

WIGAN TOWN

and
COUNTRY
RAMBLES

1

2nd
REVISED
EDITION

by
John T. Hilton

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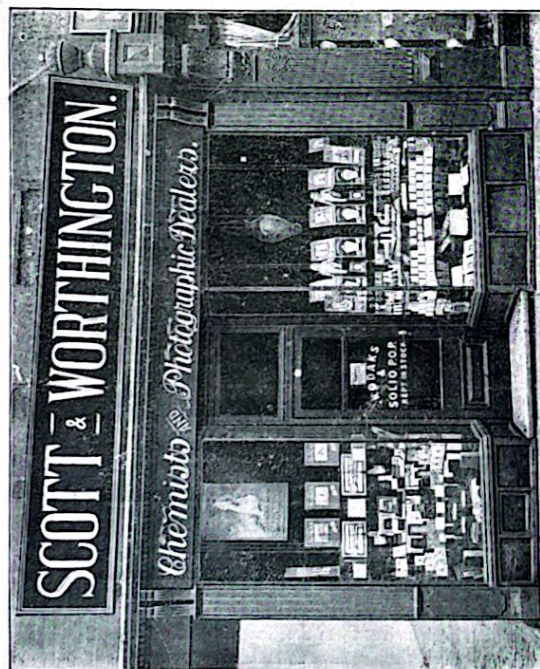
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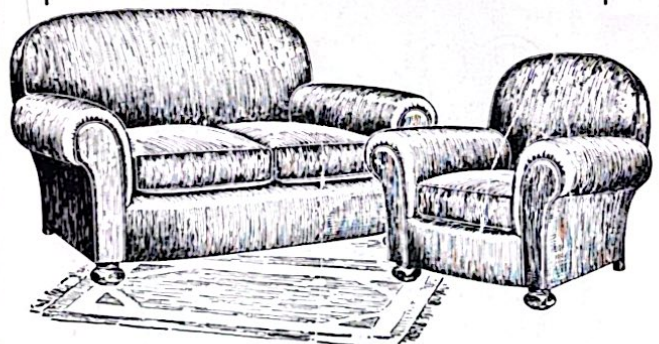
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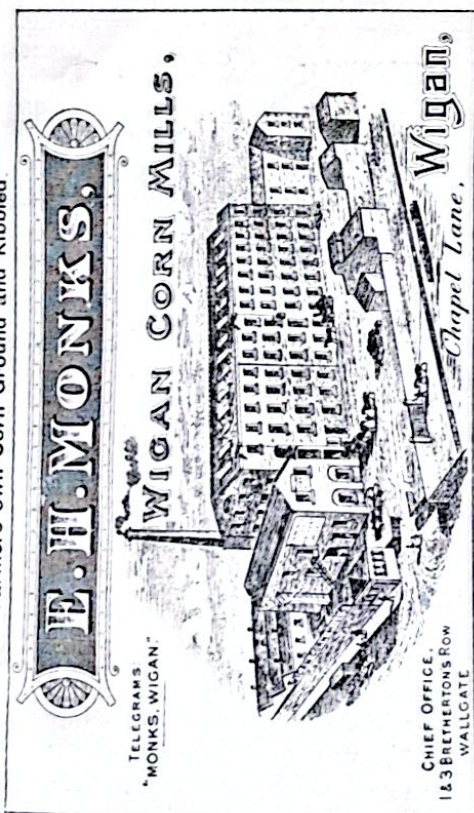
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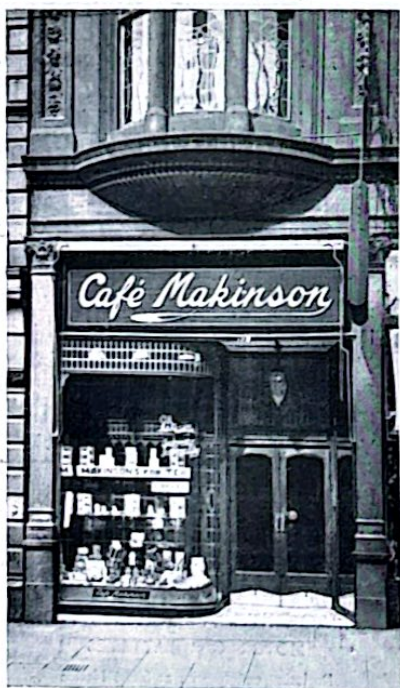
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Photo by

H. W. Latham.

Yours faithfully
John F. Conroy

**WIGAN
TOWN**
AND
COUNTRY RAMBLES

WITH VIEWS
AND
INTERESTING HISTORICAL
INCIDENTS

Together with a round of interesting
diversions for the citizen

BY
JOHN T. HILTON

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WIGAN
THE "CAXTON" PRESS
1934

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PREFACE

In issuing the second edition of this work the author is grateful to his numerous readers for the support they have given, and the interest they have shown in the subject.

He is reminded by others well able to form an opinion, of the unique part the book played during the war. An innovation of a peaceful and recreative character such as it was, and introduced at such a time of turmoil would by contrast alone find some favour. This it did, and more. Its circulation was assured from the first. It was sent across seas; was distributed by generous folk to local institutions, and periodically in small parcels, found its way to the "boys" in France. Also, as a token of friendship and remembrance, it loomed largely in the local and Colonial mails at Christmas time and the New Year.

We can only say that whatever pleasure others have shared, we have shared it likewise.

The times still call—and will continue to call—for uplifting influences, and what better can be pursued by man or woman, boy or girl, than healthy recreation and the cultivation of a good and active citizenship, coupled with the knowledge and history of their native town; with its nooks and corners and adjacent beauty spots, which are free for exploration to all who seek them.

We trust this revised (and largely rewritten) edition of the work, with its numerous half-tone illustrations (many of which are new) interspersed between its pages, may be again found acceptable, and that it may afford pleasure to the reader.

Government Tax Office.
1 Rowbottom Square, Wallgate,
Wigan, 20th October, 1933.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

In sending forth this little work on its mission the writer cannot refrain from rendering a tribute of praise to his native town, whose scenery, for miles around, cannot be surpassed for its pleasing variety and rural beauty. His aim has been to interest, and at the same time, give a stimulus to the healthy exercise of "Walking" as a recreation, and to win fresh converts to this delightful pastime.

Country life and town life are as opposite as the poles; the one quiet and restful, the other active and taxing to mind and body, hence the attraction of the country for every town worker, whether he be a business man, or an employee in the shop, foundry, factory or office. The country-side will appeal to him as long as the world lasts, it is the talisman that restores his health, and sends him back to the grindstone fit and well.

Wigan is a good centre for many interesting rambles, or rides if the cycle be used. The electric car service, with the facilities that the Railway Companies provide during the summer months, bring the beautiful country easily within the reach of even those who are the least capable of any long continued exertion.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Beyond general outlines of the district it has not been deemed necessary to go, as those who become interested in the subject will derive greater pleasure from their own discoveries than from any particulars that another could give.

The notes on the town's early history are only dips in the annals of the past, which (excepting "Hallgate Notes and Customs") are treated fully in Baines' "Lancashire" and Sinclair's "Wigan." To the latter work in particular I am indebted for the major part of the Early History. I also acknowledge the useful little manual on "Wigan," by F. F. Smith, and personal help from others.

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## WIGAN TOWN.

Population of Wigan (1931): 85,357. Acreage: 5,082.  
Population of Wigan Union (1931): 197,673. Acreage:  
48,396.

Early Closing: Wednesday afternoon.

**T**HE County Borough of Wigan (now united with Pemberton), the oldest Borough Town in Lancashire and one of the oldest in England, lies on a series of hills some 10 miles W. of Bolton, 16 miles S. of Preston, 12 miles N. of Warrington, 10 miles N.E. of St. Helens and 19 miles N.E. of Southport.

The town is situated on the River Douglas, which takes its rise from Rivington Pike and district of Horwich, emptying itself into the Ribble.

The inclusion of the Parish of Pemberton now brings the total population of the Borough to 85,357, with an acreage of 5,082 acres. The town was raised to the position of a County Borough in 1888.

Wigan was one of the first towns to obtain its Charter of Incorporation (1246), and was a town of considerable importance when most Lancashire towns were in their infancy, and has had a long and interesting historical career. Having the advantage of being intersected by the principal Railways—the London Midland and Scottish, the Lancashire and Yorkshire and the Great Central—all now unified more or less), in addition to the excellent water-way afforded by the Leeds

#### WIGAN TOWN.

and Liverpool Canal, and being in the midst of an agricultural district, the town has a fair prospect of becoming of great importance as a mercantile centre.

The coalfield of the district (less extensive than it was) has a world-wide reputation, and is represented by the Wigan Coal Corporation, Ltd., and the Pemberton Colliery Co. (1929), Ltd. The engineering and iron trade has had a long and flourishing career, the well-known firms of the Wigan Coal Corporation, Ltd., Messrs. Walker Bros., Ltd., and the Worsley Mesnes Iron-works, Ltd., being in this district. The Motor industry is well established, and Cotton Spinning and Cotton Weaving, the manufacture of Clothing for Home and Export, and the production of Hosiery and other Textiles, are extensively carried on, while in the neighbouring townships are found important Gunpowder works, Bleach and Dye Works, Linoleum Factories, Brick and Tile Works, and other trades of long-standing.

The Brewing interest is represented by the firms of Messrs. Aireys, Ltd., Oldfield Brewery, Ltd., Moorfield, Ltd., James Farrimond, and others, whose extensive businesses and premises under control, together with those of Messrs. Magee, Marshall and Co., Ltd., Peter Walker and Sons, Ltd., Greenall, Whitley and Co., Ltd., and others, help to swell the rateable income of the Borough to the tune of thousands of pounds annually.

#### WIGAN TOWN.

The town possesses an excellent water supply, a modern installation for electric current, an up-to-date and regular Motor-bus service and control, linked up with all the principal routes of the country, Gasworks, Parks, Markets, Baths, Libraries, Infirmary, Sanatoria, Tuberculosis Dispensary, Technical College, Grammar School, Girls' High School, and a growing number of elementary schools, with a department for School Clinics, but it has not as yet, we regret to say, a Museum and Art Gallery, which would lend a mighty inspiration to the town, as the Mining and Technical College has done, and is still doing, through the outstanding generosity, and the voluntary activities of our public-spirited townsmen, for the technical and artistic training of the community far and wide.

Within the last few years the town has been considerably developed; important new roads have been made, and not a few widened and re-laid, to facilitate the ever increasing flow of traffic.

Whole colonies of dwellings have been erected at Beech Hill, Bottling Wood and Spring Bank; also at Orrell, on an area of land off Orrell Road close by the Pemberton boundary line.

A pleasing addition to the chief shopping centre of the town—Market Place and Standishgate—is the new frontages and restorations in the Tudor style, which give a note of distinction to the town.

## WIGAN TOWN.

With all these advantages, together with its up-to-date sanitation, its facilities for travel, evening pleasure, outdoor recreation and sport, and not least for its liberal provision for education, Wigan may well be described as a progressive town.

## SPORTS AND AMUSEMENTS.

The attractions of the town are liberal and unique, and continue to multiply year by year. There are public bowling greens and tennis courts in the parks, as well as private greens and courts in other parts of the Borough; the Wigan Cricket Club possesses a fine ground at Bull Hey, Rugby Football is played at Central Park, Highfield and Prospect Park; and Association Football at Springfield. Golf Links are situated at Whitley Hall, Arley, Gathurst, Appley Bridge, Hindley and Ashton; the Wigan Rowing Club has its boathouse and a long reach of canal waterway at Haigh; the devotees of Hockey play the sport at Poolstock, whilst Dogtrack Courses are patronised in various parts of the town.

There are numerous Concert Halls and Dancing Rooms—the Drill Hall, Pavilion, Co-operative Hall, All Saints' Senior Church School, Hope School, St. John's R.C. School and others. The Musical Festival held annually at the Queen's Hall is a feature. Variety shows and entertainments are given at the Hippodrome, whilst Cinema Halls are in abundance throughout the town. In fact, it may be said there is hardly a sport or

## TERRITORIALS IN WIGAN.

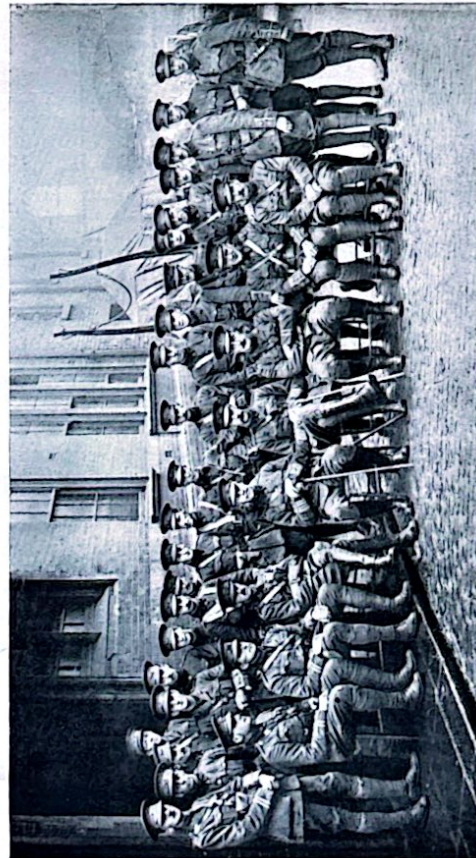


Photo by  
F. W. Dew, The Studio, Park Road, Wigan.  
OFFICERS OF THE 5th BATTALION MANCHESTER REGIMENT (1914).  
The above is a photo of some of the officers of the 5th Battalion Manchester Regiment, with Col. W. S. France, V.D., in the centre. Surgeon-Col. W. Mitchell, R.N., on his left, and Capt. J. M. B. Sanders (adjutant) on his right. The group also includes Capt. A. W. Simpson, Capt. H. M. Rogers, Capt. N. S. Brown, Major Fletcher, Capt. A. E. Greshaw, Capt. D. Walker (Qr-Master), Capt. Arthur Ellis (Acting Qr-Master), Capt. F. S. Brown, Capt. A. C. Leach, Capt. Fletcher, Capt. Walker, Lieut. J. Hanson, Lieut. V. Hewlett, Lieut. Allen, Lieut. James, Lieut. Wall, Lieut. Brown, Lieut. S. James, Second Lieut. A. E. Johnson, Lieut. Martin, etc., etc.

