

To

Mr Williams
Head Parkkeeper of
Burch Fields

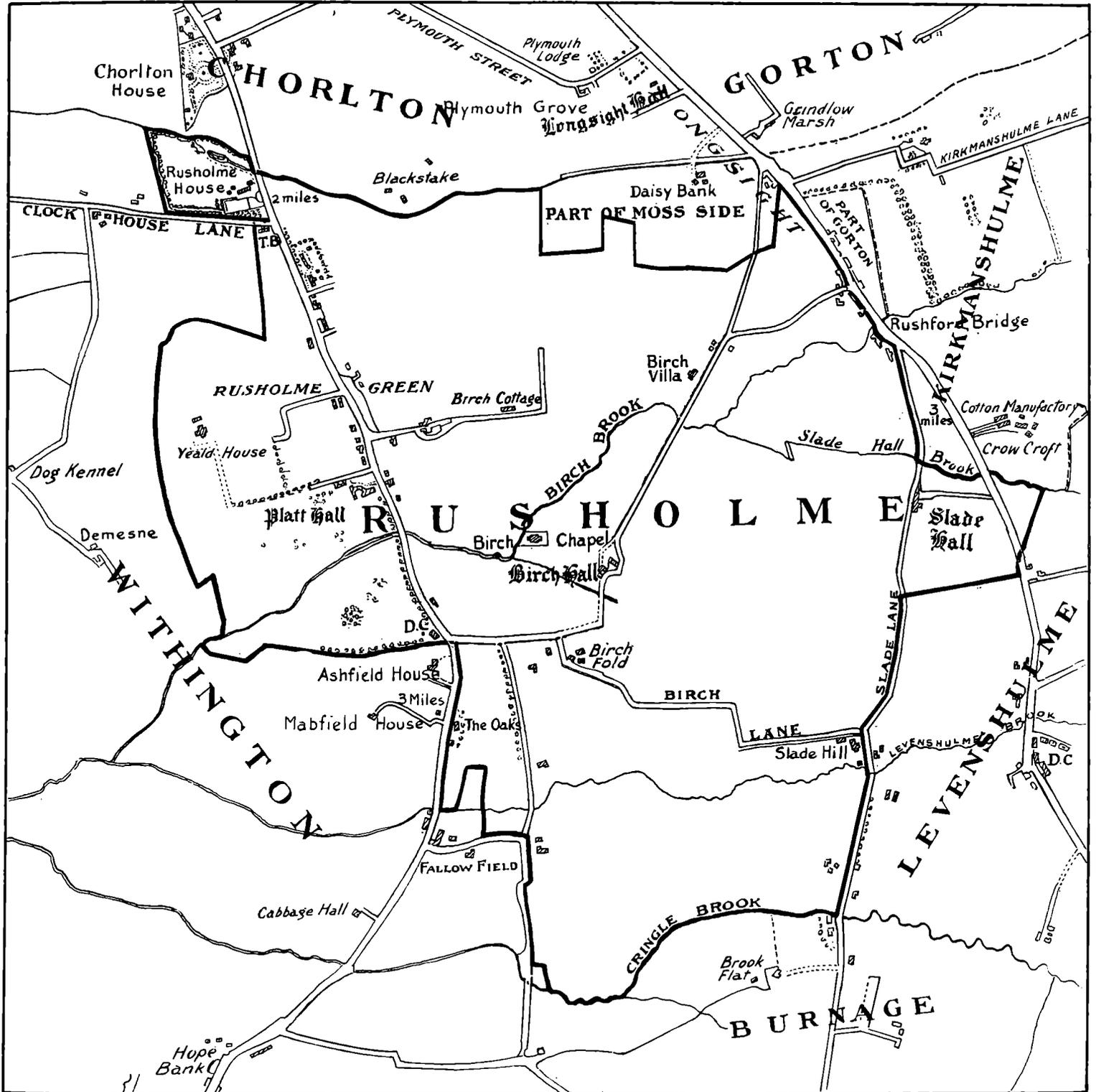
With best wishes of the
Author.

W. R.

Rusholme
April 1915

HISTORY OF RUSHOLME

WITH A GOSSIPY TALK OF
MEN AND THINGS



— Denotes Boundary Township of Rusholme. D. C. Dissenting Chapel. T. B. Toll Bar. Houses

"AND STRANGE ENCHANTMENTS OF THE PAST,
AND MEMORIES OF THE DAYS OF OLD."

History of Rusholme

WITH A GOSSIPY TALK OF
MEN AND THINGS

BY
WILLIAM ROYLE

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To
MY WIFE

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P R E F A C E .

THE sketch of *Rusholme, as it has been*, has arisen from a lecture which I in the first instance gave in the Rusholme Public Hall (my good friend, Rev. W. H. FINNEY, then Rector of Platt, in the chair). My chief object has been to afford some passing glimpses into the village life, as it is partly remembered yet by some of the older generation, and to collect all stray bits of information still floating in their memory from the early days of childhood.

No pretensions are made, and no finality has been attempted. Unfortunately, we possess no illustrations of the old Platt Hall, and of the old village, as it appeared in its more ancient garb. The tenants were mostly given to the pursuit of agriculture, and led a very simple mode of life; their amusements were but few. The cottages were timber-built, thatched, with a bit of garden in front, and its adjacent stack of peat. They used to gather on the Green to commemorate their sports and celebrate all public events.

In the 16th and 17th centuries large tracts of turfy moss characterized the locality, further accentuated by some extensive pools, or *laches*, thickly grown with reeds and aquatic

plants. Bird-life was then more intense and varied. Except the few rows of cottages scattered along the high road, and the few farms to be seen here and there, the place was lost in comparative isolation.

The women carried their market produce—such as butter, eggs, fowl, geese, pigs, vegetables—to the weekly Manchester market, and sometimes suffered fine for breaking the assize. We have no tradition left of boggart, ghost, or fairy, but no doubt superstition was here as rife as elsewhere.

Their great day for decking themselves out was Sunday, when they went to chapel to see the lord of the manor and listen to the solemn sermon.

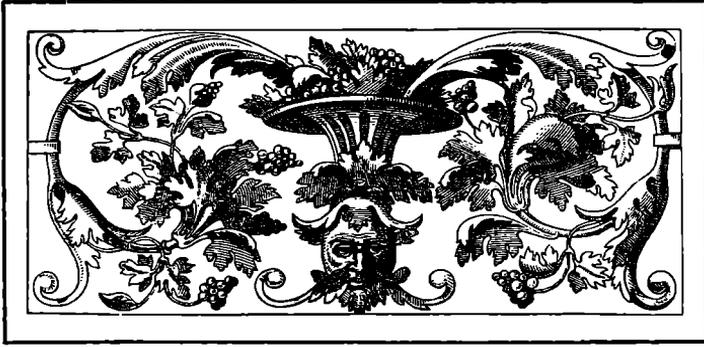
The families were few in number. Some of the tenants held their leases under the Collegiate Church.

For those who cherish the past, a few items have been appended, illustrating some aspects of its former history.

Finally, I ask the reader to recollect that the lecture was a gossip talk to my friends and neighbours in Rusholme, hence so much evidence of the personal element. There is much which I have been compelled to omit. In taking leave, I wish all success and prosperity to our beloved Rusholme and its people, and thank again all the many friends who have assisted me with advice and information.

WILLIAM ROYLE.

ELMWOOD, BIRCH POLYGON,
RUSHOLME, *July, 1914.*



HISTORY OF RUSHOLME

WITH A GOSSIPY TALK OF MEN
AND THINGS

EVOLUTION OF NAME.

WE may appropriately begin by considering the name "Rusholme." In all probability, the first part of the word is derived from rush, a reed.* The second part of it is the Anglo-Saxon word "holme," and signifies a piece of flat, low-lying ground by a river or stream, submerged or surrounded in the time of flood.

There are at least seven spellings of the name, and these, with the dates, are as follows:—

1235	Russum
1400	Risshulm
1473	Ryssum
1563	Rysshome
1568	Riseholme
1586	Ryssheholm
1649	Rushulme

Little less than a century ago the name was spelt "Rush-Holme." Many present will remember the house at the corner of Rusholme Place, opposite Moss Lane, and the

* Compare also such place names as Rush-brook, -ford (also Rushyford), -lake, -mere, -wick, etc. The *dialect form* for rush is: rush, rash, rish, rus, rusk. (See *Wright's English Dialect Dictionary*.)

stone slab that had on it "Rushulme Place." This house was built about the year 1830, but we know that at that time the name was also spelt as at present, and this may therefore have been the transition period. In 1837, when the Chorlton Poor-Law Union was formed, the name was officially spelt Rushulme.

The ancient history of Rusholme centres very much round three spots:

- (1) Platt Hall and the Worsleys,
- (2) Birch Hall and the Birches,
- (3) Birch Church.

PLATT HALL AND THE WORSLEYS.

The first mention of the Platt Estate, and therefore the first reference to Rusholme, is in the twelfth century. We are informed that in the year 1190 a certain Mathew, son of William, conveyed the lands of Platt to the Knights of St. John, that celebrated military religious Order, established at the commencement of the Crusades to the Holy Land. The pilgrims or crusaders who went to Jerusalem were received with such kindness and hospitality by the Order of St. John that on their return much religious fervour was excited, and numerous lands in various parts of the country were bequeathed to the Order, which rapidly increased in wealth. Amongst the lands so bestowed was the estate of Platt, and its income went to the support of the Order. The boundaries of this gift are only of interest to us, as they refer for the first time to "Gore Brook," an "institution" which looms largely in the history of Rusholme to-day, and also in the olfactory organs of its inhabitants. It may interest some to read the boundaries of this gift. "Beginning at the Great Ditch and following that ditch to its lower extremity as far as the cross which is cut in the tree, thence from the said ditch as far as Goselache, and by Goselache up the road which passes between Platt and Rusholme; thence along this road as far as the Gore Brook; and alongside the Gore Brook to the marsh of William de Honford, and so onwards to the Great Ditch." It is of course impossible to locate these boundaries to-day, but it is likely that the most ancient part of Rusholme is that between Gore Brook at Platt and Moss Lane East. In endeavouring to trace ancient boundaries, I have often found help from the names of fields or tracts of land. When speaking one day to the tenant of Heald Farm (better known as Brunt's Farm), I found that a large meadow with a pond was called Gooseacre (Goselache).

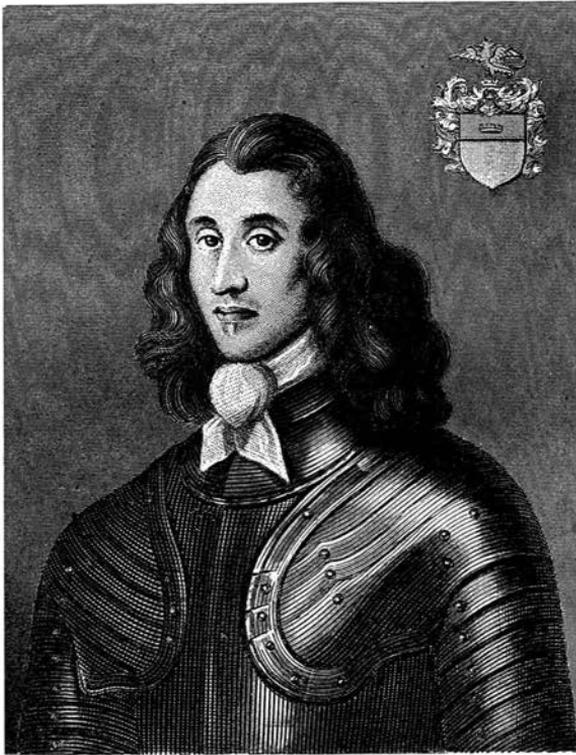
Shortly afterwards the Knights of St. John transferred the estate to a Richard de la More. The granddaughter of this man and her husband took to themselves the name of Platt from the estate of which they owned a moiety. The other moiety was granted to Richard, son of Adam de Farnworth, whose descendants were also called Platt, and for four hundred years continued to live on the Platt estate. There are only one or two references in history to any member of the Platt family, and these are of little importance, for the family does not appear to have distinguished itself in civil, military or religious life. It was in the year 1625 that the Platt family, after occupying the hall for four centuries, finally severed their connection with it.

Edmund Platt was the last of that name to occupy the estate, and in the year 1625 he sold the land to Ralph Worsley, a friend of Humphrey Chetham, for £550, which family and its legatees have been connected with the estate until the present day. At the date of transfer, portions of the estate were under lease to George Travis and Thomas Sheldermine. The Worsley family claimed a pedigree dating back to the days of William the Conqueror. Dr. Halley, in his "Lancashire, its Puritanism and Nonconformity," has a deeply interesting chapter dealing with the Worsley family. I will briefly summarize its salient points. The Worsleys claim their descent from Elias, Lord of Worsley, an adherent of Robert, Duke of Normandy, the son of William the Conqueror. Of this ancient and honourable house, proud of its knights and crusaders, one member "soiled the escutcheon, but greatly augmented the wealth by engaging in trade, and making money from the handloom weavers of Rusholme, Withington, Fallowfield and the neighbourhood." From the description of certain rooms in the old Platt Hall it is certain he was in the habit of storing cloth there. This man was Charles Worsley, who by trade became much richer than his relatives and bought, in 1614, certain lands in Rusholme from Rowland Mosley, Hough End, Withington, and on his death he left his property to his son, Ralph. Ralph Worsley continued in this lucrative business until he was able to purchase the land of Platt from the aforementioned Edmund Platt. This man, the first of the Worsleys of Platt, was of high principle and integrity and greatly respected by his neighbours. Some years ago, I spoke with an inhabitant who well remembered handloom weavers in Rusholme and hearing the click of the shuttle as he passed the cottage doors; and it is, I should say, very probable that the industry was first introduced into the village by this Ralph Worsley, who, we know, dealt

largely in yarn and cloth. He bought the yarn and gave it out among his weavers for the purpose of having it made into cloth and then sold it from his store-rooms in Manchester, which were in Market Sted Lane. He was a man of decided Puritan sympathies and a warm supporter of Cromwell and the Parliamentary cause. He did not himself, like his son, go to fight for Cromwell, but he sent a substitute, for it is on record that he agreed with John Burdsell, of the Millgate, Manchester, to "carry my arms during the service, and for his pain I have given him in hand thirty shillings, one green coat, and am to pay him daily one shilling. When he, with the rest of his company, is trained, and when he is to go forth of the country upon service, I am to pay him thirty shillings more." And now to

MAJOR-GENERAL WORSLEY.

It is, however, of Charles Worsley, son of this Ralph Worsley, that I wish more especially to speak. He was the most famous of this celebrated family, and a man of whom every Rusholmite may well be proud. Like his father, he was a keen Parliamentarian, and very early in life entered the army. We notice that in the year 1646, there came as minister to Birch Chapel, a certain Rev. John Wigan, who began to preach Independency with much zeal, as will be well understood when I say that he himself joined Cromwell's army and fought for his creed with sword as well as tongue. No doubt young Worsley was stirred by the ministrations of this stalwart preacher. He was then married and living at Platt, and threw himself on the side of Cromwell and the Parliamentary forces. There were in Manchester strong forces on the Royalist side, but the Parliament had also many friends, and none was more active than Charles Worsley. His bravery and conscientiousness secured the young soldier's rapid advancement. By the year 1650, when only twenty-eight years of age, he had already attained to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Cromwell was then on his northern march to Scotland, and Lieutenant-Colonel Worsley raised a regiment of soldiers in this neighbourhood, the first muster of these being in Cheetham Hill. On August 19th, 1650, Worsley marched at the head of his men through Skipton, Durham, Newcastle, Berwick, and Edinburgh, but to his great regret, and especially to his father's regret, was too late to take part in the battle of Dunbar. We hear little of Worsley for a period of three years, but then we meet him on a historic occasion. He was a great favourite with Cromwell, who gave him command of his own regiment



MAJOR-GENERAL WORSLEY
Born 1622 : Died 1656

of foot. It was in this capacity that he accompanied Cromwell, when, on April 20, 1653, the Long Parliament was forcibly dissolved. We are told that, commanded to meet Cromwell, Worsley "with his wife did set off to ride from Platt to London." On the day when Cromwell dissolved the Long Parliament, Worsley was desired to wait outside the house with a band of three hundred soldiers until he should be ordered to enter the house. Presently Cromwell stamped his foot, which was the appointed sign, and Worsley and his men entered. They first displaced the Speaker, next struggled with the refractory members, and then Cromwell went to the table where the mace lay, and pointing to it, he cried in the now historic phrase, "Take away that bauble." From the fact that Worsley was the captain of the force, and that the "bauble" was kept in Worsley's custody and brought from his house when wanted in the next Parliament, it is fair to conclude that he himself carried it away. Therefore, says the historian of this period, "the immediate instrument of Oliver Cromwell's famous deed turns out to have been a Manchester man"—pardon me, a Rusholme man. Shortly after this he was appointed Colonel, and nominated by Cromwell, in 1654, as the first M.P. for Manchester. Oliver Cromwell dismissed the first Protectorate Parliament soon after it was formed, and for one year and nine months there was no Parliamentary Government. Cromwell divided the country into ten districts, over each of which he placed a Vice-Gerent or Viceroy. Worsley was made one of the ten and his district was Lancashire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire. It is quite certain that Colonel Worsley was a hard working public man. His correspondence is preserved in the archives of the Public Record Office, and a portion of it has been published by the Chetham Society. In fulfilling the duties of his office he met Commissioners, set a day for ejecting scandalous ministers and schoolmasters, sequestered estates, disarmed Papists and evil-affected persons, put into execution all laws against drunkenness, swearing, profaning the Lord's Day, and other wickedness. For months this kind of work went on, entailing on him great strain and anxiety and much correspondence. In a letter addressed to the Government, in 1656, he says, "I have one thing to remind you about which I once spoke to you, and that is about the postage of my letters. There is such a multitude comes upon me out of all parts that it puts me to a very great charge, and not one of them but what is about public business."

Colonel Worsley was the first of a long line of temperance workers in Rusholme, for in connection with his work we find

him writing in January, 1656:—"That he finds it a difficult business to observe instructions about alehouses and not to weaken the revenue, though it is visible they are the bane of the country. We have ordered 200 alehouses to be thrown down at Blackburn, and we are catching up all loose and vile persons."

Never, apparently, a very strong man, Worsley felt much the strain of his arduous work. On the 10th of May, 1656, he received a command from Cromwell to proceed to London. He wrote, however, complaining of feeling ill, but promised to come with all possible speed. Soon after his arrival at St. James's Palace, which had been assigned to himself and his wife and child as a residence, he died at the early age of thirty-five. He was honoured with burial in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster Abbey, and his military funeral was such as befitted his rank. Thus Worsley sleeps among the Kings and Queens of England, and many of the illustrious dead of past ages.

In the book to which I have already referred, Dr. Halley pays a fine tribute to this good man: "His premature death was an irreparable loss to the Commonwealth. Of all the great officers of Cromwell, he had more than any other the unerring foresight, the calm judgment, the wise decision, the dauntless courage, the quick movement, the unwearied energy and the unswerving perseverance of the great Commander, and he had what his great Commander had not—a most gentle, insinuating, gracious and conciliatory manner. He firmly trusted in God. Of the military circles round the Protector's chair no one appeared so fit to succeed to the Protectorate as Major-General Worsley."

From the *Public Intelligencer* for June 19th, 1656, we extract the following account of the funeral:—"Westminster, June 13th, in the evening was solemnized the funerals of Major-General Worsley, which was performed with much honour according to his merit, his hearse being attended by the rest of the Major-Generals and divers other persons of honour, and many coaches. Before him marched four regiments of foot, ten troops of horse, and the Life Guards of his Highness, drums being covered with mourning, pikes trailed on the ground, trumpets mourning, sounding after the military manner used in such solemnities, who conducted his body to Westminster Abbey where it was interred near Sir William Constable, in the Chapel of Henry VII., three grand volleys being discharged at the interment." It is interesting to note that some years ago, when Dean Stanley was Dean of Westminster, and search was being made for the body of

James I., what was considered by Dean Stanley to be the body of Worsley was found. Thus ends our story of Major-General Worsley. We make no apology for our lengthy reference to this man, of whom, as I said before, every Rusholme man may well be proud. A portrait of him is in possession of the Worsley family, an engraving of which is in the reading-room of the Rusholme Public Library.

Major-General Worsley was twice married, first to Mary Booth, the daughter of his stepmother; and secondly, to Dorothy, daughter of Roger Kenyon, of Park Head, Whalley. A letter from a Mr. Thomas Hartley to the father of General Worsley, written on behalf of his widow and still preserved, tells of Cromwell granting £200 to her and £100 a year for ever to her children. Worsley's sword is still preserved. The blade is long and straight, inlaid with gold and inscribed with various devices and mottoes and with the date "1651."

The present Platt Hall was built in the year 1764 at a cost of £10,000. The bricks were soaked in oil before being used, hence their brightness to-day, which is often a subject of remark by visitors to Platt Fields. The old Hall, which must have existed for several centuries, was a black and white Elizabethan building and stood at right angles to Wilmslow Road.

BIRCH HALL AND THE BIRCHES.

