Liverpool. To this history I am greatly indebted for the account here given.

² Probably in a temporary meeting house.

It would seem that these proceedings led to Mr. Lythgoe's suspension from the office of minister here, for at a meeting of the same body held at Warrington, August 10th, of the same year, a petition was presented from the vacant church :—

A petition from the Lee being read, to procure them supplies from the fund at London, it was unanimously agreed that, considering the present circumstances of it, "there can be no encouragement given them for such supply at present."¹

The Rev. James Whittle appears to have been the next minister. He was educated at the Rathmell Academy by the Rev. Richard Frankland, becoming a student there March 23rd, 1693, and probably settling at Gateacre on the completion of his college course. His ordination at Warrington, along with several others, on June 16th, 1702, is noted by Matthew Henry in his diary, and he is described as "of Lee in Lancashire." He died shortly after, for in the aisle of Gateacre Chapel is a stone thus inscribed :—

"James Whittle, Minister, 1702."

The next known² minister was the Rev. Joseph Lawton. He seems to have belonged to the neighbourhood of Oldham, for he had an estate at Counthill, not far from that town. In the early history of Greenacres Chapel, Oldham, it is said that a Mr. Lawton ministered there for a short time about 1700 and removed to Liverpool.³ Doubtless this was the Rev. James Lawton associated with Key Street Chapel,⁴ and possibly a relative of the Rev. Joseph Lawton. The latter is first mentioned as minister of Gateacre Chapel in a deed of settlement dated July 30th, 1715, which is thus epitomised :—

Matthias Garnet, of Tarbock, in the county of Lancaster, yeoman; Margaret Wainwright of Edge Lane, within Darby, in the said county, widow, and Alice Lawton, of Leverpoole, in the said county, widow,⁵

¹ "Manchester Classis" (Chetham Society publications, New Series, vol. xxiv.), pp. 358, 359.

² The reader will note a considerable gap between Mr. Whittle and Mr. Lawton, which I regret I have been unable to fill up.

³ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

⁴ Vide ante p. 119, note 1.

⁵ Probably the widow of the Rev. James Lawton (vide ante p. 119, note 1).

grant money to be "yearly converted and employed to and for the use and benefit of such minister and ministers of the Gospell of our Lord Jesus Christ of the Presbyterian persuasion as should from time to time officiate at the Chapell, Oratory, or Meeting place in Gataker, within the parish of Childwall." Matthias Garnet bestowed £20, and the other two £10 each, and appointed as trustees "John Percivall, of Allerton, in the said County, gentleman; George Davies, of Much Woolton, in the said county, yeoman; Josiah Sedden, of Wavertree, in the said county, yeoman; Samuel Mercer, of Allerton, aforesaid, yeoman; James Ackers, of Whigton, in the said county, yeoman; William Holland, of Halewood, in the said county, yeoman; John Bispham, of Little Woolton, in the said county, yeoman; William Cloughton, of Wavertree, aforesaid, Blacksmith; and Thomas Burgess, of Little Woolton, aforesaid, felt maker." Among the witnesses to this document is the Rev. Joseph Lawton.

For more than thirty years after this, Mr. Lawton continued to minister to a deeply attached congregation.¹ An address was presented to him in 1730, which is interesting as showing the relations between a Nonconformist minister and his congregation a century and a half ago. The following is a copy:—

Gateacre, July, 1730.

To the Rev. Joseph Lawton. These. We whose names are subscribed or endors'd, the adult part of Christ's Church, stately meeting and now mett in Gateacre Chappell, being much concern'd for its lasting prosperity, do in behalf of our selves and all we can influence, Resolve and Declare that none of us will without necessity pressing us, and plain to any, remove our dwellings to such distance as would suspend our present special Relation to the said Church, or render our attendance there Impracticable. The same concern moves us ardently to desire you to be and continue our Pastor, to Catechize and administer all other ordinances to and amongst us, publicly and privately (according to their Respective natures), in such mannes as you shall judge agreeable to God's Word, and most conducive to our Soul's Good. Having hitherto acquiesc'd in, and approv'd all your past Administrations, we are the more zealous in the above request, and the more cordially promise to obey you, and submit ourselves so long as God Almighty shall permit, and incline you to remain amongst us.

We will separately and Jointly endeavour to have our conversation in all things becoming the Gospel of Christ; we will exhort and reprove one another in a spirit of meekness on all proper occasions, and take care that Sin be not encouraged by our neglect of these dutys, nor you or others griev'd or burthen'd by the hearing of private crime, small or great, which all or a few of us can be

¹ During his ministry there were 317 adherents, fourteen of whom were county voters.

Instrumental to reform. As to Irregularities, great or small, otherwise circumstanc's and cases wherein our private Labours don't succeed, we engage to accept and aid your exercise of Discipline.

And if any thus engag'd, or others of us not so explicitly engag'd, withdraw in resentm^t of Censure pass'd or design'd and expected, we will not be so injurious as to judge or imagine you a disturber or diminisher of our society ; it being obvious that only the obstinate person or persons so withdrawing are guilty. We are most sincere and chearfull in all and every of the above Resolutions, Declarations, Promises, and Engagem^{ts}.

In 1746 Mr. Lawton presented to the church "The Cup of Blessing," which is thus described by the Rev. George Eyre Evans :—

One Cup 5 inches tall, two handles, silver, date 1703-4, fine specimen of Queen Anne plate. On shield in front "*The Cup of Blessing*, given to the Church at Gate-acre, by Joseph Lawton, and bought in part by Isabel Heys, her Legacy to him., A.D. 1746.

A few months afterwards Mr. Lawton died, and in the graveyard of the chapel is a tombstone bearing the following inscription :—

Here Lieth the Body of the late
REVEREND JOSEPH LAWTON,
Who died the First day of February, 1747,
in the 63rd year of his age.
Amongst the virtuous there is unity in things necessary.
Let there be Liberty in things Indifferent,
and Charity in all things.

His will, made the year previous to his death, is a deeply interesting document, and though somewhat lengthy, is here copied :—

I, Joseph Lawton, of Liverpoole, in the County of Lancaster, Clerk, having surrendered the Copyhold part of my estate in Little Woolton, in the said County, and lifted a ffyne respecting my Lands (Leased out for a long term of years), situate within the Liberty of Oldham, in the said County, I give and devise unto my Executors herein after named all my Interest in the said Estate in Little Woolton, and in the said Lands within Oldham, and in my personal Estate, In confidence that they will Distribute and apply the same to such persons and purposes as are Intended, or herein after Expressed, having formerly charged the ffreehold part of my Estate in Little Woolton with the perpetual pension of twenty shillings yearly ; I now further subject the said Estate, including the whole, after the decease of my Sister-in-law,

to the perpetual yearly sum or rent charge of Eleven pounds, clear and exempt from all Offices, Labours, Lays, Taxations, and payments whatsoever, Imposed or to be Imposed, parliamentary or otherwise, payable as herein after directed, and subject to the powers herein after contained and provided for Recovery thereof. I give and devise the yearly sum of five pounds, the first part of the said Eleven pounds, unto Joseph Lawton Syddal,¹ son of Joseph Syddal, of Hyde, in Cheshire, and his assignes for ever, payable to the ffather, Mother, or uncle of the said Joseph Lawton Syddal, for his proper use during his childhood, but payable to himself on his order when he is Eighteen years old, by two Equall portions, at or upon every Eleventh day of November, and every twenty-fifth day of December.

Also, I give and devise thirty shillings to Grace, Daughter of the said Joseph Syddal, which part of the said Eleven pounds I order to be paid to the said Grace, During her natural life, in such time and manner as her Brother's money is directed to be paid. Also, I give and Devise thirty shillings, another part of the said Eleven pounds, to Alice, Daughter of the said Joseph Syddal, payable during her natural life, in the manner and times aforesaid. Also, I give and devise to Samuel and Shusannah Par, and the Survivors of them, twenty shillings, another part of the said Eleven pounds, payable to them from such of the said days as shall come next after my decease ; and so to continue payable by two Equall portions yearly till they or the Survivors of them shall become chargeable to a town, or shall dye. Also, I give and devise forty shillings to Ann, the present wife of my Nephew, John Syddal, and this last portion of the said Eleven pounds I direct to be paid by two Equall portions on the days above named during her natural life ; but the first payment not to be made till the first of the said days which shall come next after her present husband's decease. And in case the said yearly sums or any of them shall be unpaid by the space of twenty-one days next after the same shall respectively become due then the person or persons to whom the same shall remain so due and owing, shall and may enter upon the said premises (except such as may then be in the possession of my Sister-in-Law) and make distress for the same, and sell and dispose of such distress according to Law, as in case of Rent Service, for satisfaction of such Annuity or Annuities with the arrears and charges attending the same, and before the Annuity of Anne Syddal may commence. And if any of the other Annuities for life shall never become due or take effect, and when they shall by death determine and cease—It is my will, of all the advantages of their not become-

¹ In the Baptismal Register of Gateacre Chapel is the following: "Joseph Lawton, Son of Joseph Syddal [Siddall], was Born at Hide, Cheshire, 30th day of November, 1742, and was Baptised at Gate Acre, 30th day of January, 1742-3." This, I imagine, was the Rev. Joseph Lawton Siddall, who held pastorates at Chorley and Platt, and whose wife was Miss Bent, grand-daughter of the Rev. John Bent, of Chorley (vide vols. ii. and v. of "*Lancashire Nonconformity*").

ing due, and of their falling in and ceasing to be payable to the persons afore named, shall accrue and belong to the said Joseph Lawton Syddal till he, or his assigns, at length possess the whole rent charge of Eleven Pounds as their Inheritance for ever.

And I give unto my said Sister-in-Law all the Apartments, Stables, hay-loft, part of back kitchen, with part of the Garner—the Garden and Croft adjoining to be Occupied with the same liberty and freedom from any charge, as I used and Occupied them, during her natural life.

I give and devise to my Executors, their heirs and assigns for ever, the remainder of my said Messuage and Tenement in Little Woolton,¹ as also after the decease of my said Sister-in-Law, Alice Lawton, the several branches above bequeathed to her, they, or one of them, therefore constantly paying, or causing to be payd, the said Rent charge of eleven pounds, the ffreehold copyhold rents, with all other burthens, incumbrances, or payments whatsoever as aforesaid.

I give and devise the Rent charge of that part of my Lands within the Liberty of Oldham, situate on or near Counthill, to be equally divided amongst my Nieces, Sarah, Ann, Alice, and Catherine, Daughters of my late Brother, Phineas Lawton, during their natural lives. And upon the death of all, or any one of them, I give and devise equally to and amongst the children of each parent, that fourth part of the said rent which had been their respective Mother's portion ; together with the fourth part of the Reversion for ever, and order Sarah the oldest, who lives at Bradnip, near Leek, in Staffordshire, to have the Original Writings relating to the said Lands. And

¹ This was the Nook Estate. "The parsonage at the Nook," says Mr. Thornely, "was inhabited by Mr. Lawton's successors and by the subsequent ministers up to the year 1861, when the then incumbent, the Rev. N. Jones, died, and his family continued to reside there until it was pulled down in 1879." Concerning this estate he gives the following further interesting information : "Among the chapel papers there is a curious deed of Nov. 2nd, 1699, relating to the Nook, which contains several provisions, which, as relating to so small an estate, appear somewhat amusing. John Atherton, of Atherton, grants to John Whitfield, of Little Woolton, the Nook Estate ; the rent charge is to be paid annually on the feast days of the Virgin and of S. Michael. The conditions imposed are as follows : That all right of mining, and digging for coal, &c., be reserved to J. Atherton, and right of hunting, fishing, and fowling. That a man be supplied to J. Atherton for two days' labour in harvest time. That he do service in time of war. That a hound be kept for the service of J. Atherton. That J. Whitfield grind his corn at J. Atherton's mill at Woolton. That J. Whitfield keep the land in good order, and every year plant three oaks and three ashes." The Nook is now covered by the embankment of the Cheshire Railway lines, some three hundred yards to the south of Gateacre Station, the company having also acquired about six acres of the Nook farm land.

the other part of my Lands within the Liberty of Oldham, I give the rent of, equally, to my Nephews, John, Phineas and Thomas Syddal, during their natural lives. And upon their or any of their decease I give and devise the ffather's part to such son in the three families whose first entire name is Joseph, together with the reversion, to be equally divided amongst them, their heirs and assignes for ever, as Counthill Lands are meant to be given. And I order Joseph, the oldest of the three Brothers, to have the Original Writings respecting the said Lands. I give absolutely to my Sister-in-Law my little all wrought Silver (Excepting my spurs, which I give to Mr. John Smith, of Bradnip, near Leek), and I also give my said Sister the use of my household goods, during her natural life, at the period whereof, I give and bequeath the said goods, share and share alike to John Syrsers, of Liverpool, Joyner; Samuel Seddon, engraver, and Catherine, his wife; John Bispham, of Toxteth, and Hannah, his wife; Sarah Brownbill, of Speak; Em. Hill, of Roby, and her sister Ann; Bertie Barton, of Little Woolton; Martha Par, of Speak; and Matthew Stephenson, of Allerton. I give my pew in Gateacre to my Successor there, and my pew in Liverpool to Sister Alice Lawton. I give all my Books not disposed of before my death to Mr. Hardy, of Risley, Mr. Mather, of Rainford, and Mr. Sandford, of Ormskirk, in equal shares. I will that my debts, funeral expenses, and (if necessary) the probate of my will be first discharged out of my remaining personality, after which I give to my Boy (?); to my Sister-in-Law, Catherine Lawton, of Alveton, Staffordshire; to Martha Houghton, of Toxteth Park; to George Houghton, of Broad Green; to Joseph Worral, of Little Woolton; to Edward Harrison, of the same; to Sarah Glover, of Liverpool; and Shusannah Garves, of the same, Each five pounds. I give to Sister Alice Lawton for mourning ten pounds; to Mr. James Percival for a ring thirty shillings; I give Joseph Webster fifty shillings; I give to Nephew John Syddal five pounds; to his brother Benjamin ten pounds; to his brother Thomas fifteen pounds; to his brother Phineas twenty pounds; and to his brother Joseph thirty pounds. I give and bequeath one hundred and twenty pounds to be divided equally and settled upon Trustees for the better perpetual support of the dissenting ministers of the Gospel, officiating, and to officiate at Leek, in the county of Stafford, at Green Acres, and at Doblane, at Risley, at Ormskirk, and at Gee Cross or Hyde Chappells. And I order that each of the Incumbents give my Executors a receipt witnessed by two principal members of the respective congregations. I also give my Executors twenty pounds apiece in full for the discharge of their office, and for their dispatch, order throughout the Execution, the parent or uncle's receipt for a minor to be their sufficient discharge. And Lastly, revoking all former wills by me made, I declare this to be my last will and Testament, and thereof do nominate, constitute, and appoint Samuel Ogden and John Hardman, of Liverpoole, Merchants, Executors. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this twenty-seventh day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty six. J. Lawton. Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the within Testator as and for his last will and Testament (the words "to

such persons and purposes," "Rents," "pounds," "Benjamin," "Dispatch," being first Interlined) In presence of us, who subscribed our names as Witnesses thereto in his presence, James Rogers, Ann Haslam, Elisabeth McNele.

The successor to Mr. Lawton was the Rev. Richard Godwin. He was born at Bolton, December 11th, 1722, and trained for the ministry at Dr. Rotheram's Academy, Kendal, settling, on the completion of his college course, at Holcombe, removing thence to Gateacre, about 1749.¹ His intimate friends were the Revs. Tatlock Mather, of Rainford; John Seddon, of Warrington; and Philip Holland, of Bolton; and the part he took along with two of these in the composition of the Liverpool Liturgy has been already pointed out. Two or three sermons preached at ordination services were afterwards published by Mr. Godwin, and their sentiments were such as led Job Orton to animadvert upon them unfavourably. There can be no doubt that Mr. Godwin's theology did much to prepare the way for the Unitarianism of later days. In the very year of his death a trust deed, dated February 20th, 1787, was made, which defined more clearly than the previous one the type of minister who should officiate at the chapel:

Whereas the said society of protestant Dissenters at Gateacre aforesaid, are desirous of making some rules, orders, and regulations to be observed by the said Society in their Choice of their Minister or Ministers to officiate at the said Chapel, and thereby, if possible, to prevent any improper use being made of the said Chapel, or the Office of minister filled by any weak, insinuating, itinerant Preacher, not properly qualified for his office.

AND THEREFORE it is hereby further agreed and declared by and between all and every the said parties hereto, and also by the said Society at large, attending to hear public Religious Service at Gateacre aforesaid, that the minister or ministers hereafter to be elected or chosen for the purpose of stately officiating in the said Chapel, shall be of the Presbyterian denomination, as distinct from the established Church of England, from the people called Quakers, Anabaptists, Independents, Methodists, and from any other religious sect whatsoever.

The deed further shows that the minister to be elected must be recommended by "three at fewest Presbyterian ministers of such

¹ On the authority of Dr. Raffles, who says that he "came to Holcombe in 1743."

denomination as aforesaid," who would need to testify to his "good moral conduct and character," to his "competent abilities for the Christian ministry," and that he had had "a regular education for the same at some respectable seminary of learning." Mr. Godwin died suddenly of an apoplectic fit at the house of his friend, the Rev. Philip Holland, of Bolton, in August, 1787. In the graveyard of Gateacre Chapel is his tombstone, near that of the Rev. Joseph Lawton, which records his virtues thus :—

Sacred to the memory of the Revd. Richard Godwin, who died the 17th August, 1787, in the 64th year of his age. During the space of 40 years in which he ministered to this religious Society he was distinguished by an uniform attention to the duties of his office; by active exertions for the relief and comfort of the poor; and by a steady zeal for the cause of liberty and religion. His congregation, while they sympathise with all their neighbours in lamenting his death, earnestly wish that they may long retain his instructions in their memories and imitate his virtues in their lives.

The Rev. John Edwards was the next minister. He was the son of the Rev. D. Edwards, Congregational minister at Ipswich, where he was born January 1st, 1768. In 1783 he entered the Hoxton Academy to be trained for the ministry, removing to Daventry in 1785. On the completion of his college course he settled at Gateacre in 1787. The only incident of note associated with his ministry at Gateacre is the Liverpool Socinian Controversy, the origin of which is thus given by Mr. Thornely :—

In the year 1790 the Rev. John Edwards and four other ministers attended at the opening of the Baptist Chapel in Byrom St., of which chapel the Rev. Mr. Medley was incumbent. In his sermon the reverend gentleman, being aware of their presence, denounced in unmeasured terms the Socinian beliefs, and referred personally to these gentlemen in bitter and virulent language.

Mr. Edwards sent several letters to Mr. Medley, which, meeting with no reply, he afterwards published. "An answer" came almost immediately from the press by the Rev. W. Hobrow, minister of the gospel in Edmund Street, Liverpool, and Mr. Edwards issued his "Vindication" early in 1791. Mr. Medley himself does not seem to have taken any part in the controversy which his sermon had excited. In some of the pamphlets Mr. Edwards is described

as a Dissenting minister "who occasionally preaches at Ben's Garden and Key Street Chapels, in Liverpool," from which it has been supposed that his connection with Gateacre was not that of a settled pastor. Be that as it may, he laboured here until 1791, when he removed to the Birmingham New Meeting, to be Dr. Joseph Priestley's colleague, and subsequently his successor. Mr. Edwards was drowned whilst bathing at Wareham, on Sunday, September 4th, 1808. In addition to the pamphlets above-named he published two or three sermons.