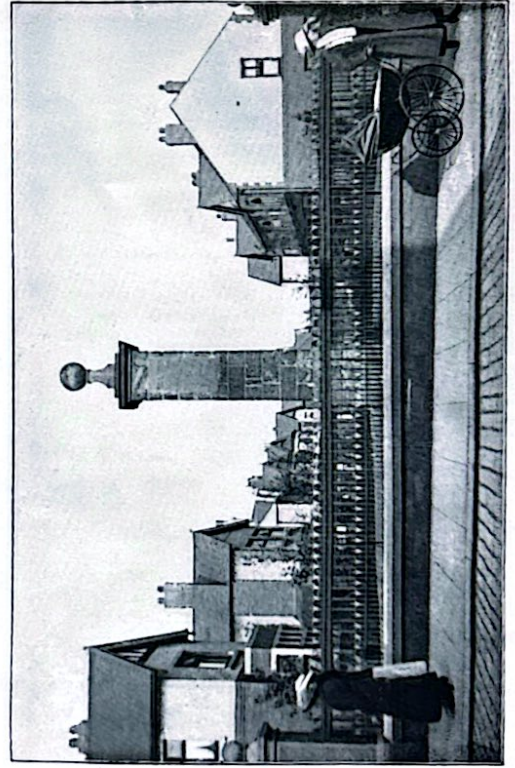
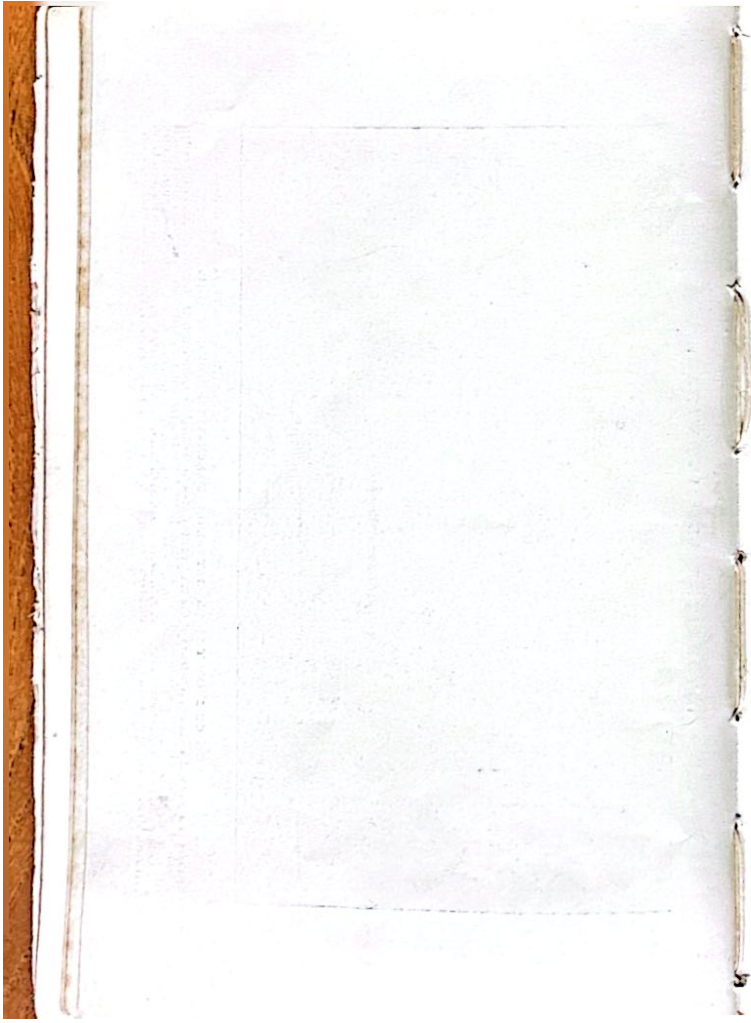


Photo by

MONUMENT, WIGAN LANE.

M. Brown.

#### WIGAN TOWN.

recreation, for day or evening, which is not amply provided for. Public festivals centre on the Market Square, and the Wigan Pleasure Fair is held in Spring and Autumn. Other Civic and National functions follow regularly in turn, the most imposing being the Carnival of the Wigan Church Sunday Schools. This engrossing event fills the whole of the town with people from far and near, whose pleasure and approval speaks for itself.

#### HINTS TO RESIDENTS.

(An Interesting Town Ramble.)

For an interesting and short tour round town, and near home, and one that would please the visitor in every way, we think "Wigan Lane" would be a good starting point. This is the finest promenade and residential district of the town, and is made famous in history by the penance of Mabel, the wife of Sir William Bradshaigh of Haigh, and the long drawn out battles of the Roundheads and Cavaliers, incidents which are commemorated by the ancient monument of Sir Thomas Tyldesley and of Mab's Cross, which are to be seen on the way.

Our splendid Infirmary (open for visitors at certain hours in the day) also claims attention, as well as the lovely Plantations of Haigh Park. This is the charming estate of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres (whose generosity in throwing open the Park to visitors is greatly appreciated by the people of Wigan), with its fine avenues, noble trees, woodland dells and lovely retreats. In

#### WIGAN TOWN.

Spring the daffodils afford a feast of colour to the eye, whilst later, rhododendrons are in their full bloom and well worth seeing, and the trees are then at their best. If time permits, one may ascend the higher reaches of the Park, and on the way observe the natural seam of coal abutting on the rock face.

If the walk be taken from Wigan Lane, through the portico and principal entrance gate, the first road to the left after crossing the River bridge, will lead to a somewhat romantic glen, a spot often used to good effect by the amateur photographer, who, from all accounts, prizes its natural setting and background. On leaving the glen, the path walk opposite will lead to the still pond and waterfall, and from here one soon emerges into the main walk.

The completing stage of the walk might then be made to the Boathouse (round by Basin Lodge Gate). Here a good view of Haigh Hall is obtained, and possibly the skiffs may be plying on the waters, while the man at the oars amidst sylvan scenery, and in a gentle craft, glides peacefully by, or may be, shoots through a bridge holding his oars, and is rowing leisurely to while away the time, as one likes to do in such pleasing surroundings—but enough of this, we will get on with the walk.

An alternative route, which may be the easier one, is to leave the river bridge, and keep on the main carriage drive all the way round to the Basin Lodge Gate, then as before stated.

#### WIGAN TOWN.

Continuing down the Hall Lane to Leyland Mill Lane (passing the once-famed Leyland Mill Foundry in the hollow, where in the sixties the Laxey Wheel was made) the return journey to town may be made by bus from Mariebonne, or if desired, the short bus ride to Standish may be suggested.

After exploiting our town attractions, not missing the finest of our Civic institutions—the Mining and Technical College—nor the Free Library, or the Borough Courts and Municipal Buildings and splendid and up-to-date Fire Appliances and equipment provided in the Fire Station adjoining, a short walk to our beautiful Parish Church and Gardens, and a quiet hour round our beautiful Mesnes Park (which is noted for its well-kept beds and fine seasonal displays of flowers, whilst from May—June the Rhododendrons and azaleas are a veritable picture, and in the Autumn the fine show of Chrysanthemums under glass in the nurseries are a wonderful collection) may perhaps be a very agreeable winding up of one's tour round the town.

We may also remind the reader of the popular evening bus services of circular tours, also of the long-distance parlour-coach services running regularly from town.

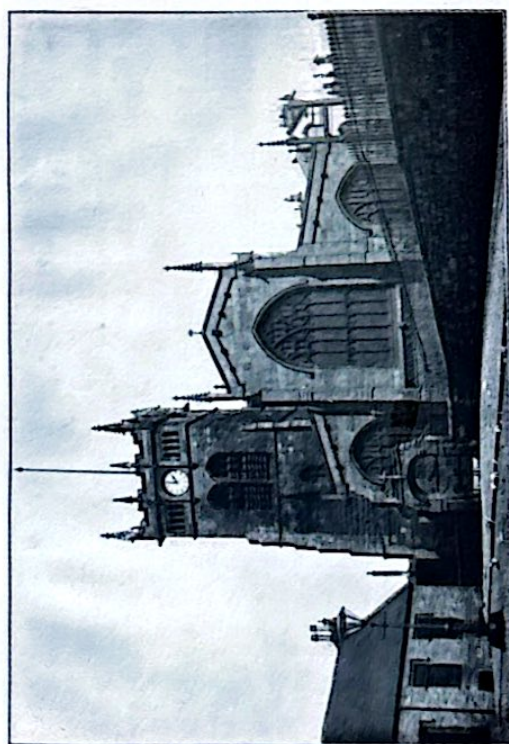
Of evening entertainments we need not speak, as they are well known to every resident.

WIGAN TOWN.

THE PARISH CHURCH AND  
GROUNDS.

This Church, dedicated to All Saints, is said to have been built on the site of a Roman settlement. A Church existed here at the Norman conquest.\* Ranulf (of Salisbury) is named as the first Rector (1199), though the earliest record is of a Grant made in the year 1255, for payment out of its endowments, of 30 marks yearly to the See of Lichfield. The Church was restored by Bishop Bridgeman in 1620, when the Chancel was re-built. The oldest parts are the lower portion of the tower and the lower portions of the two turrets, with winding stone steps leading to the roof on the north and south of the Chancel arch, which are built of red sandstone, like that used in the tower. The old tower is an immensely solid structure, the walls of which are nearly seven feet thick, as may be seen where it is cut through to connect the vestry with the choir robing-room. It had three Chantries named after their founders, viz., The Bradshaigh Chapel, the Walmesley Chapel and the Legh Chapel, each of which has its monumental or mural antiquities. In the former are the recumbent figures of Dame Mabel and Sir William Bradshaigh (referred to in the tradition of Mab's Cross). There are numerous memorials within its walls, and the sacred edifice is adorned with exquisite memorial windows of rich design and colour. It has a fine organ and choir. Its registers date from the year

\* Adapted from "Rambles Round Parish Church."  
By W. J. True.



M. Brown

WIGAN PARISH CHURCH (FROM BISHOPGATE)

Photo by

#### WIGAN TOWN.

1580. One part of the Churchyard is laid out as a public garden and a handsome War Memorial stands in the Church Grounds.

#### THE MARKET HALL AND SQUARE.

The Town Planning Act of 1873 brought many improvements to the town, and none were more urgently needed than a Market Hall and Square that would do justice to the town's requirements. The market stalls had been fixed, from time immemorial, in Hallgate, Standishgate and the Old Market Place, while the long train of farmers' carts extended from the Three Crowns Hotel to Dicconson Street. The Market Days are Tuesday and Friday. The last-named is the largest market, when the display and distribution of vegetables and fruit on the spacious market square presents an animated scene. Farmers and traders, residents and shop-keepers from far and near make this their market, and all is brisk and gay while the market lasts, from early morn until 1 o'clock at noon.

The town is exceptionally well favoured in its markets. It is in the centre of a very large industrial buying population, and has an excellent Railway service of three important lines. Its Market Square is one of the largest in Lancashire, and the Fruit Merchants are able to store the largest quantities, having commodious warehouses adjacent. Furthermore, the Fruit Market of the town is invariably steady as regards prices. These facts are reassuring, and growers can have every

#### WIGAN TOWN.

confidence in making their largest consignments. The extensive Ice Works and Cold Stores, which lie in close proximity to the Markets, are also a distinct advantage to the tradesmen of the town and district.

#### WIGAN FAIR.

The Pleasure Fair, held twice a year on the spacious square, is quite a feature. For three days (Friday to Monday) the main streets and thoroughfares are crowded to overflowing, all roads leading to the fair. As evening approaches and the fun of the fair reaches its height, it is a sight to see the floating masses of people, and the rush to patronize the golden dragons, aerials, motor tracks, bicycles, roundabouts, shows, boxing tents, swings, shooting galleries, the numerous sale and commodity stalls, and all and sundry the usual and novel attractions of a popular northern fair.

With the exclusion of harmful items, and the encouragement of genuine amusement, and of novel and safe mechanical inventions which are becoming more numerous as the years go by, the Pleasure Fair should further justify itself, and add no little share to the town's popularity.

#### THE WIGAN MINING AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE.

This is one of the oldest Mining Colleges in the Kingdom, dating back to the year 1857. It had its humble beginning in the old Public Hall, when a number of influential

#### WIGAN TOWN.

gentlemen of the town put forth their influence and energies in the movement. It was originally known as "The \*Mechanics' Institution."

\* An extract from an old autograph letter of the late Canon Fergie throws some interesting light on the early days of the institution:—"Pemberton Villa, 15th December, 1856. The attention manifested by many of the young men at the Mechanics' Institution and their evident determination to advance themselves intellectually pleased me much, and disposes me to say that I would most willingly sacrifice one evening per week, as well as the time requisite for preparation, to their improvement. I am, however, in a strait. I am most willing to breast the rain and storm of winter during the evenings I attend the Institution, but neither Mrs. Fergie nor myself think it would be very comfortable for me to be knocked down, robbed, or garrotted. Already a highway robbery has been committed near here, and sometime since we heard of garrotting in the neighbouring Warrington Lane. . . . Now, it strikes me if the young men are very anxious for my instruction and I very willing to walk to and from Wigan for their sakes, they in turn would perhaps have no objection to see me safely home—two at a time, so that they would be company for each other on their return. . . . Our house is 20 minutes' walk from the Institution."