THERE are few if any prettier spots in the vicinity of Manchester than Birch Hall and its immediate surroundings. The stately trees, the Elizabethan Hall, the church and rectory, the ancient Nico Ditch and other features all combine to make it, especially in summer time, a most delightful spot. Indeed so rural and secluded is the neighbourhood that the passer-by may often see rabbits over-running the adjacent fields and garden. There is much of interest in the history of Birch Hall and the Birch family. The name of the estate was originally Hindley Birches, and the earliest mention of it we can find is about the year 1190. It was at that time that the property passed into the hands of the Birch family, the first of the name being Matthew de Birches. A copy of the deed shows that part of the estate consisted of woods, in which swine were allowed to feed, and a large mill for the grinding of corn. During several centuries that followed, history only gives scattered references to members of the family, for they took little part in the political or military history of their country. Two exceptions must, however, be made of men who, though of the same family, were very different in temperament and mode of life. William Birch, who was born

about the year 1522, was evidently a man of delightful character. He was ordained by Ridley, the martyr Bishop of London, one of the four Royal Preachers, licensed in 1552 by Edward VI., whose function it was to promote the reformed religion, and upon the accession of Elizabeth he succeeded the Catholic warden of Manchester Collegiate Church, who had refused to take the oath of supremacy; but later Birch resigned his office, in the hope that his successor would be better able to protect the collegiate estates from the depredations of the unscrupulous and rapacious favourites of the Queen. Later he was made rector of Stanhope in Weardale, Durham. He died in the year 1575, and his will is an excellent index to his personality. He left money to

The poor of Gateshead,

The poorest prisoners in Newcastle Gaol, and also in Durham Gaol,

The poor in Stanhope parish,

and, bringing his sympathies nearer home, to

Twenty poor widows of Manchester,

Twenty poor maidens of Manchester on their marriage,
To build needful bridges within three miles of "my brother's house."

The poorest in Risshum, Withington, and Didsbury.

Thus, it will be seen, we had poor in the village even in those days. After these and other generous gifts, he concludes: "If dowtes in thes legaces, I geve to my executors auctorite to do as by godlie discretion they shall think good, and dare answer before that Judge that seith our mynde, before which Jesus Christ all must appeare and thoughe over the funeralls, debts and legaces paid, all goods be the executors, yet my will I do declare to be, that yf the 2 part remayning be greit, they shall of the remayning parte help poore neighbours, partlye by guifts and partlye by lending freelye to the needye, especiallye the godlye, for they are but stuerds, under God, the true Owner, and I was and am." Mrs. Williamson, in her *History of Fallowfield*, very truly states: "One would almost think Ridley had spread his own mantle over this favourite disciple, and that this mantle, with even more large-hearted, more tender benevolence, has descended upon the much loved Archdeacon Anson."

The most celebrated man, however, of this family was Thomas Birch, born in 1608. At the commencement of the Civil War, he offered his services to the Parliament, and was the means of raising a regiment of soldiers in support of Cromwell, in 1642, as did his neighbour General Worsley. On



THE OLD HORSE BLOCK, PLATT COTTAGE



BIRCH HALL

January 15, 1643, a circumstance occurred which brought him into collision with Lord Strange, afterwards Earl of Derby, leader of the Royalists in Lancashire, and laid the foundation (so says Seacombe, the historian of the house of Stanley) of a personal hostility which was never extinguished and which appears to have resulted in the execution of the Earl of Derby at Bolton. On the occasion of a banquet given to the Earl of Derby at Manchester, a number of prominent Royalists accompanied him thither. They were met by an armed band, headed by Captain Birch, who disputed their passage and gave orders to his men to fire on them. They were unable to do so, owing to the rain which was falling heavily at the time, and the Royalists, taking courage, repelled the attack, and Birch and his men fled. After the disastrous battle of Worcester the Earl, retracing his steps towards Lancashire, on his way encountered a troop of Cromwell's horse, by whom he was taken prisoner. The terms on which he surrendered were that he should have quarter given for his life and condition of honourable usage. But being now in the enemy's hands, Bradshaw, Rigby and Birch designed him to be a victim of their envy. These three represented to Cromwell how unsafe it would be to the whole nation to allow him to live, got a commission to try him by court-martial, and the result was that the Earl was beheaded at Bolton on October 15, 1651. History tells us that Colonel Birch passed through the crowd rubbing his hands with a satisfied smile.

The succeeding years in Colonel Birch's life were full of activity, but space forbids us to dwell upon the distinction he gained in Cromwell's army. He attacked Preston and carried it by storm, and Lancaster surrendered to his troops. He was appointed Governor of Liverpool, for which place he was afterwards Member of Parliament. He was a man of vigorous personality, and had a sharp tussle with Humphrey Chetham, who was then founding the charity which exists to-day, which dispute nearly cost this city the benefit of this splendid foundation. He retired from active life at the Restoration, and about the year 1674 came to live at Birch Hall, where he died in 1678, in the seventy-first year of his age.

In later years there is little to note in the history of the Birch family, and we find that in the year 1743, in consideration of the payment of the sum of £6,000, Birch Hall with one hundred and sixty-eight acres of land was sold to George Croxton, of Manchester. Two years later John Dickinson, a Manchester merchant, whose mother was a daughter of the Rev. Robert Birch, minister of Birch, one of the 2000

ministers ejected in 1662, became the purchaser, whose name is still with us in Dickinson Road. His town residence was in Market Street Lane. Here Mr. Dickinson lodged and entertained Prince Charlie, the Pretender, when he visited Manchester in 1745. The house from this circumstance took the name of "The Palace," later the Palace Inn, and some years ago was re-built and is now the well-known Palace Buildings in Market Street. The bed on which the Pretender lay was transferred to Birch Hall. It is interesting to remember that Archdeacon Anson, about whom we shall have something to say later, was a descendant of this John Dickinson. John Dickinson died in 1779 at the age of 90, having lived at Birch for 65 years.

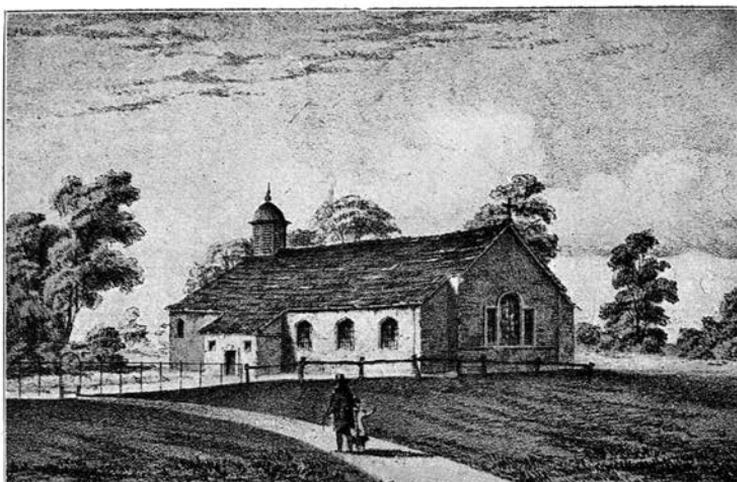
Birch Hall, as it now stands, is, if not altogether modern, so much altered as to present no special feature of interest to the antiquarian. The house in its original condition was a timber and plaster building of some considerable extent, judging from an inventory of the rooms taken in 1678, but the only portion of the old Hall at present remaining is at the back of the present structure, and shows that the old building was a black and white half-timbered house, so common in those days. There are the remains of an old moat still to be seen and we are told that a century ago when this was cleaned out, old daggers and coins were found.

BIRCH CHAPEL.

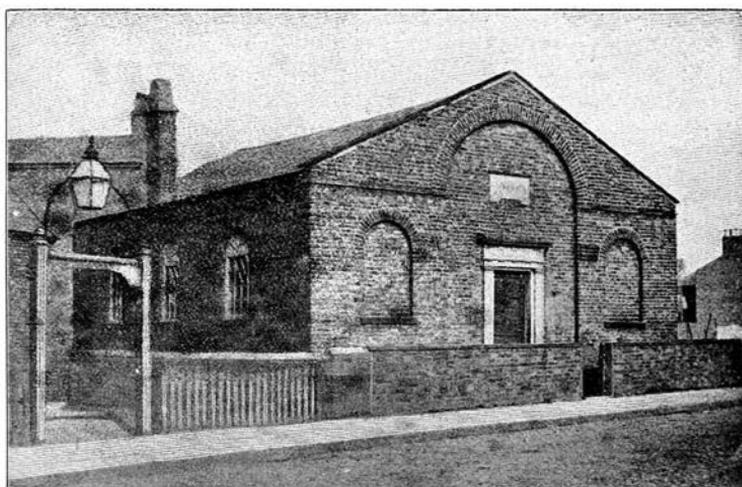
THE history of Rusholme centres very much round what is termed the "Ancient Chapel of Birch," the oldest and for considerably more than a century the only place of worship in the village. Birch Chapel, as the original structure was called, was dedicated to Saint James, and built during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Many speculations have been made regarding the exact date, which was between the years 1579 and 1598. I have had many a chat with Archdeacon Anson on this point, and he always said that in his opinion it was in the year 1596, because in the Visitation Returns of 1598 the reference to Birch Chapel is as follows:—

"Birche Chapel, in Rusholme, latelie erected and now void of a Curate."

Hence the three hundredth anniversary was celebrated in 1896. At the same time, I have always thought that the building of a house of prayer was an undertaking that would be very congenial to a man of devout mind like William Birch, who died, however, in 1575. Like other chapels in the parish of Manchester, its early use was limited to the family on whose estate it was built, and their immediate



BIRCH CHAPEL
Erected 1596 : Demolished 1846



OLD WESLEYAN CHAPEL, DICKENSON ROAD
Erected 1829 : Demolished 1863

dependents. Birch Chapel, which many people living to-day well remember, was built of brick, covered with grey slates. It was filled with oaken pews and had accommodation for 350 worshippers. The chapel was built partly on the site of the present church and extended quite close to the brook. My friend Mr. J. S. Buckley, in his interesting book, *The History of Birch-in-Rusholme*, writes: "There is no picture to show what was the appearance of the original building before the enlargement. Old scholars tell me that there was just room to get between the corner of the chapel and the brook." The chapel at first was unendowed and for nearly a century was not fully used, and though there is no record of the godly deed of providing funds for the erection of the building, there were many willing contributors to the support of the ministry. As showing the large area over which the parish extended in 1636, we find that in the list of families that gave contribution the following districts were included: Birch and Birch Hall House, Slade and Rushford, Grinlow and Chorlton, Levenshulme, Rusholme, Fallowfield and Lady Barn, Withington and Housend. In 1636 the income from what was termed the "Chapel Wage" was £17 2s. 7d. In 1640 an endowment fund was started, the number of contributors being sixty-seven and the amount raised being £40 8s. 4d., among the subscribers being: "Old Mrs. Birch, £5; Ralph Worsley, £4; Thomas Shelmerdine, £2 (we wonder whether the Shelmerdine family in Rusholme to-day are descendants of this Thomas Shelmerdine); Mr. Syddall of Slade, £1 6s. 8d." It is interesting to go through the list of those who, in these by-gone centuries, contributed towards the work of God in Rusholme. We read of the village blacksmith contributing 2s. and of several who contributed 1s. each.

The money raised by this endowment fund was expended in purchasing two acres of ground in Longsight, and Colonel Birch added one acre from his own estate in Gorton; which three acres were ultimately vested in trustees, the income being used for the maintenance of the fabric of Birch Chapel, and the payment of 10s. per Sunday to the appointed minister. In 1679, after the Rev. Henry Finch had received his stipend, there remained a sum of £1 5s. 2d., out of which he received a further sum of 10s. "because he had been sick," a sum of 7s. 6d. was spent in the repair of the chapel, and 8s. 6d. was lost in bad and broken money, surely a reflection on the church-goers of that day. I think I am correct in saying that this estate, which was founded in 1640, remained intact in possession of Birch Chapel until

the year 1850, when a portion was sold and from the proceeds the present rectory was built. The remainder of this old estate at present produces £75 per annum. There is a plan of Birch Chapel in existence dated 1640, and a list of families attending, which comprises in all seventy persons (see appendix). In the chapel book of Birch Chapel of the same time there is the amount given by each family for the support of the ministrations in Birch Chapel. In the twenty-three families representing Rusholme are the names of Sheldermine, Travis, Wilkinson, Hartley, Parkinson, Baguley and Bowker, etc., and it would be interesting to know whether they were the ancestors of those now living in Rusholme bearing the same name. In 1646 the Rev. John Wigan, leaving Gorton, came to Birch Chapel, where he "set up Congregationalism," this being about the time when the Independents or Congregationalists first prominently opposed the Presbyterian form of church government. As previously mentioned he gave up the church for the army. He was followed in 1659 by Robert Birch, who was a member of the family possessing the patronage of the living. He appears to have united in himself the two offices of pastor and teacher of the church. Refusing to conform he was silenced on the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662. For several years after 1662 Birch Chapel was only used occasionally and then, so far as we know, by nonconformist ministers only.

When you enter Birch Church graveyard by the Lych Gate you notice the old gravestones on your right. This was the site of the inside of the chapel. Here we read on the stone in the old-fashioned language "Deborah, the affectionate, prudent, and pious wife of Ralph Worsley, of Platt, gentleman, who was deceased May 8th, 1681." This Ralph Worsley mentioned was the son of General Worsley. We have no space to trace during succeeding centuries the history of Birch Chapel. It is profoundly interesting to those who care for such things and who have a love for the Church. We can only say, however, that on May 13, 1845, the foundation of the new church was laid a few yards to the east of the ancient chapel, and the building was finished just a year later. Shortly afterwards the old building, so rich in historical associations, was taken down. The present church was built to accommodate 700 people and the total cost was £4,300, towards which the Archdeacon contributed £2,000. It was dedicated July 1st, 1846, and in the same year on June 26th St. John's, Longsight, and Holy Trinity, Platt, were consecrated.

The Act of Uniformity was passed August 2nd, 1662, and

by this enactment two thousand ministers were deprived of their livings. Manchester and its neighbourhood was tinged with a numerous Nonconformist population, and consequently the Act came as a heavy visitation on men of the stamp of Henry Newcome. The Mosley MS. (now in possession of the Reference Library), throw an unexpected ray of light on the struggle which was fought out both in Manchester and Birch Chapel in which some of the best local families were involved. It forms a stirring episode in the contention for spiritual liberty, and no doubt the annexed list of the champions who rose in defiance of "the powers that are," will be read with uncommon interest. The authorities in Manchester set a simultaneous watch on the persons attending Birch Chapel, and those who abstained repairing to the Collegiate Church. A James Clough acted as informer against the people who entered Birch Chapel, amongst whom many were from the town and various townships; and a R. L. of G. (who diplomatically preserved an incognito) undertook similar duties at the Collegiate Church, beginning their work on December 7th, 1662. The offenders were eventually summoned by the Constables of Withington and Manchester to appear before the court to show cause of their absence from Church, and to take the oath of obedience, or in default, to take the consequence, and undergo either distraint or pay a levy of fine of "twelve pence a Sunday" for absence from their parish church, or other usual place appointed for common prayer, according to the statute.

The fight was continued to May 27th, 1663. A careful examination of the list will show the degree of weakness or strength displayed by the sundry actors during the strife. In some, apparently, the flesh was very weak, and James Bowker, a minister, of Blackley, lost heart at the very beginning of the contest. A list of those inhabitants of Rus-holme and neighbourhood who were brought before the magistrates is given in the appendix.

The Rev. Robert Birch, who was the minister of Birch Chapel from 1659 to 1662, after his ejection went to live on his own land at Grindlow, now called Chorlton-on-Medlock. He practised as a doctor and he and his wife were buried in the garden of their house, which was later known as Longsight Hall and which, much altered, stands to-day at the end of Grindlow Street, in Stockport Road.

In the year 1907 the Anson Chapel was added to the church, the gift of the late Sir Wm. Anson. As Mr. Buckley truly says it is a splendid piece of design and workmanship.

BIRCH BELLS.

"Those Rusholme Bells, those Rusholme Bells,
Merrily peal those Rusholme Bells;
They bid us with their cheerful voice
Rejoice with them that do rejoice;
And as their cadence soft doth sweep,
They bid us weep with them that weep."

—SIR A. E. H. ANSON.

INSCRIPTIONS ON THE BELLS.

- Tenor*— From bequest of Alice Fletcher;
"Holiness unto the Lord."
Seventh— A. F.
"Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead."
Sixth— A. F.
"Watch ye; stand fast in the faith."
Fifth— Given by the Rector;
"Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with
them that weep."
Fourth— Given by the Congregation;
"Watch and pray."
Third— Given by the Congregation and Parishioners;
"Pray for one another."
Second— Given by the Parishioners;
"Praise the Lord of Heaven
Praise Him in the height."
First— Given by the Congregation;
"Praise Him, all ye angels of His:
Praise Him, all His host."

The first peal was rung on St. James's Day, July 25th, 1863, commencing at 4 p.m., before evening service. The weight of the tenor bell is 13 cwt. 3 qrs.—From *The History of Birch-in-Rusholme*, by J. S. Buckley.

BIRCH HALL HOUSES.

WE must not omit to mention that old-fashioned building in Old Hall Lane, standing back from the road. Part of the house is very old, having been built over three hundred years, but in more recent years has received additions. It was formerly called Birch Hall Houses, and was the residence of a family named Edge, who, like most of their neighbours, were supporters of Cromwell. There is an incident worthy of record in connection with the capture of Lord Derby, previously mentioned, which speaks well for Captain Oliver Edge, son of Oliver Edge, of Birch Hall Houses. Of the capture the Earl gives the following account: "I escaped" he wrote afterwards to the Countess, "one great danger at Wigan, and I met with a greater at Worcester. I was not



PLATT HALL



BIRCH HALL HOUSES

so fortunate as to meet with anybody that would kill me, for the Lord Lauderdale and I, having tired horses, we were not thought worthy of killing, for we had quarter given by one Captain Edge, a Lancashire man, and one that was so civil to me that I and all that love me are beholden to him." When Rev. Henry Finch retired from Birch Chapel, as mentioned in a later page, he began to preach in private houses. One of the houses, in addition to Platt Hall, so licensed, was this present house, and it is on record that on the 14th day of October, 1697, the house was used as a "meeting place for an assembly of Protestants dissenting from the Church of England." The Edges appear to have left the house early in the eighteenth century.

THE OLDEST HOUSE IN RUSHOLME.

No mention of old Rusholme would be complete without reference to Birch Fold Cottage, a black and white building which stood in Old Hall Lane at the bend, and which was demolished, sad to say, in the year 1912. It was a fine relic of olden days and was the delight of artists, it having been sketched and photographed probably more than any other house in the neighbourhood. Its age was uncertain, but it had stood there several centuries. There are some of us left who remember distinct traces of it having been surrounded by a moat. I remember in my young days that this house was pointed to as the one "where Oliver Cromwell once slept." I have often been told of the underground passage from this cottage under the Nico Ditch to Birch Hall. As I think of this house, memory goes back to many a pleasant afternoon spent there with my old friend, Miss Cottrill, who lived in the cottage for fifty years. Her old-world courtesy is a fragrant memory to me. While speaking of this cottage I must not forget to mention an old Quaker gentleman, Mr. Gravely Woolston, who lived there for many years. He was a cheery soul, had a pleasant word for everyone he met, and was a striking figure in his broad-brimmed hat as he passed through the village. All the children knew him and ran by his side, taking hold of his hand or clinging to his coat. He was accustomed to go on Sunday mornings to the Friends' Meeting House in Mount Street, and I recollect him returning one Sunday morning and saying in his breezy way, "We have had a glorious meeting this morning. Not one spoke."

PLATT CHAPEL.

It is not generally known that a very interesting history is attached to Platt Chapel, on Wilmslow Road. As this is

somewhat mixed up with the history of Birch Chapel, I had better begin by saying that in the year 1672 the Rev. Henry Finch was appointed as minister to Birch Chapel. The entry concerning his appointment states:

“Henry Finch, of Manchester, General Presbyterian Minister, a private oratory belonging to Thomas Birch, of Birch Hall, licence for a Congregational meeting place.”

This appears to prove that Thomas Birch, who was a Nonconformist, had service for a time conducted in some out-building of Birch Hall, or this may refer to Birch Chapel itself. The Conventicle Act* was pressed with the utmost rigour against Nonconformity, and these services in Birch Hall buildings were held by stealth. The following incident is worth recording: On Sunday, November 18th, 1666, Colonel Birch, in contravention of this Act, permitted two wandering ministers from Germany to preach at Birch Hall. Booker says they were preaching and singing from nine o'clock to three o'clock, denouncing all manner of woe to England and exhorting the people to fly and take refuge in Germany. They sang two German hymns with well-tuned voices, the purport of one—being sung in the house of an old Commonwealth officer, and beginning “Hark, how the trumpet sounds”—being well calculated to excite alarm in the minds of the neighbouring Royalists. They supposed this to be a military hymn, and thought a conspiracy was being fomented. The Conventicle Act was put in force against Colonel Birch and some of those present at the meeting. They were brought before the magistrates and among those fined was the wife of Ralph Worsley, of Platt, whose grandchild “Deborah, the affectionate and prudent wife of Ralph Worsley, of Platt” lies buried in Birch Churchyard. I went one Sunday morning to Birch Church to get a few dates from the churchyard. I stood by the grave of this good woman and I heard the voice of the Rector and the congregation worshipping in the Church. My mind went back through the centuries, and I thought of that Sunday when our ancestors in the village valued so much their own faith that they were willing to risk fine and imprisonment for it. Though avowedly dissenting from the Established Church, the Rev. Henry Finch was appointed by Colonel Thomas Birch to the charge of Birch Chapel, and continued with more or less interruption to officiate there until the death of Colonel Birch, in the year 1697. The next heir, having

The Conventicle Act adjudged that “every person above 16 years of age present at any meeting under pretence of any exercise of religion in other manner than as the preacher of the Church of England, where there are five persons more than the household, shall for the first offence be sent to gaol for three months, or pay £5; for the second offence double; and for the third, transportation for seven years or a fine of £100.”