The Rev. William (afterwards Doctor) Shepherd succeeded. "I was born," says he, in an autobiographical fragment, "I believe, in Thomas Street, Liverpool, on the 11th October, 1768, as appears by the baptismal registry of Benn's Garden Chapel, a Dissenting Meeting House of that town, at which my parents were regular and zealous attendants." His father was "a master shoemaker in pretty good business," and his mother the daughter of the Rev. Benjamin Mather, "a dissenting divine of some note." On the death of her father, the Rev. Benjamin Mather, at Darwen, in 1749, Miss Mather went to reside with her brother, the

¹ It is recorded that Mr. Mather was minister for some time at Kirby, and that he built at his own expense the chapel at Knowsley. He was stationed for several years at Lower Chapel, Darwen. An account of Lower Chapel is given in vol. II. of "*Lancashire Nonconformity*," and of Knowsley in vol. iv., to which may be added some items of information from the Raffles MSS. A Mr. Bourne is named as minister in 1742, and the Rev. D. W. Evans in 1765. His remains were laid in the graveyard of the chapel, and upon his tombstone was placed the following inscription:—"The monument of the Rev^d. D. W. Evans, who departed this life, July 31, A.D. 1790. He being dead yet speaketh; yesterday for me, to-day for thee." The Rev. Richard Harrison, who removed from Tewkesbury was minister about 1772. It appears that Knowsley was served about this time by the Prescott minister. The Rev. Samuel Park, of Prescott, used to preach at Knowsley Chapel on Sunday mornings. He came into Lancashire from Yorkshire, and it is recorded that he used to say, "If ever the Lord left me to myself, it was when he suffered me to come into Lancashire, this dark County." The Rev. John Wilding, his successor, being of a delicate constitution, could not endure the fatigue of going to Knowsley, and the place was closed for many years, £20 of the endowment being added to the income of Prescott. Subsequently the chapel was used by the Methodists. I have no information about Kirby.

Rev. Tatlock Mather, at Rainford,¹ until her marriage with Mr. Shepherd. A few years afterwards Mr. Shepherd was "found dead in a coffee house," and the young widow, with William, her eldest son, was persuaded to return to her brother, the Rev. Tatlock Mather, at Rainford. Mr. Mather, who was a bachelor, adopted young Shepherd as his son, and gave him instruction in elementary knowledge. He was then sent to Holden's School,² and subsequently to a school kept by the Rev. Philip Holland, of Bolton. Mr. Mather's death from low fever on August 23rd, 1785, threatened to interfere with young Shepherd's prospects, but the Rev. Richard Godwin, one of Mr. Mather's executors, interested himself in the widow and her son. In August, 1785, he became a student at Daventry Academy, and in September, 1788,³ he removed to Hackney New College. On leaving the college, in 1790, he became tutor to the children of the Rev. John Yates, with whom he resided at Toxteth Park. Whilst here Dr. Shepherd took part anonymously in the Liverpool controversy previously mentioned, publishing a little pamphlet which created quite a stir, under the title "Every Man his own Parson. A Dialogue between Timothy Tightbound, Aminidab Prim, and Simon Search, occasioned by certain Theological Publications in Liverpool." In May, 1791, he was invited to the charge of the Gateacre congregation, and was ordained pastor thereof on the 4th of August following. For considerably over half a century Dr. Shepherd discharged the duties of minister in this little retired spot. During some part of that time he conducted a school at the Nook for gentlemen's sons; and of his pupils several rose to prominent positions in society. Connected with this school is a touching incident which deserves recording. In 1794 the Rev. J.

¹ Correct vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity," where the Rev. Benjamin Mather is called the brother of the Rev. Tatlock Mather.

² Mr. Mather, in a memorandum book, writes:—"Billy Shepherd was entered at Mrs. Holden's School, August 28th, 1775."

³ Mrs. Shepherd died in September, 1787, during her son's college course. She had lived for some years with Mrs. Hardman, at Allerton Hall, where young Shepherd used to spend his vacations. Dr. Shepherd was accustomed afterwards to speak in highest terms of this good woman's generosity.

Joyce, Dr. Shepherd's most intimate friend, was committed, along with some others, to the Tower of London, upon a frivolous charge of high treason. In November of that year the accused were set at liberty after a seven months' imprisonment, and shortly afterwards Mr. Joyce paid a visit to his friend. "In the following May," says Mrs. Ridyard in her *Memoir of Dr. Shepherd*, "Mr. Joyce came to visit that dear friend who had been so faithful to him in his hour of peril,¹ and for many years afterwards there existed in the schoolroom at Gateacre a traditionary account of the meeting. The boys, most of whom were the sons of men of Liberal politics, were aware who was the guest expected at the Nook, and took a lively interest in the event. On the day on which he was to arrive they saw, or fancied they saw, an unusual restlessness in the demeanour of Mr. Shepherd. They fixed among themselves that one or two should in turns keep watch at the extremity of their boundaries to give the earliest notice of the approach of a post chaise. Hour after hour passed on, for the traveller was delayed much beyond the expected time. At last, late in the evening twilight, a vehicle was seen in the distance. The excited sentinels hurried back to the house with the welcome news, and with a simultaneous rush, master and pupils sped up the little lane leading to the high road. The postillion was stopped, and the awed and wondering boys looked on in silence when they saw the two strong men, whose nerves had never quailed before oppression, grasp each other's hands and sob like children." Dr. Shepherd's literary tastes may be seen not alone in the books which he gave to the world, but in the fact that his society was sought by men of highest reputation and learning. When the assizes were removed to Liverpool Her Majesty's judges were accustomed to drive down to the Nook at Gateacre to enjoy the old minister's delightful company. He died in 1847, and upon his tombstone in Gateacre Chapel yard is the following beautiful inscription :—

¹ Dr. Shepherd had been accustomed to go to the Tower in the hope of seeing his friend, and when refused admission he would stand for hours upon the wharf in front of the Tower that the prisoner might derive comfort from the sight.

The Rev. WILLIAM SHEPHERD, LL.D.,
For 56 years Pastor to the Congregation assembling in this Chapel.
Died 21st July, 1847. Aged 78 years.

Humane and generous, learned, good, and wise,
Here midst his flock the faithful Shepherd lies ;
For fifty years and six he show'd the way
Which leads from this dark world to endless day.
For fifty years and six, with voice and pen,
He labour'd boldly for his fellow-men ;
For peace and freedom toil'd with earnest zeal,
And felt for misery all that good men feel.
A wit, a poet, more, a man lies here
Who in the cause of truth was void of fear,
Who, cast upon a persecuting age,
Rebuk'd oppression and the bigot's rage.
O reader, stay, and bless the brave man's name,
Then to thy work and emulate his fame.

In the year 1851 the congregation, assisted by friends and admirers, erected a handsome marble tablet to his memory, surmounted by a bust of Dr. Shepherd, inside the chapel. The inscription upon this monument is from the pen of his friend, Lord Brougham, and is as follows :—

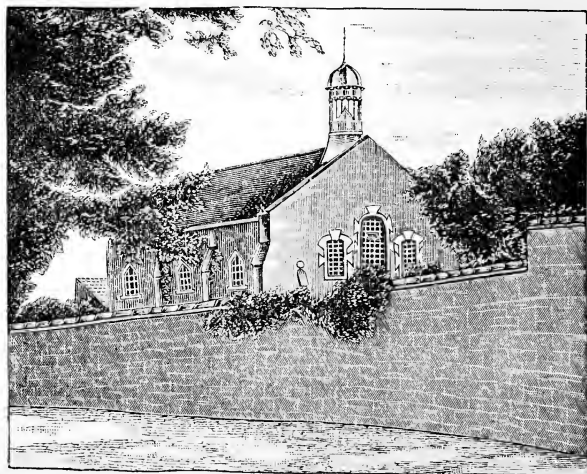
Sacred to the Memory of
WILLIAM SHEPHERD, LL.D.,
for fifty-six years minister of this
Chapel. A man of undeviating integrity in all the relations of life ;
an accomplished scholar and classical writer, conversant with
Ancient and modern languages, well
versed in the literature of both.
Eminent for his wit, which was
original and racy, of remarkable
sagacity in judging of men
and things. A staunch supporter of constitutional freedom. The undaunted enemy
of oppression and abuse.
A formidable adversary when his
principles were assailed. A
warm and steadfast friend at all
times, towards deserving objects
generous beyond his means.

Devoting his life to
the useful and honourable office
of teaching, and the sacred
duties of his pastoral calling.

Revered by his flock,
Beloved by his friends,
Respected by all.

Born Oct. 11th, 1768. Died July 21st, 1847.

In 1845 Dr. Shepherd's age and infirmities pointed to the need of assistance, and the Rev. Lewis Lewis became his colleague in the pastorate. He was born April 19th, 1792, educated first at



GATEACRE OLD CHAPEL.

Carmarthen, then at Manchester New College, York. He was minister at Crediton, 1814-16; Dorchester, 1816-36; Shepton Mallet, 1837-42; Cheltenham, 1842-46; and at Gateacre, 1846-48. In September of the latter year he resigned and took no other settled charge. He died in London, October 13th, 1870. The Rev. Noah Jones entered upon his labours as successor on Sunday, October 1st, 1848. He was born at Etruria, in Staffordshire,

January 13th, 1801,¹ and was the nephew of the Rev. Noah Hill, Congregational minister. He was intended for the Congregational ministry, and received his training at Wymondley College. Previous to his settlement at Gateacre he held charges, amongst other places, at Walmsley and Bolton. He continued his ministry at Gateacre until his death on August 28th, 1861, and was interred at Rivington. The Rev. George Beaumont, educated at the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, and for a few years in charge of the North End Mission, Liverpool, entered upon his duties as successor to Mr. Jones on Easter Sunday, April 5th, 1863, and still holds the pastorate.

Gateacre Chapel is one of the few old Nonconformist structures which have not given way to more modern ones. In appearance it is still very primitive, though some alterations have been effected in it during the flight of the years. Whilst recent improvements were being made, which led to the old belfry being taken down, it was noted that the bell, on the upper part of the interior, had inscribed upon it the following :—

“Come away, make no delay. A. R. 1723.”

Upon it, also, was a small figure of a carved head and a spray of foliage resembling ivy leaves. “On removing the plaster from the walls,” says Mr. Thornely, “the remains of the timbers which used to support the roof were discovered, about 3ft. 3in. below the top of the present wall, and when a portion of the ivy which covered the west end of the chapel was removed the wall showed clearly the line of the old gable, which was very considerably lower than at the present time. The roof was probably raised to its present height when the gallery at the west end was put in. It is not improbable that the date 1723 upon the bell points also to the time when this alteration took place.” It only remains to be said that the congregation is Unitarian, and has been so at least since the days of the Rev. John Edwards.

¹ Vide vol. iii. of “Lancashire Nonconformity,” where correct January 31st, as above.

II.—WOOLTON AND GARSTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

IN February, 1819, Congregationalists commenced operations in Woolton, "a considerable village six miles S.E. of Liverpool." The County Union at its meeting of the previous year had granted £40 for the purpose, in the hope that it would soon be an important centre in that part of the county. A schoolroom capable of seating about 120 persons was opened by the Rev. Charles Whitworth, a student from Idle Academy, on the first Sunday in February. In the morning forty persons were present, in the afternoon double that number, and during the month the congregation increased to such an extent that the room was usually well filled in the morning, and in the evening more came than could obtain admission. A Sunday School was shortly afterwards established, and altogether the interest speedily assumed a promising aspect. Mr. Whitworth was engaged "to make a trial of this station for two years," and, assisted by Mr. Robert Brown, of Prescott, he was able to extend his labours to that place. It is also recorded that in 1820 he preached every Friday evening at Garston, "a village two miles from Woolton;" and in the same year a church was formed at Woolton consisting of seven persons besides the minister and his wife, Dr. Raffles and the Rev. P. S. Charrier assisting in the service. Mr. Whitworth did not remain beyond the two years, and the County Union Report ending April, 1822, states that "unpleasant circumstances" had "caused the interest to droop at Woolton," but that the committee were "making considerable exertions to promote its revival." Mr. Whitworth subsequently laboured at Shelley, in Yorkshire. The Rev. John Holroyd, also a student from Idle Academy, is said, in the County Union Report ending April, 1823, to have laboured at Woolton the greater part of the last year. He laments, however, that whilst at Woolton itself "in general" he had had as many hearers as the small place could accommodate, he had not met with "much encouragement in the surrounding villages." Mr. Holroyd's stay was even briefer than that of his predecessor. His subsequent pastorates were at

Delph and Denton.¹ Members from "different churches in Liverpool" favoured the friends at Woolton with their "acceptable services," and Knotty Ash was associated with it as a preaching station where "three zealous young persons" conducted services. In the Report ending April, 1826, both stations are described as very encouraging, but that is the last time they are mentioned, and the effort to plant Congregationalism here seems to have been abandoned for a time. To the Congregational Church at Wavertree belongs the honour of making the second and more successful attempt to establish a Congregational interest at Woolton. Under its auspices services were conducted several years in a hired room previous to the erection of the present chapel in 1865. The Rev. E. K. Evans, from Ancoats,² held the pastorate from 1863 to 1865. After leaving Woolton Mr. Evans was pastor for some time of the Congregational Church at Prees, Shropshire, but latterly he devoted himself exclusively to scholastic work at Chiswick where he died June 23rd, 1893, aged sixty-two years. On March 25th, 1864, R. Alison, Esq., of Woolton Heys, who had given the site, laid the foundation stone of the present chapel, "which forms a picturesque object in the surrounding landscape, its graceful outline and elegant tower and spire being visible from some distance." The cost of the sacred edifice was about £3,250, towards which the Bicentenary Committee promised £400, and the sitting accommodation is for 450 persons. The opening services took place on November 23rd, 1865, when the Revs. John Kelly and E. Mellor, M.A., were the preachers. On the following Sunday the services were conducted by the Revs. E. Hassan and E. Giles. The church was formally constituted on January 8th, 1867, the Rev. E. Mellor, M.A., presiding on the occasion, and in the same month the Rev. William Davies, B.A., a student from Lancashire College, who had been labouring here a few months, was ordained to the pastorate. Mr. Davies continued a useful ministry here until death called him away on June 2nd, 1893. The pulpit is now vacant. It deserves to be recorded that this is one of those churches which has never been dependent upon the help of the County Union.

¹ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² Ibid.

It has been already noted that preaching services were held at Garston for a short time eighty years ago, but the present Congregational Church is barely twenty years old. The "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" for 1875-6 says of Garston:—

In this populous district a few earnest men have hired a private room, in which a Sunday School has been conducted and the Gospel preached. A grant at the rate of £30 a year was voted at the last annual meeting but only half the amount has been applied for. A church has not yet been constituted. There is an average congregation of fifty persons on Sabbath evenings, and in the Sunday School there are ten teachers and seventy-six scholars.

In November, 1876, a church was formed consisting of sixteen members under the pastoral care of the Rev. H. E. Martin, from Golborne,¹ and the following year the Union granted the sum of £100 towards the support of the cause. Mr. Martin resigned in 1879, and is now resident without charge at Liscard. In the same year the Rev. T. Cole, a student from Carmarthen College, became the minister. In 1883 the present school chapel, with accommodation for 300 persons, was opened free from debt. The cost was about £2,370, including the site, towards which the Liverpool Chapel Building Society gave £300. The "Calendar," which announces the fact, says that the prospects of the place are "most hopeful," that with "a pleasant and comely building, an earnest and beloved minister, and a united people, progress and usefulness are, by God's blessing, assured." The following year (1885) the church intimated that henceforth it would be able to do without assistance from the Union Funds. Mr. Cole is still the respected pastor of the church.

¹ Vide vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

III.—WAVERTREE AND STANLEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

WAVERTREE Congregational Church originated with the Rev. Thomas Sleigh, who, coming to reside in the neighbourhood in 1836, opened his house for religious worship, and afterwards obtained a large room in the village. Mr. Sleigh had been educated for the ministry at Hoxton Academy, and was ordained pastor of the Congregational Church at Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, in 1811. After a "fruitful and helpful ministry," extending over twenty-seven years, he retired to Wavertree, and, as already stated, commenced religious services, out of which the present church has grown. In December, 1838, he laid the foundation stone of Trinity Chapel, Hunter Lane, which was completed and opened for worship on Tuesday, October 1st, of the year following. The preachers on the occasion were the Revs. Dr. Raffles and James Hill (late of Oxford). "Deep impressions were produced," says the *Evangelical Magazine* for 1839, "and the most lively feeling excited for the future prosperity of this newly-formed interest. The congregations were large, and the collections considerable."¹ A church was formed in 1841, and Mr. Sleigh continued his useful labours until 1848, when he removed to Bulford, in Wiltshire. He died at Birkenhead, where he had been resident without charge, on March 17th, 1862, aged eighty-one years. His successor was the Rev. J. Edwards who held the pastorate from 1848 to 1851. The Rev. Ninian Wight followed. He was educated at Highbury College, and laboured for five years at Blackfriars Street, Aberdeen, whence he removed to Wavertree in 1852. In 1858 he removed to Carlisle, thence to Edinburgh, and is now resident without charge at Harrogate. The Rev. W. C. Stallybrass, educated at Glasgow, and formerly minister at Douglas, Isle of Man, succeeded Mr. Wight in 1858. He resigned in 1861, and subsequently laboured at Peckham. He is now resident without charge at Sandy Knowe, Wallasey, Cheshire. The next minister was the Rev. E. Hassan, a student from New College, who assumed the pastorate in 1862. From the "Church Manual" for 1879 the following extract is taken:—

¹ Page 550.

Relieved of the responsibility with respect to Woolton, the church was forced to consider the pressing need of increased accommodation for the congregation at Trinity Chapel. Within the last ten years three successive enlargements of the chapel have been effected. The first, erection of a new front to the chapel, increasing its length, and the putting up of galleries, completed April, 1868; the second, building of new organ chamber, new class rooms, vestry, &c., ready for use in February, 1873; and the last, repewing of the entire area of chapel and the raising of the ceiling about five feet, finished September, 1875. The total cost of these alterations was about £4,000.

In 1887 Mr. Hassan removed to Salisbury, where he is still labouring; and in March, 1888, the Rev. Samuel Owen, from Cannon Street, Preston,¹ became his successor. Mr. Owen removed to Swansea in 1893, and the pulpit at Wavertree is still vacant. Trinity Chapel, "a neat and beautiful edifice, built of stone and of the Gothic order," as opened more than fifty years ago, is a much larger and more imposing structure to-day. The enlargements which it has repeatedly undergone have given a sitting accommodation for 750 persons. Connected with the church is an important mission in Wellington Road, concerning which the manual for 1879, previously named, says:—

In the course of the period named [the last ten years] work long carried on in Wellington Road increased to such an extent as to render the erection of suitable buildings an absolute necessity. A definite proposal in this direction was made at the annual church meeting, January 31st, 1877, and nearly £1,000 promised at once towards the undertaking. The memorial stone of the Sunday School and Mission Rooms was laid by Mr. John Blyth, 24th April, 1878, and the buildings were opened in the month of October following. The cost of the buildings and furniture was £3,000.