The present building was opened by the Countess of Crawford, in January, 1903, and stands in a commanding position.

It comprises, in addition to the usual lecture theatres and class rooms for Science and Art, large drawing offices, separate laboratories for mining, chemistry, metallurgy, physics; and workshops for engineering, plumbing, woodwork, carpentry and joinery, and wood carving. The main entrance is from Library Street, whence a handsome doorway leads into the central hall, paved with mosaic,

#### WIGAN TOWN.

round which are the administrative offices, the council room and library, principal's room, assembly, and examination hall, engineering, drawing, mechanics' laboratory and lecture rooms.

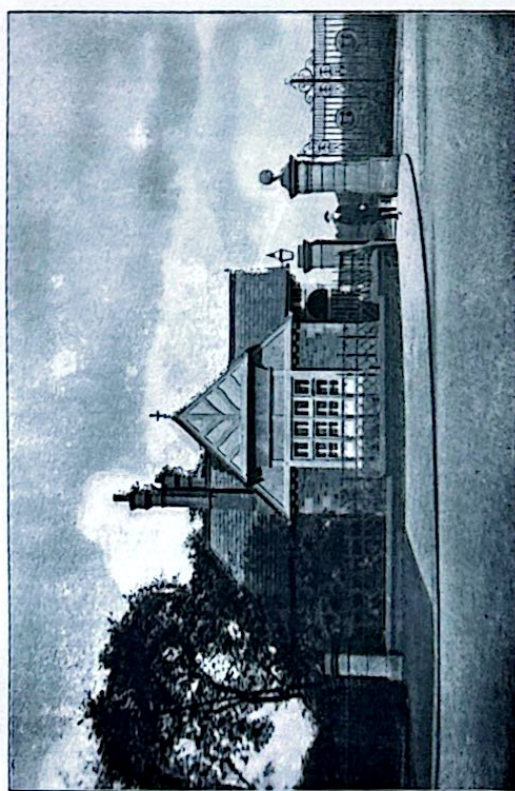
On the ground floor are the mechanical and electrical engineering laboratories, plumbers' workshop, engineering workshops, manual training (woodwork) rooms, metallurgical laboratory and lecture room, and accommodation for cycles. In the basement are the Sturtevant Fan and Lancashire Boiler for heating and ventilating the building.

The first floor includes the mining lecture rooms, mine surveying room, geological laboratory, bread-making laboratory and general class rooms for the commercial department. The second floor contains a handsome suite of art rooms, physical laboratory, chemical laboratory, and lecture room, with necessary preparation rooms and retiring rooms for lecturers, etc.

#### THE WIGAN PUBLIC FREE LIBRARY.

The Public Library was opened in May, 1878. The building, completely fitted and furnished, was presented to the Corporation by the late Mr. Thomas Taylor, at a cost of £12,000. The late Mr. Joseph Taylor Winnard bequeathed the sum of £12,000 for the purchase of books; and other donations amounted to £1,000.

The structure is from the design of Mr. A. Waterhouse, R.A., and consists of a main



M. Brown.

MESNES PARK ENTRANCE.

Photo by

1914

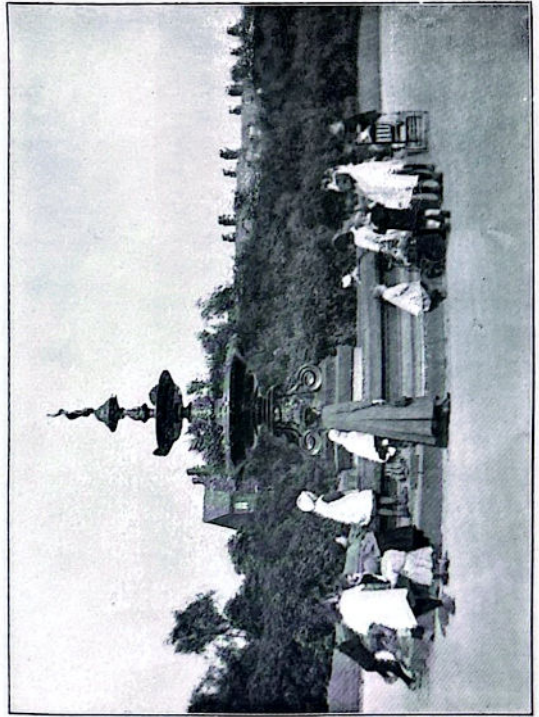
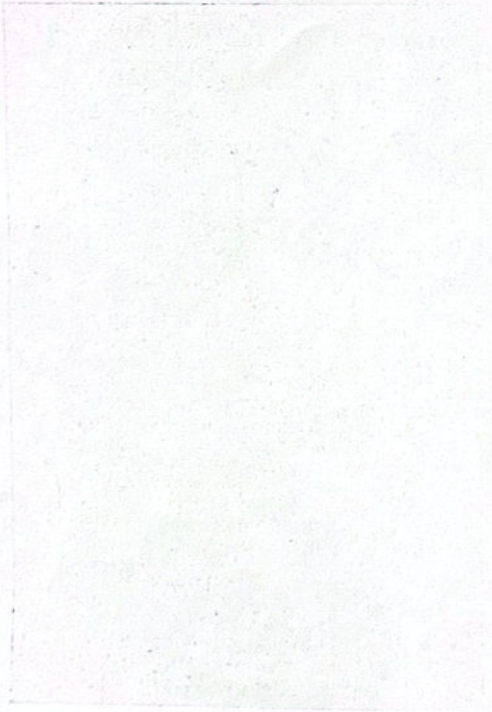


Photo by

FOUNTAIN, MESNES PARK  
(as it appeared in 1914)

M. Brown.

#### WIGAN TOWN.

building, with cross gables at each end, the central portion forming a recess, supported by buttresses. A new annex in the form of a second News-room was added during 1892, and in 1893 Sir Francis Sharp Powell, Bart., the Member for the Borough, presented the Powell Boys' Reading Room and Library.

In the Library and News-room is a unique collection of old Wigan views, the majority of them forming the valuable gift of Dr. R. Prosser White. The Reference Library rooms, containing the valuable books and treasures, are a special reserve for the use of residents, visitors and students, and all lovers of literature.

#### MESNES PARK.

This Park lies in the Mesnes adjoining the Grammar School. It was opened in 1871, and was formerly the site of the old Mesnes and the marl pits. Entering by the main terrace from the Lodge, on the left are public grass tennis courts, whilst at the north-west end are the public bowling greens, the putting greens and hard tennis courts, with the juvenile recreation grounds near by. The Park contains a handsome pavilion as well as a band kiosk, from which is discoursed the music of brass and string bands, during the summer months. Its lake is on the west side. It has two statues, one of Sir Francis Sharp Powell, Bart., in bronze, which stands on the main walk. Erected by subscription and unveiled on November 4th, 1910, the inscription reads:—

#### WIGAN TOWN.

"SIR FRANCIS SHARP POWELL, BARONET,  
BORN IN WIGAN 1827, M.P. FOR HIS  
NATIVE TOWN 1857-59 AND 1885-1910.  
ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION, 1910."

On the high level and fronting the Pavilion is another in stone representing a soldier in active warfare and sculptured by Mr. Goscombe John, to commemorate the heroes who fell in the Boer War, 1899-1902.

#### THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

The date of the original foundation of the Wigan Grammar School is wrapt in obscurity, but it is believed that one existed in the 16th century (1597) on the site of, or near to, the Old School Common. The present building, adjoining the Mesnes Park, was opened in the year 1879, by Nathaniel Eckersley, Esq. The school is under the control of a Sub-Committee of the Wigan Education Authorities. It awards one or two Powell Scholarships in each year. Many men in superior walks of life owe their advancement to the excellent training they received at this school.

#### THE ROYAL HOTEL.

This historic hotel and posting house, known in former days as "The Eagle and Child," with its old theatre of long forgotten past in the yard behind, has recently been demolished, and in its place stands the fine and imposing emporium of "Woolworth's."

It was an institution in the old coaching days, and in days gone by, was the centre of

#### WIGAN TOWN.

many important events and activities—political and social—of the town.

Men of high rank have stood on its balcony and harangued the crowd, and no more familiar figure, or one so popular in his day, ever addressed a constituency than our late borough member, Sir Francis Sharp Powell, Bart., whose reputation for fighting a keen political battle, not once, but numerous times, was universally known, even as he himself was as highly respected.

\*From an old record we find that on the 9th May, 1842, the Grand United Order of Oddfellows met together at this house to make a presentation to one of its local members, Dr. Alexander Shaw (a noted doctor in his day), whose labours for the fraternity were eulogised by Robert Rose (the poet and bard of colour), who made the presentation.

Representatives were also present from the United States and other distant places.

#### ROYAL ALBERT EDWARD INFIRMARY.

The Royal Albert Edward Infirmary and Dispensary was opened by His late Majesty King Edward (who was then Prince of Wales) in 1873. The name of the building was specially chosen by her Majesty Queen Alexandra. It was intended to name it "The Royal" Infirmary, when Her Majesty suggested the addition of the words "Albert Edward." It is said to be the only infirmary in the kingdom that is so named.

#### WIGAN TOWN.

The permanent staff of the institution is supplemented by local Honorary Medical Practitioners and Surgeons, who are in regular attendance. The infirmary is doing a good work, and is largely supported by the working classes, who have many representatives on the Board of Management.

#### HAIGH HALL.

The venerable house of Haigh is closely connected with the history of Wigan. Although the Hall cannot claim great antiquity, it is one of the finest specimens of the modern mansion, and commands a pleasant view of the undulating western plain in which the old borough is situated. On the same site was the home of the Bradshaighs, and within two miles of it the abode of the Norrys at Blackrod, the last of whose direct race was Mabella of traditional memory. The honourable family now inhabiting it have been ornaments to their town and country. They have been distinguished in war, politics, religion, literature and science. The present Earl was Member of Parliament for the Chorley Division, but on the death of his father he took his place in the House of Lords. He is also the distinguished Honorary Chairman of the Wigan Free Library, and is a patron of the Arts.

#### THE TOWN'S EARLY HISTORY.\*

The town's history dates back to primitive times. The Romans invaded this territory

\* Adapted from Sinclair's "History of Wigan."



M. Brown.

PLANTATION GATES, WIGAN LANE.

Photo by

#### WIGAN TOWN.

during the first century of the Christian era, when the Anglo-Saxons were in peaceful occupation. After they had established many improvements—built strong fortifications and made lasting roads, they withdrew their legions and evacuated the country. The fortifications are well described by the late Rev. A. E. P. Gray, who says: "There was an agger or earthwork with a ditch outside it, running round the hill: this crossed the Standish Gate, at the bottom of the hill, near the point where the Dicconson Street and Church Street now meet: it followed the course of the former street, and then turning to the left crossed the Mesnes close to where New Market Street now runs; turning again, it seems to have enclosed the Hall Gate, and to have gone down King Street West across the Wall Gate, and down King Street to the Free Library, where it bent northwards and crossed the Mill Gate, after this point it would naturally run along the top of the slope overlooking the Douglas as far as St. George's Church, where it turned down Church Street to the place from which we started."

#### ROMAN REMAINS

The road from Chester and Warrington (via Winwick and Haydock) to the north, passed on the east of Goose Green by Robin Lane End to the ford on the Douglas, near to the present Adam's Bridge, and continued through Market Place and Standishgate, thence it took a westward course through the Mesnes, and continued on to Standish, Preston (by way of Walton) and Lancaster.

#### WIGAN TOWN.

This road became with the Romans what it has long been and still is to us, the chief line of communication from North to South. Fifty years ago the road was carefully traced from Warrington to Wigan by an antiquarian—one, the Reverend Edmund Sibson, of Ashton-in-Makerfield. Another road, from Manchester, passed through Hindley and Amberswood Common along the south of Ince Hall, Hardybutts and Scholes, and crossed the ford of the river at Millgate. It is said that traces of this road are still to be found on Amberswood Common.

The valley of the Douglas is closed on the north and the north-east by the Rivington Hills, and separated from the valley of the Mersey by the high lands which our Anglo-Saxon ancestors named the Billingham, of which the Billinge Hill is the highest point. A Roman road ran through this valley, leaving Wigan on the right. It is also believed that a Roman station existed at Blackrod. Some time during the last century remains were discovered on the banks of the Douglas at Wigan, consisting of a number of Roman urns, and a gold coin of Vitellius was found at the same place. Other discoveries of this and later periods have from time to time been unearthed in many parts of the town. Ancient war relics have also been found.

#### NORMAN CONQUEST.

Historians record that lands in the Newton Barony, in which Wigan was situated, were bestowed upon Warinus Banistre, and that

#### WIGAN TOWN.

estates were taken from the Saxons and given to the Normans, and mention is made that the old Saxon family of the Bradshaigh's had their estates restored. Other local estates are also referred to.

#### THE FIRST BARON.

The Rectors of Wigan have been Manorial lords from the time of Henry III, who gave that honour with the Rectory, to his Secretary and adviser, John de Mansel. He held about one-fourth of his estates as a home farm or demesne, his labourers living together (in Hallgate) for protection, or to be ready in case of emergency for military duties. He was the Judge and Governor, had a Court leet and prison at his Manor house, appointed bailiffs, exacted fines, and received all fees and tolls at fairs and markets. Such were the conditions of the people before the Charter of Henry III, which was the

#### ORIGIN OF THE CORPORATION.

In this Charter, not only were all the privileges of a market town allowed to the inhabitants, but they were allowed to govern themselves and make their own bye-laws. Following close upon this was the

#### FIRST PARISH CHARTER,

granted by the said John Mansel about the year 1249, which confirmed all that was allowed by the Royal Charter, and added further privileges for the burgesses in connection

#### WIGAN TOWN.

with his demesne. This good rector and trusted servant of the King eventually became embroiled in the political troubles of the day, and though powerful, honoured and wealthy at home, he died poor, wretched and miserable abroad, even the place of his burial being unknown. These charters were the means of establishing a new era in the town, which grew and prospered. It not only had

#### A GUILD MERCHANT

for the government of town's affairs and trade, but also a confederation of merchants. Craftsmen and artificers were also admitted into the Guild and became important persons in the town; being freeholders and burgesses they had entire control of its business and merchandise. No craftsman could carry on any trade without their special leave, and a stranger or foreigner was not allowed to start a trade or business in the town until he had been brought to court by the gate-waiters, to prove his ability at his craft. If this was satisfactory, and means of subsistence proved, he was admitted as a burgess, and enjoyed the benefits of the Guild.