BIRCH FOLD COTTAGE
The oldest house in Rusholme—Demolished in 1912



RUGGLES'S COTTAGE IN MONMOUTH STREET

no sympathy with Mr. Finch's Nonconformist views, secured his dismissal. The Rev. Henry Finch preached in private houses licensed for dissenting worship until in 1699 Mr. Ralph Worsley gave a plot of land, on which Platt Chapel now stands, "a site, the south-east corner of a close called Blake Flatt, in extent about twenty roods." The cost of the building was £95, and among the items of expenditure were: For pulpit cushion, £1 3s. 3d.; meat, drink, ale, pipes, and tobacco, 19s. Mr. Grimshaw, who preached at the opening service, received the large sum of 5s. In 1718 an open belfry was added, the bell being supplied by Abraham Rudhall, the famous bell-founder of Gloucester. On the bell inserted in capitals is:

A. R.

COME AWAY MAKE NO DELAY.

This bell is still in use, calling passers-by to the worship of God. This chapel was taken down in 1790 and in the same year the present chapel (since altered) was built, being therefore one hundred and twenty years old. The Rev. Henry Finch, the first minister of Platt Chapel, died in the year 1704. Calamy, the eminent Nonconformist divine, says, "he was a great blessing and help to the younger ministers, who loved and honoured him as a father, and his behaviour to them was full of condescension and tenderness. He greatly resented anything that broke in upon order or tended to the reproach of the ministry . . . his preaching was clear and methodical and was adapted to convince the mind and to move the passions. He lived according to his profession a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

I am happy in bringing to light these particulars concerning one who was the founder of organised Nonconformity in Rusholme. The pretty Platt Chapel, half-hidden among the trees, has had a succession of good men as ministers during the intervening two hundred years, three of them, Rev. Wm. Whitelegge, Rev. S. A. Steinthal, Rev. C. T. Poynting, B.A., themselves accounting for a ministry of a hundred years. Rev. S. A. Steinthal took a prominent position in the educational and philanthropic work of the city of Manchester and was a keen politician. From the first there have been no religious tests. The ancient communion chalices, dated 1640-41 and 1661-62, transferred from Birch Chapel, and sold in 1874, were in 1895 restored to the trustees and are still in use at Platt Chapel. On the western side of the chapel is the Worsley Chapel, in which is the Hatchment of the old Worsley family, an ancient relic of the past.

ARCHDEACON ANSON.

No history of Rusholme would be complete without full mention of one who, more than all others, was associated with the village, namely, Archdeacon Anson. I have already pointed out how he was historically connected with Rusholme through being related to John Dickenson of Birch Hall. George Henry Greville Anson was the son of General Sir William Anson. He was for some years Curate of the Parish Church of Leeds, under Dr. Hook, but in June, 1846, on the resignation of Rev. George Dugard, he was presented by his brother to the living of Birch. For fifty-three years he was Rector, and from the very first took the greatest interest in all that concerned the people of Rusholme. Soon after his arrival he helped to originate the Local Board of Health, and he was one of the founders of the Rusholme Public Hall. He was the first to assist in all local celebrations of national events. The Archdeacon was said to have Liberal sympathies in politics, but I always found him difficult to fathom. When canvassed for his vote he used to say to me, "My father was a Whig and my grandfather a Tory, and I follow the politics of my ancestors," so we came away no wiser than we went. He founded, and attended regularly, the Philharmonic Society, held in Birch Infant School twenty-three years ago.

He was a strong Churchman, but he was willing on occasions to co-operate with other Christian workers. He was Archdeacon of Manchester from 1870 to 1890, being appointed by Mr. Gladstone.

No doubt, many will remember the alarm excited in the mind of the juvenile portion of the inhabitants of the village, over a quarter of a century ago, by the appearance on the walls of huge placards announcing a "Siege of Rusholme," to take place on a certain Saturday afternoon. When the appointed time arrived it was found to be nothing more serious than the advent of the Salvation Army, taking its place among the religious organisations of the village. It was some time after this that the Archdeacon, desirous of showing his sympathy with all who were working for the common good, invited the Army to a service in his mission room "down the Green," in Basil Street. When I say that William Day was leader of the Army at that time, it will easily be believed that there was plenty of life and noise in the service. The concertinas and tambourines did their best and helped in making a meeting to which the Archdeacon's habit of mind and mode of worship were hardly accustomed. I remember when the time came for him to give the sermon, he



THE ARCHDEACON

announced the text in the tone of voice to which those of us who knew him were so accustomed, as from I. Kings, Chapter xix., verse 12:

“And after the earthquake a still small voice”—

It was a little time before the humour of the text was appreciated by my friends in the Army.

Poor people knew the way to the rectory, and none ever appealed to the Archdeacon in vain. He was a true friend to all in distress. He rejoiced with those who rejoiced, and wept with those who wept. I know no man who so fully exemplified Goldsmith's “Village Preacher”:

His house was known to all the vagrant train;
 He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
 At church with meek and unaffected grace
 His looks adorned the venerable place;
 The service past, around the pious man
 With ready zeal each honest rustic ran,
 Even children following with endearing wile,
 And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile;
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
 As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
 Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

How well we remember as children watching the Archdeacon conducting the solemn funerals in the churchyard, on the coldest day with bare head and wind-swept hair.

The Archdeacon died in February, 1898, and was buried just outside the east window of the church, in the spot he himself appointed.

DR. FINLAYSON.

THE Rev. Thomas Campbell Finlayson, D.D., (Glas.), was for twenty-seven years (1865-1893) minister of the Rusholme Congregational Church (built in 1864). Previously he had been the pastor of the church at Cambridge.

His name is held in pleasant remembrance, for here in our midst he maintained a powerful and effective ministry. He was a man of wide scholarship and deep sympathies, and held with a tenacious grip his religious and political principles. He had a quiet power of attraction, a charming personality, and was loved by all who knew him.

Through his writings he addressed a much wider circle than that which assembled in the Rusholme Church. His best known work is, *Biological Religion*, a criticism of Professor Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. That distinguished critic, Dr. Henry Dunckley, wrote in the *Manchester Examiner* of Dr. Finlayson's book: “We have

never seen a finer piece of critical writing." Perhaps his most characteristic work is *Koheleth*, a practical exposition of the book of Ecclesiastes. The volume of sermons entitled, *The Divine Gentleness*, shows what Dr. Finlayson was as a preacher; and a posthumous volume, *Essays, Addresses and Lyrical Translations* (Macmillan and Co.), with a delightful biographical sketch, sets forth the man. The *Manchester Guardian*, reviewing this volume, said: "Even the casual reader is led to feel thankful that such a man had been known and such a life lived." The sketch was written by Dr. A. S. Wilkins, a distinguished professor in our University, and himself a well-known Rusholme resident.

The late Dr. A. Mackennal, in writing of Dr. Finlayson after his death, said "There was no distinction his brethren had to bestow which they would not have given him, and that for two reasons—because they knew him worthy and because of the love in which they held him."

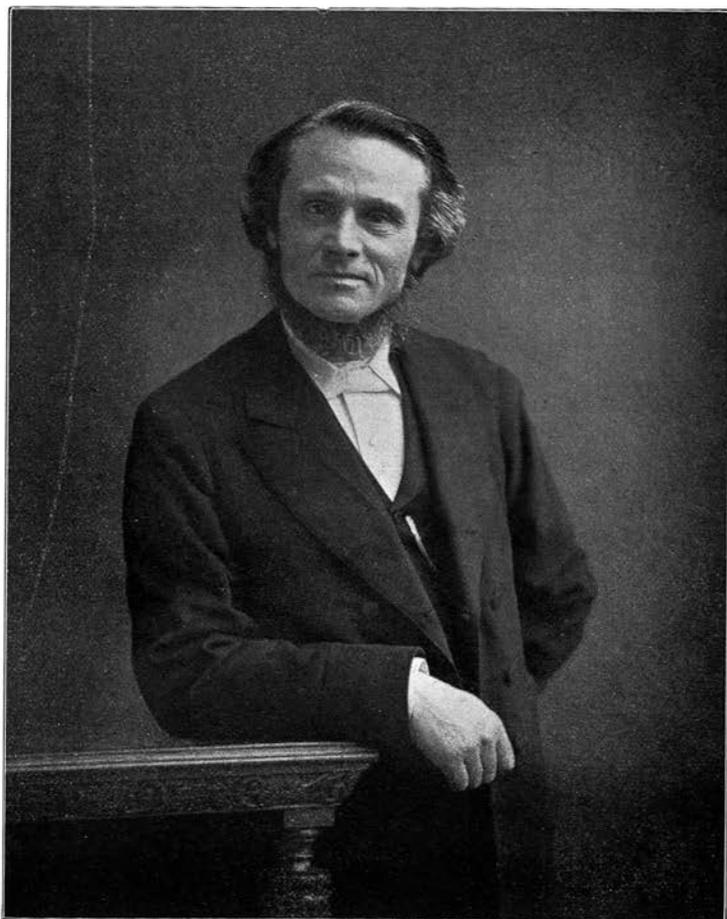
To-day, twenty-one years after he has passed away, his name is revered not only in Rusholme and in our city, but elsewhere; and there are those who still come to Rusholme to see the place where Dr. Finlayson lived and preached.

He died in 1893, one might almost say in his prime, at the age of fifty-seven. His remains were laid in the Necropolis at Glasgow, his native city, the city also of his *Alma Mater*, which a year or two previously had shown her appreciation of his ministerial and literary work by conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

MISCELLANY.

UNDER this heading I mention various matters of general interest concerning Rusholme.

In the year 1834 a private company was formed to build some substantial houses and pleasure gardens on three sides of a quadrangle where Brighton Grove now stands. There was a lodge for entrance and another for exit and these stand there to-day. I show my readers a photograph of the proposed palatial residences, showing Birch Brook as a clear stream of water running through the grounds in front of the houses, there being terraces and rustic bridges. It was an ambitious scheme to beautify Rusholme and I say all honour to the men who had this in their minds. But alas, after the four houses now standing on the left-hand side had been built, the company came to grief and the scheme was abandoned.



REV. T. C. FINLAYSON, D.D.

The following is a bit of weird history: As mentioned later, the Wesleyan Sunday School was started in 1826 in Granny Lane, by Charles Beswick, a working man, living in Ardwick, who passed through Rusholme every Sunday on his way to Fallowfield and Ladybarn, where he did some lay preaching. A few years later, about 1830, a school for children was opened at Platt Chapel. In the records of the Wesleyan Sunday School we find in the year 1833 about thirty new scholars came one Sunday. On asking Mr. Beswick the reason for this, he told me it was owing to *body snatching* taking place in Platt Chapel graveyard, and the children were afraid to attend school. I got no further information on this matter until recently, when, speaking with one of the oldest residents in Rusholme, he gave me the following particulars. He said his father was the village night watchman and had a wooden hut for shelter at the corner of Platt Lane. His duty was to go round the village and call out the time and the weather—"Four o'clock and a fine morning," and so on, though I fear he would generally have to record wet mornings. One morning early, going along Wilmslow Road, he saw a light in Platt Chapel yard and some body snatchers at work, and they had actually got a recently interred body out of the grave. He gave chase and the men bolted, leaving the body on the grass. It was reverently re-interred. It was said that men engaged in this gruesome work, as they could command good prices for dead bodies to sell to medical students. As a conclusion to this story, I may say that not long ago I saw the grandson of the corpse and the grandson of the watchman walking arm-in-arm through Rusholme.

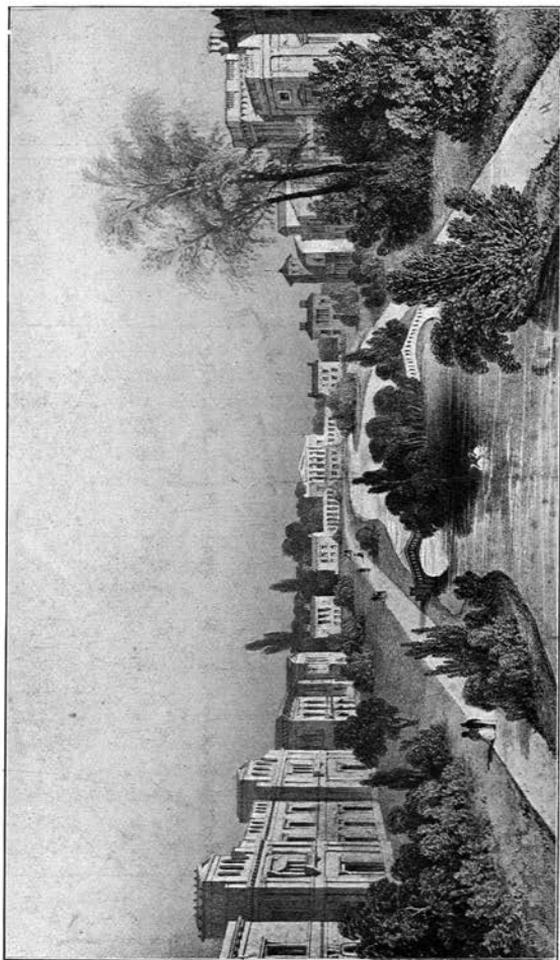
One day, about the middle of the year 1863, a great crowd might have been seen in Wilmslow Road, near the corner of Dickenson Road. In those days prize-fighting was popular and Tom Sayers had just fought Heenan, the American. Sayers came to Rusholme to see some relatives and was persuaded to lay a brick in the new porch of the Birch Villa Hotel. We live in better days when such brutal sport is not publicly encouraged.

Rusholme has been favoured with the visit of Royalty on two occasions. The first was in the year 1857, when Prince Albert came through on his way to Abney Hall, Cheadle, the residence of Sir James Watts, with whom the Prince was staying. It was on this occasion that a man, in the abundance of his loyalty, flung handfuls of silver coins

among the crowd as he walked along Wilmslow Road. This made a vivid impression on the young people of that day. But the great day for all, and one that will for ever be written in red letters in the history of Rusholme, was Monday, July 14, 1913. On this occasion we were favoured with the visit of His Majesty King George V. and Queen Mary, who were paying a state visit to the city. They approached Rusholme from Longsight and entered Birch Park, in which twenty-five thousand school children were assembled. Their Majesties stopped whilst the children sang the National Anthem, but I was told the children sang it much more effectively at the rehearsal an hour previously. They entered the ancient Brighton Grove with its overhanging trees, and here they were nearer to their subjects than at any other point in their long journey. Through Platt Fields they went, where a further twenty-five thousand children were assembled, and here they reviewed the Reservists, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and other such organisations, and then journeyed along Wilmslow Road to the city. The whole village was gay with bunting and in no place did their Majesties receive a heartier welcome than at Rusholme. The old people of Rusholme were not forgotten and were seated on a stand at the corner of Dickenson Road, where at twelve o'clock, just before the Royal party arrived, they sang the National Anthem. Altogether that great day will never be forgotten by all Rusholmites.

March 10, 1863, was also a great day for Rusholme. King Edward and Queen Alexandra, as they were afterwards called, were married on that date. About eight hundred Rusholme inhabitants were invited to a feast in the Rusholme Public Hall and old Platt Schools and other places. The food was cooked at different houses and I well remember we were busy at our own home in that way. After the banquet, Mr. Lawson, an elocutionist then living in Rusholme, gave an entertainment, and there was music and singing and in fact everything that could make the day unique in our experience.

On the large field behind Birch Schools, where the Exhibition buildings stood until recently burned down, there was over sixty years ago a large brick-croft. In the middle of the croft was a house in which lived the owner named Farr. Because he would not join the Union, groups of men came from Gorton way and trampled on the bricks. Farr kept several dogs and a cannon for protection. One of



BRIGHTON GROVE SCHEME OF 1834

the raiders was shot dead and his body brought to the Birch Villa Hotel for the inquest.

A very conspicuous object years ago in Whitworth Lane was the long building called the shooting gallery. It was the property of the then Mr. Joseph Whitworth and was used for experimental purposes of testing rifles. It was about half a mile long.

The first real ice skating-rink in England was erected at the corner of Wilmslow Road and Moor Street. There was great trouble at first in getting a good quality of ice and the venture was not a success. Like so many buildings nowadays, it is turned into a picture palace.

I give in this volume a photograph of a very old house that stood on the spot in Claremont Road (then called Granny Lane) where now the Abattoirs are, and at the corner of what is now John Street (formerly Holford's Row). It was a quaint old cottage occupied by a man named Ruggles, and reminded one of a hut in the backwoods of Canada. The cottage was taken down in the year 1884.

Gas was introduced into Rusholme in the year 1847, and our venerable friend Mr. Thomas Lloyd was the first lamplighter. There were then fourteen lamps in Rusholme. Mr. Lloyd was also interested in clocks and for twenty years had charge of the clock in the tower of the Congregational Church. In 1847 there was no public supply of water in the village, only wells and ditches. The village had one policeman and four private watchmen.

I remember in the year 1862 much excitement was caused by the statement that a nightingale had been heard at the Hough, near Wilmslow. Now it is generally held that the nightingale is never heard north of the Trent, but my friend Alderman Fletcher Moss says he has heard one in Didsbury, so this statement cannot be correct. Rusholme like other places was greatly excited and scores of persons went at nights and stood in the lanes to listen. Parties were made up and went in spring carts at a shilling a head. Everybody came back with a different tale and we could never tell whether they had heard the nightingale or not. However, some of the parties that went in carts got tipsy and began

quarrelling and did not return to Rusholme until the small hours of the morning. So that was the end of the nightingale.

The shop which is now the Coffee Tavern at the corner of Moor Street and Wilmslow Road has an interesting past. In the year 1850 it was used as a Public Library and Reading Room and was the resort of all the villagers with an intellectual turn of mind. Later it was the home of the Rusholme Working Men's Club which was started within its walls. Friendly societies, temperance organisations, a tonic sol-fa class, and spiritualists in turn have used the rooms, and lastly little children under the Necessitous School Children's Act go there day by day. This is a grand Act; for how can you expect children to learn their lessons when they do not get sufficient food?

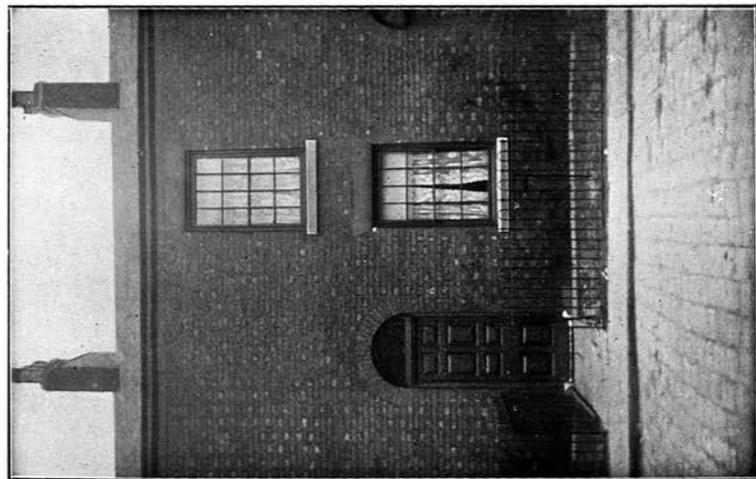
Although Dr. Maclaren never lived in Rusholme, he was associated with it through his Presidency of the People's Institute, Nelson Street. I give an extract from the diary of Mr. Wm. Roberts, photographer, referred to elsewhere. Some public lectures had been arranged for the village and here is the record of one.

"March 22nd, 1859. Rev. Alexander Maclaren lectured in the Birch Infant School on 'Country, Climate and Character.' He is a most remarkable man, singular in appearance, style and accent (Scotch), full of poetry and deep thoughts, and I should think he is destined to be a leading man and preacher in Manchester."

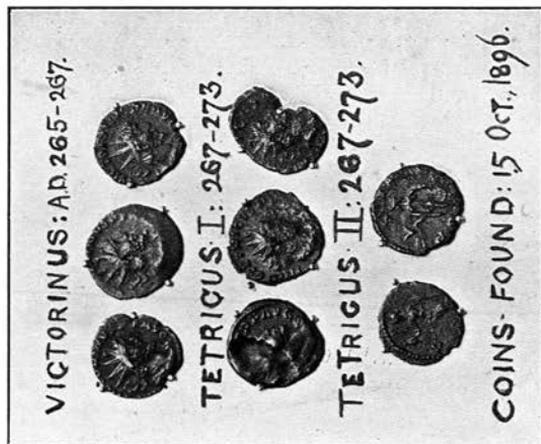
My old friend was not only a diarist but a prophet.

I was informed the other day that Mr. Julius Knoop, who lived in Regent House, Wilmslow Road, had such pleasant recollections of Rusholme that he gave that name to a new district when he went to live at Baden-Baden, in Germany; thus paying a great compliment to our village.

Some time ago there was a find of coins in Gore Brook, near the Anson Golf Ground. Any schoolboy will know that the Romans landed in England 55 years B.C. and ruled the land for centuries. They established a camp at Campfield about A.D. 273. The Emperor Gallienus was busy in the East trying to subdue Persia, but other men set up as emperors in France, England and Spain. These eight coins show three of these pretenders.