Stanley Congregational Church arose out of cottage preaching in 1853, the preachers coming principally from Crescent Church and Great George Street Church, amongst whom may be named Messrs. C. R. Hall, R. Radcliffe, and Sir J. A. Picton. A school chapel was erected in 1855, and the County Union Report, ending April 1858, says:—

The aspect of things here is very cheering; both the congregation and the Sabbath School are prosperous. The progress already made supplies a ground for hope that much success will follow the prayerful efforts which are put forth in the cause of the Redeemer at this interesting station.

¹ Vide vol. i. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

The Rev. C. Green, educated at New College, London, and who had previously laboured a few years at the Barbican, London, became the minister in 1857. In the following year a church was formed, and in 1859 Mr. Green resigned, shortly afterwards going into the Established Church. In the autumn of that year the Rev. William Sanders, a student from Rotherham College, accepted an invitation to the pastorate, and was ordained November 7th, 1859. In 1863 Mr. Sanders resigned. He subsequently held pastorates at Knottingley and Shepherd's Bush, and is now resident without charge at Westbourne Park, London. The Rev. George Lord, a student from Airedale College, was the next minister. He began his labours in 1863, and almost immediately the work of erecting a new chapel, which, from the commencement of the interest had been felt necessary, was taken in hand. The building was completed and opened for public worship November 9th, 1865, by Dr. Joseph Parker, of London. The cost was about £3,800, towards which the Bicentenary Committee gave £700. The sitting accommodation is for 750 persons. In possession of their new house pastor and people no longer needed assistance from the County Union Funds, but began to be generous contributors. Mr. Lord has remained with his first charge until the present day, discharging his duties with an efficiency which has been rewarded by encouraging growth in his church. An enthusiast for church extension he has ever been found willing to serve the Lancashire Congregational Union in any capacity, and his brethren in the ministry expressed their affection and respect for him by calling him to the Chair of that Union in 1893. Along with the Rev. James Allatt, of Newton-le-Willows, and the Rev. John Chater, of Southport, Mr. Lord enjoys the position of senior minister in the Liverpool District. On the completion of his twenty-first year's pastorate his people commemorated the event by church extension at Knotty Ash. A Sunday School had been taught here for some time and services conducted, first in a cottage, and then in the upper room of a laundry. On November 9th, 1884, a substantial school chapel, with accommodation for about 200 persons, was opened. The cost, including class-rooms and chapel-keeper's house, was about £2,000, and the building was opened free from debt. There is a good congregation here, with a vigorous Sunday School. In 1889 the old

school chapel erected in 1855, was taken down, and Stanley New Schools and Gymnasium were erected. Nine years previous seven class rooms and a large room for infants had been built at a cost of £1,030; these form part of the new structure, which consists of sixteen rooms. The cost was about £2,300, which was met by the opening day. In 1891 mission work was commenced at the Old Swan. Suitable premises have been secured capable of seating about 120 persons. A Sunday School has been gathered, and Sunday evening services are held with satisfactory results. Mr. Lord has had associated with him in his work since 1887 the Rev. J. W. Walker, B.A., formerly of Huyton,¹ who devotes his labours mainly to the cause at Knotty Ash.

IV.—WALTON, RICE LANE, AND BOOTLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

IN our survey of suburban Nonconformity we have come to a district north of Liverpool which is deeply interesting. The Congregational interests are only a few years old, but we are in a neighbourhood made holy by the pious labours of a number of ejected ministers, who deserve at least a brief notice. Taking Calamy as our guide, it appears that the Rev. William Aspinwall was ejected from Maghull in 1662, that he removed to a farm in Yorkshire after his ejection, and afterwards settled with a dissenting congregation in Cockermouth. The Rev. John Mallinson, ejected from Melling, was born at Rastrick, in Yorkshire, and educated at Oxford. He had several children, and died poor, in May, 1685, aged seventy-five. The Rev. Nehemiah Ambrose, ejected from Kirby, or Kirkby, was probably related to the Rev. Isaac Ambrose, of Preston. His will, dated September 2nd, 1668, describes him as of Toxteth Park; mentions Hannah, his wife; Nathaniel, Judith, and Hannah, his children; and his "natural brother Joshua Ambrose," some time vicar of Childwall. The Rev. Joseph Thompson, ejected from Sefton, was born at Wigan and educated at Oxford. He has already been named as

¹ Vide vol. iv. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

one of the ministers at Liverpool in the days of the Commonwealth.¹ Walton-on-the-Hill provided two ejected ministers, the Rev. Robert Eaton, rector, and the Rev. Henry Finch, vicar. Concerning Mr. Eaton, who was rector at Walton in 1656, the reader will find full information in the account of Stand Chapel,² where he subsequently laboured until his death in 1701. In the Walton Parish Registers is the following notice of the baptism of his son, Samuel Eaton, who succeeded him in the ministry at Stand Chapel :—

Anno 1657.

Samuel Eaton, son of Mr. Robert Eaton, Parson of Walton. Born Jan. 16th, Saturday, at night. Baptized Jan. 24th, 1657. Ibid.

HEN: FINCH, Vic.

Mr. Finch, who was born in the parish of Standish, and “acquired a considerable exactness both in Latin and Greek” at Wigan and Standish Schools, became vicar of Walton in 1654. The following entries relating to Mr. Finch, in the Walton Parish Registers, have been kindly supplied by Mr. F. Musker, Parish Clerk :—

Mem^odu. That Hen: Finch Borne in the parish of Standish anno: 1633. Baptized 7th 8th. Succeeded Mr. Nevill Kaye in the vicaridge of Walton. 1654, July 30th.

HEN: FINCHE,
Will Rydinge de Derby,
Churchwarden.

Hen: Finch marryed Mary Hammond of Warrington Oct^r. 11th 1659.

Maria, fil Hen: Finch nat. 3^o die July circa hor: 8 ante merid: Baptiz: 8^o die ejus de mensis anno dñni 1660 and rediv Regis Caroli 2^{di} post exil 1^{mo} Regni 12^{mo}.

1660.

Mary daughter of Hen: Finch vic. de Walton. Borne July 3rd about eight or nine of the clocke in the morning 1660.

Baptised July the 8th, 1660.

1662.

Tabitha fil: Hen: Finch vic. de Walton, nat. vicessimo sexto die Marci mit^hor octav ante meridiē. Baptizat: sexto die April.

Anno Septimo. Vicariatus HEN: FINCH.

¹ Vide ante p. 61.

² Vide vol. iii. of “Lancashire Nonconformity.” It should be noted that in previous volumes Walton near Liverpool is confused with Walton near Preston. The indefinite statements of previous writers on Lancashire Nonconformity was the cause of this.

After his ejection Mr. Finch became the minister of Birch Chapel, Manchester, and originated Nonconformity in that district. He died in 1704, aged seventy-one years.¹ His son, the Rev. Peter Finch, was one of the earliest of the Rev. Richard Frankland's students, and was a Dissenting minister at Norwich for about sixty years. He died in 1754, aged ninety-one years.

Congregationalism in Walton began on July 10th, 1870, with services conducted in the room of an uninhabited house in Walton Park. A school chapel was opened on April 30th, 1871. The cost, including furnishing, and 3,000 yards of freehold land, was £1,566 6s. 7d. Subsequent enlargements have brought this amount to £2,830 8s. 7½d., towards which the Lancashire and Cheshire Chapel Building Society has given £200, and the Liverpool Chapel Building Society £260. The sitting accommodation, when the Chapel was first erected, was for 200 persons. In 1871, a church was formed consisting of fifteen members, and the Rev. J. W. Clark, from Ulverston, accepted the pastorate for three years in August, 1872. The "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" for 1875-76, says:—

The chapel has been increased to about double its original size at an outlay of nearly £900. Of this amount one-half has been subscribed and the other borrowed.

At the expiration of the three years, during which Mr. Clark agreed to hold the pastorate, the church and congregation unanimously invited him to continue his services. He accepted the invitation and remained until October, 1880, when he removed to Burnley.² The Rev. J. H. Ferguson, M.A., a student from Lancashire College, began his duties as minister on February 13th, 1881. The new pastorate was attended with so much success that the following year the church was able to dispense with the assistance from the Union Funds, which had been generously given to it from the commencement of the interest. Mr. Ferguson still exercises a useful ministry here.

¹ Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² Vide vols. i. and ii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

The Rev. L. Weaver in 1890, began to conduct services in a Mission Hall, formerly a Police Station, in Rice Lane, Walton. The room has accommodation for 200 persons. The station is in charge of a special committee of the Liverpool Ministers and



Deacons' Association. A small grant is made from the County Union Funds, and Mr. Weaver still ministers here.

In 1871 the Liverpool District meeting of the Lancashire Congregational Union resolved to hire a room in Bootle, and to commence divine service in this populous suburb of Liverpool.

Accordingly, on the 15th of October, 1871, the Assembly Room was opened as a temporary place of meeting. On the 14th of November, 1872, a church was formed, twenty members from various neighbouring churches being enrolled, the Rev. George Lord, of Stanley, presiding. In December, 1872, the Rev. G. P. Jarvis, educated at Hackney, and who had laboured for some years in Limerick, became the pastor of the newly-formed church, but his health failing, he resigned in June, 1874. Subsequently he became the pastor of the Congregational Church at Dunmow, Essex; his present pastorate being at High Wycombe, Bucks. The number of church members increasing, it was resolved to build, and an excellent site for the purpose was obtained. In October, 1874, the foundation stone of Emmanuel Congregational Church, Bootle, was laid by the late Sir James A. Picton.

In 1875 the Rev. Thos. Dunlop, who was educated in the University of Edinburgh and who had been for several years co-pastor with the Rev. Dr. Peddie, of the United Presbyterian Church in Bristo Street, Edinburgh, resigned his charge there with the intention of emigrating to the United States. While waiting for the sailing of the steamer in which he had engaged his passage, he was asked to preach by the Bootle Congregational Church, and his services were so much appreciated that he was requested to preach on the following Sunday. The result was a unanimous call to the pastorate, and in October, 1875, Mr. Dunlop commenced his labours as the second minister of the church. The handsome building in which the church now worships has accommodation for 750 persons, cost about £7,500, and was opened in February, 1876, when further assistance from the funds of the County Union was no longer asked.

Adjoining the church commodious schools have been erected containing a fine hall for the general school, about twenty classrooms, and an infant schoolroom. These were opened in December, 1878, the cost being about £4,500. The members on the Church roll on 1st January, 1893, were 417, and the contributions to outside objects in 1892 exceeded £500.

A substantial and beautiful Mission Hall has been erected by the Bootle congregation in Marsh Street, Kirkdale, for the benefit of a populous district not far from the Bootle church. This hall

cost rather more than £1,800, and was opened in August, 1886, when a sermon was preached by the Rev. A. Mearns. The Mission is conducted by the Rev. W. Thomas, and with the large Mission Sunday School is in a very prosperous condition. Mr. Dunlop is still the respected pastor of the church.

V.—WATERLOO, SEAFORTH, AND CROSBY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

AT Waterloo, a town of recent date, situated at the mouth of the Mersey, six miles from Liverpool, Congregational worship was commenced in a small hired chapel about 1855 by the Rev. T. Sleigh, formerly of Wavertree, and then resident in the neighbourhood. He resigned his oversight of the place in 1857, and the County Union Report, ending April, 1860, gives the following, its first notice of the station :

The building in which the congregation at present meets is held on a yearly rent, and is wholly unequal to the demands of this important locality. The Rev. Mr. Walker, formerly of Tideswell, is working with much zeal and earnestness, and well deserves the support and encouragement which he so much needs. An effort is in progress for the erection of a new chapel, which is indispensable to any reasonable prospect of success. It is high time that the reproach which, as a denomination, we have incurred here, as in many other watering places, for the want of a suitable place for public worship, should as speedily as possible be removed.

The Rev. G. K. Walker, mentioned in the preceding extract, was educated at Cotton End, and removed from Tideswell, in Derbyshire, to Waterloo, in 1858. In 1864 he became the pastor of the Congregational Church at Middlewich, and is now resident without charge at Egremont, Cheshire. The "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" for 1866-67, says :—

None of the grant voted last year has been applied, and the committee of management believe that, with a little extra effort, they shall be able to meet all claims without further help. It is sincerely hoped that, when their beautiful new chapel is completed, they may realise the success at present anticipated.

That "success" was realised, and no further grant was sought from the Union Funds. The chapel was opened for worship

in 1866. It is Gothic in style, treated so as to "secure adaptation to the purpose in view." It has sitting accommodation for 630 persons, and cost with land, organ, interior fittings, school-room, lecture hall, and classrooms, about £6,500, towards which the Bicentenary Committee granted £500. After Mr. Walker's removal no minister was appointed until 1868, when the Rev. T. B. Sainsbury, B.A., entered upon his labours. He was educated at Highbury College, and had previously held the pastorate of the Finchingfield Congregational Church, Essex, for more than twenty years. Mr. Sainsbury resigned in 1874, and shortly afterwards became pastor of the Congregational Church at Duxford, Cambridgeshire, a position which he still holds. The Rev. Timothy Hodgkinson, a student from Lancashire College, succeeded in 1874. A helpful ministry was terminated in 1884, when Mr. Hodgkinson resigned. Subsequently he went to Canada, and he is now pastor of a Congregational Church at Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Rev. A. J. Bedell, educated at Lancashire College, and formerly at Leyton, held the pastorate from 1886 to 1891. The present minister, the Rev. G. A. Brock, B.A., from South Norwood, London, and whose ministerial training was received at Cheshunt College, succeeded Mr. Bedell in 1891.

Seaforth Congregational Church owes its origin to the Congregational Church at Waterloo. The mission was commenced in March, 1878, and "very speedily it became successful, a flourishing Sunday School being quickly gathered, and divine worship being conducted twice on Sunday and once in the week. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was early observed, and the fellowship grew with encouraging rapidity."¹ In 1881 the Rev. W. L. Roberts, a student from Lancashire College, became the first minister, and the following year a school chapel, capable of accommodating 250 persons, was erected upon "a freehold site in Elm Road, a portion of the Gladstone Estate."² The cost of the site

¹ "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" for 1882.

² Not the least amongst the honours which belong to Liverpool is the fact that it was long the home of the Gladstone family; and here, in 1808, was born its most eminent member, "the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone—orator, poet, scholar, statesman—a man of the most varied capacities, and equally eminent in them all." (Sir J. A. Picton's "Memorials of Liverpool," vol. ii., p. 281.) It is said that the site of the Seaforth Congregational Church is a portion of the "grounds of the house where the present Prime Minister's boyhood was spent."

was £540, and of the chapel, exclusive of fencing and furniture, about £1,550, towards which the Chapel Building Society granted £250. In 1883 the church was formally constituted. Mr. Roberts continued his useful labours here until 1885, when he removed to the newly formed church at Hartington Road, Liverpool, of which he is still the pastor. His successor was the Rev. R. Ashcroft, who had previously held Congregational pastorates at Adlington, Bamford,¹ and Rock Ferry. Leaving the latter place for the Christadelphians, amongst whom he spent several years, he rejoined the Congregationalists and became pastor of the church at Seaforth in 1886. In 1889 Mr. Ashcroft resigned and went to the United States. The Rev. A. A. Dauncey, educated at Lancashire College, and formerly minister at Lower Darwen, held the pastorate from 1890 to 1891. He is now resident without charge at Southport, and he was succeeded at Seaforth by the present minister, the Rev. D. C. Tincker, a student from Nottingham Institute.

Crosby Congregational Church had its origin in the steady movement of the population from the centre of Liverpool to its outskirts. The villas of Waterloo, Crosby, and Southport compete with those of Sefton and Birkenhead Parks and Oxtan and Bidston Hills on the Cheshire side of the Mersey. The Liverpool Chapel Building Society, watchful of the "flowing tide," secured in 1882 an admirable site at Crosby between the old village of Great Crosby and the newer and more rapidly developing suburban district of Blundellsands. Here, in full view of the Crosby Channel, a large number of Liverpool townsmen built for themselves, on the sandy dunes, comfortable houses. Some of those who thus migrated were Nonconformists, and they felt the necessity of having a church within walking distance. A few of these in 1884 decided to erect a school chapel, postponing the erection of a larger building till it was found to be necessary. The cost of this structure, including that of the site for the larger edifice to follow, of an organ afterwards added, and of committee and class rooms, was £4,300. The chapel seats about 350 comfortably. The flooring is solid—wood blocks set on concrete—

¹ Vide vols. ii, and iii, of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

and is practically noiseless ; the pews are substantial and cushioned to match throughout ; the colouring is subdued, and the ventilation and acoustics are perfect.

The memorial stone was laid by the late Alfred Barnes, Esq., J.P., of Farnworth, on July 9th, 1884, and the opening services took place on December 11th, in the same year, being continued until the 21st, when the Revs. Dr. Fairbairn, Samuel Pearson, M.A., and T. Herbert Darlow, M.A., were the preachers.

Within two years the total cost of the buildings, &c., was paid off, and the church was set free to proceed with other work. It ought to be stated that the sum of £250 was contributed as a challenge grant by the Liverpool Chapel Building Society, and the same Society also gave £200 towards the cost of the site.

While the school chapel was in course of erection the committee were fortunate enough to meet with the Rev. Thomas Herbert Darlow, M.A., a graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, and whose theological training was obtained at Lancashire College. Cordially invited, he became the first minister. Mr. Darlow speedily proved himself a worker well adapted to the needs of the locality and the newly-formed congregation, in which, as time went on, and the members increased, were found representatives of various denominations uniting in Christian fellowship and service. In January, 1885, forty-three persons formally united themselves in church fellowship, amongst them being Messrs. Thomas Raffles Job, A. B. Paton, David Fernie, Harold L. Bower, George Oliver Jones, J. Kenyon Rogers, and James M. Martin. Mr. Rogers was Treasurer, and Mr. Martin Secretary during the first six years of the church's existence.

Mr. Darlow continued to be the minister until 1891, when he responded to an invitation to take charge of the Browning Hall Mission, Walworth, London : his present charge is at Hampstead South. Before Mr. Darlow left Crosby he had the unusual felicity of helping to choose and settle his successor in the pastorate, the Rev. Thomas Henry Martin, B.A., a student of Mansfield College, Oxford, and St. John's College, Cambridge. The wisdom of the choice is being confirmed, the church continuing to grow in numbers, the members in the beginning of 1893 being 182.

The usual branches of church work have, from the first, been maintained with vigour ; but one or two special features have been

developed by local circumstances which merit mention. Shortly after the erection of the chapel the whole of the available sittings were allotted, and while new comers could not get a sitting there were many empty pews. Under pressure of Mr. Darlow's influence seat-letting was abandoned, the free and open system was adopted, and reliance for finance was placed entirely on quarterly subscriptions, and weekly free-will offerings. The result was immediately proved to be satisfactory. Full congregations and an elastic revenue justified the experiment, which is still found to work well.

The principal work taken in hand by the church is Home Mission work in Liverpool, first in Slade Street in connection with Waterloo Congregational Church, and afterwards in premises at Sandhills, specially erected by the Crosby Church in 1888, at a cost of £1,750. The Crosby Mission House at Sandhills, includes a hall, club rooms, class rooms, and Missionary house. A Christian Guild has been formed, of which the minister at Crosby is the warden, and the resident Missionary is the sub-warden; and upwards of fifty of the congregation at Crosby are actively engaged in the various departments of work of which the Mission House is a centre.