#### THE ORIGIN OF FAIRS.

The great wake of the year was on the eve of All Saints. The townsfolk gathered together in the market place and kept vigil all night. Booths were erected and festive gatherings were held. Pipers played for the people, and other attractions included bull-baiting, horse racing, donkey racing, foot

#### WIGAN TOWN.

racing, sack racing and fiddle matches—all the diversions of a fair of olden time. This annual custom brought buyers and sellers together in great numbers, some on horse back, some in carts, others on foot, and all commodities were vended, that of cloth being a notable feature.

#### THE OLD CLOTH HALL

in the Commercial Yard was the rendezvous for buyers and sellers, townsmen and foreigners, and became a busy exchange.

#### IN CROMWELL'S DAYS.

No town showed more loyalty to its King than did the town of Wigan in the days of the Civil wars, and no town suffered more from the devastating horrors that ensued, after nine years of strife. The Royalist Army, under the command of Lord Derby, had its headquarters in the town. His strongest opponent was Colonel Assheton who, on 1st April, 1643, made an attack on Wigan, held the town at his mercy, and ransacked the church. Cromwell himself was in command at the battle of Preston, when the Duke of Hamilton having been defeated there, made his way to Wigan with his depleted army.

#### SIEGE OF LATHOM HOUSE.

No part in the history of the wars stands out in bolder relief than the memorable defence of Lathom House (1644). Lord Derby was in the Isle of Man, and Lady Derby refused to listen to the terms of Sir

#### WIGAN TOWN.

Thomas Fairfax. The house itself proved to be impregnable; it was surrounded by a wall six feet thick, strengthened by nine towers, each of which had six pieces of ordnance, and the whole surrounded by a moat 20 feet broad. Within the fortifications were six companies of soldiers and six captains. The command of all under the Countess was under Major Farries, a Scotchman. The besieged poured forth shot and shell, and held the castle in spite of the superior forces against them, for three long weary months, until her husband on his return from the Isle of Man, came with reinforcements, and drove them with great slaughter through Wigan to Bolton.

#### INQUISITIONS.

To raise money for the continuance of the war Cromwell made a levy upon all livings over a certain amount, and commissioners were appointed to go down and examine minutely in every parish, the state of the Church, its wealth, the devoutness of its parishioners and priests, and how they were affected by the Parliament. There were sixteen inquisitions held in Lancashire, and of these, six were held at Wigan, with the result that many incumbents were deposed and Presbyterians appointed in their places. The town was in such a reduced state that a petition was made to Parliament for assistance; poverty and starvation everywhere abounded; but the worst was yet to come. The ultimate trial and execution of the King led the Scots to take the field and espouse the

#### WIGAN TOWN.

cause of Charles II, and this augmentation of the Royalist army inspired the people with hopes of victory.

#### THE BATTLE OF WIGAN LANE.

Lord Derby had arrived in England with three hundred Manxmen to assist his Sovereign in taking the Crown and Kingdom, which were justly his. His forces were soon augmented by many Wigan men and Lancashire Presbyterians. Under him was Major General Sir Thomas Tyldesley, one of the bravest of the Lancashire Royalist leaders. Lord Derby led his army on towards Wigan on the 25th August, 1651, and met the enemy's cavalry, who were entrenched at the north of the town. The earl marshalled his men and began the attack, but the Cromwellians were a superior foe and soon gained an advantage. Lord Derby's charger, was shot under him, but seizing a riderless steed he again mounted and charged whilst calling his men to follow. On he galloped through the masses of the enemy. His horse was again shot under him, and he himself was wounded afresh, and his faithful French servant was at last struck dead at his feet. Fiercer and yet more hopeless grew the battle, yet bravely Derby fought and well, but all in vain. The gallant Cavalier, Sir Thomas Tyldesley, had been no less courageous than Derby. Again and again he renewed the attack, and in a desperate onslaught was slain, and his men fell easy victims to the foe. Lord Widdrington, who had only lately been made a Baron for his gallant services to the

#### WIGAN TOWN.

King, had been fatally wounded, and Colonel Boynton had been slain. All hope was now lost and what remained of the Royalist army were taken prisoners. In the tottering old walls of Wigan there were then more breaches than gates, and these were unguarded, and so became thoroughfares into the town for fugitives. Lord Derby sought refuge in the "Dog Tavern\*" which exists to this day, and is now known as the "Old Dog Hotel." Getting away, in disguise, he pursued his way by Warrington to Worcester. But events proved he only escaped from danger to death. After the defeat at Worcester, he gave himself up, and was most unjustly treated. Like his royal master, he was condemned for execution, which took place at Bolton. His remains were brought to Wigan and conveyed to his ancestral home, Lathom House, where he was buried. A town bravely held and defended by him mourned his untimely end: not in battle had he fallen, but on the scaffold. His speech on the scaffold, and execution, are fully treated of in works on his life and history of the times.

"Sir William Widdrington, of Widdrington Castle, Cumberland, was a knight, and for his good services to the King was raised to the dignity of a Baron of the realm by letters patent, dated 10th November, 19th

\*A well preserved bust—a relic of many generations, which is said to be of this Earl of Derby, is in the possession of the present owners of the house. The long frontage of the "Old Dog" Inn went up the passage. The recess or "cubby-hole" in which the Earl was hidden, is traced on the back premises of 31 Market Place, near the "Old Dog" Inn.



MAB'S CROSS, STANDISHGATE

#### WIGAN TOWN.

Car. II, by the title of Lord Widdrington of Blankney, in the County of Lincoln. His eldest son William succeeded to his title and estates." (Dugdale's Baronage of England, page 471.)

The remains of Sir Thomas Tyldesley were buried in the family vault at Leigh, and twenty-eight years afterwards a monument was raised by his cornet, Alexander Rigby, to his memory. The monument was afterwards taken down, but again rebuilt, where it now stands in Wigan Lane.

#### MAB'S CROSS.

The interesting history of Mabel is preserved in a few lines in the Bradshaigh family pedigree, a quaint copy of which may be seen in the introduction of Sir Walter Scott's "Betrothed." This family historian says:—"Sir William Bradshaigh, second son of Sir John, was a great traveller and a soldier, and married to Mabel, daughter and sole heiress of Hugh Norris de Haghe and Blackrode, and had issue in 8 Ed. II. Of this Mabel is a story by tradition of undoubted verity, that in Sir William Bradshaigh's absence (being ten years away in the Holy wars) she married a Welsh knight. Sir William, returning from the wars, came in a palmer's habit amongst the poor to Haghe, who, when she saw him and conjecturing that he "favoured" her former husband, wept, for which the knight chastised her, at which Sir William went and made himself known to his tenants; in which space the knight fled, but

#### WIGAN TOWN.

near to Newton Parke Sir William overtook him and slew him. The said Dame Mabel was enjoined by her confessor to "doe penance by going onest every week barefoot and bare legged to a crosse near Wigan from the Haghe whilst she lived, and is called Mab's Cross to this day; and their monument lyes in Wigan Church as you see them portrayed." Who or by whom this cross was erected no record tells.

#### THE INSURRECTION OF JACOBITES.

The object of this insurrection was to place on the throne the eldest son of King James the second—Prince Charles Edward Stewart. At the time when the insurrection broke out (1715) the Prince was in France, and did not reach Scotland until the rising had been almost suppressed. The Jacobite army marched down on Preston and had relied on gaining many recruits, and the English troops advanced in two divisions to meet them.

A battle was fought, and the Jacobite leaders were compelled to surrender, and became prisoners with 1,500 of their followers. The great mass of the prisoners were tried at Liverpool, and five of them were publicly executed in the Wigan Market Place. In the rebellion of 1745, the Young Pretender, Prince Charles Edward Stewart, passed through the town at the head of his army on the way to Manchester, and returned by the same route when retreating, spending the night of the 10th December in Wigan, where, with his staff, he made his temporary headquarters at the

#### WIGAN TOWN.

##### MANOR HOUSE\*

in Bishopgate, which has lately been demolished. This house and grounds, known as "Bishopgate House," was, no doubt, in its earliest days, an institution attached to the Barony of Wigan, within the enclosure of the Bishopgate that once stood hard by.

In the early part of last century it was used as a school, and occasionally as a barracks.

##### OLD PACK-HORSE ROADS.

The main road was from Warrington, through Newton, Wigan, Preston and Lancaster to Kendal. The latter town was the principal pack-horse station on this line of road, sending large trains of horses as far south as Wigan. The London wagons which conveyed most of the goods along this road came as far north as Wigan and Standish, where they took in cargoes of coal for sale on the return journey through Cheshire.

##### STAGE COACHES.

Up to the year 1757 the method of travelling from Lancashire to London was on horseback. On the 9th June, 1757, the Warrington Flying Stage-Coach began to run twice a week between Warrington and London. The time of the journey was three days and two nights. The fare was two guineas inside, and one guinea outside,

\*A written document in the Prince's handwriting, acknowledging the hospitality he received on that occasion is said to be in existence.

#### WIGAN TOWN.

children being charged half-price. Citizens of the town in those days would hire a post-chaise to convey them to Warrington whenever they had occasion to go up to London.

#### HARROGATE STREET WELLS.

Wigan might have been a fashionable inland resort at this day had its mineral wells, which existed in various parts of the town, down to the 18th century, been developed by our ancestors. Unhappily, the Spa has been drained away by the coal mines of the district, but traces of the wells still remain in the neighbourhood of Harrogate Street\*. What, therefore, might have been utilised for the public good and to the town's benefit, has been lost for ever.

The waters were said to contain medicinal properties, derived from the solution of substances through which they passed. Dr. Leigh, an eighteenth century writer on medicinal waters, observes that "the vitriol spring at the cannel pits at Haigh near Wigan when he first tried it, yielded an ounce of vitriol for a quart of water." He also mentions that chalybeate waters were found at Wigan, and gives a full description of the burning well at Arncliffe near Wigan.

\*A relic on the site of one of the Harrogate Wells is still to be seen on the land belonging to the Harrogate Inn.

#### WIGAN TOWN.

#### TRADE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

It is interesting to note what were the prevailing trades carried on in the town in the seventeenth century. Next to bell-founding, the most important trade was that of the potters, who would probably have their kilns in the Potteries. The clay was obtained from the waste lands of the manor, for we find mention of an award by Bishop Bridgeman in 1664, "that potters of Wigan for the time being may dig clay in the wastes of the said manor, as heretofore potters of Wigan have used to doe, provided the places so digged be forthwith after the digging sufficiently amended." It is a matter of regret that two such important trades, once so prosperous with our worthy forefathers (who had nothing like the chance of education and skilled training that we have to-day) should not now be ours. Other trades were braziers, pewterers, mercers, smiths, barbers, coverlet weavers, fustian weavers, plumbers, dyers and butchers. The town also had officials acting as Gatewaiters, Surveyors of flesh and fish, and bread and beer, Searchers and sealers of leather, etc.

#### HALLGATE NOTES AND CUSTOMS.

The Parish of Hallgate in the early seventies was a compact district, thickly populated with a hardy, poor, but genuinely honest people.

The plot of land comprising Richmond Street and Frog Lane was then green fields

#### WIGAN TOWN.

and gardens. Opposite the school stood Boardman's cottage and Chaddock's shippin. The Rectory was not then walled round, and the gates were open to view. Spring Gardens consisted of old tenements, and Frog Lane was nothing more than its name indicates, a country lane.

The old footpath through the Mesnes led alongside the Rector's wall (now enclosed) at a point opposite to the house at present known as No. 11 New Market Street, through the present Cricket ground and past the Mesnes Well to Barley Brook.

The old hand-loom weavers' cottages, with long flights of steps, stood near the "Rising Sun," whilst the two Crofts opposite were then busy thoroughfares.

The inns were more numerous than at present; the "Rising Sun," "The Globe," "Robin Hood," "Gloucester," "King of Prussia," and the "Ringers' Arms" having vanished.

The Pig Market (now known as Crofters' Arms Yard or Back Market Street), held every Friday, was nothing more than a passage. It also served as a Chandlery, doing a large wholesale trade in candles, which were then commonly used.

The Hallgate races took place on the 12th of June, and the rollicking fun of the day continued to a late hour. Climbing the greasy pole, treacle dipping, stilt walks, and tug-of-war matches, were a few of the diversions.

#### WIGAN TOWN

The following is a Copy, but not Facsimile, of an actual advertisement in the Author's possession, of the Old Hallgate Races and Sports. It is printed on yellow paper a yard long:—

#### HALLGATE ANNUAL RURAL SPORTS

under the distinguished patronage of  
THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF  
HALLGATE.

Mr. Moon, Chairman, and Miles Mitton,  
Treasurer.

#### The ANNUAL SPORTS

will take place on MONDAY, 14th  
AUGUST, 1865.

#### WRESTLING MATCH

at the Crofters' Arms.

1st prize, 20/-; 2nd, 10/-; 3rd, 5/-. Not to exceed 6 score 10 lbs. Entries closed at 12 o'clock on Monday, the 14th. Each man to wrestle in socks and drawers. To commence at one o'clock.