"THE LITTLE WINDOW WHERE THE SUN CAME
PEEPING IN AT MORN"



OLD COINS FOUND NEAR GORE BROOK

Victorinus
Tetricus I.
Tetricus II.

I suppose some poor man wandering along Gore Brook with the coins in his possession fears robbery and hides them for safety. He may have been killed, but he never comes for them again, and for sixteen hundred years they lie in this ground only dug out on October 15th, 1896. Meanwhile Alfred the Great, William the Conqueror, King John, Henry VIII., and Elizabeth have all reigned and passed away, and it is very interesting to look upon a photograph of this kind.

The last quarter of a century has seen a great transformation in South Manchester and in no part has the change been greater than in Rusholme. What a pleasant walk it was to turn down Platt Lane and when we got to the church to admire the long line of stately oak trees which stood on the right, and as we approached the Rusholme cricket ground many distant objects caught the eye—the towers of the Lancashire Independent College, the spires of the chapels at the Southern Cemetery—and often have I stood on the cricket ground and, looking across Mee's farm, seen the distant spire of Bowdon Church. Talking of the Rusholme Cricket Club reminds me of many pleasant Saturday afternoons spent in watching matches here when the Club was one of the first in Manchester. Memory goes back to the "seventies," and I think of Tom Fothergill, a real round arm bowler; Alec Watson, who became the famous Lancashire player; Flowers, who afterwards did great things for Nottingham, the place of his birth; Footitt, one of the fastest of bowlers; Ernest and "Willie" Wadsworth; the former a fine all-round player and the latter a famous "slogger," who caused great excitement amongst the youngsters when he went in to bat. With him it was "get on" or "get out" and we enjoyed ourselves. The climax, however, was reached when the retiring batsman, having made his half century or more, amidst the applause of the crowd and the smiles of the ladies was presented by old Mr. Anderson, the President, with a bat on reaching the pavilion steps. Standing there watching I often wondered whether by a stroke of luck I should ever attain such an honour in after life. But it never came off. Memory would linger over those happy days when in youth we spent our afternoons watching the playing of the grandest of open air games.

On the night of the coronation of George V.—whom

God long preserve—from the top windows of my house I saw twelve bonfires lighted to celebrate the event. These stretched from Wilmslow in the west along by Alderley Edge, Kinder Scout, Disley, Werneth Low on to Greenfield in the east.

In the early "sixties," at the time of the American War and the Cotton Famine in this country, bands of operatives from the manufacturing centres came asking for help. I recollect standing one day on the kerbstone in Moor Street, opposite our house, whilst six women operatives walked abreast along the street. They wore polished clogs and white aprons, and had homely shawls on their heads, tied under their chins. As they walked slowly along they sang

Let us pause in life's pleasures
And count its many tears,

Whilst we all sup sorrow with the poor.

'Tis the song and the sigh of the weary,

Hard times—hard times come again no more.

These are some of the words, so far as I can remember them. Others sang a hymn

Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known,

and carried large baskets with them in which they thankfully received gifts of bread. The pale, pinched faces of the women bore traces of patiently endured and honest poverty, and though long years have passed since that incident took place it has burned itself in my memory. However, there is a sense in which even such national sorrows or calamities have a good end, for they release in a nation springs of sympathy and generosity which are never again dried up.

I have been writing about Rusholme above the level of the ground, but I have also wondered many a time what Rusholme below the surface is like. I asked a friend of mine who has an extensive knowledge of Geology, and he answered my question, but in such language as is never heard in Parliamentary circles or on the boards of the Royal Exchange, so I was forced to try in another quarter and was told that the subsoil was clay. This I could understand and confirm, because in my very early married days, when I brought my bride to our humble home in Duke Street, I had a few yards of garden which I honestly tried to cultivate and make to blossom as the rose, but found nothing more promising than clay. However, no one must be led away with the idea that Rusholme is an unhealthy spot, for it is nothing of the



THE "UNEMPLOYED" AT WORK MAKING THE LAKE



OPENING OF LAKE

sort. Look at the number of old folk who attend the Old Folks' Tea Party every year and you will believe that, despite the clay soil and any other climatic disadvantages, we live in a healthy spot. Just recently on the Corporation Allotments in Yew Tree Road, Rusholme, an interesting discovery was made. Two policemen on adjoining plots arranged to dig for water. They dug through nine feet of clay and then came upon a layer of sand in which they found a number of hazel nuts and substantial pieces of old wood. These were submitted to Professor Boyd Dawkins, our greatest authority on such matters, who said they were probably swept to their present resting place by flood in former ages. An old forest covered the whole of Lancashire and Cheshire and the forest has in some places been traced to a depth of sixty feet below present sea level. The age of this forest is pre-historic. It was inhabited by man in the Neolithic Age—the age of polished stone. How far back that is as measured in terms of years it is impossible to guess. Some of the nuts had plainly been gathered by squirrels.—This is indeed a chapter in old Rusholme.

The date August 5th, 1856, was the day of the great flood in Rusholme. Birch Brook overflowed its banks in Birch fields; the weir could not be seen nor the culvert near the lych gate, whilst the wooden bridge lower down was washed away. Brighton Grove and Norman Road were like rivers and the water ran into Platt and flooded the fields in front of the Hall. People were ferried across Wilmslow Road in a handcart. This flood was caused by a cloud-burst in the Gorton district.

It is not generally known that in the reading room of the Public Library there is a modest local museum. Here may be seen photograph drawings of Brighton Grove in 1832, Archie Wilson's cottage, the last Rushcart in 1882, etc., etc.; also portraits of General Worsley, Dr. Melland, Alderman Goldschmidt, W. R. Callender, J. S. Mayson and others.

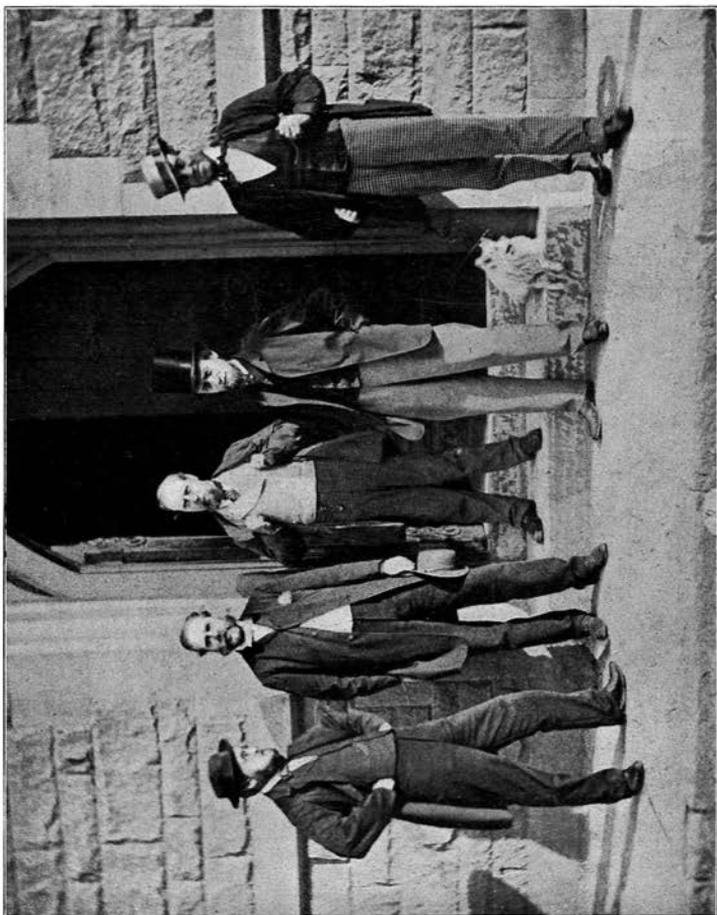
When Platt Fields was acquired for public use there was no intention of making a lake. But in the autumn of 1908 acute distress prevailed in the city and in order to find work for the unemployed it was decided to construct a lake. The Local Government Board lent money for the purpose and also made a substantial grant towards the cost. Over 700 of the unemployed were found work and they came every day throughout that dreary winter. I have rarely seen a more

pathetic sight. The elderly men came, those who obviously had seen better days; young men in the vigour of life, and indeed all classes came and did their best to earn a living. They often showed me their hands covered with blisters, for many had never handled a spade before. There is a vacant niche in the temple of fame for the statesman who will solve the problem of the unemployed. The area of the lake, including the island is $6\frac{1}{2}$ acres. The walk round the lake is 760 yards long. A small bay and sanctuary for wild fowl has been formed on the south side of the island.

Many people have wondered what connection "Rusholme Road," the thoroughfare from Oxford Road to Ardwick Green has with Rusholme. The explanation is that a hundred and twenty-five years ago anyone going from Manchester to Rusholme would travel via London Road, and the thoroughfare in question to Rusholme; hence the name. Oxford Road, from St. Peter's Church, was only opened on July 12th, 1790. This was done with great ceremony. The Boroughreeve, Constables and a "number of respectable gentlemen," accompanied by the Beadles, walked in procession along Oxford Road to Rusholme, thus opening the road.

I have dealt with omnibuses on another page, but show a photo of the famous Cheadle stage-coach. This, of course, from its dignity and the character of its riders is on a platform by itself. It ran every morning and evening during the summers of 1876-7-8-9 between the "White Hart," Cheadle and the "Spread Eagle," Corporation St. The coachman is Dick Wood, of bus fame, and on the box-seat is the rector of Cheadle, Rev. J. C. Macdona, who left the Gospel for politics and entered Parliament. Behind is Alderman Fletcher Moss, of antiquarian renown; Mr. James Watts, Lord of the Manor; also Messrs. J. D. and Sydney Milne and Mr. J. H. Milne. These were the "nuts" of those days and the coach went through Rusholme at a fine speed.

I give in this volume a photograph of Edward Morris which I am sure will be welcome by all old Rusholmites. Edward has stood in Wilmslow Road for 54 years. He has been blind from childhood but can describe the houses on the road and remembers Moss House Cottage and Wm. Entwistle, M.P. living at Rusholme House; also he has a vivid recollection of the Rush Cart and Morris Dancers, and the Cheadle busses as they raced along



A RUSHOLME GROUP OF FIFTY YEARS AGO
Messrs. ALTON, STRINGER, MAPLESTON, ULPH, CLARK

Rusholme was incorporated with the city of Manchester in the year 1885. There was strong opposition to this; public meetings were held and much feeling was excited. Many of those who took part in the agitation are dead, but if they could come back and see the Rusholme of to-day they would be compelled to admit that incorporation has brought immense benefits to the village. Well kept and lighted roads, public parks and free libraries, are only a few of the advantages which have resulted, and in addition we are citizens of no mean city. Manchester is one of the best-governed cities in the country and I venture to say there is no place where there are greater activities working for the good of the people. We have a wealth of men and women who in the City Council and elsewhere are giving their time and strength to public work and doing much by their example to sweeten public life. One generation of these good men and women passes away but another takes its place, and so the grand work is going on continually. I am proud to think that in this work the men and women of Rusholme, in the days that are past as well as to-day, have taken their full share.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.

It has been my pleasure and privilege to know most of the men who during the last forty years have been engaged in religious and other work in this village. Rev J. J. Twist, for many years curate of Birch and the first Rector of Fallowfield, was one whose name is not forgotten. He was assiduous in his visitation of the sick and it mattered not whether they were Churchmen or Dissenters, if he knew there was trouble or mourning in the house there he went.

Thomas Lowe, one of my best friends, was known to most people in Rusholme. He came to the village in 1836 and took part in most of the public affairs of the village. He was one of the founders of the Rusholme Public Hall in 1850 and also of the Working Men's Club in Nelson Street. He was the pioneer of temperance work and established the first teetotal society in the village in 1845 which held its meetings in the Chapel in Moor Street. He was an unflinching advocate of total abstinence, and some who to-day hold aloft the banner of temperance in Rusholme owe their inspiration to him. His public work in connection with the village was justly recognised when he was unanimously invited to occupy the chair at the Jubilee celebration in the Public Hall in 1887 and presided over a splendid meeting. A well read and cultured man he was never tired of talking about his favourite science astronomy. As is well known he was the father of Wesleyan

Methodism in Rusholme and passed away in 1892 at the ripe age of seventy-eight, having lived in Rusholme fifty-six years.

James Hounsfield was known to a smaller circle of friends. The distinctive feature of his character was that he was a man of method and also a bachelor. For twenty-three years he never, for any cause whatever, failed to attend the Wesleyan Church and Sunday School close by, four times each Sunday. He was the founder of the Penny Bank in the Public Hall and for nearly thirty years attended to receive from children and others the money every Monday night. He was from the beginning on the directorate of the Public Hall. In the best sense of the word he was a "good man."

Alderman Philip Goldschmidt, a leading Manchester merchant, was for many years President of the Rusholme Public Hall and Chairman of the old Local Board. He was also the honoured Mayor of this city in the year 1882-3. At the 1887 Jubilee he defrayed the cost of the celebration treat to the old and young people of Rusholme and we all marched round Oldenburg House and sang "God save the Queen" for him. It was my pleasure to know Mr. Goldschmidt very well for he was President of the Rusholme Gymnastic Society of which I was secretary. The Rusholme Working Men's Club in Nelson Street was built at the expense of Mrs. Langworthy and Mr. Goldschmidt. He was ever ready to help the poor of the village, and gave cheerfully, begging you to come again if necessary. He gave much of his time to municipal and philanthropic work in this city. One of the most lifelike paintings in the City Art Gallery is that of Alderman Goldschmidt. It was presented by his fellow citizens.

Mrs. Langworthy bore a revered name in Rusholme and in her lifetime gave freely of her wealth to the poor and also to the public institutions of the village. She paid for and established the first Boys' Club in Manchester, namely that at the People's Institute, Rusholme.

Another Rusholme name that must not be forgotten is that of William James. In the early days of the Rusholme Public Hall he fought hard to "democratize" that institution, and there were lively times on the directorate. He was a regular fire-brand, an enemy of extravagance, against everybody in office and did not believe in aldermen. He was captain of the Rusholme Volunteer Fire Brigade and in his own way worked for the good of the people. But this country was not sufficiently large and free for him and he went to Queensland thirty years ago and joined the Labour Party there.



A PEACEFUL SCENE



OLD SCHOOL HOUSE, PLATT LANE

Fate was unkind to him and for long years he wandered solitary over that vast country ever working hard. One evening years ago he arrived at a place where were a few houses and died there quite suddenly. Not a soul knew him but a kindly postmistress gave him Christian burial. In his pocket was a paper on which was my own name and it was thus that I became aware of the death of my old and valued friend.

Amongst those who looked upon Rusholme as their home one of the most distinguished was Dr. Frederick Melland. He was a native of Derbyshire but lived in Rusholme over seventy years. The year of his birth was only two years after the battle of Waterloo and nearly two years before the birth of Queen Victoria. He was the subject of six British sovereigns, closing his days as he began them under a George. "His widest circle of friends is to be found among his old patients in Rusholme. He was a young man when he first went there and he was still at work after he had reached seventy. His neighbours found him to be a public minded man in many ways. He was a keen politician though not a public speaker; he served the Volunteer movement as the surgeon of the corps and he worked hard to establish the Public Library in Rusholme." He had a warm friendship for Dr. Finlayson and "took a large part in building the Congregational Church at Rusholme and a very full part in its services, taking among other things a place in the choir." He was a very striking figure in the village, tall and erect, wearing a shepherd's picaid across his shoulders and with a cheery smile for all his friends, among whom I was proud to count myself. We called him the "grand old man of Rusholme" and so he was. His funeral took place at the Manchester Crematorium on January 21, 1911, and amongst the relatives and friends present was the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith.

I well remember that on one of the occasions when I gave my lecture on "Old Rusholme" I was honoured by the presence of Dr. Melland and Mr. R. D. Darbshire, freeman of the city of Manchester. The following morning I received a letter from Dr. Melland saying that on the previous evening someone had walked off with his hat, and he added that if I did not recover his hat he would vote Tory at the next election. This was indeed alarming and I spent most of the day searching, but in vain. The next morning a letter came from Mr. Darbshire saying that at the lecture his hat had also mysteriously disappeared. This was a tragic situation. I suggested as a solution that these distinguished citizens should meet each other to effect an exchange. So the Doctor

walked over to Upper Park Road but his interview was fruitless. There was evidently an epidemic of hat "swopping" just then. It would take a distinguished man to wear either hat.

Talking of my good friend Mr. R. D. Darbshire I well remember a kindly action he once performed for a poor family. The breadwinner had died and there were six young children left. The summer was coming and the widow thought that with the help of an ice-cream cart she could make a living. This would cost fifty-shillings and I got together for her about thirty-eight. I knew a rich man in the neighbourhood and thought he might make up the difference. It was one of the largest houses in Rusholme and I was shown into the drawing-room by a stately footman. The owner was much touched by my tale of sorrow and gave me half-a-crown. Much discouraged I took my way to Mr. Darbshire's house and put the case before him. He gave me a generous donation but said he would help this poor woman in another way. He was the acting legatee of the Whitworth Trust which had just bought Potter's Park (now Whitworth Park) and it was to be thrown open to the public on the following Monday. This woman was given, by Mr. Darbshire, the exclusive right to sell ice cream in the Park. Without Sunday work an enormous amount of ice cream was made and every ounce sold, for it was a day of tremendous heat, and the clear profit was forty-two shillings. So we bought the cart. What a stately appearance and old world courtesy there was about Mr. Darbshire! He wisely distributed nearly two million pounds of the estate of Sir Joseph Whitworth to the immense good of the city of Manchester and district and with the money that he might properly have claimed for himself he built the beautiful Whitworth Art Gallery in the park of that name. Mr. Darbshire had a great love for birds and at his house in Upper Park Road he altered all his chimney pots to fantastic shapes to encourage the birds to build in them and the birds came in great numbers. My first connection with politics in Rusholme was in the year 1866. Gladstone had been rejected by Oxford University, and, being invited to stand for South Lancashire, came down to Manchester, and in the Free Trade Hall made his famous speech beginning "I am come among you unmuzzled." Rusholme was then part of South Lancashire and was greatly excited over the election. The Conservatives had their headquarters at the "Birch Villa" and the Liberals in the Public Hall. I remember attending the Liberal meeting in the Hall addressed by some of the candidates, but I am not sure whether Mr. Gladstone was one



DR. MELLAND



REV. W. H. AND MRS. FINNEY
IN NORMAN DOORWAY OF BIRKIN CHURCH

who spoke there. The leaders of the Liberal party in Rusholme in those days were Mr. Wood, of Princess Street, and Mr. Furniss, of Kingthorpe Grove. Mr. Wood was remarkable for being very like John Bright in personal appearance. The polling resulted in the return of Egerton and Turner, Conservatives, and Gladstone as the only Liberal. He represented Rusholme in Parliament for two years until the village became part of South East Lancashire.

In giving my reminiscences of the immediate past I have not mentioned those who are still with us for obvious reasons, but I cannot refrain from referring to my valued friend Rev. W. H. Finney. For twenty-five years he was the Rector of Platt and his ministry amongst us was powerful for good. We called him the Rector of all denominations and in every effort for the good of the people of Rusholme he cheerfully associated with all the churches. The poor in Rusholme still cherish his memory, for with his devoted wife he knew them all in their homes. Some years ago they retired to the village of Birkin, in Yorkshire, and all their friends desire them a peaceful eventide.

A WALK ROUND RUSHOLME A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

I PROPOSE that we now take an imaginary walk through Rusholme, along Wilmslow Road, in the early part of last century. I have conversed with several persons who were familiar with Rusholme a century ago. We will start at the west side of Wilmslow Road, near High Street. The land here belonged to the Traffords and Lloyds, and in 1810 Rusholme House was built and tenanted by Richard Entwistle, and remained in the family until 1872. In that year it was sold to Mr. Crompton Potter, who in 1888 disposed of it to the Whitworth Legatees. Later it was pulled down and the land added to the Whitworth Institute and in 1904 presented to the Corporation of Manchester. This was part of the grand work done by the Whitworth Legatees for the benefit of Manchester, the leading spirit of the legatees being that good citizen and freeman of the city, the late Mr. R. D. Darbishire. Whitworth Park, with its splendid Picture Gallery, is a great acquisition to the city.

At the corner of Clock House Lane, now called Moss Lane East, stood a low thatched cottage called Moss Cottage, on which there was a clock. This was pulled down in 1880. A little further on, where Carter's repository now stands, there was a toll-bar, the toll being 9d. for a four-wheel vehicle. I am just old enough to remember this toll-bar and

the family of the name of Hargreaves that kept it. When the Withington bar at the corner of Mauldeth Road was put up, the toll at Rusholme was reduced to $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. Continuing our walk, a row of thatched cottages occupied the site now held by the Carriage Company's premises. Two of those cottages were used as almshouses for the poor of Rusholme under Overseers, who had such powers as Poor Law Unions now possess. Passing these almshouses, we have nothing but open fields and we can see right into the country, to Chorlton and to the uplands of Bowdon, until we come to Poplar House and cottages standing right opposite what is now Thurlow Street. They were quaint and old-fashioned cottages standing low down, and one of them, with a plastered front and a delightful old-fashioned inside, is standing there to-day. Outside these cottages, in the days of which we are speaking, as a relic of other times and modes of conveyance, used to stand an old-fashioned horse-block. This was removed some years ago and placed in front of Platt Cottage, Wilmslow Road, where it can still be seen from the high road opposite Platt Fields. Poplar House was built in 1788 and was said to have been the country house of the Behrens family. Proceeding on our walk, we come to more open fields, as Regent House, better known as "Knoop's House," was not then built, and then to a narrow winding lane called "Granny Lane," later Monmouth Street, and now fashionably styled "Claremont Road." I am told that higher rents can be gained from houses in a "road" than in a "street," and that this is the reason for the change. I suppose we may expect Plantagenet Avenue next and more rent. At the top of "Granny Lane" was a cluster of cottages, in one of which Charles Beswick started, for the Wesleyans, the first Sunday School in Rusholme, in 1826.