The cause of Foreign Missions also holds a large place in the thought and work of the church. The scholars of the Sunday School support a native Catechist at Kadiri, in South India, whose communications with the replies of the children thereto, do much towards quickening and keeping alive the Missionary spirit. Mr. Martin, in addition to maintaining the good work begun by Mr. Darlow, has established a successful Men's Guild at Crosby, for the discussion of moral and social questions, and under his inspiring ministry the church continues to grow in usefulness and power. It owns a valuable library for the use of its ministers. Except during the first year, it has required no assistance from the County Union Funds, whilst for all purposes it has raised during the eight years of its existence the handsome sum of £12,683 15s. 7d., including the cost of the chapel site, paid for in 1882.¹

¹ This account of Crosby Church is copied mainly from a manuscript kindly sent me by a friend connected with the church.

CHAPTER IV. THE STORY ENDED.

I.—WELSH CONGREGATIONALISM IN LIVERPOOL.¹

THE TABERNACLE.—To trace the beginnings of Welsh Congregationalism in Liverpool it is necessary to go back to the year 1800, when a number of Welshmen, from Llanbrynmair and other parts of the Principality, came to Liverpool with the intention of emigrating to America. After being out at sea, however, for many days, they were compelled to return to port, as the vessel proved to be unseaworthy. Many of them resumed their voyage in another ship, but others remained and settled down at Liverpool. Accustomed as they had been to worship in the old Cymraeg, and unable to converse or use the English language to any purpose, they began to meet for divine service at the house of one of their number, Thomas Rees by name; and by degrees their fellow-countrymen scattered through the town came to hear of the warm and “hwyliog” meetings they enjoyed, and were thus attracted to them, partly, no doubt, from mere curiosity and national sentiment, but many of them because they had learnt that the Lord was with them. After holding their services in this way from house to house for some time, they rented a large room in a warehouse in Beckwith Street, off Park Lane. Here they formed themselves into an Independent Church, and for the first time partook of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. They did not, however, remain in this place long, for their number was being added to day by day, and larger premises became a necessity. They therefore took, at an annual

¹ This account of Welsh Congregationalism in Liverpool has been written for this work by the Rev. D. M. Jenkins, the able and respected minister of Park Road Church. I am deeply obliged to Mr. Jenkins not only for such generous help, but for the promptness with which it was rendered when solicited. The account has been altered only in a few particulars.

rent of £30, an old chapel, which belonged to the English Wesleyans, situated in Edmund Street. In 1803 they gave a call to the Rev John Jones, Ceirchiog, Anglesea, who ministered to them faithfully until he removed to Talgarth, in 1814. At the time of his removal the number of communicants amounted to sixty-five. For the following three years the church was without a settled pastor, but it was frequently visited by Dr. George Lewis and the students under his care at Wrexham College—now situate at Brecon. At the beginning of 1815 the church began to seek out a plot of ground whereon to build a more commodious edifice. They decided upon a piece of waste land at the corner of Great Crosshall Street; and, after all the necessary preparations had been made, in April, 1817, the foundation stone was laid by Dr. Raffles, Welsh addresses being delivered on the occasion by the two eminent divines Williams of Wern and John Elias. “The Tabernacle,” as the new chapel was called, cost £2,700, and it was, at the time of its erection, the largest edifice the Welsh Independents possessed. The opening services were held in September, 1817, and the preachers on the occasion were the Revs. Dr. Raffles, Dr. Stewart, and Peter S. Charrier, all of whom preached in English. In June of the same year a call had been given to the Rev. John Breese, a student at Llanfyllin, whose ministry was begun at Edmund Street, and who laboured, in season and out of season, with them for more than seventeen years. After being for a year and a half without a pastor, a call was given to the saintly William Williams, of Wern, who commenced his ministry in their midst in October, 1836. The number of church members at his coming was 256, but it rose rapidly, and the three years he remained with them were the most prosperous in the history of the church; and when, in October, 1839, he was compelled, owing to ill health, to resign his charge and return to Wales, the number on the church roll exceeded 400. About this time it was deemed advisable to extend the sphere of Independency by erecting another chapel, and in 1841 Salem Chapel was completed, and over 150 members of the Tabernacle went to assist the new cause. The loss of so many members was a great trial to the Tabernacle, but there still remained a strong church; and in the beginning of 1843 they invited the Rev. William Rees, Denbigh,

to be their pastor, and he commenced his ministry the first Sunday in May of that year. The church numbered 300 at his coming, but it increased so rapidly that the place left vacant by the 150 who had gone over to Salem was soon filled up. The years 1847-48 were years of great commercial distress, and hundreds of Welsh inhabitants were compelled to leave the town, a fact which necessarily affected the congregations to a large extent. After ten years successful ministry at the Tabernacle, Mr. Rees received a call to the pastorate of Salem Church, and began his duties there the first Sunday in May, 1855. Before the close of the same year the church had given a call to the Rev. John Thomas, of Glynedd, Glamorganshire. The call was accepted, and Mr. Thomas entered upon his ministry in Liverpool on the first Sunday in March, 1854. Dr. Thomas, for such he became subsequently, remained here until his death on July 14th, 1892, at the age of seventy-one years. The church numbered 227 when he came, but before the close of 1860 the membership had increased to more than 400. It was felt that there was great need for the commencement of another cause at the North End of the town, and in 1858 a room was taken by a number of friends, where a Sunday School was established and occasional preaching services were held. This was the nucleus of the now flourishing church at Great Mersey Street, and at the end of two years about sixty members left the Tabernacle to form a church there. The departure of so many left a great void in the mother church, and after much consultation—especially seeing that three out of every four of the church members came from the upper parts of the town—they decided to leave the old chapel and build another in a more central position. A plot of land was purchased in Netherfield Road South, and here a commodious and beautiful edifice to hold 800 persons was erected at a cost of £6,500. It was opened in January, 1868. The old Tabernacle was sold for £2,000, and by hearty co-operation the entire debt was removed by the commencement of 1879. In 1885 the church again incurred a debt of over £3,000, by the erection of a branch schoolroom at Anfield, and by painting and beautifying the chapel and the purchase of an organ which cost £750. This debt has also been well-nigh cleared off. Last year a dark cloud burst over the church, when death removed the pastor who had served them

so faithfully and so long. Dr. John Thomas was no ordinary man, as is testified by his being elected Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in place of Dr. Thomas Rees, whom death had unexpectedly removed on the eve of the annual meetings; and to lose one who had been pastor of the church for the lengthy period of thirty-eight years was a great trial. The friends, however, were neither discouraged nor dismayed, and a year was not allowed to elapse before a call was given to the Rev. R. Thomas, who had ministered with gratifying success for many years at Landore, Glamorganshire. Mr. Thomas accepted the call, and in April of this year entered upon his ministry at the Tabernacle, with every token of encouragement.

PARK ROAD CHURCH.—About the year 1827 several members of the Tabernacle decided to start another Welsh cause in a more southerly direction of the city, as many Welshmen had settled there. For this purpose they took a room above a stable in Watkinson Street, where a Sunday School was commenced and prayer meetings were held every Lord's Day. Mr. Breese preached once a week for them, on Tuesday evening. Success crowned the efforts of the seventeen faithful ones who formed the nucleus of the new church, and the room very soon became too small for their increasing numbers. They then sought out a more convenient place, and this was found in a yard in Greenland Street, which they roofed over; and after all the necessary internal alterations were made, the place was opened for divine service on Christmas Day, 1828, when the preachers were the Revs. John Breese and — Evans, Bagillt. The church was then regularly constituted, and two deacons were chosen, viz., George Owen and Robert Jones. The following summer, relying on the promise of assistance from the mother church, a call was given to the Rev. John Jones, a student of Hackney College, London, who was ordained pastor October 20th, 1829. He remained with them for the short space of one year only, when he removed to Preshenlle, near Oswestry; but the church had by this time increased from seventeen to thirty-two in number. A year elapsed before they gave a call to the Rev. Thomas Pierce, a respected member and a preacher of reputation from the Church at Denbigh. He was ordained at the Tabernacle December 24th, 1832. Five years

passed, and the church had now increased its membership to ninety-four. It was felt, therefore, that another move was necessary ; consequently, in August, 1837, the foundation stone of a new chapel in Bedford Street (now Beaufort Street) was laid by the Rev. D. Morgan, then of Manchester and subsequently of Llanfyllin, and on May 6th of the following year the chapel was opened, when the preachers were the Revs. Thomas Pierce and — Pugh, Mostyn. “Bethel,” as the new place of worship was called, cost in all £2,200, but before many years had passed every penny of this debt was removed, and this, too, in a time of great commercial failure and distress. The health of the faithful pastor was during these years being gradually undermined, and on the 30th of May, 1857, he passed away from his work to his reward, aged fifty-five years. For two years the church was without a settled ministry, but early in 1859, after careful consideration, they gave a call to the Rev. Noah Stephens, then of Sirhowy, Monmouthshire, which was accepted, and Mr. Stephens entered upon his new sphere in June of that year. At his recognition services the following ministers took part : the Revs. J. Stephens, Brychgoed (brother of the pastor), R. Thomas (Ap Vychan), W. Rees (Hiraethog), J. Thomas, H. Griffiths (Bowdon), and H. E. Thomas (Birkenhead, afterwards of Pittsburgh, America). Mr. Stephens laboured consistently for many years with much acceptance, but both he and the church felt that the situation of the chapel was most unfavourable for obtaining a large and permanent congregation, and after prayerful deliberation it was decided to move to a more central locality. A piece of land was secured in Park Road, on the corner of Northumberland Street, upon which a fine chapel, in the Gothic style of architecture, was built. Its sitting accommodation is for 600 persons. The entire cost of the chapel, including the land, was £5,957, but by persistent effort about £3,000 of this large debt was removed during the pastorate of Mr. Stephens. Towards the close of 1873 his health gave way, and after several months of patient suffering he died, April 9th, 1874. For more than two years the church was without a pastor, but in 1876 a call was sent to the Rev. D. M. Jenkins, then minister of the English Church at Morriston, Swansea, and he commenced his labours in Liverpool on the second Sunday in

October, 1876. His recognition services were held on the 17th of the same month, when the Rev. J. Thomas, D.D., presided, addresses being delivered by the Revs. T. Davies, Morriston ; J. Davies, Taihirion ; W. P. Lockhart, W. Roberts, Samuel Pearson, M.A. ; J. H. Evans, Wesleyan ; H. Jones, Birkenhead ; John Griffiths (Gohebydd), brother to Mrs. Jenkins ; Dr. Owen Thomas, and others. The health of Mr. Jenkins was at the time very precarious, but he speedily recovered, and entered upon his new sphere of activity with zeal. The debt, which at his coming amounted to about £3,000, was speedily added to by the purchase of an organ and by renovating the church and school-rooms. Early in 1885, by which time the whole of the debt had been extinguished, the Jubilee services were held, when Dr. Thomas Rees, of Swansea, then Chairman elect of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and the Rev. E. Stephen, Tanymarian, preached to large congregations. Before the year closed both of these ministers, who had taken part in the meetings, were summoned hence to meet their Saviour on high. Mr. Jenkins is still the pastor of the church, and during the seventeen years he has been at Park Road considerable success has attended his labours, and to-day the church roll contains the names of over 400 members.

GROVE STREET.—The gradual but continuous success which attended the labours of Mr. Williams, of Wern, at the Tabernacle, together with the great revival which broke out immediately after his removal, seemed to indicate clearly that the time had arrived for the church to enlarge its sphere of work. This step had been thought about for some years, but it had now become absolutely necessary to adopt it, inasmuch as the old Tabernacle was crowded out, whilst a large Welsh population had sprung up in those parts of the town which are on the upper side of Lime Street. Land was first purchased for the building of a chapel in Bittern Street, but it was afterwards considered to be in too secluded a place, and for this reason was sold. A plot was subsequently obtained on Brownlow Hill, in a convenient and prominent position at the corner of Elizabeth Street, and the foundation stone of "Salem" Chapel was laid by Dr. Raffles, September 1st, 1840. The preachers on the occasion were the Revs. T. Pierce, J. Roberts, Llanbrynmair ; W.

Williams, Carnarvon, and D. Griffith, Castellnedd. The entire cost of the chapel was £2,468, and it was opened the first week in September, 1841. Services were held on Thursday, Friday, and Sunday, and on the following Monday the church was formed, consisting of 168 members, coming from the Tabernacle and from Bethel—by far the greater part from the Tabernacle. In February of the following year it was unanimously decided to invite the Rev. R. Thomas, of Dinas Mawddwy, to undertake the pastorate of the church. Mr. Thomas accepted the invitation, and commenced his ministry in October of the same year. For more than six years he laboured successfully, during which time the congregation was large and united, until in 1848 he accepted a call from the church at Rhosllanerchrugog. During the following two years the church met with several reverses, being deprived of some of its more prominent members. Under these circumstances a pressing invitation was sent to Mr. David Davies, a respected deacon of Bethel Church, to come to their aid. The invitation was accepted, and Mr. Davies served the church for many years, holding the trusted position of treasurer until his death. His coming into their midst restored confidence and hope to many who had become faint hearted, and by the beginning of 1853 the church was again in a flourishing condition, when the Rev. W. Rees (subsequently Dr. Rees), of the Tabernacle, received a call from the people, which he accepted. In the year 1865 it was decided that it would be greatly to the advantage of the cause if the chapel were removed to a more convenient place, and consequently a plot of land was secured in Grove Street, near the junction of that street with Crown Street. Here a beautiful and capacious edifice, with accommodation for 800 persons was erected, the cost being £6,300. It was opened for worship on Thursday, February 7th, 1867, and the services were continued until the following Monday night. Towards the close of 1874 Dr. William Rees resolved upon resigning the pastorate which he had so worthily held for nearly twenty-two years. In 1876 a call from the church was received and accepted by the Rev. W. Nicholson, of Groeswen, and he commenced his ministry on Christmas Sunday, 1876. On Tuesday, January 2nd, 1877, a meeting to welcome Mr. Nicholson to Liverpool was held,

in which the following ministers took part : the Revs. O. Jones, B.A. ; John Evans (Eglwysbach) ; W. Roberts ; O. Thomas, D.D. ; J. Thomas, D.D. ; D. M. Jenkins, and H. Jones, Birkenhead. His ministry at the outset was full of promise, and although a number of the members left owing to a disagreement, and Mr. Nicholson's health gave way, yet the church kept its ground and did good work. On the 29th of July, 1885, Mr. Nicholson passed to his rest, at the early age of forty years. Nearly three years elapsed before a successor was appointed ; but early in 1889 the Rev. H. M. Hughes, of Holyhead, received a unanimous invitation, which he accepted, the meeting of welcome taking place on May 27th, when the Revs. H. Rees, R. Rowlands, W. J. Morris, O. Thomas, D.D., W. Roberts, D. M. Jenkins, and H. Jones took part, while Dr. J. Thomas presided. Connected with this church is a large and commodious schoolroom, situate in Earle Road, where a Sunday School is regularly held and occasional sermons are also preached. It was opened in 1887, when Dr. John Thomas conducted the services, its cost being about £1,000. Mr. Hughes continues to labour in this church with much acceptance.

GREAT MERSEY STREET.—For some years prior to the commencement of this cause several of the members of the Tabernacle had perceived its necessity, but had been unable to move in the matter. In 1856, however, when the debt on the old Tabernacle had been paid, the minister and several of the leading members decided to commence a cause in the North End of the city. In 1858 a large room was taken in Boundary Street, and on April 11th opening services were held, when the Rev. J. Thomas, D.D., was the preacher. For two years occasional sermons were preached there, while the room was chiefly used as a Sunday School. In 1860, however, it was resolved that a church be formed, and on May 13th services were held for that purpose, when the Rev. W. Rees preached, the Revs. H. E. Thomas and N. Stephens also taking part. Considerable success attended the efforts of the friends here, and in about a year they gave a call to the Rev. W. Roberts, of Pentre Voelas, who commenced his ministry the last Sunday in September, 1861, his recognition services being held early in October, at which the Revs. W. Morris, Bryngwran ; W. Morgan,

Carmarthen ; and W. Griffith, Holyhead, preached. Mr. Roberts at once set to work in earnest. A plot of land was secured in Great Mersey Street, and by March, 1863, a beautiful and very convenient chapel was ready for opening. The entire cost was £2,350. Services were held, in which the Revs. W. Roberts, Penybontfawr ; R. Thomas, Bangor ; Dr. Mellor, and the Welsh ministers resident in the town took part ; and at the conclusion of these services £900 had been secured towards the debt. The church, which at the time of its formation numbered sixty members, gradually increased, and soon had in fellowship more than two hundred. It had, however, to undergo many reverses, owing to removals, deaths, and other causes. In the meantime Mr. Roberts continued to labour with great wisdom and faithfulness, but in 1888 felt compelled, owing to the infirmities of age, to resign his charge, continuing to preach one Sunday in every month for some time afterwards. On April 17th, 1890, the faithful servant was called to his rest. The church has not yet secured a successor.

KENSINGTON CHAPEL.—In the summer of 1878 a number of people left Grove Street Chapel on account of some ‘misunderstanding between them and their pastor, the Rev. W. Nicholson, and started a Welsh cause in Kensington. At first they held their services in a room somewhat far removed from the town. Ere long, however, they removed to more convenient premises nearer the town, and in 1881 the chapel wherein they now worship was built, being opened for divine service in January of the following year. At the expiration of two years the church invited the Rev. J. O. Williams (Pedrogwyson) to the pastorate, and in May, 1884, his recognition services took place, when the Revs. J. R. Roberts (Conway), and H. Ellis (Llangwm), officiated. The church has prospered during the ministry of Mr. Williams, and in 1889 it benefited largely by the will of Mr. John Hughes, one of its founders, who left £700 towards paying the chapel debt.

TRINITY ROAD, BOOTLE.—This cause was started by a number of members belonging to Great Mersey Street Church, who began to assemble in a room in Balliol Road, September, 1878. At first the intention was to hold a Sunday School and an occasional preaching service only, but it was subsequently thought advisable

to form themselves into an Independent Church, and this was done in November, 1879, when the Revs. J. Thomas, D.D., and W. Roberts took part. The members of the church continued to worship in Balliol Road until February, 1882, when they removed to the Assembly Rooms, for which they paid a large rent. They succeeded at last in obtaining a plot of land in Trinity Road, whereon they erected a school-chapel, which cost £500. The opening services were held in July, 1883, and in the following year a call was given to the Rev. William Thomas, a student of Bala College, who served them faithfully until 1890, when he accepted an invitation to be assistant pastor to the Rev. T. Dunlop, of Emmanuel Church, Bootle. Last year (1892) the church gave a call to the Rev. Deiniol Jones, of Pentraeth, Anglesey, who in the spring of the present year (1893) settled in their midst, and is labouring faithfully in his Master's service.