#### POLE SWARMING

at the Rising Sun, for a leg of mutton. Free.

#### RAT WORRYING MATCH

at Mr. Joseph Lowe's Fox and Goose.

#### SINGING MATCH

at Mr. Scholes's Caledonian Inn.

#### GRINNING THROUGH A COLLAR

at the Three Arrows.

WIGAN TOWN.

SINGING MATCH AT THE GLOBE  
TAVERN.  
TOBACCO SMOKING at Mrs. BAILEY'S,  
'BRICKLAYERS' ARMS.

FOOT RACE  
at Mr. Parkinson's, King of Prussia,  
backwards and forwards.

SACK RACE  
at Mr. Robert Bolton's, Ringers' Arms.

DANCING MATCH  
At Mr. Roper's, Bay Horse.

SINGING MATCH  
at Mr. Peter Hill's, Robin Hood.

DONKEY RACE  
at Mr. Edward Ainscough's, White Lion,  
for a Leg of Mutton.

MUFFIN EATING  
at Mr. Boardman's, Coach and Horses,  
where prizes are not named, they will be  
declared at the time.

THERE WILL BE TWO BALLOONS  
SENT UP DURING THE EVENING.

All men seen on buildings, and all dogs  
loose on the course, will be shot.

Done at the Court House, Hallgate, this  
eighth day of August, One thousand Eight  
hundred and Sixty-five.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

Strowger, Printer, 22 Scholes, Wigan.

WIGAN TOWN.

For the tug-of-war matches Hallgate  
possessed a strong and powerful team, which,  
captained by the stalwart Ned Topping, was  
victorious in many encounters.

Connolly's tickets—a temptation to both  
men and women to gamble on horse-racing—  
were then in vogue, but were happily removed  
by legislation.

Shaking clubs were also a feature.

Party feeling ran high at election times,  
and politics were invariably the cause of many  
strifes, particularly when the Fife Band of  
the School had been on parade and finished  
up by playing "Boyne Water."

Of the many noteworthy characters of the  
time were Bill Green, the coffin maker, Old  
Edward Clough, the verger, who lived oppo-  
site Entwistle House, and walked to and  
from church in cassock and bib. He kept a  
very knowing parrot, whose chatter was great  
fun to the choir boys when they called. Blind  
Gee who, walking behind his coal cart, made  
his deliveries in two pennyworths, served in  
a bucket, Old Atkinson, the "knocker-up,"  
who battered the doors with a hammer, and  
Henry Taylor, who succeeded Atkinson, but  
tapped the windows with a fishing rod, a  
method which is still adopted.

Old William Parkinson is worthy of note.  
Old William kept the rather odd mixture of  
cows and a grocer's shop. He drove his cows  
to the Rector's field in the early morning to  
pasture during the day, when he baked his  
delicious loaves, smoked his Churchwarden's  
pipe, or sold his groceries, and then went to

# WIGAN TOWN.

lead the cattle back in the evening for milking. His was a credit trade, and his busiest days were Fridays and Saturdays, which were pay days. Not being able to manipulate figures he chalked the scores of his customers on the stone front of the fire-place and on the shop walls.

After serving a customer and reckoning the goods, he, chalk in hand, booked the score either on the fireplace or on the wall, wherever there was room, in this manner:—

Four o's, four 1's and a dash would be 4/4<sup>1</sup>. The following key will make this clear:—

For a halfpenny he used a dash (—);

For a penny he used a one (1);

For a sixpence he used a semi-circle (half of o);

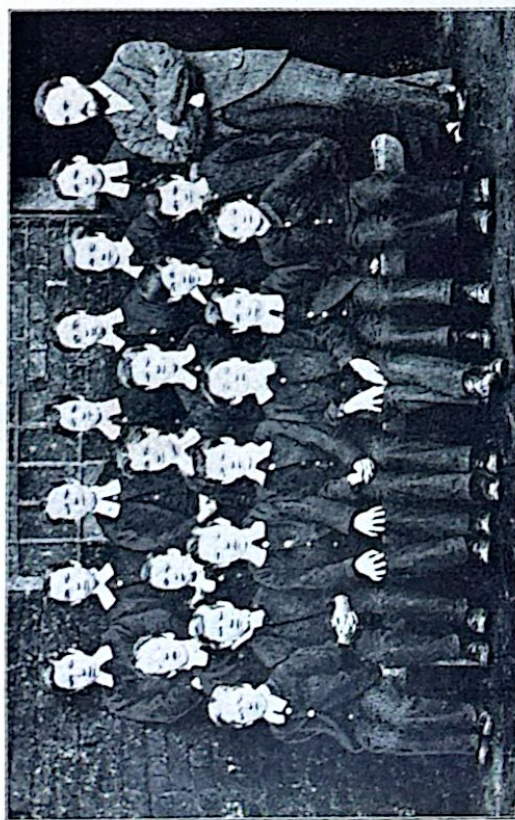
For a shilling he used a circle;

For a half-crown he used a cross;

For a crown he used a larger cross.

One more reference, as to the National and Blue Coat boys. A generous benefactor long ago bequeathed certain lands, in trust, so that the income derived from them should be applied annually to the clothing and apprenticing of poor boys.

In the days we are now considering, the style of the suit which they wore was quite unique. The material was of the best blue pilot. The jacket with laps, and a plain, red, sewn-in stand collar, two brass buttons, and the trousers whole fall. The cap was flat in shape and brimmed. A white bib was supplied, made to fasten round the neck over the



Mr. SAMUEL WEAVER WITH HIS CLASS OF BLUE COAT BOYS (January, 1877).  
Back Row—Brown, Shuttleworth, Trer, Collier, Lowe, Beathwaite, Magraw  
Middle Row—Underwood, Scholer, Molyneux, Bayman, Rothwell, Barnes.  
Front Row—Daniels, Lee, Taylor, Kniveton, T. Hill Southern

#### WIGAN TOWN.

coat, of which the boys were exceedingly proud. A pair of strong three-hole shoes and two pairs of stockings completed the outfit and full-dress uniform.

The boys had the place of honour at the School Festival, held on the first Saturday in July, and also in the Sunday procession. Many of them were choir boys.

One wonders how those boys are now faring. Some are still with us, others are away, perhaps in foreign lands.

The schoolmaster in those days was Mr. Samuel Weaver. His assistant, Mr. Richard Lace (now F.R.G.S., of Douglas, I.O.M., and brother of Mr. T. Livingstone Lace, J.P., of this town), though of a good age, still retains a very warm affection for the school and indeed for the town of his earlier days. He sang in the Parish Church Choir, and was later the first organist of St. Michael's Church, and afterwards Choirmaster at St. Catherine's.

Mr. Weaver was followed by the late Mr. William Langshaw, who came from the Goose Green Schools, with not a few of his scholars—Goose Green lads—with him; a tribute of affection to their master.

*"If any reader, or scholar, or Blue-coat boy can help by naming those un-named on the photograph shown facing page 42 the Publishers will be pleased to hear from him with a view to insertion in future issues."*

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Still govern thou my song, Urania, and fit audience find though few."—Paradise Lost.

### THE COUNTRY SIDE

(AN IDEAL).

"Oh, how happy here's our leisure!  
Oh, how innocent our pleasure!  
O ye valleys, O ye mountains,  
O ye groves and crystal fountains,  
How I love, at liberty  
By turns to come and visit ye!"  
Grindon.

#### THE NEED OF EXERCISE.

The highest medical authorities have pronounced in no uncertain voice the great need for the workers of this country to avail themselves of more active recreation. The needs of the times demand it, every department of the commercial life is being speeded up, and keen competition is the result. None know this better than the business man and worker, who need to adapt themselves to this new order of things to be fit and qualified for the strenuous life they have to live. It is, therefore, a duty of paramount importance to take exercise and recreation, and according to the medical profession it must be active recreation. What this shall be let the reader decide for himself.

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"The why is as plain as way to Parish Church."  
As you like it.

#### POPULAR SPORTS

Every man follows the hobby or sport of his choice, and every legitimate recreation has its right place in the community and fulfils its mission.

In the summer we are drawn to cricket, bowling, boating, tennis, and other games and field sports, whilst winter, with its magic spell, affords us bracing walks and skating, and draws thousands to the football fields, who enthusiastically follow their favourite teams through thick and thin, through victory or defeat. Our own good Sovereign, the King and Duke of Lancaster, has only a few years ago endorsed the nobility of the game by his august presence. The pleasures of golf and of the wheel also, are many, they continue all the year round, from its beginning to its close. Nothing can prevent the popularity of the speedy motor cycle, whilst the ordinary (yet ever-improving safety) is the proud possession of thousands who delight in country rides "far away from the madding crowd."

#### ROAD TRAVEL.

What will yet be evolved in our mechanical workshops in the way of improvements in cycle and wheel traction none can say, but since the air has now been conquered by living man, nothing in road locomotion can surprise us. The public spirit of to-day is keenly alive to its needs, and activity and

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Variety's the very spice of life, that gives it all its flavour."—The Task.

enterprise in all departments of mechanical production are in evidence on all sides. The times are positively ripe for the adoption of all useful and speedy contrivances in road travel that genius can produce, so that the inventor and mechanic is now having the time of his life, and if he is up to his business many a clever mechanic may yet find an opening for his ideas and win a lasting fame.

#### OUTDOOR HOBBIES.

There is no end to the hobbies than can be prosecuted in the open country—hobbies that men in high walks of life have followed in the course of their lives, and which have helped them on to celebrity. It is a recognised fact that a hobby relieves the monotony of one's appointed duties, and every man should have one at least, and ride it at a gallop.

A friend we know, an amateur naturalist, follows the hobby of collecting bird's nests, not only on the copse and in the hedgerows, but high up in the trees, for which purpose he provides himself with climbing irons. Being also an amateur photographer he combines this art with his hobby, and submits his photos to ornithological magazines. Another friend, also a photographer, specialises in trees, and his collection, with subscribed notes as to locality and dates, is a rarity indeed. Fossil-hunting is the pleasing hobby of the young geologist, and combines recrea-

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Why Hal, 'tis my vocation."—King Henry IV.

tion with valuable data for future study or investigation, whilst botany research and collection is always interesting and instructive to both young and old. Every recreation plays its part in the grand scheme of life.

#### WALKING AN IDEAL EXERCISE.

There is yet another recreation, and an important one to those who do not cycle and are fond of the country—one that has stood the test of time, and will continue a favourite with many when others have become unsatisfying or unpopular. We refer to the art or pastime of "walking." It is undoubtedly the original, if not the most primitive recreation, but who can deny that it is still the best and easiest means of health culture? The long, brisk walk in the open country produces a glow of health and exhilaration which fully compensates for the little effort required. It opens up fresh scenes, originates new ideas, and as a natural result awakens new interests. It is good for old and young, good for the nerves and the brain—in short, it is a reliable and healthy exercise.

Its simplicity at once commends it; it requires no elaborate preparations, and admits of no incumbrances, save when required, the knapsack and field glasses. Nothing else is admitted in this select pastime, though, of course, the camera is at times indispensable.

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

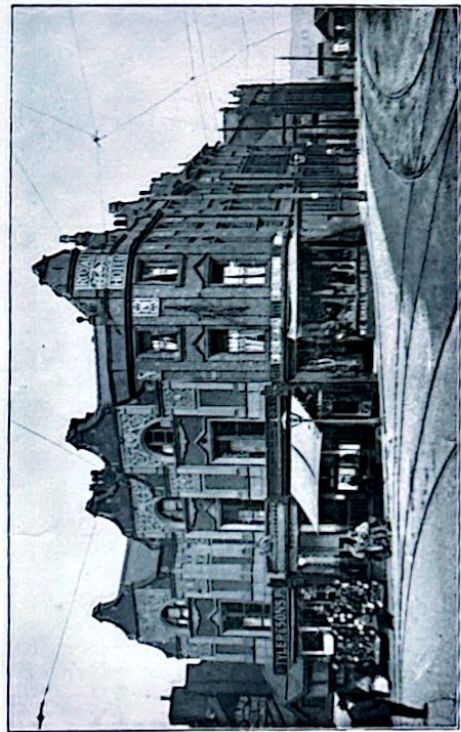
"Solitude sometimes is best society  
And short retirement urges sweet return."  
Paradise Lost.

Given a fine day and a few hours at one's disposal, and the sport is at hand; you take your hat and stick, or may be your hiking kit, and away you go.

Those in good health need to practise it, as well as those whose health is below par, and to these in particular, an early morning walk is invaluable indeed. Eminent professional men and ministers of the gospel adopt this form of exercise, and they would not do so if they did not find it conducive to good health and longevity: therefore, clerks and students, shop assistants, mechanics and factory hands, who labour under worse conditions and require plenty of fresh air and change of environment, should have no hesitation in following it; there is every reason why they should become votaries of the pastime. None the less is walking exercise invaluable to the business man, whose energies in his working hours are taxed to the utmost.

#### AN APPEAL.

The votary of the open air sees the countryside in all seasons of the year, and in all its aspects and variable moods—when the dark days of winter are past, and the trees and hedges are beginning to open, when the fields are smiling and the corn waving, when the wind howls and the gales blow, when the frost has bound the waters and tinged the hedges, and when the landscape is in its winter dress



M. Brown.

ROYAL HOTEL, STANDISHGATE  
(now the site of Messrs. Woolworth's Stores).

Photo by

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"The labour we delight in physics pain."  
—Shakespeare.

and the hilltops are whitened with snow. He not only pursues his pastime in the sunny days of summer, but he welcomes the returning days of winter, when he can have the most bracing and improving walks.