We continue our walk, passing Moor Street, and notice four thatched cottages at the corner of Pill Row, on the land now occupied by the Congregational Church. Later, these houses were occupied by Messrs. Upton, Dyson, Solomon Turner, and Edward Mottram. Just beyond this was Gilbody's thatched cottage, adjoining the two low houses recently demolished. There was a field at the corner of Platt Lane, as Melbourne House and those adjoining were not then built.

We cross Wilmslow Road. Norman Road in those days was a narrow winding lane which terminated in a footpath about one hundred and fifty yards from the turnpike road. Funerals to Birch Chapel came this way, but the coffin required to be carried from the point mentioned. I remember my father telling me that on the day of the Peterloo massacre,



GILBODY'S COTTAGE, WILMSLOW ROAD



ANCIENT COMMUNION CHALICES
I. 1640-1641 : II. 1661-1662

in 1819, he was standing at the corner of Norman Road and saw crowds of people coming from Manchester, many with marks of blood upon them received in that murderous affray. Where the Birch Villa Hotel now stands was an old thatched cottage where lived a woman who sold cakes. Dickenson Road was then called Sharp's Lane, and afterwards Lomas's Lane. Near where the Wesleyan Chapel stands was a farm house, and the road diverged sharply to the right (*see map*). The gable ends of the first houses on both sides of Moon Grove came right on to Dickenson Road in those days. Many remember Rudd's Farm and shippin, which stood next to the Wesleyan Chapel. Dickenson Road terminated where Conyngham Road now is, and thence there was a footpath to Birch Lane. At the corner of Birch Lane was a schoolhouse known as Chadwick's School, kept by an old man of that name. It was a day as well as Sunday school. I remember my old friend, Mr. Lowe, telling me that he often saw, over seventy years ago, the children walking down Birch Lane from this school to Sunday service at the old Birch Chapel. This was in the days when the Rev. G. Dugard was Rector. There was a path from Lomas's Lane to Victoria Park called Strawberry Lane, on account of the strawberries that grew on the hedge banks.

RUSHOLME GREEN.

We must now notice what was one of the chief characteristics of the village in the days we are considering. Some may have heard the expression from an old inhabitant, "down the green." This implies that the person in question is going down the village towards the city. The village green was a plot of land extending from Dickenson Road to Lloyd Street, and at its broadest it was thirty yards wide. In the chronicles of the village Rusholme green is mentioned as early as the year 1548. This green, well-covered with grass, was a splendid playing-ground for children, and the housewives of that day used it for drying clothes. Across the green, a few yards south of Thurlow Street, ran a silvery stream called Rush Brook, and this was crossed by a bridge which was the great resort for the weavers, both men and women, and other village workers for gossip at the end of the day's work. It may be mentioned in passing that this brook, called Rush Brook or Little Ditch, which ran down Walmer Street, and on to Moss Side, was turned into the sewer in the year 1884, and this was the end of the ancient brook, rather an ignominious end to a stream that had been on the map for a few centuries. A lumbering omnibus started from this

bridge, when it felt so inclined, to go to Manchester, the fare being sixpence. One of the great excitements of the day, especially to the juvenile portion of the community, was the passing of the London coach several times a week, with its echoing horn. What a vast change between those days of long ago, with their easy going life, and the bustle in the village to-day with the crowds of people and the rapid electric cars. No doubt many will remember that there used to stand back from the green, near Thurlow Street, three old black and white thatched cottages. One of the cottages was occupied by Archie Wilson, a well-known Rusholme character. I daresay there are those who remember Archie. He belonged to a race of Lancashire cobblers now almost extinct. He was fond of a glass and in his way a bit of a philosopher. He was always seen in a top hat. Wet or dry, sunshine or shower, ebriate or inebriate, Archie always wore his "topper." As a lad I used to think it would make a good concertina. Every Sunday he took home the shoes he had been cobbling during the week, slung by their laces over his shoulders. He had a raven with which he was always quarrelling, when the language on both sides was not of the choicest. He had a brother called Red Rover, well known to all the children of that day by his red hair and by his stopping in the street, when carrying clothes, and delivering to them speeches of the Pecksniffian order. These cottages where the Wilsons lived and where all the five brothers were born were called "Carter's Lache," or lake. There is a reference to this plot of land in the *Manchester Mercury*. April 21st, 1752:—

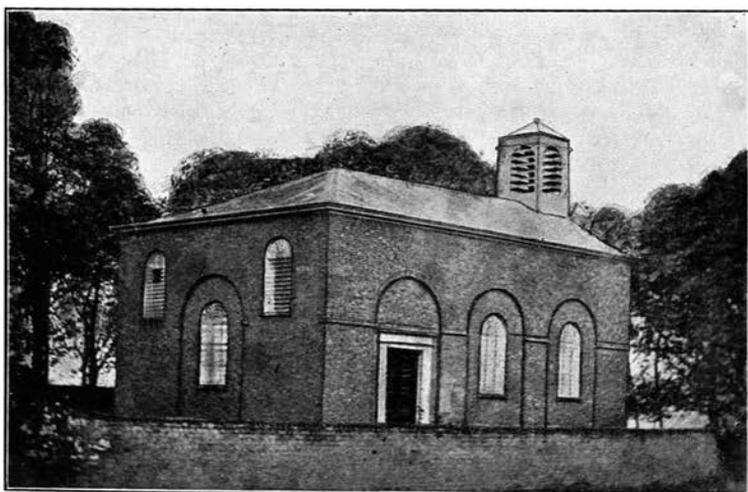
To be sold—A freehold estate, lying in Rusholme, commonly called Carter's Lake, belonging to George Booth, now in occupation of Samuel Burrough, consisting of thirty-seven acres of land and upwards, with housing and out-housing convenient for the same, and let at forty-three pounds per annum, with a quantity of ready growing timber. Enquire for George Booth, at Thomas Booth's, the lower end of King Street, Manchester.

There is a good drawing of Archie's cottage hung in the Public Library.

Just below Carter's Lache there were three low shops extending to Lloyd Street, one of which was occupied by an old dame, Mother Chadwick, and where we used to buy "bulls' eyes" and marbles. The village green was sold and enclosed in the year 1832, the purchase money being vested in three trustees. I cannot ascertain what became of the money except that £139 18s. 8d. was handed over by the last surviving trustee, Mr. Carill Worsley, to the building



ANCIENT MICKLE DITCH
Mentioned in Audenshaw Deeds in A.D. 1200



OLD PLATT CHAPEL

fund of the Rusholme Public Hall. Passing down the village we come to the Horse and Jockey Inn, now the Clarence. It stood many yards back with a swinging sign and a horse-block in front of it. Just beyond was the large house occupied by Mr. Denison and later by Mr. Turner.

So ends our walk which we trust has enabled us to understand a little what our village was like a century ago.

MICKLE DITCH.

PROBABLY the most ancient feature in Rusholme is the "Mickle Ditch," or, as it is sometimes called, "Nico" or "Nicker." My friend Mr. H. T. Crofton, in his *Agrimensorial Remains round Manchester*, gives a full description of this ancient ditch. It is described as the most remarkable of all the artificial boundaries round Manchester, and is mentioned in an Audenshaw deed as early as 1200. In a 1317 Rusholme deed, "Mekel Dyche" is the name given, and in 1484 another Rusholme deed terms it "Miche Wall deche." Its extremities were Ashton Moss on the east and the great Hough Moss, of which the estate of Platt forms a part, on the west. It extends through Droylsden, crosses Ashton Old Road to Debdale Clough, then winds through Fairfield and part of Openshaw to Levenshulme and Rusholme. It is pointed out as a remarkable fact that from its source the ditch is the boundary of ancient townships. Dim tradition has it that the raising of the embankment was the work of the Saxons, to protect themselves against the invasions of the Danes. It is also said that it was made in one night, each man digging a length equal to his own height. "The ditch was not made for drainage purposes, because it runs up and down hill and crosses the deepsunk Debdale clough towards its eastern end." The extreme length of Mickle Ditch is five miles one hundred and eighty-three yards. The only remaining portion, so far as I know, of this ancient ditch is that lying between Platt Chapel and Grangethorpe and Ashfield houses. A memorial board with an inscription is placed at each end, that is, in Platt Fields and Platt Chapel yard, on each of which is inscribed the following:

Part of the Very Ancient
Mickle or Great Ditch
Sometimes called Nico Ditch,
Well known A.D. 1200, Extending over
Five miles from here to Ashton Moss
and bounding several townships
described fully in Vol. XXIII. of
Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society

It is said some battles took place about the years 870 to

900. and one of the fiercest raged in the vicinity of the Mickle Ditch and Gore Brook. In our own neighbourhood there is a connection with this legend in the names of Danes Road and Norman Road. Talking of battles and the dead, we naturally follow with a reference to the Dead Entry, that narrow passage with high walls leading into Norman Road. In our childhood we were told that there were "hundreds of dead bodies lying beneath that noted passage, slain in the fight between the Normans and the Danes." How we used to run down that dark entry at night frightened by the echo of our feet! Later, we took our sweethearts down and gave up going there at all after the Corporation put a light there.

Many persons confuse the stream that runs behind Birch Hall and Schools, and which is called "Nico Ditch," with the ancient Mickle Ditch dealt with elsewhere. This "Mickle Ditch" had little value as a defence or for drainage, but as "Ditches" hold water it was necessary to give the water some outlet and the one passing Birch Rectory and school followed a natural dip in the land from the ditch to Gorebrook.

GORE BROOK.

THERE is another interesting and ancient feature of the Platt Estate, and that is the renowned Gore Brook. The Gore Brook is formed by three other brooks, Moss Brook, which rises in the Droydsden district, and Dick Lane Brook rising in the Ashton side, and another which rises in the Denton district. The stream meanders through Gorton and Longsight, and in some of the more thickly populated parts of Longsight it is culverted. It used to be a very much wider stream than it is now in the Platt Estate, and I well remember when it was 20 or 30 yards wide in parts and was a fine place for skating. I have bathed in it scores of times.

POPULATION.

As regards the population of Rusholme in the years we have been considering, very little reliable information has been obtained. In 1655 Rusholme had only fourteen ratepayers, but no separate return is made of the amount of the rate collected, it being included in the return for Withington. Amongst the names of the Rusholme ratepayers at this period are Mr. Worsley, Mr. Worsley of Heild House, Lieutenant Worsley, and George Worsley. In Birch Hall Houses we have Thomas Birch, Esq., Mr. Siddall of Slade, and Captain Edge. In 1692 the annual value of real property in Rusholme was assessed to the land tax at £146 13s. 4d. The earliest return of the population is in the year 1714, at which



SAVED FOR THE CHILDREN.



MAY DAY IN MOOR STREET

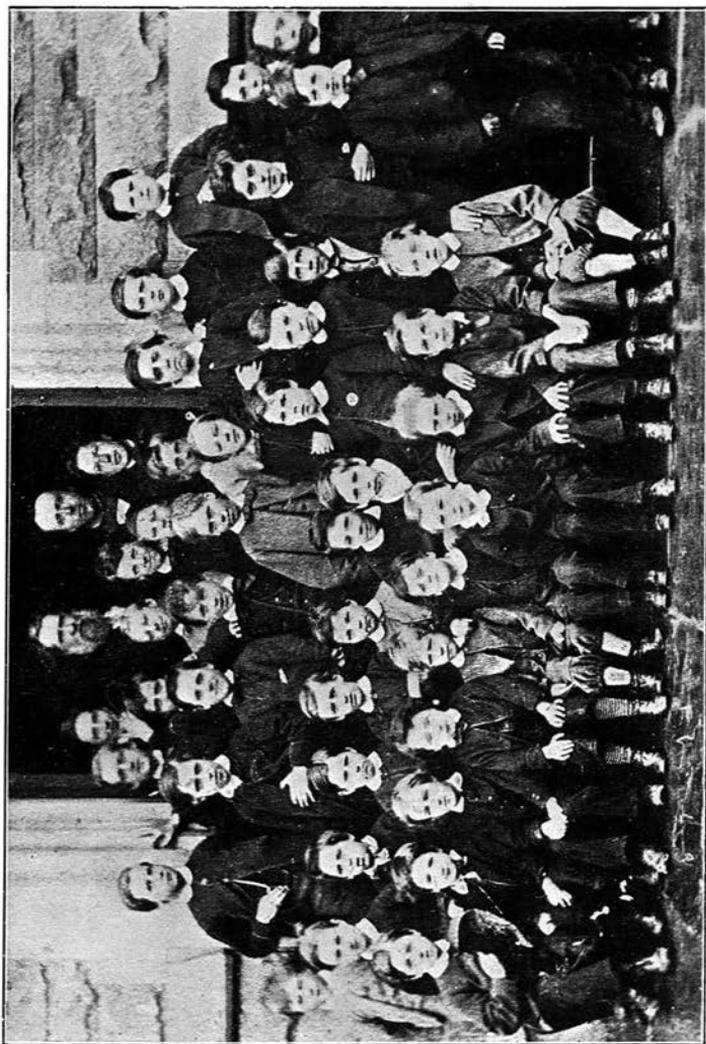
time it contained but forty families, representing probably 200 persons. Of these, five families were dissenters. In 1744 there were sixty-seven families, representing 351 persons, and there were sixty-three houses. In 1801 the population was 726; in 1811, 796; in 1821, 913; in 1831, 1,708; in 1841, 1,868; in 1851, 3,679; and in 1861, 4,945, whilst to-day for the same area as represented by these figures we have about 20,000 of a population. There is no doubt that hand-loom weaving was a popular industry and the music of the shuttle would often be heard through the open door of the cottages. The books of Birch Chapel show that so late as 1835 there were weavers working in Rusholme.

STREET NAMES.

THE names of streets and places in a locality often afford some clue to its history. National events and prominent statesmen are often commemorated by the bestowal of a name. Thus, Melbourne Cottage, recently demolished, which stood at the corner of Platt Lane, was called after the great statesman. Nearly a century ago an old soldier lived at the bottom of Moor Street, who owned a good deal of land down there. This was the time when Lord Nelson's triumphs were stirring the country from end to end. This old soldier, like Nelson himself, had only one arm, and to show his admiration for the great naval hero he called the streets after him, hence Nelson Street, and Nelson Place. What memories are called up by the recital of these two names. Nelson Square by the irreverent was called "Hell Square." In past years I have taken part in all sort of functions with my friends down in that classic spot. We have sung, prayed and preached, we have separated brawlers and preserved the peace. Things, however, are now quite changed. I well remember one night being sent for to see a man who for some days had been drinking heavily. I talked to him for a long time and told him of the great gain there would be to himself and his family if he would only sign the pledge. The poor fellow was evidently impressed with what I said and turning to me said, "Mr. Royle I believe every word you say and I have determined to turn over a new leaf and sign the pledge, but I want you to do me a favour." "What is it?" said I. "O" said my friend, "Let me have another quart now and I will start to be teetotal immediately after." Victoria Park was laid out about the time of Queen Victoria's accession, and Victoria, Queen, Albert, and Brunswick Streets were built about the same time as the Queen's marriage to Prince Albert. Princes Street was built later, about the

time when King Edward was born. Dickenson Road, a hundred and twenty years ago, was called Lomas's Lane, but twenty-five years later was called Sharpe's Lane, after a man who lived in a house where St. Mary's Home now stands. Lloyd Street was called after a man who built the houses at the bottom and who lived in one of them. Denison Street and Denison Place are called after John Denison, who lived in the large house opposite the Carriage Company's stables, later occupied by Mrs. Turner for so many years. John Street was called after John Holford, who built the property and afterwards resided at Rusholme Hall. Wiggin Street was called after a tenant of Platt Hall, who built the houses therein in the year 1846. Moor Street obtained its name from the fact that at the corner was a nursery kept by a man named Moor. This nursery extended half way down the street on the left. I well remember the cottages in Moor Street having lovely gardens in front of them, filled with choice flowers. In later years this street has become the place where rival political parties hold their open-air meetings and smash each other's political heads. But it is more pleasant to think of it as the place where all the churches in the village join on Sundays, in open-air services, preaching the Gospel which is common and dear to each of them. Taylor Street was called after Mr. Taylor, who was steward for the Platt Estate, and built some of the property. Pill Row, that narrow passage by the Congregational Church, has a little amusing history of its own attached to it. Many years ago there lived at one of the two houses forming the Avenue in Platt Lane, a doctor, named Stein. He was famed for the making and prescribing of certain pills with supposed or real wonderful powers, and he made such a substantial profit that he was able to build the row of houses at the bottom of the road. The road then ran through to the houses forming the Avenue. Seeing the property was built out of pills, the people naturally called it Pill Row. This, however, touched the dignity of some of the residents in the houses and they insisted upon another and more dignified name, so to please them it was called Stein Place, after the prosperous doctor, and so it remains until to-day. Quaint names were given to some of the streets in Rusholme years ago, and "Axon's Fowt," "Own Neds" and "Slutchy Alley" are unknown to the present generation. It may interest some to know that the two houses standing opposite the Public Hall were the bottom houses in "Axon's Fowt." Joseph Axon, who lived at the corner, was famous for selling rosy-cheeked apples.

When walking in the Dickenson Road quarter you may



PUBLIC HALL SCHOOL, 1864

have seen "Piraki Road," on which name hangs a tale. When the road was made the noble owner submitted several names to the Corporation, but they proved to be already in use. He then went to New Zealand, where he had estates, for a name, and brought over the old Maori name of "Piraki." I doubt if there is another Maori name in Manchester and anyone who lived in such a road was distinguished. But the inhabitants thereof were so often "chaffed" about it, and had so frequently to spell it for tradespeople, that they got it altered to the fashionable designation of "Birchfields Avenue," and thus dropped into the common crowd.

Brighton Grove was so called in compliment to the Prince Regent, who did so much to establish Brighton's fashions and at whose court the grandfather of the present Mrs. Worsley spent many of his early years. This "grandfather" married Miss Elizabeth Norman, of Winster, Derbyshire, and in her honour called the next road "Norman Road." The name was given to the road in 1794. A century ago there was the Didsbury Hunt which covered the surrounding districts. Hence the name "Dog Kennel Lane," as the kennels of the hounds were situated at the Withington end of the lane near the Hall. It is a pity this expressive name has been altered to Maine Road, which explains nothing.

The Rusholme people who live in Heald Grove, Heald Place and Heald Avenue may not be aware that the name these thoroughfares bear is connected with one of the most ancient bits of history in the district. It was about the year 1224 that the Grelles, Lords of Manchester, granted to the Hathersage family a plot of land, the boundaries of which today are Moss Lane East and Claremont Road. On this plot we read that there were "Yelde Houses," which name is a corruption of "Guild Houses," possibly the home of some guild the records of which are quite lost. We know that on this plot the tenants had the right to "dig turves," thus showing the existence of a large moss, hence "Moss Lane." The transition of the name is shown by the following variations in successive centuries: "Yhildhouse, Yeldhouse, Gyldehousys, Healdhouse." Until recent years there was a Heald House on the estate, but it was quite modern. The estate is now held by the Dean and Canons.

Moor Street and its offshoots has always been the most thickly populated part of Rusholme. As I spent the first ten years of my life in this street I naturally have taken much interest in its fortunes. Always plenty of children here. I give a photo of the happy youngsters of our own day. Long

years ago harvesters came from Ireland to work for the farmers round Rusholme and they mostly lodged in this street. One night, wanting one of these men, I was invited to his room and found six of these men together in one bed which was the shape of a cartwheel, all legs in the centre. "The Staff of Life" and "The Cottage of Content" were uncommon names given to two of the beerhouses in this street and more than once were the peg on which appeals were hung by outdoor speakers. At one time there were two hundred "back to back" houses in Rusholme but they have all long ago disappeared. It is possible this book may reach some who only know the Rusholme of long ago. Under the shadow of Platt Church were cornfields and here the sound of the cornrake was heard. I well remember a farm labourer in the autumn calling my attention to the music which he heard caused by the play of the wind among the waving ears of corn, then quite ready for the sickle of the reaper—beautiful poetry in a humble soul. All this is changed and there is not now a green field in Rusholme. Instead we have crowds of people, mostly prosperous and happy, and the district known as Platt Lane and Heald Grove is covered with houses which reach all the way to Moss Side.

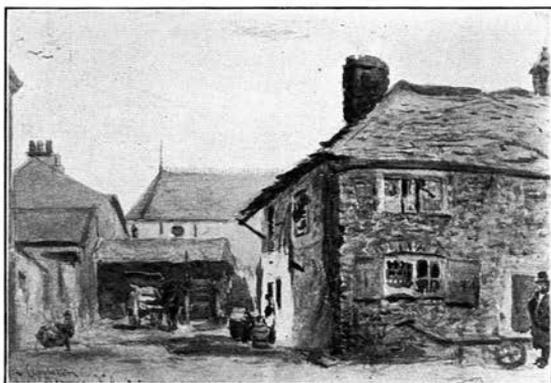
RUSHOLME WAKES AND RUSH CART DAY.