MARSH LANE, BOOTLE.—This Welsh cause was started by a number of friends belonging to the church at Trinity Road owing to some internal disagreement. In October, 1884, a Bible class was first held in the house of Mrs. Williams, 3, Wordsworth Street, and here it was decided to begin a Sunday School for the neighbourhood. A room over a shop in 75, Marsh Lane, was rented for the purpose, and Mr. Edward Roberts was elected superintendent, who from that time to the present has been the strongest pillar of the church. In April, 1885, an Independent Church was formed and the Lord's Supper was first administered by the Rev. D. M. Jenkins. They had by this time left Marsh Lane, for an upper room in Peel Road. The cause was already in such a flourishing condition that they felt competent to take the important step of securing a piece of land in Spencer Street, where a school-chapel was erected, at a cost of £450. The opening services were held in July, 1885, when the following ministers took part: the Revs. W. Thomas, Bootle; Hugh Jones, Birkenhead; H. Ivor Jones, Portmadoc; M. O. Evans, Wrexham; D. M. Jenkins, J. O. Williams, Griffith Ellis, M.A., and Isaiah Jones. For several years no minister was appointed, but last year (1892) a unanimous call was given to the Rev. Thomas D. Jones, a student of Bala-Bangor College. The invitation was accepted, and since the commencement of his ministry Mr. Jones has worked

earnestly, and success is following his efforts. The church numbers 100 members, and is entirely free from debt ; and before long they will be compelled to erect a larger and more commodious building, a fund for which purpose has already been started.

II.—A FRAGMENT OF CHESHIRE CONGREGATIONALISM.

JUST across the river, lying between the Dee and the Mersey, is a piece of land which has been called one of the "horns" of Cheshire, whose little group of churches has been so closely associated with the Lancashire Congregational Union as to justify a few notes concerning them. They are notes only, and not complete sketches, inserted with a view of illustrating the generosity and unselfishness of the Congregationalism of the sister county.

Formerly the district was quite rural, and sparsely populated. As late as 1811 Dr. Raffles says that when he crossed the Mersey from the Cheshire side in an open boat, "the great and rapidly increasing town opposite to us, destined ere long to have its representative in the Imperial Parliament, did not then exist. It was a perfect solitude—a park filled with splendid oaks, once appertaining to the ancient Abbey of Birkenhead."¹ Its gradual disparking and peopling by Liverpool merchants made necessary the planting of Congregational churches.

First in point of time comes Hamilton Square Congregational Church, Birkenhead. This building was opened for worship on October 16th, 1838, the services being conducted by the Revs. Dr. Raffles, J. J. Carruthers, and S. Luke, of Chester. On the 26th of February in the following year the church was formed, when twenty two persons entered into fellowship, the Revs. J. Tunstall, S. Luke, J. Kelly, and Dr. Raffles conducting the service. The first minister was the Rev. R. Cope, a student from Airedale College, who entered upon his duties as such in June, 1839, and was ordained on the 13th of November following. He resigned in 1841, and entered the Established Church. His successor was the Rev. W. M. O'Hanlon, from Chorley. He held the pastorate from 1842 to 1845, when he returned to his old charge at Chorley.²

¹ Vide ante p. 158.

² Vide vol. ii. of "*Lancashire Nonconformity.*"

The Rev. H. D. Knowles, B.A., a student from Cheshunt College, followed, and was ordained July 10th, 1846. He resigned about the middle of 1849, and the church was dissolved. The Rev. James Mann, who had received his ministerial training at Glasgow, and had previously laboured for a short time successively at Alexandria, Falkirk, Musselburgh, and Dumfries, was invited by the trustees to take the superintendence of the congregation. The invitation was accepted, and he entered upon his labours on the first Sunday in December, 1851. The church was re-formed on February 9th following. For twenty years Mr. Mann faithfully served the church, when failing health obliged him to resign in June, 1872. He died on the 9th of August following, at the age of sixty years. His successor was the Rev. F. Pringle, educated at Rotherham, and for a few years pastor of the Congregational Church at Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts. He entered upon his charge at Birkenhead in 1873, and remained until 1884, when he removed to Keighley, in Yorkshire, where he still labours. The Rev. R. H. Sewell, B.A., a student from Cheshunt College, followed in 1884. He removed to Reading, in Berkshire, in 1888, and is still labouring there. The present minister is the Rev. Henry Gardner, educated at New College, and who for a short time had laboured at Broseley, Shropshire. He removed to his present charge in January, 1889, being ordained the following April. The chapel has sitting accommodation for about 500 persons; and after a long association with the Lancashire Congregational Union, Hamilton Square Church was transferred to the Cheshire Union in 1882.

"Until within the last seven years," writes the Rev. Charles Goward about 1864, "there was but one Congregational church in Birkenhead, situated so far from Oxton and Claughton as to be of little service to the Nonconformists living in these neighbourhoods. Many professing Congregational principles were therefore constrained to connect themselves with those holding views on church polity different from their own; and a few gentlemen determined to do their utmost to remedy the defect, by forming another Independent cause."¹ Accordingly, a small chapel in Grange Lane, which had been vacated by the Association Metho-

¹ Urwick's "Nonconformity in Cheshire," p. 91.

dists, was taken without delay, the originators of the movement guaranteeing to defray all expenses for the first year. The Rev. J. R. Thomson, M.A., a student from New College, London, conducted the services for a few months in 1855, being followed for a short time by the Rev. D. W. Simon, M.A. (now Dr. Simon). On the 1st of January, 1856, the Rev. F. S. Williams, a New College student, began his labours as the first pastor. The church was formed the following February, and in May of the same year Mr. Williams was ordained. Shortly afterwards the project of erecting a new place of worship was adopted, and on June 22nd, 1858, the present handsome building was opened, sermons being preached by Dr. Raffles in the morning and the Rev. John Stoughton in the evening. The cost, together with the site and school-house, amounted to £5,475, and the sitting accommodation is for 500 persons. Mr. Williams resigned in July, 1861, and for some time remained without charge. Upon the establishment of the Nottingham Congregational Institute he was invited to be English Tutor, in which capacity he served the churches until his death, October 26th, 1886, at the age of fifty-seven years. He was the son of the Rev. Charles Williams, "best known as a valued and voluminous writer of popular books upon history, science, and religion;" and was connected, on the mother's side, with the Smeeton family, "a name long and honourably known among Leicestershire and Northamptonshire Nonconformists." He was a very considerable writer; his work, "Our Iron Roads," and one upon the "Midland Railway," obtaining a large circulation. The Rev. Charles Goward, a student from Airedale College, was appointed successor to Mr. Williams, entering upon his duties as such on the first Sunday in May, 1862. He resigned in 1865, and his present charge is at Middleton-by-Youlgreave, in Derbyshire. The Rev. F. Barnes, B.A., educated at Spring Hill College, and for a few years at Morley, became the minister in 1865. After fourteen years of faithful service he removed to Chester, where he still labours. His successor was the Rev. S. Hester, from Banbury, whose ministerial training was obtained at Cheshunt College. He began his duties at Birkenhead in 1880, and concluded them in 1883. The Rev. J. G. Deaville, from Bury,¹ held the pastorate from 1884 to 1890,

¹ Vide vol. iii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

when he resigned, being now resident without charge at Southport. The present pastor is the Rev. Matthew Stanley, from Bradford. He received his ministerial training at Airedale College, and succeeded Mr. Deaville in 1892. The church appears to have been in association with the Lancashire Congregational Union during the pastorate of the Rev. F. S. Williams, after which it was joined to the Cheshire Union.

Liscard, "formerly an uninteresting and thinly peopled township in the parish of Wallasey, now includes the populous watering places of Egremont and New Brighton."¹ The Congregational Church here originated with John Astley Marsden, Esq., of Liscard Castle, and in what way is stated in the following passage :—

Mr. Marsden, a staunch Dissenter, and a great admirer of the older English divines, was one day passing along some back street in London when his attention was attracted to a marble tablet lying in a builder's yard, the inscription upon which was "To the memory of Dr. Watts." Upon enquiry Mr. Marsden ascertained that it had been set up in Dr. Watts's chapel, S. Mary Axe, and had been purchased by the builder together with the original pulpit, the pews, &c., a few months before when the chapel was pulled down. Mr. Marsden at once became the purchaser, and with great triumph brought home the relics of a man for whom he had the deepest reverence. He immediately set to work, built a church upon his own land to put them in at a cost of about £1,200, and handed it over when finished to trustees for the use of the Congregational body. It was opened on the 1st of September, 1842. It is a neat building, Anglo-Gothic, with lancet windows and a tower. The next year some extensive alterations were made in the building, which cost £800.²

The opening services of the altered and enlarged structure, took place on July 19th, 1843, when the preachers were the Rev. S. Luke, of Chester, in the morning, and Dr. Vaughan, of Lancashire College, in the evening.³ On the same day the church was formed

¹ "Nonconformity in Cheshire," p. 93.

² Ibid.

³ Rev. J. H. Gwyther, B.A., the present Minister, in a recent letter says:—"The actual opening of Liscard Chapel took place in July, 1843, when sermons were preached by Mr. Luke, of Chester, and by Dr. Raffles [Dr. Vaughan, says the *Evangelical Magazine*]. You will see therefore that this is our fiftieth year, and I have just received a note from the daughter of Mr. Marsden, the pious founder, in which she corrects the popular tradition about the Watts' relics, by the statement that her father was already engaged in building a chapel to supply the wants of the neighbourhood, when he saw the advertisement of their sale, and thought that he would like to secure them for his new chapel, and so bought them."

consisting of eleven members, and on the 1st of August following the Rev. W. L. Brown, M.A., late of Lerwick, was recognised as the first pastor. He resigned December 16th, 1844, and removed to Bolton, having accepted an invitation to Mawdsley Street Congregational Church.¹ His successor was the Rev. James Lecouteur. He was born in the island of Jersey, September 8th, 1814, and received his early education at Elizabeth College, Guernsey, and St. Malo, France. He was designed by his friends for the medical profession, but his desire was for ministerial service, and eventually he was placed under the care of the Rev. C. Dewhirst, of Bury St. Edmunds, to be trained for that purpose. His first settlement was at Upwey, in Dorset, whence, after labouring some seven or eight years, he removed to Liscard. He began his labours here May 1st, 1846, and concluded them November 27th, 1849, shortly after becoming pastor of the Congregational Church at Wellington, in Somerset. At this place death terminated his ministry suddenly on December 28th, 1869. The Rev. James Cranbrook, educated at Highbury, and formerly of Stratford-on-Avon, succeeded to the pastorate in April, 1851. In 1864 he removed to Edinburgh, being succeeded at Liscard, in 1867, by the Rev. Leigh Mann, who had been educated at Cheshunt College, and for a few years minister at Melksham, in Wiltshire. He resigned in 1868, and was followed in 1869 by the Rev. J. H. Gwyther, B.A., from Stalybridge. Mr. Gwyther, who is the son of the Rev. James Gwyther, so long an honoured Congregational minister, and one of the General Secretaries of the Lancashire Congregational Union,² after a lapse of more than twenty years still ministers to an affectionate and appreciative people at Liscard. About twelve months ago the Rev. E. E. Wilkins, from the Free Church College, Edinburgh, was appointed his assistant. The church was altered and enlarged in 1888, bringing its sitting accommodation up to about 700 persons; and on its south wall is Dr. Watts's interesting tablet, which contains the following inscription:—

¹ Vide vol. iii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

זכר עדין לברכה

(PROV. x. 7.)

The following humble inscription was composed by Dr. Watts a short time before his death and, according to his Desire, is written upon this Tombstone at Bunhill Fields :

ISAAC WATTS, D.D.,

Pastor of a Church in Bury Street, London, successor of the
Rev. Joseph Caryl.

Dr. John Owen, Mr. Clarkson, and Dr. Isaac Charneley, after fifty years of feeble labours in the Gospel, interrupted by four years of painful sickness, was at last dismissed to rest Nov. 25, A.D., 1748.

Æt 75.

2. Cor., v. 5.—“Absent from the body, present with the Lord.”

Col. iii., 4.—“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, I shall also appear with him in glory.”

In uno Jesus omnia.

In 1890 the church, which had been in association with the Lancashire Congregational Union from its commencement, was transferred to the Cheshire Union.

In addition to these two Congregational churches in the town of Birkenhead, there is a third one in Prenton Road West which was formed in 1888, of which the Rev. James Wishart, M.A., formerly of Toxteth Park, Liverpool, was pastor a short time. The present minister, the Rev. W. Stanley Lamb, a student from Cheshunt College, began his labours as such in 1892. There is also the Zion Welsh Congregational Church, which has been in existence nearly fifty years, of which the Rev. H. E. Thomas was long the pastor, and was succeeded by the Rev. Hugh Jones. The pulpit is at present vacant.

Rock Ferry Congregational Church, an elegant Gothic structure, with a stately tower and spire, having sitting accommodation for 800 hearers, was opened for public worship on November 15th, 1871. Its cost was about £7,000, towards which the Chapel Building Society gave £1,000. A schoolroom, providing space for 500 scholars, was erected later at a cost of about £2,200, towards which the Chapel Building Society again gave help to the extent of £250. The first minister was the Rev. R. Ashcroft, who removed from Bamford in 1871, to take charge of the church.

He resigned in 1876, and joined the Christadelphians, subsequently returning to Congregationalism, and settling as minister at Seaforth.¹ He was followed in 1878 by the Rev. C. A. Mines, B.A. Mr. Mines, who is still the respected pastor of the church, was educated for the ministry at Spring Hill College, and, previous to his settlement at Rock Ferry, had held successful pastorates at Albion Chapel, Nottingham, and the Upper Chapel, Heckmondwike. A mission at Tranmere has developed into an important interest in connection with Rock Ferry Church, and Mr. Mines has had the assistance of the Rev. Joshua Pedlar in his work since 1884.

On the Dee side of this "horn" of Cheshire land with which we are dealing is Hoylake, of which we have the following interesting account as it appeared nearly a century ago:—

Between one and two miles from Wallisea, a very noble hotel was erected, about ten years ago, by Sir John Thomas Stanley, Bart., of Alderley, for the accommodation of persons visiting the sea side. This is much frequented in the summer season by the resident families of Cheshire and its neighbourhood, who visit this spot for the purpose of bathing in *Hyle Lake*, which is bounded by the projecting land of the Wirral peninsula, and the coast of the small Isle of Hilbrie, or *Hille byri*. The Isle is about one mile in circuit; and though the soil is scarcely anything but sand, had formerly a cell of Benedictine Monks, belonging to the Abbey at Chester. "At *Hyle Lake*," says Mr. Gough, "Duke Schomberg encamped when he was to reduce Ireland after the Revolution, and here his forces embarked. The place was called *Wallase Lizer*, a large fine spot, where races were run for many years; but those races are now run at Newmarket, though still called the Wallisea Stakes."²

In the summer of 1870 Congregationalists had their attention directed towards this interesting place, preaching services were commenced, and the Executive Committee made a generous grant from the funds of the Lancashire Congregational Union, in aid of the work. After a short time, the Rev. George Manning, from Parkhead, Cumberland, was appointed Evangelist, the engagement being from year to year. The "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" for 1874-75, says that the "small and uncom-

¹ Vide ante p. 221.

² Britton's "Beauties of England and Wales," vol. ii., p. 305.

fortable hired room in which worship had hitherto been held, had been exchanged for other premises, which had been purchased, considerably enlarged, and fitted up, so as to make a comfortable house of prayer"; that the entire outlay had been about £750, the sum of £650 remaining to be paid,¹ to reduce which liability, a vigorous effort was about to be made; and that the Rev. R. G. Soper, B.A., had accepted "an invitation, unanimously given," in January, 1874, to be the pastor of the church, which was formally constituted in that year. Mr. Soper, who still continues his useful labours here, was educated at Lancashire College, and previous to his settlement at Hoylake, had held pastorates at Clevedon, in Somersetshire, and Ludlow, in Shropshire. In 1884, the church which had yearly received a grant from the funds of the Lancashire Congregational Union, became associated with the Cheshire Union. In the same year a new school chapel was erected in another part of the village. Its cost was £1,700, which was paid off within two years of the opening. The sitting accommodation is for 350 people. The old chapel was bought by the Wesleyans.

The latest addition to the Congregational interests on the Cheshire side of the Mersey is the promising little church at Seacombe, of which the Rev. W. E. Thomas, of Aberdare, became pastor in 1892.

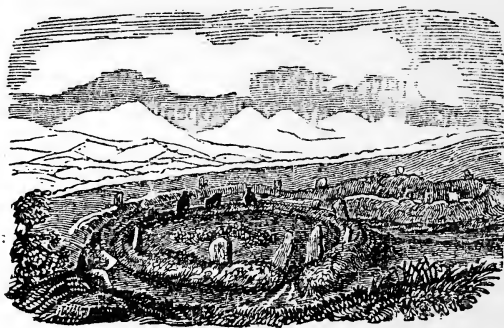
III.—CONGREGATIONALISM IN THE ISLE OF MAN.

SOME sixty or seventy miles of broad sea lie between the Isle of Man and the Lancashire coast, yet its name has become a household word in this county. Thousands of busy Lancashire toilers, set free for a brief season from the mill, the office, and the exchange, find their way each year to its quiet glens, climb its mountains, make merry upon its charming bays, and come back to life's duties charged with new supplies of vigour and healthfulness, which a visit to the Isle of Man always ensures. That fact alone makes the insertion of the story of Manx Congregationalism in the "History of Lancashire Nonconformity" not altogether

¹ This debt was soon afterwards extinguished.

inappropriate. The truth, however, is that the Congregational churches of the Island are, and have been almost from the beginning of their existence, a part of the Lancashire Congregational Union. Before proceeding, however, to give their story, the reader will probably welcome a brief account of the general ecclesiastical history of the Island.

Manx early history, like that of other countries, is shrouded in legend and myth. Hence, Mannanan-Beg-Mac-y-Leirr, the first ruler in Man, and to whom it is indebted for its name, according to the records of the Island, reigned many years, and was a "paynim," who "kept the land under mist by his necromancy.



THE DRUIDICAL CIRCLE AT GLEN DARRAGH.

If he dreaded an enemy, he would cause one man to seem a hundred, and that by art magic."