We would, therefore, appeal to those who do not cycle or motor, to adopt "walking" as a regular exercise and acquire, if they do not already possess it, a taste for the countryside and its manifold attractions, unpolluted by the smoke, and away from the noise and bustle of the town which one has to endure throughout the week. In a word—revive the hobby. Not simply a walk from home to town and a look in at one's club and back again, but a long walk in the country. Taken regularly, with a liberal utilisation of the motor bus or train as the need arises, it will be found one of the most consistent and pleasing out-of-door recreations that one can have, especially if one has a friend who is similarly interested. Begin moderately by taking a three or four miles ride outwards, getting away quickly from your familiar surroundings. Walk another four miles or so leisurely to your destination, and when you are prepared to return, vary the journey homewards as convenience offers itself. On your return, after a brush up and tea, you will feel fit for your evening's entertainment, and will not fail to derive a pleasure that fully compensates for the efforts you have made. As you get familiar with the neigh-

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

" Oft he lingers from his home awhile."—Campbell.

bourhood, extend your journeys, but always have a definite aim for the point you wish to reach. A ramble successfully carried out on the lines one intended beforehand gives more satisfaction than one taken haphazard and without decision.

#### WOODS AND HILLS.

We have a wide stretch—from east to west—to choose from; ample scope is provided for scores of interesting rambles. Do you like the hills? Go then to Appley Bridge (for Ashurst Beacon), to Billinge (for Billinge Beacon), to Parbold (for Parbold Beacon), to Haigh (for its eminence), and to Rivington and district (for its wide moorlands), and while away the afternoon you have to spare, you will be all the better for it. Should you prefer the field paths and meadows green, these are available all around within easy distance. If you are in the mood for the woods\* and dells, visit the lovely Haigh Woods and Plantations, the woods at Gathurst and Roby Mill, Billinge Woods, Longhurst Wood, Red Rock and Arley (for Arley Woods), and whilst in this vicinity see the Arley Hall (now used by the Wigan Golf Club as headquarters), which has still its old time moat and drawbridge and bell, and imagine yourself in mediæval times, when the moat and drawbridge were necessary to one's security and kept an enemy at bay. Visit

\* It should be noted that permission is required to be obtained before entering private woods.

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

" Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears."  
—Shakespeare."

also the very popular and natural Dean Wood at Gathurst, the Ackhurst Wood, the Standish Wood, the Borsdane Wood by Hindley Station, and the Duxbury Woods near Chorley, the same woods and locality probably which the poet Longfellow in "The Courtship of Myles Standish" (the puritan who sailed away in the "Mayflower" in the seventeenth century) had in his mind when he wrote that famous poem.

To be in the lanes and meadows in the warm days of summer, within hearing of the swish of the scythe or the whirr of the reaping machine, to see the work of tossing and the binding of the sheaves, and to hear the voices of the harvesters gives a zest to life, and brings a joy that no one should miss. Who has not experienced the pleasure of being alone with nature (if only for a few hours) in some enchanting wood or dell, under the grateful shelter of the shady trees, listening to the musical rustling of the leaves, the trilling notes of the thrush, the humming of the bees, the silvery rippling of the brook and the loud rushing of the water-fall?

#### A BRACING WALK.

In this variable climate the weather often changes suddenly, and we sometimes have many samples of weather in the space of a single day. But of all weathers we have experienced, we like none better than the cool day in summer after the rains, when the

## THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose  
Breathes the keen air and carols as he goes."  
—The Traveller.

westerly wind is in the ascendant—when the weather-wise hold the dictum that so long as the wind keeps up there will be no rain. At the Equinoctial periods—March and September—the winds invariably prevail.

This is the time to have a long bracing walk, when the wind blows right and left, yet withal is not too strong. And if one feels in sympathy with the weather on such a day and wants to have a real blow, the routes here suggested may be helpful.

1. Car to Upholland, and walk from thence to Ashurst Beacon, or along the lower road through Roby Mill. (Return by bus or train from Appley Bridge.)
2. Bus or train to Orrell, thence along St. James' Road to the Hospital; turn in at Crank Road and through the woods to Billinge Beacon. (Return by bus from Upholland, or by bus from Grapes Inn, or by train from Orrell.)
3. Bus or train to Parbold, walk up Parbold Hill to Wrightington, thence to Standish. (Return by bus.)
4. For a longer journey and higher hills and bleak moors, bus to Aspull, or bus or train to Horwich (which lies at the foot of the hills) and walk over Rivington Pike, returning by bus or train from Adlington, or from White Bear Station. To get still higher, and instead of climbing the Pike, proceed further, and on reaching the Watchman's house, enter the wall opening adjoining, which is easily seen; walk over Winter Hill (the next moor to Rivington) descending into Belmont. Walk to Egerton (Darwen is a few miles further), take bus to Bolton. (Return by bus or train.)
5. Bus to Aspull, or bus or train to Dicconson Lane, thence to right through Dicconson Lane to Fourgates. Turn down Lostock Road and emerge at

## THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Together let us range the fields."—Edward Moore.

Alexandra Road. Cross over Horwich New Road and take the field path just before the Beehive Hotel, passing by Phillips' farm. Again take the path to left and up Chapel Lane; here take the left to come out at Bolton Road near by the Crofters' Arms. Passing this hotel a little further enter the moorland road on the left. Here are deep quarries, and the view improves as one proceeds up the high moorlands (Return from Horwich) or continue the circuitous road and descend to Rivington village; thence to Adlington. (Return by bus or train at White Bear.)

No matter which ramble is chosen we guarantee the walker will get what he sought, and a good appetite, too, in the bargain.

The beacons and hills around the town, when not invaded by visitors and holiday-makers, are inviting places on a summer's day, but in the depths of winter, and in a boistering wind, they can be most unmerciful and unkind. Yet, to those who are strong, and not averse to bad weather conditions, and can face the frolics of a high wind, or enjoy a long walk on a frosty day, the exhilaration and the glow which follows the adventure, is a reward, as well as a test, of one's endurance.

## AMONGST THE HEATHER.

One may choose to explore the moors in spring, when the sunlit slopes are decked with the golden bloom of the gorse bush, or in the autumn, when richly tinted with heather bells. Here, on the lofty moorlands, one has fine panoramic views on all sides, and in the more secluded parts one may wander for

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Habit gives endurance, and fatigue is the best nightcap."—Kincald.

miles and not meet a single person, no living creature being seen except mountain sheep and an occasional flutter of birds out of the heather. But on the immediate hills of Rivington and around Lever Park (with its Little Barn and Great Hall Barn and Grounds) one has always company, for besides local people, one encounters here visitors from all parts.

#### RIVINGTON VILLAGE AND HILLS.

An easy way, and the most direct one for the pedestrian (in our opinion) to reach Rivington village from Wigan, is via Adlington station, and straight along (about half a mile) through the moderately steep village, and along Babylon Lane, thence by the field path on the right leading to Rivington. This may be the best way to approach the hills from the bottom, for one has a combination at once pleasing to the eye. The lakes spreading out right and left, further than the eye can reach, the woods and trees on the water's edge, the cliffs to the left (White Coppice), the hills in front and around, and the tower surmounting them all, is very fine and affords a pleasing prospect. A nature lover of the Victorian era, when the "Blackamoor Inn" was in its hey-day of popularity, well describes this retreat in verse:—

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Glimpses of scenes of most surprising lustre."  
—J. W. Fletcher.

"'Tis a beautiful spot, near the foot of a mountain,  
Enlivened by woodlands and lovely blue lakes;  
Streams of pure water, all fresh from the fountain,  
Steal on through the valleys among the green  
brakes.

"There's a neat little inn on the brink of the water  
That leaps in the sunbeam, and plays on the shore  
Where paterfamilias, mater and daughter,  
May rest with the stranger, the dark 'Blacka-  
moor.'"

The village school in the hollow, the church buried in the trees, and the old-fashioned chapel and meeting-house, ivy covered with its diamond-shaped windows, are also attractions that should not be missed. In the latter is an interesting memorial tablet something out of the ordinary, and the pews are mostly the old style closed-in family pew.

Take the hills to the left and wind round to the highest ridge of all. To do this one has to scale a steep stony road, the old moorland road. If one can manage this well and good, and his efforts will be rewarded with the fine views to be obtained, not to mention the rustic loft and towers, over which, on a fine day, flies the finest brood of pigeons ever raised by any fancier. To see them all in a row on the low pigeon house, or soaring round the tower at such an altitude, is quite an interest in itself. (It is believed that a brood from this loft did yeoman service in the late war.)

\* See "Summer Rambles" (1866) by Leo H. Grindon.

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Through thick and thin, both over bank and bush."—Fairy Queen.

One may avoid the climb by following the new road to the right, and still be on the track of the Pike. This is a pleasant road, heightened in interest by a clever rustic bridge, built in flat stone without mortar. Above the main arch, under which the roadway passes, are several smaller arches supporting a private roadway. This bridge attracts attention by its unusual style of architecture.

The improvements which the late Sir W. H. Lever effected in his lifetime, should be held in remembrance by the people, and one's sympathy went out to him when his fine bungalow was so tragically destroyed. The bungalow and grounds with Pagodas and other amenities of Eastern types, is pleasantly situated on the hillside, and the visitor sees before him that which he may have never seen before.

And now look round at the commanding views one has here, with the plains and hills beyond, and follow the guide posts and scale the Pike, or wind round by the motor road recently formed. From the top the views are fine and extensive. Away beyond is the silvery streak of coast line and Ribble estuary; to the right Blackpool Tower. Below is Lever Park, with the incomplete stone-built Castle (intended to be a replica of Old Liverpool Castle) lying to the left of the lake side on a promontory, and before one is a glorious view of the extensive reser-

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Ever charming, ever new,  
When will the landscape tire the view."  
—Grongar Hill.

voirs of the Liverpool Corporation, which fade away in the distance, and are an added charm to the delectable scene.

Let the glass reveal the scene on all sides of this wide expanse. It does not look far away to the coast, but it is really 25 miles, whilst Blackpool Tower is roughly 35 miles away. The Great and Little Barns (where refreshments are served) are still in the Park below, but the beautiful little Museum and Art Gallery are no longer available for the edification and admiration of the visitor. These treasures, we believe, were transferred some years ago to the Port Sunlight art galleries at Liverpool.

Quite an attraction in themselves were the deer, kangaroos, Indian cattle, emus and other rare animals, roaming hither and thither over the park in former days. These also are no longer on the estate, having shared the same fate of transportation. With these exceptions, Rivington still possesses the old charm that will ever pervade these wide spreading moorlands, with their pleasing scenery and landscape views. An interesting feature that one will notice (that speaks well for the authorities of the district) is the wise provision, on an extended scale, of recreation fields for young men, a boon to the rising generation.

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."  
—Campbell.

What an enjoyable time one may spend on these moors on a summer's day, if one is fond of upland scenery, and likes to ruminate for a few quiet hours amongst the heather bushes, and make the best of a well-earned short holiday. The scene is ever varying, now hilltops, now gorges and streamlets and valleys and woods. A day spent on the moors and hills is a complete change and a genuine recreation for the business man and town worker, who, in particular, must have periodic holidays if he would keep at his best. And to anyone who revels in the pastime of hill-climbing, it gives a foretaste of the keener enjoyment he hopes to have on his summer holidays, when he goes further afield. In this way the amateur climber may enjoy many pleasant moorland rambles near his own locality, and whilst preparing himself for further conquests, is keeping all the while in the pink of condition.

#### A TRUE SPORTSMAN.

Every votary of the open air takes his exercise, as far as he possibly can, at the appointed time: he does not stop at a passing shower, and a winter's gale does not deter him. He is an optimist, sees the brightest, and hopes for the best. And of what use is it to be otherwise? If one's half-day holiday has come round, and it threatens rain, let him don his waterproof and strong boots and brave the elements, the chances are he will

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"When clouds are seen, wise men put on their cloaks."—King Richard III.

enjoy this ramble better than he anticipated. How the hedges and fields take on their green colours and the whole country-side freshens after the rain. The shower over, one feels that the risk was worth undertaking after all.

There are, of course, times when the walker has to discriminate—when he must curtail his programme, and there are also times when he is caught napping (without his waterproof or umbrella). The most prudent pedestrian is not immune from the contingencies of the weather. But if one has ever roughed it at Windermere, or an incessantly Wet day (spell the word "wet" with a big capital, please), he will not flinch at the mild showers that we have in this district, at the expense of losing his walk. If one cannot claim this experience of lakeland rainfalls, we are afraid he has a big surprise in store.

There can be no harm in taking exercise on a wet day if one is well shod, and covered with a good waterproof, provided one keeps on the move, and does not sit still in wet clothes. A bath and rub down and a change of clothing are all the restoratives necessary, barring, of course, the good tea that is quickly to follow. If after this one does not feel an invigoration and a pleasant reaction from his exercise, then he may conclude there is something physically wrong with him.

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Slow and steady wins the race."—The Hare and Tortoise.

#### WALKING COMPETITIONS.

A few years ago a new feature in local sports was introduced amongst us, viz.:—"Long distance walking" by competitive teams of workers from the various clothing factories in the town. It was the Marathon race over again, but on a modified scale, and was encouraged, and rightly so, by many employers of labour. If the sport could be resuscitated it would be a great boon, and might in time rank with our established sports. It is obvious that any movement having for its object the improvement of the physical stamina and staying powers of young men (not to mention the healthy rivalry it creates and the comradeships it fosters) is one that should be well supported. Why it has been allowed to lapse into oblivion is surprising, considering the immense popularity it enjoyed on every occasion of a contest. From the time of starting to the finish of the race crowds of onlookers cheered the competitors, and encouraged them by their presence, especially in the towns and villages through which they passed. The winners, and all those who were strong enough to last on the journey were treated as real heroes. They certainly deserved the trophies which they won, and would have early qualified for membership with the professional harriers, had they continued these surprising feats of endurance.

#### THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Come on, my lords, the better foot before."  
Shakespeare.

#### NON-COMPETITIVE COMBINATION WALKS.

On non-competitive lines and purely as recreational exercise, our local technical college authorities organise summer walking excursions for students and friends. On arrival at their destination the party is treated to an impromptu lecture on the geological and historical aspects of the places and districts visited, thus combining instruction with pleasure, and affording pleasant food for thought for years to come. Thus, one may truthfully say that books are the guiding stars to knowledge, but the knowledge that is to be lasting, and to give the best results to the diligent scholar of a geological turn of mind, may be learnt and imbibed also at the shrine of nature.

#### THE RAMBLING CLUB.\*

Now if this idea of non-competitive combination walking exercises appeals to any of our readers, they could not use their influence in a better direction than by trying to form a "rambling club" or a "hiking club" amongst their associates. The prospect of many enjoyable outings at the week-ends should be a sufficient lure to get the company together, and there is little, if any, organisation needed. Men of all grades may associate in a ramble for the mutual good of each:

\* This we advocated in our 1st Edition (1914) and "Hiking" Clubs are now to be found everywhere.

## THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

"Go on, spare no invectives, but open the spout of your eloquence."—Colley Cibber.

some one of the party has a talent for telling good stories, another brings life to the party with his witticisms and humorous sallies, and the time passes very merrily. Even the duller member may be expected to shine on these occasions, and open out as congenially as the flower under the influence of the summer's sun. And these social walks and friendly meetings—all out for one common object, pleasant recreation—have a most beneficial effect, and are lasting remembrances in after life.

## CONCLUSION.

Without enlarging further on the merits of this pastime, we would say that it is one easy to follow; is healthy, invigorative, manly. It can be undertaken at any stage of life, and is a fitting recreation for any man, no matter what his position in life may be.

The joys of opening spring-time and of the lengthening day, the sunshine and splendour of summer, the harvests, and glowing sunsets of autumn, and the bracing and exhilarating exercises in the fall of winter, are all his, with good health added, who takes up this recreation.

Reader: If you are interested in the attractions of the country-side, and have not yet taken up the pastime with avidity, try it, and become—a votary.

## OUR VILLAGES.

### STANDISH AND ITS CHURCH.\*

(3½ miles from Wigan.)

The village of Standish lies on the old north road, and is rich in historic interest.

The Church is dedicated to St. Wilfrid. Of its origin nothing is known. In all probability there was a Church here in Saxon times. Of the 13th century building there now remains little that can be identified with certainty. The old tower of that date was taken down over forty years ago. The Church was rebuilt in the 16th century, but it cannot be said with any certainty that the entire structure was rebuilt, for there are many signs which would lead one to believe that the Sanctuary is of an older date than the remaining portion of the existing Church. The walls are of a reddish coloured stone (probably from Adlington) while the remainder, including the Chapel (built by Edward Standish in 1589) is of Parbold or Hunter's Hill stone, which has gone almost black with age.

The proportions of the Church are very fine, the tracery of the windows (still preserved in the Clerestory) is late perpendicular; the nave is separated from the north and south aisles by five lofty arches on each side, with circular pillars and capitals of the Tuscan order.

On the beautiful carved oak roofs are to be found the names or initials of the Rectors.

\*Adapted from "Notes on Standish History."  
By J. M. Ainscough, J.P.

#### OUR VILLAGES.

Those of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, are in stone on the Northern Arcade of the nave. The workmen employed have also left their names or initials on the structure. And in the roof of the Standish Chapel may be seen the arms of many notable families. The stone shield between the two south windows in the Standish Chapel (now crumbling away), displays the arms of the Hawardens of Woolston.

The handsome and heavily carved oak pulpit was presented by Rector Leigh in 1616.

The principal monuments are: Rector Moodie (1586), Sir Edward Wrightington (1658), Bishop Dicconson (1752), and Rector Perryn (1825).

There are also brasses on the floor of the chancel to Rectors Leigh, Haydock, Johnson, Smalley and Pilgrim, and to the relatives of Rectors Lathom and Haydock.

The earliest members of the Standish family were buried in the Rector's Chancel. Later generations were interred in the vault under the Standish Chapel, but the only memorial is a tablet to the memory of Mrs. Townley, daughter and heiress of Ralph Standish, the last male of the family who held the estates.

He died 1755. Over the reading desk is a tablet of chaste design to the memory of Colonel Edward Chisenhale, who took a prominent part on the Royalists' side in the Civil Wars.



#### OUR VILLAGES.

The Churchwardens' Accounts (commencing 1679) describe the celebrations in the village to commemorate great National events such as the Revolution in 1688, the Accession of the House of Hanover, Marlborough's Victories, Nelson's and Wellington's Victories, the passing of Prince Charles Edward and the Duke of Cumberland with their respective armies in 1745-6, when the Churchwardens met and hid the Church plate.

The village has changed much in the last half century. The quaint old thatched cottages in Church Street and in the Grove, with their old-fashioned gardens, have given place to new bricks and mortar.

The ancient Grammar School (1625) and the schools in Rectory Lane have been enlarged. The old handloom Weaving Shop at the corner of Squire's Hey has been pulled down, and commodious Offices for the Urban District Council have taken its place. The old Court House in Cross Street still remains, but the small triangular green in front of it, with its overhanging beech tree, has disappeared.

The Malkiln Pit, the delight of the village boys and girls in a long frost, has gone, and is replaced by a handsome Wesleyan Chapel with a trimly kept foreground.

The Smithy well, too, has gone, not a sign of it is left, but the ancient Market Cross and Stocks are still preserved.

The Beech Walks (favourite promenade for Standish folks for many a generation) though still fine, bears little semblance of its pristine

#### OUR VILLAGES.

days of leaf and shade. The fine beech trees are disappearing rapidly, but the westerly gales still bring in the ozone from the Irish Sea.

The Standish Woods are approached down the lane from Beech Walks and are well worth a visit, though now greatly decimated.

A little beyond the village is the walled burying ground of the Quakers.

The village has been considerably extended latterly by groups of Council Houses, and one particular improvement that must be mentioned, is the new open view of the beautiful Parish Church, brought about by the removal of the quaint old tenements that had stood for generations past.

#### WRIGHTINGTON.

(6 miles from Wigan.)

This is the beginning of a purely agricultural district, extending many miles towards the Southport coast. Wrightington Hall is the main mansion and chief attraction, including the view of the lakes. The Fishpond bridge (now a National Monument) is a spot well-known to every local cyclist, who in the summer evenings makes it his destination. A little beyond the bridge is Dangerous Corner, the road to the left leading to Appley Bridge station and Fairy Glen.

There is a story connected with Dangerous Corner:—"A farmer in the neighbourhood, whose wife had died, was 'takkin her to t'buryin', when the carriers accidentally

#### OUR VILLAGES.

knocked the coffin against the wall in rounding Dangerous Corner. The corpse came to life again with the sudden shock, and the wife returned alive to her home. Some time after she again sickened and died, and as the funeral procession approached Dangerous Corner the husband said: 'Now my lads, be careful you don't knock her ag'int corner this time.' "

#### PARBOLD.

(8 miles from Wigan, 9 from Southport.)

The Douglas Valley reaches its highest point of attractiveness midway between Wigan and Southport, say from Appley Bridge onwards. Here it excels in scenery and rural beauty. At its source, and for some little distance, the river is pure as crystal, and were it not for industrial operations it would probably remain so all along its course.

Parbold is an old-world village dating back, according to earliest records, to 1369, when "Thomas de Lathom left 11 marks as pont de Doggles," and in 1401, "Alexander Pyk gave two acres of land in Dalton by Doggles-bridge to William del Scholes for life, and after his death towards the repair of the bridge of the Doggles for ever."

Situated in the heart of the country on rising ground, and being only a few miles from the sea-coast, and from Wigan, it has become quite an important residential village for business men. In summer time it is popular as a holiday resort,\* and Hunter's Hill, Hell Hob and Mawdslev are likewise

#### OUR VILLAGES.

well patronised by pleasure seekers. For ages this has been a quarrying district as the many old excavations testify, although their ruggedness is now partly smoothed over by the ever busy, but gentle hand of time, whilst its sequestered farms and wooded dells are rich in tradition and historic lore. Many old houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries survive, amongst which may be mentioned Stane Hall (old date), Ashurst Hall (1640), Fisher House (1656), Halliwell's Farm (1671), Scott's Fold (1683), Ackurst Hall (1686), Finch House (1722) and Aspinall House (1756).

"In the days of the 'fly-boats' there was no doubt a considerable passenger traffic between Liverpool and Wigan and the intervening hamlets. The 'fly-boats,' drawn by three horses with postillions, left Liverpool daily at 8 a.m. and arrived at Wigan at 5 p.m. The fares to Owler's Lane (Alder Lane), Parbold, were: Front cabin, 3s. 6d.; Back cabin, 2s. 4d."

#### APPLEY BRIDGE.

( $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Wigan.)

Fairy Glen and Sprodley Wood lie close by the adjacent mound called Boar's Den, concerning which Mr. Price has woven much interesting and authentic research and established the fact that a battle was once fought by the Anglo-Saxons near its base.

\* The rural charms of the village and plains between Parbold and Southport are well known.

#### OUR VILLAGES.

The following notes will explain:—

\* "*And in the four wild battles by the shore of Douglas.*"—Tennyson.

"Ascending Parbold Hill and proceeding eastwards in the direction of Standish, a slight descent is made into a ravine called Sprodley Wood, locally known as Fairy Glen, and along this wood runs Sprodley Brook. Shortly after passing over Sprodley Brook, in a field on the left, may be seen a grass-covered mound, which from time immemorial seems to have been called Boar's Den. It is so marked on the Ordnance Map of 1843, and in the very recent map of 1894 the word 'tumulus' is added. Boar's Den is about three miles west of the roman road which passes through Wigan and Standish: the elevation is about 320 feet above sea level. From this plateau a magnificent view presents itself at every point of the compass. Northwards, beyond the silvery streak of the Ribble estuary, rise the Cumberland hills; nearer and trending eastwards may be seen Pendle Hill, Bleasdale Moors, Longridge Fells, Rivington Pike and Angle-sark Moor; southwards, Billinge Beacon and Ashurst; and westward stretches a vast plain with Welsh mountains faintly outlined across the Mersey estuary. Few sites in Lancashire could rival this in its command of the ancient landmarks and beacons of the County, and the estuaries of the Ribble, Mersey and Dec. I have roughly measured Boar's Den, and find the circumference at the

\* Price's "Notes on the Douglas Valley."

#### OUR VILLAGES.

base of the mound to be about 160 yards, and I should take the height to be about 15 feet. It is very symmetrical in shape, taking the form of a round barrow. There is little, if any, depression at the summit; but the elevation may have been to some extent disturbed, and the contour altered, by centuries of tillage. Near the course of the River Douglas, and not far from Boar's House, a large number of bones of men and horses, and 'an amazing quantity' of horse shoes were found, whilst excavating the ground for the making of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal."

"The villas of Southport and Wigan merchants and tradesmen are already creeping perilously near Boar's Den and the next generations may see the old battlefields studded over with the emblems of peace and prosperity. The pick and spade may then reveal the mysteries of Boar's Den."

Ashurst Beacon towers high on Ashurst Hill, and from its heights, commanding views of the picturesque plain, extending to the sea-coast, are obtained.

#### GATHURST.

(2½ miles from Wigan.)

In the summer this is a familiar haunt, and a charming place for a pic-nic. At Eastertide and Whitsuntide crowds pour into the village and make it a holiday centre. It is easy of access from all parts of Wigan town. The numerous water-ways and canal overflows, after heavy rains, lend an addi-

#### OUR VILLAGES.

tional interest to this country-side. Dean Wood, and Porter's and Ackhurst Woods, are the great public attractions, though the private wood belonging to the late Mr. Elisha H. Monks (a well-known and thrifty corn merchant of our town) was a real charm in the owner's day, to those who had permission to walk through it.

He himself planned and formed the flowing fountains, waterfalls and water-ways; also the simple rustic bridges and the stepping-walks up-hill leading to the higher reaches of the wood.

Alongside here from the far end of the wood, reaching to the house, was a charming walk on high elevation, culminating in choice rose and daffodil and kitchen gardens.

The district is gradually developing, and Prince's Park is another pleasing residential addition to this charming and near-by old village.

#### ABBEE LAKES AND UPHOLLAND.

(3 miles from Wigan.)

For an afternoon's outing few attractions can surpass those to be obtained here. The village is quaint and interesting, not the least its Church, whose tower now crumbles with age, and stands sentinel over the antiquated memorials of many generations. There is much to attract in this village, and many interesting old houses remain. The Old Grammar School (and school yard), now in disuse, should be noticed. The feature of the place is the fine recreation grounds and

#### OUR VILLAGES.

lake at the Hotel where boating on a fine stretch of water, in sylvan surroundings, may be obtained.

Close by lies Dean Wood, to which access is obtained by a roadway opposite to Abbey Lakes, or through Upholland village to the right, thence turning in the lane at the Grove Laundry. Other attractions are: College Road leading to the College and to Appley Bridge, Ashurst Beacon (2 miles) and Roby Mill (1 mile).

Overlooking the Churchyard stands a house, which, several years ago, was the wonder of the district through the appearance of a nocturnal ghost, which drew thousands of people nightly while the scare lasted. It held the village spellbound for some weeks, and as suddenly disappeared.

#### LOCAL VIEW POINTS AND HILLS.

##### WHERE THE FIELD GLASS IS USEFUL.

Mesnes Park (high level).  
Parish Church Gardens.  
Beech Hill.  
Richmond Hill.  
Alma Hill.  
Roby Mill.  
Standish.  
Upholland.  
Appley Bridge.  
Ashurst Beacon.  
Billinge Beacon.  
Parbold Beacon.  
Harrock Hill.  
Hunters' Hill.  
Blackrod Church (behind  
Adlington.  
Red Rock.  
Haigh.  
Rivington Hills.

