

**HISTORY OF THE BOROUGH AND
FOREIGN OF WALSALL, IN THE COUNTY
OF STAFFORD; WITH AN INTERESTING
TOUR OF INSPECTION, INCLUDING A
FAITHFUL REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT
INQUIRY INTO THE CHARITIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649603589

History of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall, in the County of Stafford; With an Interesting Tour of Inspection, Including a Faithful Report of the Government Inquiry into the Charities by E. L. Glew

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E. L. GLEW

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A Faithful Report
OF THE
GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO THE CHARITIES
AT THE GUILDHALL, WALSALL, JUNE, 1855,
BEFORE THOMAS HARE, ESQ.,
COMPARED WITH THE FORMER INQUIRY, A.D. 1830.
BY E. L. GLEW.

"How despotic might authorities become, were there no local censors to notice their fancies and their freaks. All our PUBLIC AFFAIRS SHOULD BE ACCURATELY REPORTED. When fools talk, let us hear their folly, that for the future we may be aware of them and condemn them to the silence of private life. If wise men speak, let us have every word, 'for the lips of the wise dispense knowledge.' LET OUR PUBLIC LIFE BE THOROUGHLY PUBLIC, THEN WILL HONEST MEN RESOICE, AND JOHNNES AND KNAVES SHUN THE LIGHT THAT SUITS NOT THE CHARACTER OF THEIR DEEDS."—*Birmingham Daily Press*—"FIRST WORDS."

WALSALL:
J. R. ROBINSON, THE BRIDGE.
1856.



J. S. ROBINSON, PRINTER, THE BRIDGE, WALSALL.

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ERRATA.

- PAGE 20—Line three from the bottom, for “£20,000,” read £17,286 6s. 6d., and in line following, for “£500,” read £2,000.—vide “Account of money expended in the rebuilding of Walsall Parish Church,” in *Additional Notes* at the end of the volume.
- .. 24—Line two, for “thirty marks,” read *thirteen marks*.
- .. 30—Line ten from the bottom, for “Beyford,” read *Brayford*.
- .. 36—Line thirteen from the bottom, for “1773,” read, 1733.
- .. 42—Last line, for “10s. 6d.,” read *7s. 6d.*
- .. 46—In note, for “William Harris,” read *J. R. Robinson*.
- .. 56—Line four from the bottom, for “1847,” read 1845.
- .. 61—Amongst the officers to the Union, should have been included:—
Messes. F. P. Palmer, D. S. Moore, G. H. Whimper, and
H. W. Hare, Surgeons.
- .. 76—Line ten, for “is now vested in the vicar of Walsall, though the inhabitants formerly claimed the advowson,” read *is now claimed by the vicar of Walsall, as well as the inhabitants, who have frequently exercised the advowson.*
- .. 89—Line thirteen, for “Charles Stewart,” read *Charles Stuart*.
- .. 97—Line six for “1060,” read 1660.
- .. 161—Line ten from the bottom, for “were invested,” read *was invested*, and in line twelve, for “were now lying,” read *was now lying*.

PREFACE.

Accuracy of detail and boldness in the assertion of truth, marking diligently what is just or unjust, wise or rash, honorable or ignoble, philanthropic or uncharitable, liberal or despotic; and above all, steering clear of flattery and prejudice—are (it will freely be admitted) the most essential qualifications of a historian. Such, then, are the principles on which the author has endeavoured (however unskillfully) to rear the structure of his present work. Is it necessary to add more? Probably so, for—

. . . . "Sometimes,—when unknown folk surround you,
To whom you are unknown, 'tis fair to mention
Your claims to worth, that they may not confound you
With vulgar men, but show you due attention."

Besides, the remark may naturally arise, "assertion is no proof;" a few reasons, therefore, by way of attestation, may be deemed not only excusable, but necessary, especially when it is borne in mind that the individual who assumes the important (though perhaps thankless) task of surveying, reporting, and canvassing, local affairs, is comparatively a stranger to the town and people of which, and whom, he treats; a fact withal which gives him rather an advantage than otherwise over a native, inasmuch as he is more certain to scan surrounding objects with an unprejudiced eye, and portray them with the same unbiassed feeling as the painter would transfer them to canvass.

The original intention was merely to give an accurate report of the recent "Inquiry into the public charities," which occupied the attention of Thomas Hare, Esq., the Government

Inspector, for five days, and was attended throughout by the author of these pages, who each day furnished a condensed report of the proceedings for the columns of a local paper.

Encouraged by the solicitations and assurances of several friends, the writer resolved on offering a more extended report in the form of a pamphlet, but it was afterwards suggested that a sketch of the "History and Antiquities of Walsall" should be appended, and accordingly an announcement to that effect was issued; on more mature consideration, however, it was found expedient not only to render the *Historical division* as comprehensive as possible, but also to bestow upon it the most prominent place, in order that the true nature and position of the "Charities" might be better understood.

With regard to the "*Ancient History and Public Charities of Walsall*" no pains have been spared to acquire the most authentic information, old records have been ferreted from their dusty hiding places, and the best authorities extant have been carefully consulted and compared. For many of those important auxiliaries the author is indebted to the Mayor (F. B. Oerton, Esq.,) and Samuel Wilkinson, jun., Esq., the Town Clerk, to whom he takes this opportunity of tendering his acknowledgments, as well as to other gentlemen, from whom were received the like favours.

Few can form an adequate conception of the drudgery attendant on reducing to a little world of order, the somewhat chaotic mass of abundant and valuable elements, necessary to the construction of a work like the present, and to make, when reduced, such additions and deductions as would render them fertile in beneficial results. It is to be hoped, therefore, that those who criticise will in "justice remember mercy;" and as the author is not vain enough to lay claim to "infallibility," he humbly trusts that the "will may be taken for the deed;" and any slight errors into which he may have unconsciously fallen, may be counterbalanced by the recollection, that he has

throughout the undertaking been influenced only by a desire to contribute a mite to the public weal, and however he may have failed in the attempt, he has at all events done his best.

The modern division comprises *a survey of Walsall in the present day*. Places of Worship, Public Institutions, and all "matters of local interest" (have during a tour of inspection) been sketched with caution, and tinted with delicacy, due attention having been paid to the proper adjustment of light and shade, and care having been taken neither to exaggerate, extenuate, or "set aught down in malice," but to present with Pre-Raphaelite minuteness things not as they appear, but as they really are; the intention being to hand down to posterity as faithful a picture as possible, of a locality where the author has received many kindnesses and passed many happy days; and in which, next to "his own his native land," viz., "poor ould Ireland," he feels the liveliest interest.

The *Inquiry into the Charities* was conducted in a colloquial fashion, seldom confined to any particular charity: witnesses were examined so as to suit their own convenience, and the proceedings altogether were of so discursive a character, that without the privilege of reference to the Inspector's notes, (of which the writer was enabled to avail himself), it would have been a matter of considerable difficulty—in fact, an impossibility—to place before the public a faithful and intelligible report of the important facts elicited. In answer to some remarks made on this peculiar mode of procedure, the Inspector replied, that the nature of the inquiry rendered such a course inevitable. Be that as it may, the author feels that he would be guilty of great injustice, were he not to acknowledge the courteous manner in which that gentleman rendered him every possible assistance, in acquiring a correct knowledge of the proceedings, not only by allowing access to his notes, but also by his willingness at all times to answer any question, or clear