Druidism is the first form of religious life in the Island with which we are acquainted, but precisely how and when it was introduced is not clear. According to some a descendant of the famous Mannanan first established the Druids here, considerably before the Christian Era; others, however, say that the Isle of Man was the final retreat of the Druids, "after the cruel massacre of their brethren in the Isle of Anglesey by the ambitious Romans" in the first century. Certain it is that, however introduced, and cruel as many of its practices were, Druidism exercised a very wide and

beneficent influence upon the people.¹ "The Druids," writes one, "greatly ameliorated the condition of the people by introducing among them the advantage of government and consequent social order. For many of those simple and admirable principles of equity which form the basis of the common law, the Manx as well as the English, are indebted to the venerable prophets of the mistletoe."²

In the fifth century Christianity was introduced into the Island by St. Patrick, who "found the people, at least the Rulers, given to Magick ; but being overcome or convinced by his preaching and

¹ Druidical remains are not uncommon in the Island, and not less conclusive of the widespread influence of Druidism are some quite modern observances. The following respecting St. Maughold's Well, written in 1848, is interesting, and bears upon the point :—

"Beneath the rocks which form the bold promontory of Maughold is the celebrated spring called St. Maughold's Well, the water of which is remarkably clear and refrigerant. The custom, not yet obsolete, of resorting to this well on the first Sunday in August is most probably of Druidical origin. The spot is precisely such as would have been selected by those hoary prophets for an annual assembly, when, probably, oracles would be delivered to the superstitious enquirers. It was the practice of the emissaries of the Church of Rome, when carrying their religion to a new region, not to abolish heathen *observances*, but merely to substitute a new pretext, having some reference to the new religion. Thus, in Ireland, they did not abrogate the custom of burning fires in honour of the Sun at the beginning and end of harvest, but instructed the benighted heathens to dedicate their fires to John the Baptist, which the peasantry continue to do to this day. So with regard to Maughold's Well. That captain of Irish Rapparees having selected this spot as his favourite abode, and having afterwards been canonized in honour of his self-imposed penances, the people were instructed to repair to his well at a particular season, as they had formerly done to receive the oracular responses of the Druids. But as it was necessary to substitute a new pretext, the well was forthwith invested with the properties of preventing and curing barrenness, to which priestly juggle the chalybeate quality of the spring gave some colouring, at least in those days of medical ignorance. The fructifying virtues, it is needless to say, have disappeared with the priests who administered the draught, but the people still observe the custom of resorting to the spot once a year, though it may be safely affirmed, that the major part of them know not wherefore they are come together."—"Isle of Man Guide," by J. B. Loughton, B.A., p. 150.

² "Isle of Man Guide," by J. B. Loughton, B.A., p. 8. In vol. iii., of "Lancashire Nonconformity" the reader will find an engraving of the "Cutting of the Mistletoe."

miracles, they were converted or else expelled the Island." After about three years' labours, he went to Ireland, leaving St. Germain, "a holy and prudent man," to complete the work which he had begun; and he "so absolutely settled the business of religion that the Island never afterwards relapsed." Equally prominent amongst the early traditions of the Island is the name of St. Maughold, who had been the captain of a band of Irish robbers, but was subsequently converted to Christianity, and who was driven ashore in a leathern boat near the bold promontory on the east coast which bears his name. His high reputation and superior piety led to his being called unanimously to the Episcopal chair, and tradition says that St. Bridget, a celebrated Irish nun, visited these shores for the purpose of taking the veil from his hands. It is impossible to unravel the tangled mass of fact and fiction which belongs to this period; consequently, the three popular saints shall be left undisturbed in the glories which the centuries have thrown around them.

"The Reformation," says Bishop Wilson, "was begun something later here than in England, but so happily carried on that there has not for many years been one Papist, a native, in the Island; nor, indeed, are there Dissenters of any denomination, except a family or two of Quakers, unhappily perverted during the late Civil Wars; and even some of these have of late been baptiz'd into the Church."¹

The Bishop of the Island about the outbreak of the Civil War was Dr. Parr, a Lancashire man, who had previously been rector of Eccleston, near Ormskirk. A high character is given to him, and it is said that during his residence many oppressive ordinances

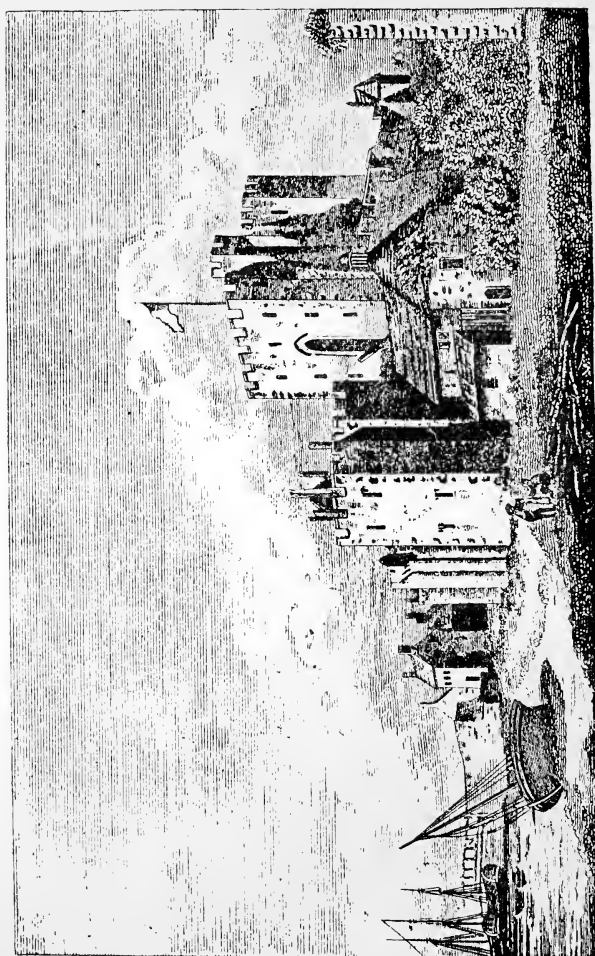
¹ The passage above cited is from an account of the Isle of Man written by Bishop Wilson for "Camden's Britannia" (vol. ii., p. 1450) Second Edition, published in 1722. The account contains some very curious information about the physical features of the Island. "There are several noxious animals," says he, "such as Badgers, Foxes, Otters, Filmerts, Moles, Hedgehogs, Snakes, Toads, &c., which the inhabitants know no more of than their names, as also several Birds, such as the Woodpecker, the Jay, the Maup, &c. And it is not long since a person more fanciful, than prudent or kind to his country, brought in a breed of Magpies, which have increas'd incredibly, so as to become a nuisance. And it is not two years since somebody brought in Frogs, which they say increase very fast." The tradition is that St. Patrick banished all sorts of vermin from both the Isle of Man and Ireland.

were repealed, and "many shameful practices of the clergy were reformed, in consequence of the determined opposition of the people."¹ For some seventeen years after his death the see was vacant. This was the period of the Civil War in England, in which the Derby family, to whom the Island then belonged, played so prominent a part. Its story does not come within the scope of this work ; suffice it to say that it was from the Isle of Man that the Earl of Derby went to join Charles at the battle of Worcester, which resulted so disastrously for the Royal cause, and ended in himself being taken prisoner and executed at Bolton on October 15th, 1651. His brave Countess, whom he had left behind on the Island, and who had so brilliantly defended Lathom House in 1644 against the Parliamentary forces, hearing of the preparations of her enemies to deprive her of this final retreat, retired to Castle Rushen, Castletown, meaning to hold it to the last extremity. Colonels Dukinfield and Birch, members of old Puritan families in Lancashire, sailed against the Island with a large force ; and Captain Christian, in whom the Countess principally confided, seeing the uselessness of resistance, it is said, without her knowledge, surrendered the whole Island. Until the Restoration the Countess was kept a prisoner.

Shortly after the Restoration Dr. Isaac Barrow was appointed Bishop, whose services to the cause of religion were very considerable ; but the most eminent of all those who occupied the Episcopal chair was Dr. Thomas Wilson, a Cheshire man, born in the little village of Burton, and for some time curate of Newchurch, near Winwick, in Lancashire. "When he arrived in the Isle of Man," says the Rev. Samuel Haining, "the prospect was truly appalling : the house at Bishop's Court, which was to be his residence, was lying in ruins ; the churches were in a state of dilapidation ; the revenues had not been regularly collected ; the clergy were ignorant ; and the people, engaged in smuggling, were immoral."² During the fifty-eight years of his Episcopate, he "never omitted the active duties of the sanctuary, and regularly visited the parishes and churches on Sundays without giving them

¹ "Isle of Man Guide," by the Rev. Samuel Haining, p. 49.

² *Ibid.*



CASTLE RUSHEN, SIXTY YEARS AGO.

any intimation, that he might ascertain how the worship of God was attended and the manner in which the duties of religion were performed."¹

Writing in 1848, Mr. Laughton says :—

With the name of Wilson the pen fondly lingers. It is a name dear to the very stones of the Island. Not only on these lonely and storm-beaten coasts is the name and memory of that just man blessed, "his praise is in all the churches" wherever the doctrine and discipline of the primitive church are revered,² where the character of Bishop Wilson is held in remembrance. It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the rapturous enthusiasm which attaches to his memory in the Island. A stranger must see the sparkling eye and animated countenance, and hear the subdued and trembling accents of the natives, when speaking of their ancient father, to enable him to understand the faint eulogy with which an Englishman seeks to record his distant participation in those exalted feelings. A simple unostentatious stone covers the ashes of the great and good; and if, among the thousands who yearly arrive on these shores, there be one whose heart is susceptible of that holy emotion, which the contemplation of departed excellence is calculated to inspire; if there be one who loves to shed a tributary tear on the grave of the righteous man, who "perisheth and no man layeth it to his heart," let him wend his lonely way to the old churchyard of Kirk Michael, where he will experience a crowd of sensations, such as he could never receive from the field of "glorious victory," though a nation of his enemies were sepulchred beneath it.³

The inscription upon his tombstone reads thus :—

Sleeping in Jesus,
here lieth the body of
THOMAS WILSON, D.D.,
Lord Bishop of this Isle,
Who died March the 7th, 1756,
Aged 93.

And in the fifty-eighth year of his consecration.

This monument was erected by his own son THOMAS WILSON, D.D.,
a native of this parish,
who, in obedience to the *express command* of his father, declines
giving him the character he so justly deserved.
Let this Island speak the rest.

¹ "Isle of Man Guide," by the Rev. S. Haining, p. 52.

² And where they are not; *i.e.*, even a Nonconformist can revere and respect the memory of so good a man as Bishop Wilson however much opposed to his doctrines.

³ "Isle of Man Guide," pp. 41, 42.

Men of varying degrees of excellence have succeeded to the Episcopate, but as this account is only meant to give a general idea of the ecclesiastical history of the Island, "with the name of Wilson" my "pen" must pause, so far as the Episcopal Church is concerned. I shall only add an interesting passage from the Rev. S. Haining's pen. After pointing out that the established religion of the Island is the Episcopal Church of England, writing in 1835, he says :—

Liberty of conscience is enjoyed by the inhabitants, and the Statute Book of this Island is not disgraced by any penal laws to restrict our freedom in the worship of God. The noble struggles of our ancestors to maintain their religious freedom have secured to us the blessings of civil liberty; even Hume, the Tory historian, with all his inveterate prejudices against Christianity, has candidly acknowledged that we are indebted to the exertions of the Puritans for all the civil liberty which we enjoy. These venerable men, however, did not regain all that had been wrested from them, and England, with all her boasted religious liberty, is surpassed by the Isle of Man. Here no preacher of any denomination is required to obtain a license for himself, or the place in which he worships; and a man's being a Dissenter is no disqualification for any civil employment.¹

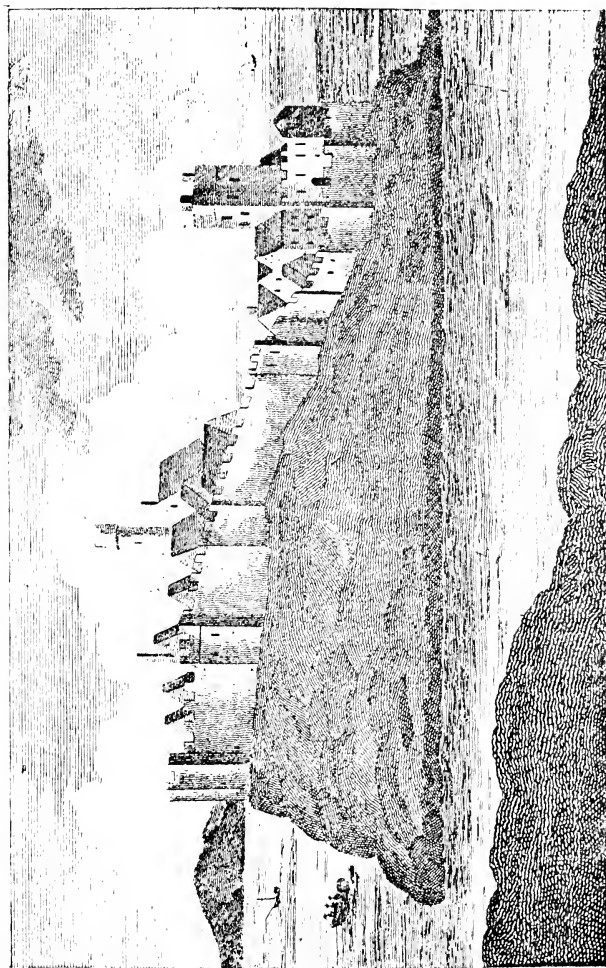
Wesleyanism was the first form of Free Church life to appear on the Island. In 1781 it was visited by John Wesley, and, as his account of the Island is full of interesting points, it is given here in full :—

Wed. [May] 30.—I embarked on board the packet-boat [from Whitehaven] for the Isle of Man. We had a dead calm for many hours; however, we landed at Douglas on Friday morning. Both the preachers met us here, [Wesleyanism had been introduced some six years before] and gave me a comfortable account of the still increasing work of God.

Before dinner, we took a walk in a garden near the town, wherein any of the inhabitants of it may walk. It is wonderfully pleasant, yet not so pleasant as the gardens of the Nunnery (so it is still called), which are not far from it. These are delightfully laid out, and yield to few places of the size in England. At six I preached in the Market-place, to a large congregation, all of whom except a few children, and two or three giddy young women, were seriously attentive.

Sat. June 2.—I rode to Castleton, through a pleasant and (now) well-cultivated country. At six I preached in the Market-place, to most of the

¹ "Isle of Man Guide," p. 55.



PEEL CASTLE, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF LAST CENTURY.

inhabitants of the town, on "One thing is needful." I believe the word carried conviction into the hearts of nearly all that heard it. Afterwards I walked to the house of one of our English friends, about two miles from the town. All the day I observed, wherever I was, one circumstance that surprised me; In England we generally hear the birds singing, morning and evening; but here thrushes, and various other kinds of birds, were singing all day long. They did not intermit, even during the noon-day heat, where they had a few trees to shade them.

June 3.—(Being *Whit-Sunday*.) I preached in the Market-place again about nine, to a still larger congregation than before, on, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." How few of the genteel hearers could say so! About four in the afternoon, I preached at Barewle, on the mountains, to a larger congregation than that in the morning. The rain began soon after I began preaching, but ceased in a few minutes. I preached on, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and showed in what sense this belongs to us and to our children. Between six and seven I preached on the sea-shore at Peel, to the largest congregation I have seen in the Island; even the society mostly filled the house. I soon found what spirit they were of. Hardly in England (unless, perhaps, at Bolton) have I found so plain, so earnest, and so simple a people.

Mon. 4.—We had such a congregation at five as might have been expected on a Sunday evening. We then rode through and over the mountains to Beergarrow where I enforced on an artless loving congregation, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." A few miles from thence we came to Bishop's Court, where good Bishop Wilson resided near three score years. There is something venerable, though not magnificent, in the ancient palace; and it is undoubtedly situated in one of the pleasantest spots of the whole Island. At six in the evening I preached at Balleugh, but the preaching-house would not contain one half of the congregation, of which the vicar, Mr. Gillling, with his wife, sister, and daughter, were a part. He invited me to take a breakfast with him in the morning, *Tuesday* 5, which I willingly did. We read family prayers before breakfast, in a very serious manner. After spending a little time very agreeably, I went on to Kirk-Andrews [Andreas]. Here, also, I was obliged to preach in the open air; the rain being suspended till I had done. In the afternoon we rode through a pleasant and fruitful country to Ramsay, about as large as Peel, and more regularly built. The rain was again suspended while I preached to well nigh all the town; but I saw no inattentive hearers.

Wed. 6.—We had many of them again at five, and they were all attentive. This was the place where the preachers had little hope of doing good. I trust they will be happily disappointed.

This morning we rode through the most woody, and far the pleasantest part of the Island; a range of fruitful land lying at the foot of the mountains, from Ramsay, through Sulby, to Kirkmichael. There we stopped to look at the plain tombstones of those two good men, Bishop Wilson and Bishop Hildesley, whose remains are deposited side by side at the east end of the

church. We had scarce reached Peel before the rain increased, but here the preaching house contained all that could come. Afterwards Mr. Crook desired me to meet the singers. I was agreeably surprised. I have not heard better singing either at Bristol or London. Many, both men and women, have admirable voices; and they sing with good judgment. Who would have expected this in the Isle of Man?

Thur. 7.—I met our little body of Preachers. They were two-and-twenty in all. I never saw in England so many stout, well-looking Preachers together. If their spirit be answerable to their look, I know not what can stand before them. In the afternoon I rode over to Dawby, and preached to a very large and very serious congregation.

Fri. 8.—Having now visited the Island round, east, south, north, and west, I was thoroughly convinced that we have no such circuit as this, either in England, Scotland, or Ireland. It is shut up from the world; and, having little trade, is visited by scarce any strangers. There are no Papists, no Dissenters of any kind, no Calvinists, no disputers. There is no opposition, either from the governor (a mild, humane man), from the Bishop (a good man), or from the bulk of the clergy. One or two of them did oppose for a time, but they seem now to understand better; so that we have now rather too little than too much reproach; the scandal of the cross being, for the present ceased. The natives are a plain, artless, simple people; unpolished, that is unpolluted; few of them are rich or genteel; and the far greater part, moderately poor, and most of the strangers that settle among them are men that have seen affliction. The Local Preachers are men of faith and love, knit together in one mind and one judgment. They speak either Manx or English, and follow a regular plan, which the assistant gives them monthly. The Isle is supposed to have thirty thousand inhabitants. Allowing half of them to be adults, and our societies to contain one or two-and-twenty hundred members, what a fair proportion is this! What has been seen like this in any part either of Great Britain or Ireland?

Sat. 9.—We would willingly have set sail but the strong north-east wind prevented us.

Monday, 11.—It being moderate, we put to sea; but it soon died away with a calm.¹

Wesleyan Methodism, which thus early won such remarkable success amongst the Manx people, has retained its foremost position amongst the religious forces of the Island. The Primitive Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and even

¹ "Wesley's Journal," vol. iv., pp. 195-197. Mr. Wesley records in his Journal that the calm continuing through Tuesday, it was Wednesday morning before the vessel reached Whitehaven. How different to day when Liverpool, about twice the distance to Whitehaven, may be reached from Douglas in less than four hours, and in nearly all sorts of weather.

"Papists," with other small sects, have followed, and are represented by interests more or less strong ; but the Wesleyan Methodists are considerably the strongest Nonconformist denomination in the Isle of Man.

Manx Congregationalism is nearly a century old, and it owes its origin to the Rev. Samuel Haining. From a document in the possession of the present minister of the Finch Hill Congregational Church, Douglas, the Rev. David Inglis, B.A., whose wife is the grand-daughter of Mr. Haining, the following, from Mr. Haining's pen, relating to the "commencement of the cause" and the "various discouragements" which had to be faced, is copied :—

In the year 1804, the Rev. Samuel Haining, then a student at Edinburgh, visited the Island to ascertain the state of religion, and to try what could be done to establish a Christian society regulated by New Testament principles. He preached throughout the Island for a few weeks, and then returned to finish his studies. Application was made to him by some who had heard him preach to come amongst them, and, being advised by Christian friends to do so, he complied, and laboured in the different parts of the Island. A church was formed in Douglas on Congregational principles, consisting of eight members, and he was ordained to the pastoral care of the church on the 15th August, 1808, by Rev. Mr. White, Chester, Rev. Job Wilson, Northwich, Rev. Jenkin Lewis, Wrexham, and Rev. [Charles] Ely, Bury. Four places of worship were occupied before a chapel was built, which was begun in 1811, and opened for worship in the month of January, 1813. Many difficulties had to be surmounted from the ignorance of the people and their opposition to the doctrines of grace, from the attachment to the Church Establishment, and from the prevailing influence of Methodism in the Island, from the insufficiency of means of support, and the want of active pious persons to co-operate in the spheres of usefulness formed, from the removals, by death, of many attached friends, and from many members and hearers of the word being obliged to go to other places to reside ; but owing to the kind Providence of God we continue a people still.