## Rambles and Bus Travel

(For numbers 1 to 5 see pages 52 and 53.)

6. Walk to Haigh, via Plantations; and over the railway bridge, keep to wagon line as far as the overhead bridge. Emerge a little further on left taking the long narrow road to Haigh Church. Cross the road, and proceed past the Brewery until fields are reached, keeping to the left. Follow the lane through Little Scotland up to Cock Tavern. Thence to left descending Dark Lane (a steep descent). Cross this lane, and continue in a straight course through Anderton (see the stocks), crossing all intersecting roads until Four Lane ends at Higher Adlington are reached. Thence to right for Rivington.

7. Bus to Aspull, walk up Moorgate, along Scot Lane. At first cross-road turn to left for a few yards, and enter the first narrow lane on right, winding round old pits, and on crossing railway bridge follow footpath between the railway and field, and continue straight to Horwich for Winter Hey Lane, then to right, and take the opening round the Bridge Hotel, and climb the winding roads to the moors at Rivington Pike.

8. Bus to Aspull; and near by, to left of Moorgate Inn, thence through stile at top end of the road. After the first field turn to right and continue to the lane. Thence to left passing Green Barn Inn. Here enter the first road to right, down Tanner's Brow and past Blackrod Station. Proceed along Crown Lane and turn in on left at the Co-operative Stores opening, and on between the allotments, passing the weir and mill stream, emerging by the Squirrel Inn. Thence to right and enter Rivington Lane on left for Lever Park and the Rivington hills.

9. Walk as above (No. 8) and take bus or train from Blackrod to Horwich, thence to Bridge Hotel and as No. 7.

10. Bus or walk to Brock Mill Lane; thence down this lane and at bottom turn left of Dyeworks and river bridge, and proceed up the lane until footpath (on left), leading to canal, is reached. Take the left

## RAMBLES.

on towing-path to Adlington. Thence through the village, passing White Bear Station, up Babylon Lane and through field-path on right for Rivington.

11. Bus or train to Adlington or White Bear, and proceed up Babylon Lane as last.

12. Bus or train to Boar's Head; proceed along Chorley Lane to Adlington Hall gates (on right). Turn in here, keeping to left, and on reaching the highway (Park Road), take the left turning for Adlington Station, and proceed as above (No. 10).

13. Bus to Springs Bridge (Aspull route) and along towing-path to left (the angler's resort), until Adlington is reached. Thence follow route No. 10.

14. Follow No. 5 ramble for Dicconson Lane and Horwich moors. If the day is bright a turn to Horwich Moor, through the first stile on the right after passing "Rockhaven" will be interesting. The mountain footpath will be found on the left, and the detour may be made long or short as time and weather permits.

15. Train to White Bear or bus to Adlington; thence through Adlington, and continue on to Limbrick and to Rivington village. (A fine walk.)

### TO ADLINGTON (for Arley Woods).

16. Train to White Bear; or bus to Adlington; thence to right, up Park Road as far as the farm; on right, through the farmyard, and along the footpath through Arley Woods, and past Arley Hall and Golf Links, emerging at Red Rock station. Return by train; or to left for Haigh and Aspull bus, or descend Red Rock Lane to right for Chorley Road, thence to left for Boar's Head. Return by train or bus.

### TO RED ROCK.

17. FOR WATERWORKS.—Train to Red Rock, then first lane to left passing Arley Hall, and follow footpaths alongside the Reservoirs, emerging in Chorley Road, Standish, which cross over, and continue up Bradley Lane for Standish Church and stocks. Return by bus or through the fields to Wigan. (Down hill all the way.)

## RAMBLES.

18. FOR ARLEY WOODS.—Bus or train to Boar's Head; down Chorley Road to Red Rock, or train to Red Rock, and as above for Arley Hall. Thence follow footpath through the woods, and emerge at the farm and into Park Road, Adlington. Take first fieldpath to left and proceed through Adlington Hall grounds, emerging at Chorley Road. Thence to left for Boar's Head, return by bus or train.

## TO GATHURST.

19. Through the Mesnes Park and out at the nursery end. Along the footpath and through the fields to Beech Hill, or bus direct to Beech Hill, then enter by the little wood, alongside by the brook, and continue on footpath through the dell to Standish Lower Ground; thence to right and follow the road into Crooke village. Note the submerged schools in the marshes, and "Crooke Hall," in part ruins, beyond the farm, then through the village, over the canal bridge and on to the towing-path. Thence to right, and at the canal bend make a detour along the river bank and willow beds. Again on towing-path to the canal bridge at Gathurst. Take the road on the left up the steep bank, and turn in the fields by the Bird-Pit-Hand Inn (with bowling green) passing through Porter's Wood. On emerging through the stile in the lane, turn to right for Springes Road, thence to left, passing the Manor House and Walthew House and Farm, then first turn to left for Martland Mill Bridge. Return by bus.

20. Bus to Martland Mill Bridge, thence to right on towing-path to Gathurst, passing under Gathurst Bridge. Enter Dean Wood at the second lock house.

21. Train to Gathurst; thence under the railway bridge, and enter immediately to right through the fields to Dean Wood.

## TO BILLINGE.

22. (A climb.) Bus or train to Pemberton; thence to left past Highfield Church and Vicarage. Continue to the second of the Winstanley Park gates and at the four cross roads (see the stocks) take the road to Billinge. A pleasant halt may be made for an inspection of the old Church. For Billinge Beacon,

## RAMBLES.

enter the lane opposite the Church, and follow its course. On descending the beacon take first opening to left of the quarry wall, and follow the road through the wood to the highway. Thence to left of Billinge Hospital or Cottage Homes, for Orrell, return by bus from Grapes Inn, or by train from Orrell station.

23. Train to Orrell; thence to right and up first lane on the left (Winstanley Lane), passing the interesting Lodge of Winstanley Hall as far as the four cross roads, and proceed as route No. 22 to Billinge.

24. Bus to Upholland; thence past the Church, and turn up Newgate Lane on the right leading to Hospital and Billinge Beacon. Continue through wood on left, thence to right by wall, then to left through the farmyard and upwards through the fields and to Beacon. Return by way of the Billinge Church, and follow the road to left of Storik Inn for Garswood Station, or by bus from Billinge.

25. Bus to Ashton-in-Makerfield; thence past Ashton Church and along Garswood Hall Road. Take the pathway leading to Billinge, and emerge near Billinge Church, then proceed as No. 22.

## TO ASHURST BEACON.

26. A CLIMB. Train to Appley Bridge; thence to left for canal bridge. Here on the right enter the stile and proceed through the fields until a farm is reached. Take the road to the right. Continue through the wood and up the steep lane, thence through stile on the right, and on to the Beacon. Return by way of Upholland (to left) bus, or to Parbold and return by bus or train.

27. Bus to Upholland; thence through the village, and up the steep brow past the Post Office, and along Alma Hill for Mill Lane. Note the old Corn Mill on the left, and the fine views all around. Arrived on the Beacon, the view westward lies towards Southport and Liverpool, eastwards are the hills of Darwen and Horwich. Descend via Dalton and Appley Bridge. Return by bus or train.

## RAMBLES.

### TO FAIRY GLEN OR SPRODLEY WOOD.

28. Train to Appley Bridge; thence to right up Appley Lane, and enter the stile on left opposite the road leading to Shevington Vale and proceed to the Glen. If it is desired to return from Parbold climb the ravine to the north end, and thence on highway on the left for Parbold and station. (Return by train or bus.)

29. Train to Parbold; thence walk to Parbold Hill and Beacon. Proceed onwards for Dangerous Corner. Before reaching here, a ravine on the right comes to view, which descend for the Glen. Leave the Glen by the pathway for Appley Lane, thence to right for Appley Bridge station. Return by bus or train.

### TO WRIGHTINGTON.

30. FOR FISH POND.—Bus to Standish; thence along the first road to left missing the Church. Continue through the village of Almond Brook, and alongside Wrightington Hall towards Dangerous Corner, until the lakes and bridge are reached. (This is a very nice ramble for summer evenings. When frozen over these lakes afford pleasure to hundreds of skaters.) Near by is Dangerous Corner, thence to left for train or bus.

31. VIA MOSSY LEA.—Bus to Standish; proceed on the north road passing the Quakers' Burying Ground on left, and to Pepper Lane on the left. Turn up this lane, and continue for Mossy Lea, emerging at Wrightington. Turn to the left for Standish if returning by bus, or to the right for Dangerous Corner and Appley Bridge. A detour may be made through Shevington Vale for Shevington and Martland Mill Bridge if desired.

### TO PARBOLD.

32. Bus or train to Parbold; thence to the right for Parbold Hill and Beacon. Walk to Wrightington, passing Dangerous Corner, to Fish Ponds and Lakes, and proceed to Standish for bus.

## RAMBLES.

33. Bus or train to Appley Bridge; thence to the right for Dangerous Corner. Follow the road to left, and proceed to Parbold Hill and village. Return by train or bus.

34. Bus to Standish; thence to the left as for Wrightington Fish Ponds and Lakes, as No. 30. Thence proceed over the bridge for Dangerous Corner, and continue to Parbold. Return by train or bus.

35. Bus to Upholland; thence to Ashurst Beacon as No. 27. Follow the road past Ashurst Beacon Inn, passing and descending by Douglas Church on the hillside, and wind round to the village of Parbold. Return by train or bus.

### TO HAIGH AND RED ROCK.

36. Bus to Aspull, thence to the immediate left for Haigh. Note the Church with its modern built wych-gate, and the schools with the sundial, also, lower down, the windmill in the field on the left. At the bend of the road will be noticed the Observation Tower which the late Earl of Crawford used in his astronomical observations.

Along the ridge, to the left, fine views (and sea views) are obtained. Proceed onwards to Red Rock. Return, if preferred, from Red Rock Station, or continue the descent to Chorley Road; thence to the left for Boar's Head, and return by train or bus.

### MISCELLANEOUS RAMBLES.

37. TO NEW SPRINGS AND KIRKLESS IRON-WORKS.—Bus to New Springs; thence to the immediate right down Kirkless Lane, passing the Kirkless works of the Wigan Coal Corporation Ltd., and along to Hindley Hall; thence to the right for Hindley Station, or continue the descent by Hall Lane to Hindley town. Return by train Hindley Station, or by bus in the town.

38. BRYN GATES.—Bus to Platt Bridge, thence by bus to Bryn Gates, or direct by train to Bamfurlong Station. Proceed to left, turning in at Bryn

# RAMBLES.

Gates, and continue the descent, passing the Raven's Wood, Bryn Hall and Collieries, emerging at Park Lane End at Goose Green. (Return by bus.)

39. TO BORSDANE WOOD.—Bus to Aspull; thence to the immediate right of Four Lane Ends, down Kirkless Lane, for Hindley Hall. On emerging into Hall Lane cross immediately over and enter the footpath leading to the wood.

This interesting wood, though it has lost most of its old-time beauty, is now, we believe, under protection by the authorities, and is about to be reserved as a "Bird Sanctuary."

Continue through the wood and onwards to West-houghton. Return by bus or train.

40. TO DOVER LOCKS AND GOLBORNE.—Bus to Poolstock (Eckersley's Arms), and enter on the towing-path at the gable end of the house opposite that hotel. Thence to right of path, passing the sheet of water (on right) popularly known as "the Scotchman's flash," the fisherman's haunt in summer and the skater's playground in winter. Continue on to Dover Lock (4 miles), then leave the towing-path, and take the road to Golborne Station, or if preferred, proceed along Crankwood Road for Leigh and Bedford Station. Return by train or bus.

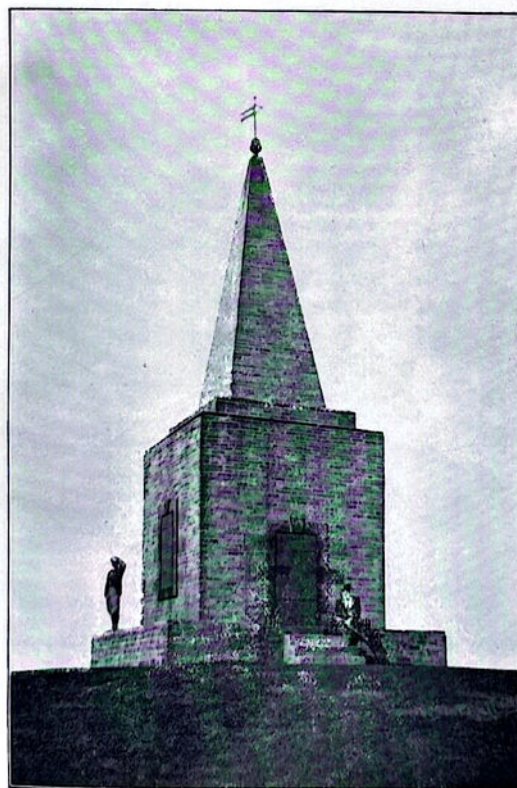


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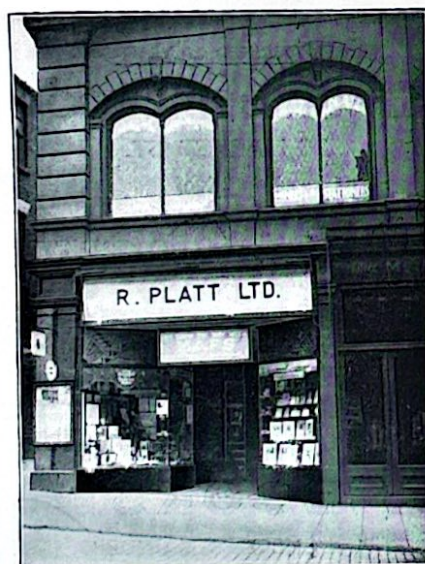
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