"WAKES SUNDAY" in Rusholme was always the last Sunday in July and things were fairly lively during the following week. Moor Street was the centre of attraction, for here were gathered roundabouts, gingerbread stalls, marionettes, fat women, boxers, Aunt Sallies and such things. I am told there was often much gambling. In Tom Shelmerdine's yard attached to the Brunswick Inn was erected the high greasy pole, covered over with soft soap and crowned with a leg of mutton. With a bag of soot tied round him the climber slowly ascended covering the soap with soot as he progressed. Just as he reached out his hand to grasp the leg of mutton down he would come, bringing the soot and the soap, and when he reached the ground it was difficult to tell which was the soot and which was the man. This was fine excitement and caused much innocent enjoyment; I think we take our pleasures very sadly nowadays.

I remember when our village was known as the great place for pigeon fliers and washerwomen, the latter one of the noblest of occupations, but alas! sadly diminishing owing to the coming of the steam laundry. One day a candidate for a public position in Rusholme spoke disrespectfully of these ladies, with the result that when the election day came



TOLL BAR, FORMERLY CORNER OF MAULDETH ROAD,
FALLOWFIELD



ARCHIE WILSON'S COTTAGE, CARTER'S LACHE

he was at the bottom of the poll. Rusholme people have always been noted for their love of sport. William H. Iddison, the brother of Roger Iddison, the famous Yorkshire cricketer; William Flowers, the Notts player; Alec Watson, the great Lancashire cricketer; and other county men lived in the village. Then we also had Jack Shanks, the pedestrian and Charlie Jones the boxer.

The first of May was always a great day with the youngsters of Rusholme. We were up early in the morning to see the milkmen and maids dressed up in all their bows and ribbons. In those days there was a crowd of milk carts from Northern Etchells, Gatley, Styal and Wilmslow, which came along every day to supply the great city with its milk. The carts and horses were covered with ribbons, and how dazzling the wheels looked as they spun round, their spokes covered with coloured paper! There were some few milkmen who defied this custom and "Dicky Broome" was one of them. He had a stormy reception, for we used to sod him. Dicky was full of wrath and one day jumped out of his cart and chased us down Platt Lane. It was of no use, however, for in those days we could run like hares. When he returned disappointed to the end of the lane, he found someone had walked off with his horse and cart and milk and hidden it in Pill Row. After Dicky left the road, he carried round his milk in panniers and lived for many years crying "mik, mik," in corruption of "milk, milk." I was with him at the end and know that he died at peace with everybody.

But of all the days in the year for true enjoyment and real happiness for the youngsters, Rush Cart Day easily surpassed them all. A kind providence centuries ago arranged for this to be on Saint Oswald's Day, the 5th day of August, which was when school holidays were on. When we were young we never knew the enchanted spot where the Rush Cart came from, for it appeared first to us in Fallowfield, where we sallied forth to meet it. Later we knew it was made at Withington, as we might expect, for there would be found plenty of "withs" or "rushes." The Rush Cart has a great pedigree and an interesting connection, centuries old, with churches, but we children of course knew nothing of these things. It was a grand sight to see the waggon laden high with rushes in orderly arrangement, surmounted by flowers of every hue and with pewter flagons and cups slung over the top. The horses in their ribbons were "as proud as Punch." Then came the farm labourers carrying the garlands, honoured men they were, and I used to think that I would rather carry a garland than be king of England. Then the morris dancers,

all decorated from head to foot with ribbons and flowers and with flowing streamers in their hands. The band struck up and they danced to the tune as they went along the high road, round and round the rush cart, with healthy, ruddy faces and heavy hob-nailed boots, singing as they danced,

Every lad shall have a lass
But I'll have four-and-twenty.

All the village turned out to see them and we had a feast of joy. The morris dancers went up to Platt Hall dancing, whilst Squire Worsley and Mrs. Worsley, with their little daughter, came out to greet and refresh them. They passed through the village on their way home in the afternoon and I fear their steps were not as steady as in the morning. It was altogether a glorious time. The tramcars came in 1880 and there was something incongruous between tramcars and Rush Cart—the new and the old—so 1882 saw the last Rush Cart come down from Withington. I feel sorry for the children of the present day, for though they have many privileges we knew nothing of, they have no Rush Cart, with its attendant joys.

RUSHOLME PUBLIC HALL.

THE modest-looking building standing near the corner of Dickenson Road and Wilmslow Road, and called the Rusholme Public Library, has been the centre of interest in the village during the last sixty years. It was originally called the Rusholme Public Hall and Reading Room, and was started in some hired rooms over what is now the Coffee Tavern, Wilmslow Road. A few years later, larger premises being required, a public meeting was held in the Independent Chapel, Moor Street, to advocate the building of a hall. Mr. W. Entwistle was in the chair and the speakers included Mr. Thos. Brittain, Rev. G. H. G. Anson and Mr. Thos. Lowe. The foundation stone was laid on March 18th, 1859, by Wm. Entwistle, Esq., in the stead of Sir John Anson, whose wife was ill. Ultimately the present building was erected, at a cost of nearly £3,000, being opened on January 14, 1860. At this ceremony the Rusholme Volunteer Rifle Brigade appeared for the first time in their new uniform. The object was the moral and intellectual improvement of the people of Rusholme, and the subscription was 2/- per quarter, which included the Reading Room and use of library. The building in those days and in after years was the common meeting ground of men of all parties and creeds, and so we were enabled to understand each other better and unite for the common good. I owe much to this Institution, having been associated with it almost from the

beginning. I was intimate with the hall keepers and librarians who invited me to use the reading room, and here I got my first love for books.

In the early days of this Institution, lectures were given by the first scientific and literary men of that day. On December 6, 1864, John Ruskin gave a lecture in the hall. I stood outside and well remember the long line of carriages in front of the building. The first lecture was on "Kings' Treasuries," and the second, delivered shortly afterwards, was on "Queens' Gardens." I remember Archdeacon Anson telling me that when he requested Ruskin to lecture he asked what he was to lecture about and, in reply to a suggestion from the Archdeacon, said he would talk about books and the value of libraries. Afterwards Ruskin sent his own titles and they were as mentioned above, two of the most delightful productions of this great writer, and now incorporated in *Sesame and Lilies*.

Professor Bowman, the astronomer, who lived in Victoria Park, gave several lectures here, one especially on the great comet of 1858. I well remember being carried out of doors to see this wonderful sight in the heavens. In addition to the lectures I have just mentioned for the more educated and cultured portion of the community, an attempt was made in the "sixties" to cater for the working classes. This took the form of entertainments made up of songs, readings, and recitations, etc. They went under the name of "Penny Readings," and soon every village and town had them. The history of this movement to cater for the working classes is worthy of a more permanent record than this can presume to be. They were held in every part of Manchester. I have in my possession many of the programmes. Some of the songs and recitations then given would not be listened to to-day. Edwin Waugh's "Come whoam to thi childer an' me" and "Besom Ben" were great favourites. Such now are never heard at popular entertainments. People want lighter and more nonsensical programmes. One feature we had at these "Penny Readings" which is unknown nowadays, and that was all the audience joining in the chorus. Many a concert of to-day would be redeemed from dullness if the audience were led in a popular chorus. With what gusto did we chorus that old English song "The Farmer's Boy:"

To plough and sow, to reap and to mow
And be a farmer's boy.

We are dreadfully respectable and "proper" in these days. These "Penny Readings" were organised by Mr. Edward Wilde, then Hon. Secretary of the Institution. He worked

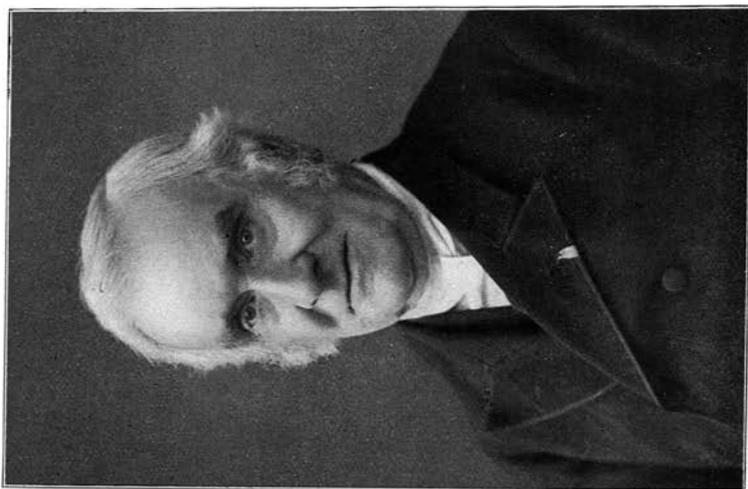
unceasingly to make them a success and in many other ways did much to improve the moral and intellectual condition of the people of Rusholme. These readings of fifty years ago have had their day. For some years they flourished and I have seen the large hall crowded; they were stopped partly by the unruly conduct of a portion of the audience, and several times the police had to be called in to eject the noisy ones.

It was shortly after this time that a new form of entertainment, imported from America, sprang into popularity—"Christy's Minstrels" of the burnt-cork variety, and they were seen everywhere. One of these troupes, the O. I. C. M., came to the Public Hall here and advertised a two nights' entertainment, allowing a reduction in price if tickets for the two nights were bought beforehand. When the first night came the troupe in full dress appeared with the usual corner "bones and tambourine." After the overture they left the stage and on came an artist with a banjo and sang a solo, "They are going to bury me in the cold, cold ground." I well remember how slowly he sang, turning up the whites of his eyes, until he made us weep. If the little game he was up to had been known to the audience I venture to say a few would have given a willing hand to assist at a premature interment! Then he in turn left the stage and we waited and waited for the next item. Finally, an old gentleman, bolder than the rest, with his spectacles at the end of his nose, got up and went behind the scenes, returning to say "They have all gone." Sure enough we had all been "taken in," for during the singing of the solo all the troupe had gone by Institution Place to Rusholme Grove and fled, taking the money for both nights, and never paying for the printing or the Hall. Ever after, it was ruled that the Hall must be paid for in advance, and that rule continues to the present day.

The Local Board of Health had its habitation in the Public Hall. It was formed in the year 1849. The meetings to arrange its establishment were held in Dr. Melland's house, in Wilmslow Road, at the corner of Moor Street. They were attended by Mr. Thos. Lowe, Mr. E. R. Langworthy, Rev. G. H. G. Anson, Dr. Melland and one or two others. All honour to these men, the pioneers of public work in Rusholme. Prior to this time many of the streets of the village were undrained and unpaved and the sides of them were almost open sewers. Monmouth Street and Walmer Street were then in wet weather ankle-deep in mud, but the Board effected many improvements. It was in 1853 that for the first time Corporation water was introduced. Streets were paved and sewered and the foundations were then laid for the excellent



R. D. DARRISHIRE
Freeman of the City of Manchester



THOS. LOWE

system of drainage which we now enjoy, and I venture to affirm that Rusholme is one of the healthiest spots in Manchester. The members of the old Local Board of Health should not be forgotten. Frederick Appleby (Civil Engineer, who gave freely of his ability for the public good), Thomas Bridge, Charles Jones, Henry Wren, Thos. W. Ulph, Henry Salomonson, James Ramsay, and Samuel Royle, who afterwards represented Rusholme Ward in the City Council. All these men did their best for the people of Rusholme long years ago. In this Public Hall the Rusholme Gymnastic Club had its habitation and turned out many noted athletes. Ben Greg, Lionel Adams, Tom Noble, Tom Hamnett, Fred Bon-sall, George Boswell, and Dick Watson were some of our leading athletes, and all had more than a local reputation, winning scores of prizes at athletic festivals. George Boswell, the son of omnibus owners, was in his day one of the best men in the north of England for long distance running; and Dick Watson was famous everywhere for steeplechase running—he could run like a hare. The annual "Assault-at-Arms" in the large room was a great event in the village every year, and I reflect with great pleasure on the many happy hours spent in the Gymnasium below. Our comrades of those days—where are they? Some are not, and others have scattered over remote corners of the world.

In the basement of the Rusholme Public Hall there was, forty years ago, an American skittle alley, which was very popular. It was frequented by a number of old cronies who enjoyed the game and a pipe. They were indeed a cheery lot. There was James Tunncliffe, who always smoked with his pipe upside down, and one of the great mysteries of my youthful days was how "old Tunncliffe," as he was called, managed to keep the tobacco in his pipe. Then we had old Clarke, with his Pomeranian dog, and my valued friend, Robert Atkinson, and many others who make a pleasant memory for me in these later years. The Rusholme Choral Union met in the Public Hall, with Edward Marsland as conductor. Who does not remember Alfred Bates, who taught us all tonic sol-fa? Another name closely connected with this Hall was William Roberts, the village photographer, who was a genial soul and a general favourite. He was the local historian and collected all the facts and traditions concerning the ancient history of Rusholme. Almost every person in the village was known to him and some of the pleasantest hours of my youth were spent in his company. Every village should have its local historian to gather together interesting historical facts and so keep alive local patriotism.

The Rusholme Public Hall, now the Public Free Library, was erected by public subscription, assisted by two bazaars, held in 1860 and 1864. The chief subscribers were C. Carill Worsley, E. R. Langworthy and Sir William Anson, Bart., each giving £100; and others were W. Entwistle, Robert Barnes, Robert Barbour, Ivie Mackie, Samuel Royle, W. R. Callender, etc. Mr. Joseph Whitworth (afterwards Sir Joseph) also gave the stone from Darley Dale quarries. A very interesting fact is that among the contributions was "Balance of Rusholme Green Fund," per C. C. Worsley, Esq., £139 18s. 8d. This was part of the proceeds of the sale of Rusholme Green, about which I have written on another page, but I have searched in vain to find what became of the balance of the money obtained by the sale of this ancient piece of land. The total cost of the Public Hall was £3,000.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

I SHOULD like to say a word about some religious and other institutions in Rusholme. Platt Church was opened in 1846 and was the work of Mr. Edmund Sharpe, the distinguished architect. It was one of the first experiments in building with terra cotta, and with its very graceful spire can be seen for miles round. I can recall the second Rector, the Rev. Aubrey C. Price, who often came into Moor Street in his surplice to conduct open-air services; and also the Rev. H. T. Veness, of rough exterior but tender heart, who was his successor.

Platt Day Schools were started in the old barn-like structure in Platt Lane in the early "fifties." These buildings had a striking appearance, as they formed three sides of a square. At one time they were used to accommodate the overflow from Platt Hall, but later, as I have just mentioned, the east end was turned into a day school. I went into the old school not long before it was demolished and there I saw the desks at which the boys used to sit, and the stool from which "Cocky" Turnbull surveyed the scholars and to which we were summoned for a thrashing, which I have no doubt we richly deserved. All these remained, as did the room itself, pretty much as it was fifty years ago when it was last used. But the scholars—where were they?

I have had playmates, I have had companions
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays,
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

The present Platt Schools, in Grove Street, were erected and opened in 1861, and I was one of the first scholars attending on the opening day. The first masters were Messrs.

Turnbull, Foden, Watling and Parkinson. It should be mentioned that the very first day-school in Rusholme was begun in the house in Nelson Street, still standing, at right angles to the street and near the Working Men's Club. Miss Rawlinson taught there in the early forties, prior to the building of Birch Infant School, which took place in 1846.

The Congregational Church was first established in Kingthorpe Grove, at the bottom of Moor Street, in May, 1839. It began as a Sunday School and soon after was removed to Holford's Row, now John Street. Later, in 1853, the chapel in Moor Street was taken, and here George Macdonald, subsequently the well-known novelist, was for a time supplying the pulpit, and later the Rev. Dr. D. W. Simon was minister of the Church. On October 23, 1864, the present Church was opened.

It was on the 23rd of August, 1877, that an event took place in this Church which makes the day notable in the history of Rusholme. On that August day the marriage took place of Miss Helen Melland, the eldest daughter of Dr. Frederick Melland, and Mr. Herbert H. Asquith, then a rising young barrister. The simple but impressive service was conducted by Dr. Campbell Finlayson, who was not only the Minister of the Church but also an esteemed personal friend. As the people gathered around the entrance of the Church to see the bridal procession they little thought that in the young bridegroom they saw a future Prime Minister of England.

I cannot refer to the Congregational Church without mentioning Mr. J. C. Norbury, who for over fifty years worked in connection with the same, especially among the young people. These Rusholme children looked upon him as a true friend, as indeed he was, and many now fighting the battle of life have reason to thank Mr. Norbury for help and advice given them.

The Roman Catholic Church in Thurloe Street was erected in 1862.

The cause of Wesleyan Methodism was started by Charles Beswick, a local preacher from Ardwick, who on Sundays often went to preach in Fallowfield and Lady Barn. He saw many children playing about the streets, and started the first Sunday School in Rusholme in 1826. This was in "Granny Lane," later Monmouth Street and more recently Claremont Road. In 1829 the chapel in Dickenson Road was built by Mr. Fernley, who then lived at Platt Hall. Later, this was demolished and re-erected in Lady Barn, to be used as a Working Men's Club. The present Wesleyan Chapel in

Dickenson Road was opened on December 3, 1862, and is acknowledged to be one of the most beautiful chapels in the district.

Birch Infant School in Dickenson Road was erected in the year 1846, and before the Public Hall was built was used for all public gatherings. It was for many years the only infant school in the village. As I write memory recalls Miss Rawlinson, who was kindness itself, and richly gifted with that patience she so much needed.

The People's Institute was built in 1872, the entire cost being paid by Mr. James Ryder. Later, additional rooms were added by Mrs. Langworthy, who was always a good friend to the young people of Rusholme. Here was started the first Boys' Club in Manchester. A few years ago the whole place was practically rebuilt, with several additions, as a memorial to the Rev. Dr. McLaren. This place is a regular hive of Christian industry and nearly every kind of social and religious work is carried on there.

The Working Men's Club in Nelson Street was erected in 1884, at a cost of £1,000, and Alderman Goldschmidt and Mr. Bateson Wood were amongst those who established it.

The Rusholme Clock in the tower of the Congregational Church is a conspicuous object. It was placed in position in the year 1873, the funds being supplied by public subscription. A committee was formed, of which Mr. Councillor Goldschmidt was chairman, Messrs. E. Wilde and W. Frevellier, hon. secs., and Mr. Thos. Noton, treasurer. The clock strikes the hour on a bell weighing 18 cwt., made by Taylor, of Loughborough. The dials are seventy feet from the ground, and are therefore well seen from all sides. The pendulum of the clock weighs nearly 2 cwt. The total cost was £476. After incorporation the care of the clock was taken over by the Manchester Corporation.

PUBLIC HALL DAY SCHOOL.—How interesting is this group of forty-two boys taken on the steps of the Rusholme Public Hall in the year 1864, just fifty years ago. You see Mr. James Royds, the head master and Mr. Hadfield, drawing master. The names of the boys as they called each other at school are reading from left to right,

First line (top): George Warburton, Charlie Hobday, Tony Alton, Charlie Barton, unknown, Edwin Hyde, Billy Pettigrew, Harry Gould.

Second line: Willie Wilde, Harry Royle, Bob Brunt, Jack Mawrey, Arthur Stringer, Tom Froggatt, Joe Mottram, Will Charlton, Edward Smith.

Third line: George Barton, Will Palin, Tom Hobson, Marmaduke Whitty, George Palin, Will Whitty, Harry Nall, Tom Fothergill, John Charlton, John Mottershead, Tom Kellam, Ben Davis, Bob Nall, Billy Hawksby, Billy Howarth.



THE THREE-HORSE OMNIBUS, 1856



LAST JOURNEY OF THE CHEADLE 'BUS' - "SCOTCH BOB" DRIVING
September 12th, 1913

Fourth line: John Priestly, Will Priestly, Will Kellam, Billy Henson, Arthur Bond, Tom Charlton, Jimmy Royds, Stringer, Arthur Smith, Charlie Bond.

Who is the "unknown" one—he looks a determined boy, as though he would make out something in the world. After the lapse of all these years I look with pleasure on the faces of these boys. I have played marbles, and cricket too, with most of them. Time has wrought many changes and these boys have become solicitors, merchants, doctor, churchwardens, at least one a "parson," Chairman of District Council, scientist, banker, farmer, and others well known on the Exchange. Some are doing public work in our own city, a few have gone over to the great majority and, although I don't know, it may be, alas, some have made shipwreck of life.

RUSHOLME NOTABILITIES.