Mr. Haining was accustomed to write in the Church Book the nationality of each person admitted, and it is interesting to note that those in fellowship during 1808, the year of the church's formation, represented four kingdoms. The following is the list :—

ANTHONY FITZCHARLES, Deacon.
HUGH DOUGLAS, Scotch.
Mrs. DOUGLAS, Scotch.
ANN KELLY.

SUSANNAH BLUER.
 JANE HAINING.
 JOHN ALEXANDER, Manx.
 GEORGE REDFERNE, Manx.
 MARY FITZCHARLES, Manx.
 LADY MACARTNEY, Irish.
 ELIZA MACARTNEY, Irish.
 GRACE HANNAY, Scotch.
 WILLIAM HANNAY, Scotch.
 MISS KERSHAW, English.
 MISS EARNSBY, English.

Athol Street Chapel, which was about two years in building, was opened January 24th, 1813, and its cost was as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Purchase of the Ground	189	0	0
Building the Walls on	162	0	0
Clearing the Ground and Digging the Foundation ...	40	0	0
Timber	331	17	8
Workmanship	116	9	3
Slates	65	7	8
Slating	18	0	0
Windows, Lead, and laying it on	47	19	0
Plastering	84	0	0
Ironmonger's Bill	34	0	0
Lamps... ..	28	0	0
Painting Windows and Doors	10	0	0
Stone Cutter's Bill	32	0	0
Samuel Hill, for Superintending Putting on the Roof, and Sundries	65	14	1½
Extras not included in any of the above	40	16	6

£1,265 4 2½

Gallery.

	£	s.	d.
Timber from Mr. Quayle, Liverpool	15	4	4
Do. from Robert Corlette	16	0	0
Workmanship for the Shell of the Gallery	24	0	0
Timber from R. Corlette for the Seats	68	13	11¼
Do. from E. Forbes for do.	15	0	0
Workmanship for Seats and Stairs	36	0	0
Ironmonger's Bill	14	0	0
Plasterers' Bill	6	10	0
Extras not included above	10	0	0

£205 8 3¼

Shortly after the chapel was opened, a Sunday School was commenced, probably owing to the starting of a Methodist School in the town.¹ The following relates to the event :—

A Methodist Sunday School for the religious education of children of both sexes and of all denominations, will be opened in this town on Sunday next [May 2, 1813]. We understand that a Sunday School will also be opened at the Independent Chapel, Athol Street, on Sunday next, under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Haining.²

It is much to be regretted that the information respecting Mr. Haining, the apostle of Manx Congregationalism, is not more full. A native of Kirkcudbright, and, as previously stated, educated at Edinburgh, it would be interesting to know what led him to turn his attention in the direction of this Island. Settled, however, here,³ like most of the Congregational ministers of that day, being filled with the Missionary spirit, he made his church at Douglas the centre of manifold labours. In 1815 pecuniary assistance was sought from the Lancashire Congregational Union, and in the Report, ending April, 1816, appears the following interesting paragraph :—

The attention of your committee has been directed also towards the *Isle of Man*, from which place they received a strong appeal to their feelings on behalf of the cause at *Douglas*, where our faithful brother Mr. HAINING has laboured for eleven years with considerable success, amidst great opposition. Driven by persecution from one building to another, his congregation were at last compelled to build for themselves. This has, however, occasioned a debt which presses so heavy upon them, that their minister has been obliged to keep a school for his support, and has thus been prevented from itinerating, the necessity of which is felt by all there. To assist him in doing so, your committee have, agreeable to a resolution of the last half-yearly meeting, taken the case into their serious consideration, and appointed a sub committee with discretionary power to arrange this business.

¹ Happily the spirit of unfriendliness, which, in the early days of Methodism existed between it and other Nonconformist denominations, has long ago passed away.

² *Manx Advertiser* for May 1, 1813.

³ The following extract from the *Manx Advertiser* for July 13th, 1811, is interesting as determining the place of Mr. Haining's residence during his first years upon the Island :—

“Doctor Bible has taken a lease of and removed to the house lately occupied by the Rev. S. Haining in Muckles Gate, next door to Mr. Clegg's.”

The appeal was successful, the sum of £25 was granted, and as the result, we get the following report in April, 1818:—

At the last annual meeting Mr. HAINING was taken under the wing of the Union, as an itinerant in this long neglected Island; and he has laboured abundantly, in not less than twelve different towns and villages; some of them distant ten, fifteen, or even twenty miles from his residence. There are only two places in the Island in which he has not yet been able to preach, and he hopes shortly to visit them. He is in the habit of preaching five times in the week, besides the labours of the Sabbath. In his own congregation at Douglas, he has been more successful than in any former year, having been enabled to give himself wholly to the ministry. Among the places visited by Mr. HAINING he particularises the following: *Union Mills, Kirk Onihan* [Onchan?] *Ramsey, Ballaugh, and Castletown* (the capital of the Island), in each of which, many who were living without God in the world, have attended the preaching of the Gospel, and have manifested a great desire to have it continued. Thus has the sum of £25 enabled a faithful minister to carry the glad tidings of great joy to hundreds who were perishing for lack of knowledge; and, with the continued assistance of the Union, he will not fail to preach among them the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Mention is made in the foregoing extract of Ramsey and Castletown, where Mr. Haining frequently preached. Congregational churches existed here for a short time, and at this point it will be convenient to give the few items of information about them which I have been able to obtain. As early as 1810, a church had been established at Ramsey, and the following is an account of the ordination of a minister to the pastorate on September 23rd of that year:—

Rev. Js. Taylor was ordained pastor of the Independent Church, Isle of Man. Mr. D. Lewis, Llanbrynmair, introduced the service. Mr. Haining, of Douglas, described the nature of a Gospel Church from Acts ix. 31; Mr. D. Jones, of Holywell, asked the questions and prayed the ordination prayer; Mr. Haining delivered the charge from 1 Tim., iv., 16; Mr. Jones preached to the people from Phil. i., 27. first clause; Mr. Haining concluded by prayer. The congregation was large, remarkably attentive, and apparently much affected. For five years Mr. Haining occasionally preached in Ramsey. Mr. Taylor has laboured there for more than a year, with considerable acceptance; a church is formed, and the prospect is encouraging. This is the second Independent Church lately planted in the Isle of Man.¹

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1811, p. 116.

The County Union Report, ending April, 1820, states that whilst there had been "several additions to the church at Ramsey," it had to "deplore the loss of its principal friend." In 1821 the Home Missionary Society sent the Rev. Mr. Baker to take charge of the church, who is said to have laboured with "great promise of success." In 1829 "Vacant from Removal" is written against the church, and shortly afterwards, it appears to have died out. Possibly consequent upon this, at any rate, about that time a Congregational church was established at Castletown. The Rev. Mr. Morss was minister in 1833, but he was "not yet ordained."

The County Union Report for the year ending April, 1837, has the following respecting Castletown :—

The Rev. Mr. BERRY states, that during the past year the interest at this place has proved a source of "animation, depression, and perplexity." Full one third of the original congregation, including several of their most active and valuable coadjutors, have been removed to England. In the midst of these discouragements, however, he considers that the cause has substantially advanced in public estimation, and the people seem to be united, and deeply concerned for the welfare of the place. Mr. BERRY has preached at *Port Lethary*, *Balla Beg*, *Balla Salla*, and the *Strand*, where the congregations have been good, though the severity of the weather and sickness have prevented his visiting them with the regularity he desired. The congregation at *Castletown* has varied from thirty to sixty. There are at present seventeen members in the Church ; there are forty children in the Sunday School. Mr. BERRY considers the village congregations as very encouraging ; usually they are about forty. At the *Strand* in particular, the place is always full, and the congregation remarkably serious and devout.

In the autumn of 1837, Mr. Berry resigned, and retired from the Island, and during the winter the place of worship was closed ; but it was re-opened in the following spring "under very encouraging circumstances," and the Rev. Mr. Saxton, formerly a student of Rotherham College, became the minister. The church remained in existence only a few years longer.

Returning to Mr. Haining, the County Union Report, ending May, 1821, states that the Home Missionary Society had "kindly expressed their intention to supply the Island with the means of itinerant preaching" ; but their efforts were to be "considered auxiliary" to those of the Lancashire Congregational Union. As

the result of this, Mr. Baker, as we have seen, was sent to Ramsey, with whom Mr. Haining "zealously" co-operated. From the *Evangelical Magazine* for 1822, the following is taken, which illustrates how anxious the little band of Congregationalists in Athol Street were to spread their principles in the Island :—

At a meeting of the friends of religion in Athol Street Chapel, Douglas, Isle of Man, May 27th, 1822, was formed "The Isle of Man Congregational Itinerant Society," designed to spread the gospel throughout that Island by means of preaching and of schools. Mr. W. Kelly was appointed President, and the Rev. T. F. Winslow,¹ Secretary. The gospel is now preached in several parts of the Island. The communication from Liverpool or Greenock being greatly facilitated by means of steam boats, they hope to receive visits from their Christian friends thereabouts. The climate is healthy, the living cheap, and the sea-bathing, they say, excellent. It is proposed, as soon as possible to procure ministers to preach to the inhabitants in *Manks*, their native language.²

Following this Mr. Haining was able to report to the Lancashire Congregational Union, in 1823 :—

There are now, at least, four preachers in constant motion throughout the Island. And there are encouraging accounts of the places in which the word of God is preached under the patronage of this Society.

Mr. Haining continued to receive help from the Union Funds for some years after this, but no further information about his work appears in the Reports. In 1829 the following information respecting the ecclesiastical condition of the Island is given :—

Population, 50,000. Diocese, *Sodor and Mann*. The existing churches will not afford room for more than 9,000. In Douglas, 7,000 inhabitants, and the Episcopal churches cannot accommodate 1,400 hearers. *Wesleyan Methodists*, 3 circuits, 5 preachers. CONTRIBUTIONS—*Bible Society*, £86 3s. *Wesleyan Methodists*, £140 14s. 7d. *Church ditto*, £25.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS, 65. Scholars, 3,602.

Place.	Pastor.	Remarks.
Douglas	Rev. S. Haining	... Erected 1813.
Kirkmichael, Peel...	— Dalrymple.	
Ramsey	Vacant from Removal. ³

¹ Probably this was Mr. Thomas Winslow, who was recommended by the church at Islington, London, to the Glasgow Theological Academy, where he was entered as a student in 1819.

² Page 363.

³ "Congregational Magazine" for 1829, p. 735.

The Rev. A. Jack, Congregational minister of Whitehaven, paid a visit to the Island in 1833, in connection with the London Missionary Society, and in a letter to the Home Secretary, says :—

I was much gratified with the kind reception which Mr. Rodgerson and myself met with in the Island, and the disposition shown to help the great cause of missions. The brethren in Douglas and in Castletown showed themselves quite alive in the work and only complained that they had so long been left out of the churches to which appeals had been made for support. There are only two Congregational Churches in the Island, one in Douglas, under the pastoral care of Mr. Haining, and the other at Castletown, under the care of Mr. Morss, who is not yet ordained. There's a Scotch church in Douglas, but in a very feeble state. I formed *An Auxiliary Society for the Island* at Douglas, which I hope will succeed. It is placed in the hands of some active young ladies, who, I have no doubt, will work well. I formed also an *Association at Castletown* which promises well. They will both, however, be only miniatures, for there is not a Manchester in the Island. Will you be so kind as to send to me, by the first monthly parcel, some missionary papers adapted for circulation at Douglas and at Castletown, that the ladies may proceed vigorously in their work. I am happy that I had an opportunity of making known the society and its claims to many who seemed to have no idea that any other Missionary Society existed beside the Wesleyan. I promised that if it were in my power I would revisit the Island next year, and keep alive the impression made in favour of the Society. The Primitive Methodists showed us much kindness in granting the use of their chapels. The collections amounted to £26 5s. 7d.¹

Mr. Haining continued his useful labours at Douglas until they were interrupted by death in 1846. His tombstone in the graveyard of St. George's Church, Douglas, contains the following inscription :—

In Memory of
JANE.
Wife of The Rev. Samuel Haining,
of this town,
She departed this life on the 16th of January, 1843,
Aged 60 Years.
Also of the Rev. SAMUEL HAINING,
A native of Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland,
who came to this Island in 1804, as a Minister of the Gospel of Christ,
and was Pastor of the Church and Congregation which met
in the Independent Chapel,
Atholl Street, in this town from its erection in 1813
till his death on the
22nd of August, 1846, in the 68th Year of his Age;

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1833, p. 421.

Also,
JAMES HAINING,
Eldest Son of the Rev. Samuel Haining,
Died 25th February, 1876,
Aged 67 Years.

Mr. Haining was one of the originators of the Lancasterian School, now St. George's Church Day and Sunday School, of which the Rev. D. Inglis, B.A., as his representative, is a trustee; also of the Isle of Man Auxiliary of the Bible Society, going up to London to obtain the needful information. He was the author of a capital Isle of Man Guide, which passed through two or three editions; and he published, "Mormonism Weighed in the Balances of the Sanctuary and Found Wanting;" "Strictures on the Charge of the Bishop of Sodor and Mann, Delivered to his clergy at Bishop's Court, July 10th, 1844;" and a sermon on "Regeneration." He was an excellent Hebrew scholar, and during the forty years of his residence upon the Island laboured with a fidelity which has caused his name to be still a tender memory to some of the older people. His daughter, Miss Haining, still survives.

The vacant pastorate was filled by the Rev. Mr. Harrison, who had been educated at Rotherham College. Trouble arising, he resigned after two or three years, and the chapel was closed for several months. It was about this time that the Rev. W. C. Stallybrass came to be tutor to the family of Mr. Jackson, of Falcon Cliff. Mr. Jackson had ceased to attend Athol Street, and with him came into existence Cliff Chapel, of which Mr. Stallybrass was minister for a short time. In 1850, however, the Athol Street friends invited him to the pastorate of the church there. The invitation was accepted, and Mr. Stallybrass began his labours on July 25th of that year. At Cliff Chapel, the Rev. Robert Chamberlain became his successor. He was educated at Hoxton Academy, had held pastorates at South Shields, Petworth, and Swanage, previous to his removal to the Isle of Man, in 1852. He remained some two years, when he became pastor of the Congregational Church, at Oakham, where he died December 30th, 1855, aged fifty-eight years, having been minister only a few days. Shortly after Mr. Chamberlain's removal the church at Falcon Cliff ceased to exist; the chapel has since been "transformed into an entrance

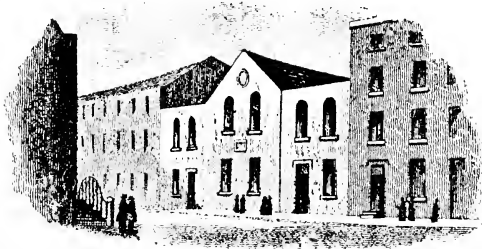
to Falcon Cliff Hotel grounds." Immediately on the settlement of Mr. Stallybrass at Athol Street, the church was re-formed, and after a successful pastorate of eight years he removed to Wavertree, Liverpool.¹

His successor was the Rev. John Chater, a student from Cheshunt College, who had charge of the church from February 20th, 1859, to May, 1863, when he removed to West End, Southport, where he is still the respected minister. His successor was the Rev. Anthony Thompson, B.A. Born at Alnwick, in 1835, and, educated at Spring Hill College, he settled at Douglas, in 1863, on the completion of his college career. A promising ministry was cut short by his death, April 5th, 1866. On November 23rd, 1866, Wm. Dalrymple, Esq., laid the foundation stone of the present Finch Hill Congregational Church, and on the same day the Rev. John Williamson, M.A., a student from Lancashire College, was recognised as pastor. The following ministers, most of whom had taken part in the stone laying ceremony, assisted in this second service: Revs. J. Legge, M.A., J. Fettes, A. Murdock, J. A. Macfadyen, M.A., Professor Scott, LL.B., and Professor Newth. The building was opened for public worship in 1868. It is a neat and commodious edifice, and, standing well on the hill, is a conspicuous object in the town. The accommodation provided is for 600 persons, and the total cost, including land and school, was about £5,000. Within the last three years several very handsome windows have been inserted in the church by the Dalrymple, Maitland, and Haining families, in memory of worthy members who have gone over to the majority. The old chapel in Athol Street, which had done good service for more than half a century, was sold and transformed into shops, the upper part now serving the useful purpose of a Free Library. On September 30th, 1878, Mr. Williamson closed a successful pastorate, and removed to Newland Chapel, Lincoln. His present sphere of labour is at Cardiff. On the 23rd of February, 1879, the Rev. David Inglis, B.A., from Werneth, Oldham,² began his ministry as Mr. Williamson's successor, and still continues here. With the exception of Mr. Haining's, his pastorate is, therefore, by several years, the

¹ Vide ante p. 211.

² Vide vol. v. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

longest which the church has enjoyed, and it has been not the least successful. During that period a debt of £1,400 has been removed, and class rooms have been erected at a cost of about £250. About seven years ago the church was beautified, at an expense of £140, and the membership which stood at about eighty-three at the commencement of the present pastorate, is now 130. Recently the church has suffered heavy losses in the removal by death of at least two of its most prominent members—Mr. William Dalrymple, son of the Rev. James Dalrymple, of whom more presently, fell asleep on May 18th, 1890, after filling many useful positions in the public life of the Island, and serving the church in the capacity of deacon for forty years. Mr. Thomas Cubbon, his brother-in-law, a “good and faithful servant,” both in the church



ATHOL STREET INDEPENDENT CHAPEL AS IT APPEARED FIFTY YEARS AGO.

and out, died May 9th, 1893, aged sixty years, leaving a vacancy which many years will not succeed in filling, and a blessed memory which time will not efface.

Reference has just been made to the Rev. James Dalrymple, who was educated at Edinburgh. His career was a somewhat chequered one; but, according to the passage previously cited from the *Congregational Magazine*, he was “pastor” of Kirk Michael in 1829. Probably all that is meant is that Mr. Dalrymple, who was a schoolmaster there at the time, conducted religious worship as he had opportunity, for there is no evidence that a Congregational Church ever existed at Kirk Michael. It was, however, at Union Mills that he spent the greater part of his life in preaching, in a very humble meeting house, the Gospel he so dearly loved.

Some humorous stories are related concerning him, one of which is to the following effect : On one occasion, whilst conducting the service, the lighted candles caught the loose folds of his gown which he sometimes wore, and Mr. Dalrymple simply remarked that for once he was "a burning and a shining light." After his death, which took place in December, 1861, the present little chapel, with sitting accommodation for 150 persons, was erected by public subscription, in memory of his long and faithful labours. The foundation stone was laid June 25th, 1862, and the building was opened for worship in the following year. Services were continued until 1873, when, "owing to the difficulty of finding suitable pulpit supply," the place was closed. In September, 1890, the Finch Hill Church took steps for its reopening. The Rev. F. R. Roberts, M.A., late of East Boldon, and formerly a student of Lancashire College, took charge of the place. After some twelve months he left, and was followed from September, 1891, to May, 1892, by the Rev. W. C. Lee, late of St. Annes-on-the-Sea.¹ No successor has yet been appointed. The members are in fellowship with Finch Hill Church ; and the County Union, since its reopening, has annually granted £25 in support of the work.

Until a few years ago there existed a second Congregational Church in Douglas of some importance, a brief account of which will conclude the history of Congregationalism in the Isle of Man. Respecting its origin a recent writer says :—

About fifteen years [should be about thirty] ago, the Finch Hill Congregational Church sought to extend its usefulness into the neglected parts of Douglas, and for this laudable end engaged Mr. Smith as an evangelist, who, for a long time, laboured in visiting from house to house, cottage prayer meetings and in the open air, especially on the Market-place, until at last he drew around him a number of attached supporters. After a while mission rooms were engaged ; the Temperance Hall (since pulled down) and St. George's Hall, Athol Street, and the evangelist, possessing a large amount of the genius of the revivalist, gathered together large meetings. Mr. Smith becoming exceedingly popular, was persuaded by his numerous followers to enter upon a more ambitious project and a wider field of usefulness than small mission rooms afforded. Eventually a plot of ground was fixed upon in Circular Road, near Buck's Road, and the erection of a large chapel was commenced.²

¹ Vide vol. i. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

² Broadbent's "Guide to the Isle of Man," p. 190.

The chapel, according to an inscription upon its front, was erected in 1866, and has sitting accommodation for about 600 persons. For several years, large congregations were gathered by Mr. Smith's ministry; but in 1872 he resigned, being followed in the same year by the Rev. W. H. Hyatt, who had been trained for the Wesleyan ministry. He removed to Upper Mill, in Yorkshire, in 1874. His successor was the Rev. J. S. Kent, who held the pastorate from 1877 to 1879, removing in the latter year to Little Lever, near Bolton.¹ The Rev. T. R. Quayle became the minister in 1880. He remained about three years, and no successor was appointed. The building was eventually sold to the Unitarians by whom it is now used. During several years previous to its dissolution the church received considerable help from the Union Funds; and it may be added that for some time there was a preaching station at Laxey connected with it having sitting accommodation for about 100 persons.

Such is the story of Manx Congregationalism. In some aspects doubtless it is discouraging, but in others not; in some senses it may be a record of comparative failure, but much more of persistent and courageous effort on the part of men who had the strongest faith in their principles. And if it has not succeeded in multiplying its interests as largely as some other denominations, Congregationalism is well and respectably represented by the Finch Hill Church, which for more than eighty years has borne honourable testimony to the truths of the Divine kingdom.

¹ Vide vol. iii. of "Lancashire Nonconformity."

NOTES.

PAGE 27.—In the Raffles MSS. is the following respecting East Bank Street Chapel:—

“This Chapel is a neat building of brick, from a plan by Mr. Haigh, of Liverpool. It is 16 yards by 14 outside, the walls 2 bricks thick. It is situated in a lane called East Bank Lane. The land was bought of Peter [?] Hesketh, Esq., one of the Lords of the Manor, and is copyhold, renewable for ever on a fine of £5 for every life, three lives being put in at the purchase. The whole quantity of land enclosed within the walls is 40 yards by 30. The first stone was laid in July, 1823, and the Chapel was opened December 15th in the same year, by Rev. Alexander Steill and Dr. Raffles.”

PAGE 46.—The Rev. Edwin Robinson after leaving Ramsbottom went to Manchester, and had no regular pastorate afterwards; but his name appears in connection with the “Tabernacle” there in City Road in 1851 as the preacher. (Vide vol. v., of “Lancashire Nonconformity.”)

PAGE 68.—The Rev. W. Berridge, Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Lowton, sends an interesting notice of Mr. James Eckersley, who lived the greater part of his long life in Mather Lane, near the house where Richard Mather was born. Though not a Congregationalist, he was a good Nonconformist, being a local preacher for many years amongst the Independent Methodists. He was born March 9th, 1804, and when old enough began work as a silk weaver, which was a very common trade in those days. Subsequently he took to farming, and followed that occupation for nearly sixty years. At the age of seventeen he became a local preacher, and as such frequently visited Bolton, St. Helens, Wigan, Leigh, and many other places. After a long life of quiet, useful service, Mr. Eckersley died March 3rd, 1892, and was interred at St. Mary's Church on the following Monday, Mr. Berridge performing the funeral ceremony. A short service in the Independent Methodist Chapel, conducted by the Revs. John Adamson and W. Graham, had preceded. Mr. Berridge, who had interested himself much in Mr. Eckersley, with a catholicity of spirit not too common, referred in generous and appropriate terms to his death on the following Sunday morning, “Born,” said he, “within a few yards of the spot on which this church now stands, his body thus rests near the place of its birth, but his soul by common consent has found a place amongst the Saints on high. As long as his strength permitted, he led an active life in his great Master's service, and was untiring in his efforts for the spiritual good of his fellow men. In the great and final reckoning many will rise up and thank him for the faithful witness he bore. Though not of our communion, he was most tolerant to all who differed from him, and I consider it no light privilege to have known such a man as he.”

PAGE 76.—The following is a copy of the certificate of the register of Peter Gaskill's house, known as “Red House,” at Burton Wood:—

“21 Die., July 1690. These are to certify whom it may concerne that the house of Peter Gaskill of Burton Wood in this County now certified to this court for a meeting place for a congregaon of Protestants dissenting from the Church of England for the exercise of their religious worshipping in it (pursuant to a late Act of Parliament in that case made and p'vided) recorded att this p'sent Qr Sessions. Given und'r my hand in open court of Qr Sessions att Ormes Kirke the day and year above written. ROGER KENYON Clerk of the Peace there.”

PAGE 92.—In the aisle of the old Chapel at St. Helens immediately in front of the pulpit was a brassplate thus inscribed :—

Here lyeth the body
of the Revd. Joseph
Gellibrand who offici-
ated at this place near
30 years, and departed
this life the 18th of
June 1740, aged 63.

PAGE 93.—This work was nearly all in type when four volumes of the late Dr. Raffles's MSS. came into my hands. They have been given to the Lancashire Independent College by his executors, an institution in which he always took the deepest interest, and Mr. Goodyear, Librarian, has kindly placed them at my disposal. In the Preface I have expressed my regret that the opportunity of consulting them earlier was not mine, but I have made good use of them in these notes, and occasionally I have broken into the narrative that the reader may have the advantage of Dr. Raffles's careful researches. It is well known that Dr. Halley had access to these MSS. in preparing his "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," a work of deep interest and value; but the character of these MSS. convinces me that if Dr. Raffles had carried out the thought which was once in his mind and had written the history of Lancashire Nonconformity, it would have been along the lines of the present work rather than those of Dr. Halley's.

PAGE 93.—Respecting the Rev. William Harding, Dr. Raffles says :—

"He had no education for the ministry, but held a farm and preached at Partington in Cheshire. Mr. Jonathan Mercer, of Allerton, being a cheesefactor, met him in his journies of business, and it was chiefly through his introduction and influence that he came to the Park. . . . He was stern and morose in his disposition, there was little in him to attach the young to his person or his ministry, the consequence was that the congregation declined under him. . . . He was by no means happy in his family, although for five or six years previous to his death he gave up his farm and resided with one of his daughters who married an American Captain, and lived in Upper Frederick Street, Liverpool. During the above mentioned period, he was laid aside from preaching by the infirmities of age. He was in the habit of preaching a sermon on the 5th of November, but he kept no other day; for on a certain occasion when Christmas Day happened to fall on a Sunday, he apologised to some of his people for not preaching on an appropriate subject, saying, that he had no sermon by him of that nature, and he had not time to make one. He was very fond of flowers and paid great attention to the cultivation of them, but whether he was a scientific Botanist or not, I cannot tell. He had, however, a very fine garden."

PAGE 95.—The incendiaries were supposed to be Roman Catholics. The Chapel was rebuilt in 1774, and its cost was £217. 11s. 8d. The following is a copy of the humble petition of the congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Toxteth Park, Liverpool :—

"Whereas the Dissenting Chapel in Toxteth Park, was in a very ruinous condition, insomuch that it was dangerous to celebrate worship therein, and it was thought necessary to rebuild the roof, with the greater part of the walls; and whereas the expense amounts to about two hundred pounds, which the Society of itself is not able to defray, We the under-mentioned do, in the name of the Congregation, hereby implore the assistance of our Brethren and fellow Christians.

March 14th, 1775.

WILLIAM HARDING
JOHN RIGBY
JNO. MERCER
WM. LASSELL
DAN. MATHER
JOHN HAUGHTON.

We the undersigned, being Protestant Dissenting Ministers in and about Liverpool, do recommend the case of the People of Toxteth Park Chapel to the attention of charitable and well disposed Christians.

RICHARD HARRISON
ROBT. LEWIN
PHILIP TAYLOR
RICHARD GODWIN
H. KIRKPATRICK
N. CLAYTON."

PAGE 143.—A century ago London was to the churches in the Provinces what Manchester is to-day to all the churches outside itself in the county. It was the place to which all religious beggars went. In the Spring of 1789, the Rev. James Kenworthy, of Warrington, was in London seeking help on behalf of his newly erected place of worship; and he sent to Mr. Jonathan Mercer a humorous letter respecting the matter, of which the following is an extract:—

"You have heard it is very probable, that I have made some little progress in my present most disagreeable business, but it is very slow. Have gone from place to place a whole afternoon for one single half guinea. Some have been unjust enough to tell me that I neglect my people at home to come begging to London, others stand to guard their doors against me as if I was about to rifle them. It is a work to me, sir, insupportable. A day or two after I began I met with such unkind treatment that I was about to return home which I certainly should have done but for an individual or two, who seemed to be inclined to give me some assistance. It is only a sense of circumstances, etc., which enables me to proceed: but how I shall succeed in the end time, as in other things, can only determine. It was with great difficulty I procured the sanction of the Board, and which sorry to tell you, after I have gotten it, is little more than a GREAT NOTHING. My time seems to be one of the worst. Beggars almost swarm, but one, in particular, seems to be a great injury to me, a country man of mine well known among serious people who was at work before I could get the Board's sanction. Board ministers seem indisposed to letting me into their pulpits, but have neither time nor room to enlarge."

PAGE 152.—"The statement in the 'Congregational Year Book' respecting the Rev. G. Cowie," says the Rev. J. Barton Bell, "is not quite accurate. Mr. Cowie was deposed by the Anti-Burgher Synod in April, 1800. The majority of his congregation adhering to him formed themselves into an Independent Church, of which he continued pastor until his death in 1806. Aberfeldy, Aberdeen, Wick, Thurso, Perth, &c., are older churches than Huntly."

PAGE 165.—The Raffles MSS. throw considerable light upon the origin and early history of the High Street Church, Lancaster, where the Rev. P. S. Charrier ministered previous to his removal to Liverpool. Some of the information was supplied to Dr. Raffles by Mr. Charrier himself. The following is extracted from them:—

"The present church originated in a few families having preaching in a room fitted up for the purpose in Leonard Gate. Their first supplies were itinerant preachers, sent out by Mr. Ingham, of Yorkshire. After they had worshipped in this room for some time they removed to a small old Presbyterian meeting house in Moor Lane, and called Henry Hunt to be their minister. He came from Dublin in 1769, and continued with them until the building of the new place in High Street, which took place in 1772, but some difference between him and the people caused his removal, so that he never preached in the new chapel. In the space between Mr. Hunt and Mr. Burder they were supplied by various ministers amongst whom were Cornelius Winter and Captain Scott. It appears that the former remained about a year in Lancaster. The new chapel was opened by the Rev. John Edwards, of Leeds, and Rev. Titus Knight, of Halifax (P.S.C.)"

Respecting Mr. Hunt we have this further information from the "Memoirs of his Own Life," copied from the above named MSS. :—

"At Liverpool [where he landed Aug. 27, 1766] I was introduced as a preacher to both Baptists and Methodists. In the meantime the friends at Liverpool being fully satisfied respecting me, one of them mentioned me to a gentleman of Lancaster in such terms that he requested an interview with me. The result of our meeting was that he engaged me to officiate at Lancaster. Here I found the few people who assembled for the purpose of divine worship in a room which was so small that when tolerably filled in an evening the candles would scarcely burn; but as the hearers increased, and were disposed to settle, the friends took a warehouse which had formerly been an Arian meeting house, and fitted it up for our accommodation. Here I formed a Gospel church, and many persons exhibited pleasing and convincing proofs that the word of life was not dispensed [at Horwich] in vain. Mr. Redman [Redmayne] who afterwards proved a useful minister near Wigan, received the grace of God in truth; and several young men were sent to academies in Yorkshire. As we had several persons of respectability in our little connexion, the old meeting house after some time was considered too mean, and I was despatched to London to solicit contributions towards the erection of a superior edifice. In this mission I succeeded, and a new house of prayer was built; but, contrary to expectations, appearances, and promises, I was not permitted to enter it. When the rich men got the place completely into their own hands I was given to understand that my services would be dispensed with, and the Rev. George Burder was nominated as my successor."

Mr. Hunt subsequently laboured at Delph, Ellesmere, Stourbridge, and London, dying at the latter place, June 26, 1815, aged ninety years.

PAGE 184.—Some additional information respecting the old Nonconformist foundation at Rainford is supplied by the Raffles MSS., from which the following is taken :—

"When ejected from the old [Episcopal] Chapel, they fitted up a barn, which, being duly registered, they called Mr. Tetlaw to be their minister. He preached in the barn until 1706, when they erected the present chapel, which was put in trust for 'a congregation of Protestant Dissenters,' and the minister to be orthodox and sound in the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Such a minister was Mr. Tetlaw. He continued there near 43 years, till his death, in 1745. Mr. Tetlaw was a man of excellent learning. He had a very good library, which he left in presents to his congregation, having written the name of the person for whom it was designed in every book before his death. They were very judiciously distributed, according to the character and circumstances of each individual."

Concerning the Rev. John Toothill, another of the Rainford ministers, Dr. Raffles gives the following particulars, obtained from his widow after his death :—

"John Toothill was born at Wilsden, near Keighley, West Riding of Yorkshire, on April 25th, 1760, in the same house in which Jonathan Toothill, of Hopton, first saw the light. He was sent for his education to the town's school, to the teacher of which he was related by marriage, the wife of the schoolmaster being his aunt. At the expiration of his school days he assisted his father on the farm. When about 17 years of age he lost his mother by death. He was then the eldest child in the family. His mother had already begun to entertain hopes concerning him which she frequently expressed to her husband. His conversion to God seems to have taken place under a sermon he heard in a farmhouse from the text 'Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.' The preacher was the Rev. John [Joseph] Cockin, then of Kipping. Shortly after that he joined Mr. Cockin's church, and thence went to the academy at Heckmondwike, where he continued until the death of the tutor, Mr. Scott. The academy was then removed to Northorram, and placed under the

*Renald Tetlaw Bookc
bought at (Sept 27 Sept: 1705) } 3 s 3
3-6
worth B-x*

AUTOGRAPH OF THE REV. RENALD TETLAW.

presidency of the Rev. S. Walker. Whilst a student, Mr. Toothill accepted an invitation from the church at Booth, but did not enter upon his pastoral labours until after the expiration of his academical course. At his ordination, Mr. Cockin, his pastor, preached to the people. He remained at Booth two years. The circumstances which led to his settlement at Rainford, were as follows :—The Rev. Isaac Sharp, of St. Helens, when on a visit to his relatives who lived in the vicinity of Booth, requested Mr. Toothill to supply his pulpit at St. Helens during his absence. Whilst Mr. Sharp was in Yorkshire Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Sharp's grandmother, died, and on Mr. Toothill devolved the duty of conducting the funeral service. Mr. Mather, the minister of Rainford Chapel, and some of his hearers were present on the occasion. On Mr. Mather's death his people were divided, many of them declaring themselves to be of Arian sentiments. The Evangelical party sought from Mr. Sharp information concerning the young man who had interred Mrs. Harris's remains. They then wrote to him inviting him to supply for them for a Sabbath. He preached at Rainford at least two Sabbaths, which resulted in his being invited to become the pastor there. On receiving the call Mr. Toothill laid it before his brethren, on the occasion of a public lecture at Halifax, and sought their advice. They were unanimously in favour of his accepting it on the ground that Booth would continue to enjoy the Gospel, and Rainford might be rescued from the hands of the Arians. Jonathan Toothill, of Hopton, then came to Rainford, to see the place. With the concurrence of his brethren, Mr. Toothill accepted the invitation in the month of August, 1786, having preached his first sermon there in the month of May previous, where he continued faithfully to labour for more than fifty years, winning and retaining the esteem of all who knew him. In consequence of the failure of his eyesight rendering him unable to read, he was prevailed upon by his relatives to resign his charge. From this time, for about two years, he continued to attend the chapel as a hearer, preaching occasionally when his successor was called from home. On the Sabbath previous to his death, he had been present three times, when his son-in-law, Mr. Hoole [of Blackburn], preached. Returning home in the evening he said, "I have been drinking it in to-day." The following evening, Monday, he went

out after supper for a short walk in the garden, whilst there he fell, was seen by some men in the lane, and by them brought into the house. When placed in his usual old arm-chair he looked up at his wife, and said, "Jerusalem, my happy home!" They were the last words he was heard distinctly to utter. He died about two o'clock the following morning, on the 23rd of July, 1839, aged 79 years."

Dr. Raffles, in another note, enters more fully into the circumstances of Mr. Toothill's call to Rainford, and the condition of the church at the time:—

"At the time of Mr. Mather's death there was a strong party of Unitarian sentiments in the congregation, and they resolved, if possible, to have a minister of their views. They, however, were by no means the majority, but the rest, who were for an orthodox minister, were unhappily divided as to the person they would like. The other party taking advantage of this circumstance proposed that there should be a meeting, when each should propose the individual they desired, and he who had most votes should be the pastor. The Unitarian party were agreed in their man, and thus they would doubtless have carried their point. Mr. Sharp, of St. Helens, hearing of this, immediately went over to Rainford, and apprised the friends of Evangelical principles of the snare into which they were about to fall, and advised them at the proposed meeting, first to put the question as to *what sentiments* they would prefer in their future minister. This was accordingly done, and the friends of the truth prevailed by a large majority. [Here follows the story, given above, about Mr. Toothill and the funeral service, at which Mr. Mather and some of his people were present.] On their return home from the funeral service Mr. Mather observed that 'the young man spoke very well at the grave.' These gentlemen, who were of the Unitarian party, remembered this, and when they found themselves outwitted and out-voted by the friends of the Gospel, they directly said that if they could get the young man who spoke over Mr. Harrison's [Harris] grave they would be satisfied, and cordially unite with them. Mr. Toothill was accordingly written to, and though he was then settled with a church, yet the invitation was so urgent, and the circumstances of the case were so peculiar, that he felt it his duty to accept the call, and become their pastor. Thus the Gospel has been preserved in that place to this day."

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