VICTORIA PARK has had a considerable influence on the fortunes of Rusholme, especially is this true as regards the shopkeepers. Forty years ago "carriage and pair" was the order of the day and these swept through the entrance gates and along the well kept roads, for here the aristocracy of Manchester lived. Saturday was always a busy day with the shopkeepers attending the carriage folk. To begin, however, in the year 1836 there stood an old black and white farmhouse exactly in the centre of the present circular walk, with a strip of road across the village green leading up to it. This farm was occupied by a Richard Warburton, the father of Thomas Warburton, who later kept a grocer's shop "down the green." At that time there was not another house on what is now Victoria Park. The Victoria Park Company was formed in 1836 and owned 140 acres, but early met with financial troubles. The Company, however, survived, and no one can deny that the park has been an immense benefit to the people of Rusholme. Some of Manchester's best citizens have resided in it, and amongst them members of Parliament. E. R. Langworthy, M.P. for Salford; George Hadfield, M.P. for Sheffield; James Kershaw, M.P. for Stockport; W. Entwisle, M.P.; W. R. Callender, M.P. for Manchester; John Slagg, M.P. for Burnley, and many other names could be mentioned. No reference to Rusholme notabilities would be complete without particular mention of one whose residence here has conferred lasting distinction on the village. I refer to Richard Cobden, who laboured unceasingly for the repeal of the iniquitous Corn Laws. Cobden, who was in every sense of the word a Manchester man and was the founder of what was known as the "Manchester School," made in 1835

speculative purchases of land in Rusholme and also in other parts of Manchester. He bought land in Victoria Park, in Dickenson Road and in Wilmslow Road. A portion of the land used for Birch Park was bought from Cobden's Trustees, which trust holds land in Rusholme to this day. Cobden lived in Rusholme during the years 1845 to 1848, when his great work was accomplished and the Corn Laws repealed. His house was in Victoria Park, on the other side of the Crescent entering from Wilmslow Road. It is called "Westerfield," and was Mr. Cobden's last home in Manchester. It well deserves a commemorative tablet.

Mr. W. R. Callender, who then lived at Ashburne House, Victoria Park, was the host of Mr. Disraeli when in 1872 he made his famous three hours' speech in the Free Trade Hall. The seats were taken out of the body of the Hall and it is said that it held more persons that night than it ever has done before or since. I well remember the great cheering crowd that followed Mr. Disraeli from town to Ashburne House late in the night.

Then there was Robert Barnes. Who does not remember, as he went to town in the morning, marking time by Barnes's clock at the corner of High Street? Those were the days when people *walked* to town. Robert Barnes lived in Rusholme for nearly thirty years and left a large fortune for building Barnes's Convalescent Home, Barnes's Boys' Home at Heaton Mersey, and endowing Barnes's Samaritan Charity, giving in all £80,000 for the good of the city. He attended the Wesleyan chapel and I very well remember his quiet, unassuming manner. "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." Thousands have blessed and will bless the name of Robert Barnes.

Among other names to be mentioned are those of Sir Harry and Lady Smith, who lived at Summerfield, Victoria Park, and for a time at Rusholme House, Wilmslow Road, where Whitworth Park is situated. I remember his erect military figure as he used to ride about the village, his breast covered with medals, and on his famous charger, "Aliwal." He served under four sovereigns, and wept when he was forbidden to go to the Crimea to fight for his Queen and country. Lady Smith was the heroine of one of the most picturesque incidents of the Peninsular War, and the story of Sir Harry Smith's swift courtship and marriage sheds a gleam of romance on the dark sky of the story of the capture and sacking of Badajoz, which was otherwise a discredit to the British troops. The defenceless inhabitants of that

town were mercilessly attacked and robbed and we are told that "On the morning after the siege, Kincaid was standing near the door of his tent when, as he tells the tale, two Spanish ladies came hurriedly up. They had fled from the plundering horde in Badajoz; blood was trickling down their necks from their ears, whence jewels had been wrenched. The elder begged for herself and her sister the protection of British officers. Her sister was a girl of sixteen; the enthusiastic Kincaid calls her "an angel, a being more transcendently lovely than I had ever before seen." Protection was at once, of course, given to these ladies and Sir Harry Smith instantly fell in love with the younger and married her after a courtship to be measured in hours. The marriage was one of the happiest on record. It has left a permanent mark in British history, for Sir Harry Smith was afterwards in command at the Cape, and "Ladysmith" takes its name from that Spanish girl with bleeding ears whom Sir Harry Smith made his wife, and Sir Harry gave his name to Harrismith, which town played a notable part in the South African War. It was the sword of Sir Harry Smith which Queen Victoria used in knighting Sir James Watts at the Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857. When his famous horse died Sir Harry ascribed to it almost Christian virtues, as will be seen by the following inscription:

Near this stone is buried Sir Harry Smith's celebrated Arab charger
of the purest blood.
"ALIWAL."

Sir Harry rode him in the battles of Maharajpore, Moodkee, Ferozeshshur, Aliwal and Sobraon. He was the only horse of the General Staff that was not killed or wounded. He came from Arabia to Calcutta, thence to Lahore; he was marched nearly all over India; came by ship to England, thence to the Cape of Good Hope and back to England. He was twenty-two years old; never was sick during the eighteen years in Sir Harry's possession. As a charger, he was incomparable, gallant, and docile; as a friend, he was affectionate and faithful.

The horse was buried in the garden in front of Rusholme House.

OMNIBUSES.

I WELL remember Alice Robinson, who was born in the first year of last century, telling me she often saw the London coach passing through Rusholme, the horn of the guard always bringing out the people as it passed along the road going north or south. The news of the battle of Waterloo was brought to Manchester by this route, the coach bringing tidings of the great victory being gaily decorated. The first 'bus which went with any regularity ran in the early "forties" and was owned by Thomas Hargreaves, grocer, of Rusholme.

It started from the old toll-bar which stood near Moss Lane East, but later it ran to Cheadle and it went three times each day. The guard on this Cheadle 'bus was a celebrated player on the old key bugle, which at that time was used in military bands, before the cornet came into use. An old inhabitant told me that people living on the main road used to stay up on the fine summer nights to hear him play some fine old English or Scotch ballad as he went past on the last 'bus to Cheadle. His name is not remembered, but he played splendidly on the calm summer evenings as the 'bus, with its four horses, went swiftly on through Rusholme and Fallowfield. In the "fifties" the old three-horse 'bus made its appearance, and I give a sketch of this taken from the "Illustrated London News" of March, 1856. It started from the Birch Villa Hotel and carried seventeen passengers inside and twenty-five passengers outside. The 'bus was owned by Mr. Wood and the destination—Rusholme—was painted on the rail at the back of the seat just where the luggage was hauled up. Ladies, of course, did not sit outside; they mostly went inside among the straw. Later some of these 'buses, which were painted Scotch plaid and much admired, were owned by Macewen, a Scotchman, as his name would imply. The brothers George, William and James Boswell about this time began running 'buses from Rusholme, afterwards extending to Cheadle, with Jack Sigley as the driver. Then the Cheadle Omnibus Company was started, the vehicles beginning their journey at the Commercial Inn, corner of Brown Street. I can remember, on the polling day in the Manchester Parliamentary Election in 1867, the excitement caused every hour when the guard of the 'bus brought up from town the state of the poll, which, by the way, was mostly incorrect. Rusholme people had to rely upon such undependable things as omnibuses in those days for their news. I have a keen recollection of the wonder caused amongst the youngsters when the staircased 'buses of the Manchester Carriage Company made their first appearance. Fred Salt, in a spick-and-span new suit, was the first conductor, and "Cloggy" White was the driver in all the glory of a new pair of clogs. Then began a fierce attempt to run off the old-fashioned omnibuses of the Cheadle Company. Side by side they would chase along from Didsbury, the passengers in those days consisting of Manchester merchants and their sons, standing up and cheering their own driver as he galloped along. Those were exhilarating days and I never remember an accident. The opening of the railway to Withington and Didsbury, in 1880; soon put an end to the 'buses on the city side of these places.

Then came the horse cars and Mr. Thomas Bridge, who was the chairman of the Rusholme Local Board, laid the first rail of the Rusholme horse tramways on May 31st, 1880.

The last of the 'bus drivers was James Telford, better known as "Scotch Bob," who is indeed a cheery soul. An extract from that great institution the *City News* (without which much local history would be lost) may perhaps close this subject:

There will be general regret when it is known that the Cheadle 'bus has gone for good. So [writes Mr. William Royle] has our old friend, "Scotch Bob." For over forty years in frost (it took him two hours one day) and snow, in rain and sunshine, has Bob driven us on the Cheadle 'bus. No more shall we see his Pickwickian figure nor receive his cheery greeting from the front of the 'bus as it meanders along the old high road. Last Friday he let go the reins, made the 'bus tremble, descended the ladder for the last time. He patted his beloved horses on the back, said good-bye to them and disappeared. Next morning the horses were not required. Such was the passing of the Cheadle 'bus, with which some of us have been familiar from our earliest years. Many pleasant afternoons have we spent on the Cheadle 'bus with Bob at the front. Along Palatine Road, down Barlow Moor Road between the beeches and the hawthorns, then through the village with greetings from Bob for everyone, we went jogging along under the trees by the Wesleyan College, by the Cock Inn, past the cricketers (Bob always knew who were playing), and away by Parr's Wood, where the Bar once stood. Then we felt the fresh breeze of the uplands, crossed the river into Cheshire, and soon we were in Cheadle, and Bob amongst his "ain folk." There is more enjoyment on the top of a 'bus than in a tearing, roaring motor car. I suppose there is not now a horse 'bus on any of the Manchester roads, and so the old order changeth, yielding place to the new.

BIRCH FIELDS.

BIRCH FIELDS PARK was opened by Prince Albert Victor in October, 1888. It consists of about 33 acres and is a most popular recreation ground. It is interesting to note the genesis of this Park. In the year 1880 there was formed in Manchester a Committee for "Securing open spaces for Recreation." The leading worker in this movement was that fine public-spirited citizen Herbert Philips, the pioneer for securing open spaces. Mr. Philips himself bought that portion of the present Birch Park which abuts on to Dickenson Road as a playground for young people, and it was well used.

Incorporation of Rusholme with Manchester came along a little later and the Rusholme Local Board made it a condition that the Corporation should purchase Birch Fields for public use. This was agreed to, and in 1885 Rusholme was joined to the city. As the Corporation desired access to

Dickenson Road, Mr. Philips in 1887 generously gave his plot of $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres to the public for ever. The Corporation bought further land from Sir William Anson and Richard Cobden's trustees. Sir William Anson also himself gave 5 acres. We had a rather unimaginative Parks Committee in those years of long ago and it was difficult to get them to secure land for open spaces, far different from the Parks Committee of to-day, which is buying land in every direction for recreative purposes, to the great good of the community. I am delighted to place on record a word of appreciation of the grand work done in other days by this Committee for securing open spaces in many congested parts of the city.

I dare say many of my readers have seen the huge boulder stone in Birch Fields, and I give the inscription which has been engraved upon it.

This stone was found in the excavations in connection with culverting Gore Brook at the point where Hamilton Road, Longsight, crosses it at a depth of sixteen feet from the surface.

The stone is a block of carboniferous sandstone weighing approximately thirteen tons, picked up by a glacier in the north of the Pennine Chain or in Scotland and carried by an iceberg south and dropped as the berg melted on the spot where it was found, then sunk beneath the sea. The stone was presented to the Corporation by Messrs. Etheridge & Clark, contractors.

May, 1898.

The drinking fountain in Birch Fields was one of several erected from a bequest of the late Alderman Clay.

PLATT FIELDS.

THE acquisition of Platt Fields by the Corporation has been an immense benefit to South Manchester, and to Rusholme in particular. The story of the agitation for securing the estate for the public may be briefly told. An unsuccessful attempt to sell the property by public auction was made in June, 1901. The estate once more came into the market in 1906, but was withdrawn, the reserve price not being offered. During succeeding months letters appeared in the public press advocating its purchase for the public, but these appeals fell on unsympathetic ears, for there was a wave of economy in public expenditure passing over the city at that time. Hardly a letter was written supporting this appeal. The owners, tired of waiting for public action, decided to sell in lots for shops and small dwelling houses. A portion abutting on Platt Lane and Wilmslow Road was actually sold, and plans for the erection of the shops were submitted to the Corporation and

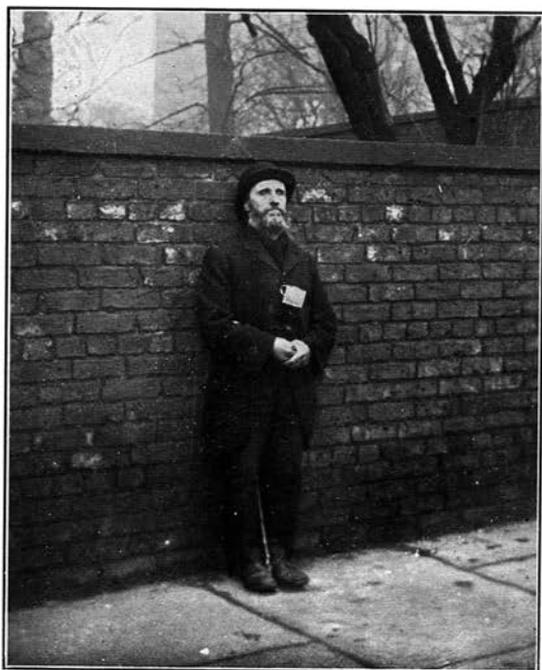
approved by them. The part sold included the Hall, which was to be pulled down and the bricks used for building the houses. This was in June, 1907. The fine trees on the estate were then at their best, and looking down Platt Lane from Wilmslow Road were a delightful sight. These trees had contained a colony of rooks for over sixty years and that year they were in stronger force than ever. A letter was written to the press, headed "A pathetic appeal," begging that the splendid trees and old rookery should not be disturbed, and that, if the Platt estate as a whole could not be secured for the public, these at least should go untouched. The knowledge that there was the possibility of what was described by some as an act of vandalism being perpetrated stirred public opinion strongly. Appeals were made in the writer's own knowledge to very wealthy citizens in Manchester to immortalise themselves by giving this estate to the city, but all in vain. Every day was precious, for building operations were beginning and the fine trees were marked for destruction on the land stretching from Norman Road almost to Platt Church. Two men were talking in the plantation just over the wall from Platt Lane and one was heard saying, "When these big trees come down in a few days won't there be a hullabaloo in Manchester!" This proved there was no time to lose. The public agitation was begun by giving for the first time the name "Platt Fields" to the estate. This was done purposely, as a more "catchy," breezy name and likely to make the place popular. A public meeting of South Manchester residents was called to see if something could not be done to save "Platt Fields." This was held on July 23, 1907, in the Wesleyan School, Rusholme. Amongst those present were Mr. R. D. Darbishire, Mr. T. A. Drew, Mr. Wm. Gaunt, Mr. O. Heggs, Rev. J. K. Maconachie, Mr. C. Marx, Rev. A. D. Powell, Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Wm. Royle, Professor Schuster, Mr. Norbury Williams, and Rev. H. Weston Wright. The following resolution was carried, "That this meeting of citizens respectfully requests the Manchester City Council to enter into negotiations for the purchasing of the Platt Fields Estate for the use of the public." The deputation appointed by this meeting waited upon the Lord Mayor (Mr. Councillor Harrop) on Monday, July 29. A deputation representing the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, consisting of Mr. John Angell, Mr. Councillor Abbott, Mr. Charles Clay, Mr. Theo. Gregory, Mr. T. C. Horsfall, Mr. E. F. M. Susman and Mr. Fred Scott also waited upon the Lord Mayor with the same object in view. Mr. T. H. Davis-Colley and Mr. Will Melland, of the Manchester and Salford

Playing Fields Association, heartily supported the movement; also many other citizens. The Lord Mayor, to whom the movement owes more than words can express, resolved to take the unusual and bold step of calling together a town's meeting without the proper requisition of citizens and this was announced for a few days later. Thousands of pictorial handbills showing photographs of choice bits of it were circulated urging all to attend, and a crowded and enthusiastic meeting of mostly Rusholmites was held on July 31st, which passed a resolution recommending the City Council to purchase Platt Fields for public use as a park. This the Council ultimately did. The estate has an area of $80\frac{3}{4}$ acres and the cost was £59,875. As previously mentioned, however, a good slice of the wooded portion of the estate (including the Hall) had been sold and the buyer had to be reckoned with. He had secured a good bargain and very naturally required compensation if he resold to the Council. The Lord Mayor said that it would not be possible to persuade the Council to pay anything more than the purchase price. It was then necessary to raise the sum of £3,000, and public-spirited citizens came to the rescue and in a few days it was done. It is only just to say that the first amount was £500 promised by the Rev. F. G. Buller, Rector of Birch, and Mr. R. D. Darbishire towards the end said he would gladly subscribe any amount that was short. Space does not permit me to give the names of all these fine-spirited men. The amount was not in the end required as the Council in a generous mood agreed to give the necessary compensation, which in the meantime had been reduced in amount.

Platt Fields was formally opened by the Right Hon. The Lord Mayor (Mr. Councillor Behrens) on May 7th, 1910, as a woodland park for ever. In the years that are to come little children may play in these fields, aged people may rest, and all of us in this beautiful shrine of nature may worship our common Creator.

There has recently been added to Platt Fields the Ashfield estate, situated next to Platt Chapel, for so many years the residence of Mr. Thos. Aitkin and later of Mrs. Aitkin. This consists of $10\frac{1}{2}$ acres and has on it over 300 healthy trees. We are indebted for this beautiful estate to the public spirit of Sir Edward Donner, Bart., whose generosity made it possible for the citizens to acquire it at a moderate cost. Platt Fields now consists of $91\frac{1}{4}$ acres.

On the Ashfield estate there is an erection looking very like ecclesiastical ruins. In fact I have been told they are the remains of an old monastery and I have often been asked



EDWARD MORRIS



ARCHIE WILSON



"what meaneth these things?" It may therefore here be stated that they are the windows taken from the Manchester Cathedral many years ago when alterations were made. They were in the first instance erected at Manley Hall, the residence of Mr. Sam Mendel, but over forty years ago brought to and re-erected at Ashfield.

At one time Athletic Festivals were the order of the day and every village had its local athletes. As I have before mentioned we have had in Rusholme our full share of runners, boxers, pigeon flyers, gymnasts, etc., so a number of Rusholme young men decided about forty years ago to have an Athletic Festival. Mr. Knoop kindly lent us a field which was situated where the Billiard Hall now stands. This was a great success so we held another the following year in Platt Fields. All the youth and beauty of Rusholme turned up, accompanied by their parents and cousins. We put up a stand which was "grand" in more senses than one. Well, in the middle of the afternoon, just as the sun had begun to take an interest in the proceedings, down came the grand stand. It was the most graceful fall ever known, for before the aristocracy of Rusholme knew where they were they found themselves on the grass. No one was really hurt, but someone said they were and sued us innocent young men for damages and we lost; so we sued the stand builder and won, thus getting our money back. When we won we went to the Public Hall and hoisted the flag in celebration of our victory. People wondered what this meant, was there a Royal visit or were the Germans coming? The directors met and threatened they would expel us from the Hall, so this was the last of the Athletic Festivals in Rusholme.

I fully intended before finishing this work to make mention of all the books and pamphlets from which I have gathered facts and also to acknowledge the great kindness of friends in giving me so much information. But when I come to tabulate all these I am overcome by the number and I dare not begin for fear of omitting some. I think all who have honoured me by reading this book will recognise that I have had to rely much on my friends. I can only say they have suffered an enthusiast very cheerfully. Words cannot sufficiently express my thanks to all helpers and I hope they will take this as an expression of my gratitude to them. If by good fortune there is any profit on the production and sale of this book I propose to give it to the poor widows of Rusholme.

EPILOGUE.

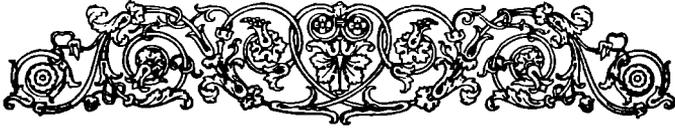
No one can estimate the pleasure I have had in writing this history. Having been born in Rusholme and lived all my life there it is natural that I should have a strong affection for the place. Born in humble circumstances I have deep sympathy with the poor. There has always been much distress and poverty in the village, for Rusholme never had any manufactories to employ its inhabitants and it was never far enough in the country for them to be employed on the land. There is much unskilled labour, and with many life has been a hard struggle for existence. I have visited the poor in their homes in Rusholme, and have known their hopes and fears; and I should be unfaithful to my convictions if I did not testify to the kindness, the patience and the quiet heroism of the poor. The thought of this enriches the halls of memory, and brings inspiration and confidence in many a trying moment.

Let not ambition mock their simple toil,
 Their humble joys and destiny obscure;
 Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

Hundreds of times in visiting the poor, the sick and the dying, my heart has been warmed and my faith cheered by seeing the kindness of the poor for one another. I have spoken in this book of the men who in other days gave their time and energies for the good of the village. Amongst old Rusholmites there has always been a very kind and friendly feeling, and I venture to say that this is due largely to the influence of the honourable and good men we have had in the village during the last fifty years, all working in their own way for the good of the people.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
 And never brought to mind?
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot
 And the days of auld lang syne?





APPENDIX.

THE beginnings of Rusholme are wrapped in a haze. No flint, stone, or bronze implements have been found within its immediate boundaries, but during a long occupation in Manchester, the Romans seemed to have strayed occasionally into its scrubby and turfy heathery wastes, following and fishing its little rivulets and deep pools. In one of these, towards its western side, now occupied by Alexandra Park, two stone net-sinkers were discovered, some twenty years ago; and in Birch Brook, not so long ago, an oaken box, filled with Roman coins—perhaps lost by some straggling fugitive. To the north a Roman road passed along the banks of the Medlock, crossing Oxford Road and the Garrett, and at its eastern site another road stretched in the direction of Stockport. No doubt, then, that the district must have been more or less familiar to the squatters of the vicinity.

Tradition connects the Nico (or Mickle Ditch), with the inroads of the Danes, who, in the 9th century, burned and ransacked Manchester. It is said that the ditch was thrown up by the Mercians against these ruthless invaders, but whatever may be its origin, no discoveries or excavations, along its line, have been made to solve the question.

Light, at last, breaks upon the district, during the 13th century.

Rusholme, in early times, formed part of the manor of Withington, and the Trafford family became connected with it as far back as the 13th century.

The Grelles, Lords of Manchester, granted the Withington Manor to the Hathersage family, by whom, probably before 1224, some land was granted in Rusholme to Richard de Trafford. It consisted of—

Twenty acres, bordering on *Tollache*, beginning at the *Great Moss* in the going up to *Goslache* as far as the boundary of Platt, and so crossing from the bound of Platt towards *Grenclow-lache*, together with the common pasture in *Wyddine*.

In 1317, Nicholas de Longford, lord of Withington, confirmed to Henry de Trafford the grant of his predecessor, in a more definite manner. It is described as—

A certain tract of waste land, beginning at the Goslache to the *Hunt Lane* in *Platt*, following the *King's highway* towards the north as far as Grenlow-lache, and so descending Grenlow-lache towards the west as far as *Kemlache*, and from *Kemlache* crossing towards the south by the *wells* and *ditch* as far as the *Yhildhouse Ditch*, thence going up as far as Goslache, and along Goslache as far as the aforesaid *Hunt Lane*, and he likewise grants him and his heirs a right for himself and tenants to dig turves on the *Yhildhouse Moor*.

Another early name was Henry de Rusholme, who held his lands of Matthew de Hathersage, described in 1260—

One messuage, etc., situate at the end of his meadow towards the north, near to the *Hutte (Hunt) Lane*, 15 perches long; 4 perches wide; one acre of land, one end of which contiguous to his messuage and the other toward his orchard; one acre of meadow in *Rusholme meadow*, one acre, one end adjoining this meadow and the other extending westward to *Le Menegate*, $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre between this parcel and the Goslache, a ridge or narrow slip of land called *Le Quicke hagged-londe*, lying between the Goslache and *Le Menegate*; $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre of land between the *Hutte Lane* and Goslache; six acres of land adjoining the land of Hugh de Asselum (*Haslam*), bounded at either end by Goslache and the old ditch.

In another grant in the reign of Henry III. to Henry de Trafford it speaks of *Le Gyldehouysys*. The bounds are defined—

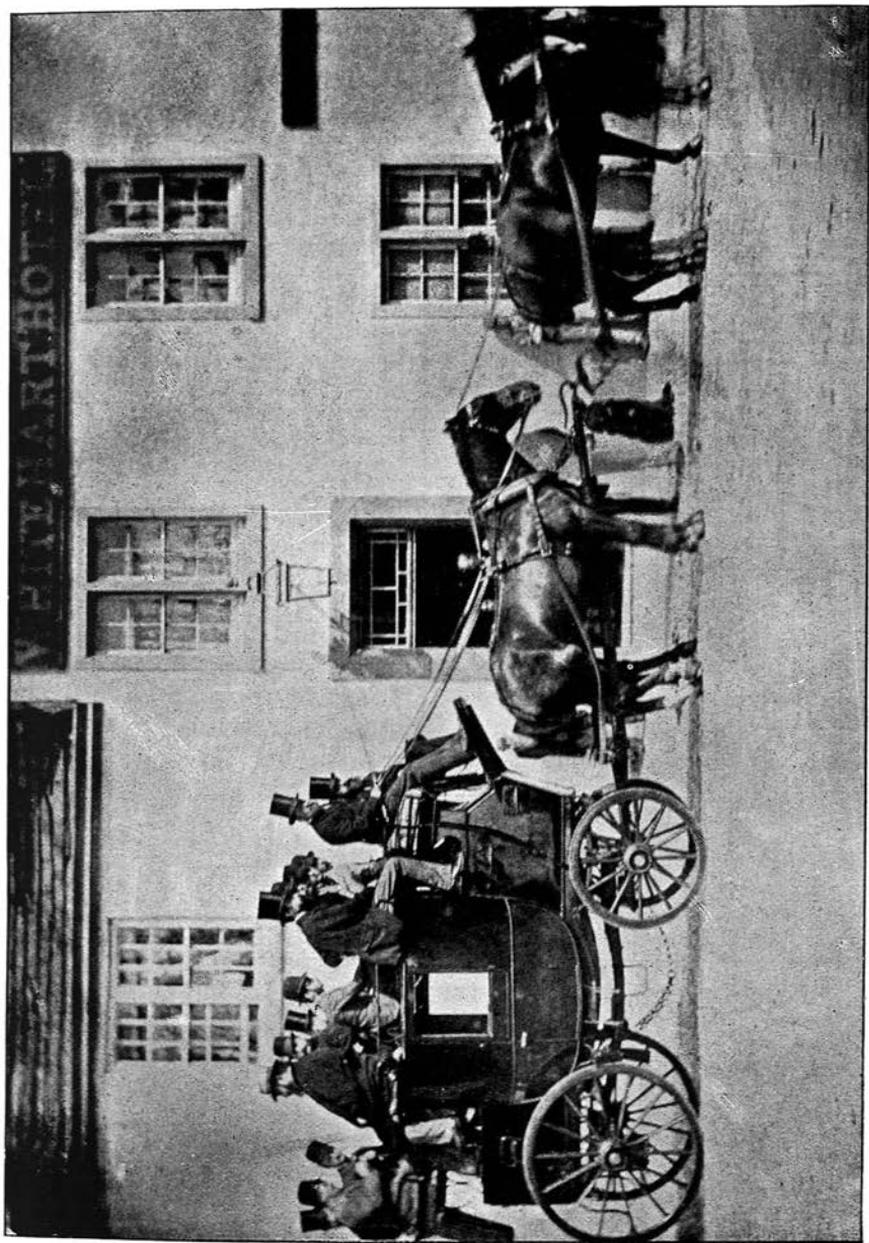
From Goslache as far as the saplings where a ditch was formed to convey the water to a *mill*, and so alongside that ditch to the moss, and from the moss again to the Goslache.

In 1300, in a grant to Jordan, son of William de Fallowfield, the lands conveyed consist in—

All his part of one ploughland called *Grenclowe-field*, lying between the land of Henry de Trafford on the one side and that of William, the son of Henry de Manchester, on the other side, of which said ploughland one end reaches to the *King's highway* leading to *Ince (!)*; the other end reaches to a ploughland called *Le Somer Werkeddeffeld*, and also $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre of meadow called *Le Brode Medow*, bounded on both sides by the land of Henry de Trafford, one end of which extends to the bank or boundary of the wood called *Le Birchene Wode* and the other end extends to *Clayffeld*.

There is no need, in a popular account of Rusholme, to extend into further details with regard to the early territorial occupation of the township, which can be more closely studied in *Booker's Ancient Chapel of Birch*.

We glean from it the existence of a large moss, on which the grantee and his tenants had a right to dig turves, this was



CHEADLE, DIDSBURY AND MANCHESTER COACH

the *Yhildhouse Moor*, which was ditched: The character of the locality is further indicated by the name Tollache, Goslache, Grenlowlache, Kemlache, and what was in the 18th century called Carter's Lache, the word *lache* signifying a marshy pool.

Then we have the mention of Hunt Lane in Platt, and Le Menegate; the messuage of Henry de Rusholme, with his orchard and meadow land; we have reference made to Grenclowe-field, the Somer Werkeddefield, the Brode-meadow, the Clayfield, and certain ploughlands, and a mill connected with the Gyldehousys. The growth of the birch on the moor is shown by the wood, called the Birchenwode. We thus gain some slight insight into the appearance of Rusholme in the 14th century.

It also speaks of the King's high road, at Rusholme, which must have run on the same track as the present high road. As pointed out already access from Manchester was *via* Rusholme Road; the other King's high road alluded to passed Rushford, on the eastern side of the township.

It is difficult to identify at present the exact situation of the various places. The *Goslache* (Gorselache), *Gooseacre* (Gorse-acre), and *Gorsecroft* were in all probability at the further end of Platt Lane and south of the Gyldehousys (Heald House), where we find yet on Slater's map of 1852 a large and extended sheet of water.

The Gyldehousys, Yieldhouses, or Guildhouse, are frequently mentioned among the Trafford deeds. They passed from that family into the possession of the Collegiate Church towards the end of the 16th century.

The Court Leet Records inform us that in—

- 1588 Edward Siddall, of Slade Hall;
- 1590 Thos. Strangwaies, of Strangwaies;
- 1629 Edmund Prestwich, of Hulme:

were seised of lands and tenements in Rusholme. The latter seems to have owned the land indicated in the map of the township as *Hulme Detached*.

THE YIELDHOUSES.

According to an indenture, in the possession of the Warden and Fellows of Manchester, dated 1645, this estate (consisting in 1859 of farm buildings, two detached houses, six cottages, and also twenty-two acres of land, and two closes of land called the *Gorse Croft*, containing three acres of land) was leased by Richard Heyrick (Warden) and the Fellows to Ralph Worsley, of Platt. It was held in 1647 (*see C. L.*

Records) by his tenant, George Travis, senior, described "of the Yieldhouses."

The Owen MSS. gives us a list of some of the successive tenants, who held their lease from the Collegiate Church, which I subjoin for its local interest—

- 1678 Thomas Travis, husbandman, one cottage or dwelling-house and two closes of land called the Gorse Croft, containing three acres of land, parcel of Yieldhouse. Rent, 5s.
- 1682 Ralph Worsley, of Platt, gent., message and tenement late in the tenure of George Travis, the elder, deceased. Rent, 35s.
- 1689 Ralph Worsley, now or late in the tenure of Thomas Travis. Rent, 32s.
- 1709 Ralph Worsley, gent., now or late in the tenure of Edward Hulme. Rent, 40s.
- 1728 Charles Worsley, gent. Rent, 40s.
- 1735 Charles Worsley, demised to Thomas Travis. 40s.
- 1771 Richard Wroe, of Manchester, tallow-chandler, surrender of message and tenements in Rusholme, called the Yieldhouse, now in the tenure of John Lees, Esq., also a cottage and two closes formerly in the tenure of Edward Hulme and the said John Lees. 40s.
- 1785 Richard Wroe, surrender of Yieldhouse, also a cottage, Gorse Croft, formerly demised to Thomas Travis. £2 10s.

JOSHUA MARRIOTT'S HOUSE IN RUSHOLME

The *Manchester Mercury* of 1783 also alludes to Joshua Marriott as residing in Rusholme in 1765. He was a yarn merchant and thread maker, trading under the name of Marriott & Hill. He failed in 1783, and his assignees offer, to be let for 3, 5, or 7 years—

All that message or dwelling-house, with the pleasure grounds, outhouses, offices, and gardens thereto belonging and about ten acres of meadow and pasture land, in rich condition, situate at Rusholme, about two miles from Manchester, late in the occupation of the said Mr. Marriott.

At the end of Platt Lane we still see a piece of land laid out in the fashion of pleasure grounds, having some avenues of trees bounding it. May this have been part of the estate occupied by him?

I give now a list of the residents in Rusholme who attended *Birch Chapel*, as given in the Chapel Book of 1636 (see *Booker's Ancient Chapel of Birch*, p. 143), together with the amount paid by each in support of the ministrations.

RUSHOLME.

Ralph Worsley, 28s.

Thomas Shelderdine, 13s. 4d. (Yeoman; had a brick-kiln near the high road.)

Thomas Travis, 10s.
 William Shelmerdine, 8s. (Houson Green.)
 Richard Traviſſe, 6s. 8d. (1624. Richard Travis de Rusholme, lynch webſter, Mosley MS.)
 Charles Worsley, 4s.
 John Davie, of Manchester, 4s.
 John Wilkinſon, whelewrit, 4s.
 Thomas Janney, 4s.
 Edmund Smith, 4s.
 Thomas Shelmerdine, ſen., 3s. 4d.
 Robert Bowker, 3s. 4d.
 Edward Baguley, 3s. 4d. (lived near the middle of the Green).
 Renoud Parkinson, 3s.
 John Davie, 2s. 8d.
 Adam Sidall, 2s. 4d.
 Thomas Bamford, 2s.
 Edward Worsley, 2s.
 Marie Davie, 1s. 4d. (Alehouſe-keeper, already mentioned in 1620.)
 Margaret Dickonſon, 1s. 4d.
 William Birch, 1s. 4d.

BIRCHE AND BIRCH HALL HOUSES.

Mrs. Anne Birche, 25s.
 Mr. Oliver Edge, 25s.
 Mr. Thomas Birche, 20s.
 Thomas Greaves, 4s.
 Henry Hughes, 4s.
 John Ridings, 4s.
 Tho. Birch, blackſmith, 2s.
 Edmund Whitticar, 2s.

List of the inhabitants of Rusholme and neighbourhood who were brought before the magiſtrates as referred to on page 23.

1662. James Clough, of Manchester aforesaid, informeth upon oath that upon Sunday, *the 14th December*, these persons hereunder named *did not resort nor repair to their parish church, nor did heare Divine Service at any church, chappell, or other usuall place appointed for common prayer, according to the statute in that behalf*, and hee rather knowes the same, for that hee saw them *at Birch Chappell* on the day aforesaid:

Edward Gathorne, Richard Ellor, Samuel Ellor, Edward Mather, Thomas Leeds,	} of Manchester.
John Baguley, of Ardwick. Miles Gathorne, of Salford.	

Oliver Edge,
William Jackson, } of Rusholme.

Upon the 21st of December—

Mr. Thomas Birch, the elder, and his wife.
Mr. Thomas Birch, the younger.
Alice Birch.
James Hulme.
Oliver Edge.
Edward Gathorne, } of Manchester.
James Johnson, }
William Jackson and his wife.
Robert Birch, of Grinlaw.
John Baguley, of Ardwick.
William Birch, of Grinlaw.
Richard Ellor,
Ralph Soundiford and his wife,
The wife of Edmund Mather,
Thomas Worrall and his wife, } all of Manchester.
Rich. Hunt,
Thomas Strickland,
James Strickland,
James Bowker, of Blakeley.
Mr. Thomas Birch, the elder.

This 21st day Mr. Wiggins preached at Birch Chappell.

The 28th day of December, 1662—

William Jackson, of Rusholme.
Samuel Ellor, of Manchester.
James Hulme, of Birch.
Thomas Wilkinson, of Rusholme.
John Baguley, of Ardwick.
James Reddich, of Fallowfield.
Oliver Edge, of Birch Hall fould.
Edward Gathorne, }
John Maddock, } of Manchester.
James Johnson, }

This 28th day one James Fitton, of —, preached at Birch.

R. L. de G. informeth ut supra that these undernamed
did not resort to the Church nor heare ut supra the *7th day*
of December, 1662—

Thomas Birch, senior, et uxor.
Thomas Birch, junior, et uxor.
Mrs. Alice Birch.
Mrs. Holcroft.
James Hulme.
Oliver Edge.
William Grantham, et uxor.
James Reddich.
Raphe Cooper.
John Hughes.
William Jackson, et uxor.
Thomas Jannie.



HERBERT H. ASQUITH

Married at the Congregational Church, Rusholme
23rd August, 1877



HELEN MELLAND



THE AUTHOR

Thomas Wilkinson.
 Reginald Parkinson.
 Edward Mather.
 Samuel Ellor.
 Richard Ellor.
 Edward Gaythorne.
 John Leeds.
 Thomas Leeds.
 John Baguley.
 Henry Tailer.

Who preached? I suppose, James Bowker.

R. L. de G. informeth ut supra and these persons under-named that they were *absent the 14th December*—

Thomas Birch, junior, et uxor.
 Mr. Holcroft, et uxor.
 Mrs. Alice Birch.
 Thomas Gilbody.
 Oliver Edge, et uxor.
 William Grantham.
 Raphe Cooper.
 William Jackson.
 Henry Tailer.
 Thomas Jannie.
 Reginald Parkinson.

And James Fitton then and there preached.

R. L. de G. informeth, etc., that they were *absent from their parish church, and were at Birche Chappell the 4th January, 1662-3*—

Thomas Birch, senior.
 Thomas Birch, junior.
 Oliver Edge.
 James Reddich.
 Raphe Cooper.
 William Grantham.
 Edward Gaythorne.
 Thomas Leeds.
 John Leeds.
 Richard Ellor.
 Raphe Sondiforth, et uxor.

Jeremiah Marsden then and there preached.

December 6, 1662—

A warrant from J. L., N. M., J. H., to the *Constable of Withington* to bring before us—

Oliver Edge, of Birch Hall fould,
 William Jackson, of Risholme.
 Robert Birch, of Grindlowe,
 Thomas Robinson, of the same,
 Mark Heape, of the same,
 Reginald Parkinson, of Rusholme,
 James Redditch, of Fallowfield,
 Raphe Cooper, of Cringle brooke,

} to take the oath of
 obedience.

December 9, 1662—

The names of those persons who came this day before J. L., N. M., and J. H., and *took the oath of obedience—*

Oliver Edge.
William Jackson.
Reginald Parkinson.
James Reddich.
Raphe Cooper.
James Bowker, of Blakely, *minister.*

The persons not appearing and are yet to take the said oath are—

Robert Birch, of Grindlow.
Thomas Robinson, } of the same.
Mark Heape, }

December 22, 1662—

A warrant to the *Constables of Withington* to summon these persons undernamed to appear before us to give some reasonable excuse for their absence from Church—

Thomas Birch, senior, esq ^r , et ux ^{or} ,	} Mrd these persons none of them appeared at the time and place appointed saveing Oliver Edge.
Thomas Birch, junior, esq ^r ,	
Alice Birch,	
James Hulme,	
Oliver Edge, hee appeared but gave noe satisfactory reason of his absence.	

A like warrant to the *Constable of Manchester* to summon the persons (to be seen from the list of 21st December*). Some of them still abstained from Church, and were summoned May 23rd, 1663; to be distrained *twelve pence a Sunday* for absence from Church (May 27th, 1663).

Names of residents in Rusholme mentioned in the *Manchester Court Leet Records* for breaking the assize, etc.

In the *Manchester Quarter Sessions, 1616-1623—*

1619-20 Thomas Shelmerdyne de Risholme, yeoman, for
fighting and breaking the peace.
1620 John Wilkinson, ditto, husbandman.
1620 Marie Davie, breaking the assize of ale measure.

In the Mosley MS.—

1624 Richard Travis de Rusholme, *lynen weaver*, for fighting
and breaking the peace.

*The full list of the absentees are not reproduced here, not to lengthen the account.

- 1624 John Bowker de Rusholme, husbandman, for fighting and breaking the peace.
 1667 Thomas Boardman de Rusholme, husbandman, for fighting and breaking the peace.
 1669 Reginald Parkinson de Rusholme, *webster*, refuses payment of tythe.

In the Court Leet Records—

- 1663 John Bayley, of Rusholme, yeoman (bond taken for security of inhabitants).
 1664 John Bowker de Rusholme, husbandman (bond taken for security of inhabitants).
 1672 George Worsley, of Rusholme, 1 hyde faulty, 5d.
 1681 Ralph Worsley, of Rusholme, 1 pint 1 gill too little, 6d.
 1681 Ralph Worsley, of Rusholme, for two point dishes and refuseth to sell by sealed measure, 18d.
 1685 Mr. Ralph Worsley, of the Platt, for not keeping their causes (causeways) in good repair for the dwelling-house of Joseph Orme, 3s. 4d.
 1685 Mr. Worsley, of the Platt, for not mending his land near *ye pinffold*, itt being out of repaire, 2s. 6d.
 1756 John Worsley, of Rusholme, for exposing butter short of weight, 5s.
 1753 Martha Burgess, of *Carter's Leach, near Rusholme Green*, for exposing two half-pounds of butter short of weight, 5s.

List of residents in Rusholme in 1824-5—*

Gentry:

Ainsworth, Mrs., gentlewoman.
 Aldred, Jas., Holt's domain.
 Bayley, Sam, gent., Yieldhouse.
 Bower, Alex., drysalter, Oaks.
 Dale, John, warehouseman.
 Dickinson, Mrs. Sarah, Birch Villa.
 Edge, John, cotton manufacturer.
 Entwistle, Rich., Esq., Rusholme-house.
 Gleave, Mrs. Frances.
 Hill, Mrs. gentlewoman.
 Jackson, John, gent.
 Little, Thomas, calenderer.
 Marsland, John, Esq., Birch-hall.
 Pilling, Charles, manufacturer.
 Robinson, Will wine merchant, Platt Cottage.
 Rothwell, John, calenderer.
 Sharp, Thomas, iron merchant, Birch Cottage.
 Smith, Robert, gentleman, Moss Cottage.
 Wiggin, Timothy, merchant, Platt hall.
 Wood, G. W., Esq.

Overseer and Collector of Taxes:

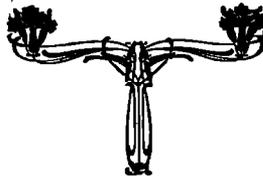
Bower, Thomas, Moon-croft.

* See *Pigot's and Dean's Manchester Directory*¹

Tradesmen :

Brickhill, John, shopkeeper.
Calvert, George, whipmaker, Draper's lodge.
Fletcher, James, blacksmith.
Giles, John, shopkeeper.
Harrison, Sarah, confectioner.
——— Thomas, shopkeeper.
Holehouse, William, butcher.
Kearsley, James, shopkeeper.
Langford, Edward, joiner and cabinetmaker.
Mellor, Jos., hosier.
Moore, John, gardener and seedsman.
Taylor, Jos., gardener.

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