

**THE HULL LETTERS, PRINTED FROM A
COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL
DOCUMENTS FOUND AMONG THE
BOROUGH ARCHIVES IN THE TOWN
HALL, HULL, 1884, DURING THE
PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF INDEXING**

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The Hull letters, printed from a collection of original documents found among the borough archives in the town hall, Hull, 1884, during the progress of the work of indexing by T. Tindall Wildridge

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T. TINDALL WILDRIDGE

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A COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS FOUND AMONG
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SELECTED AND EDITED BY

T. TINDALL WILDRIDGE.

PERIOD :
THE REIGN OF CHARLES I. UNTIL HIS IMPRISONMENT,
1625—1646.

*"The sway of the Protestant Religion and the decisive
influence of the country on its own government—these were
the objects which revolutionary England had pursued."*
—Guizot.

PUBLISHED BY PERMISSION AND AUTHORITY OF THE MAYOR
AND CORPORATION.

HULL: WILDRIDGE AND COMPANY

Respectfully Dedicated

AS A MEMORIAL

OF THE WORK OF ARRANGING AND INDEXING THE

Series of Town's Records,

INSTITUTED BY THEM IN THE YEAR 1884.

TO

ALBERT KAYE ROLLIT, Esq., LL.D.,

MAYOR OF KINGSTON-UPON-HULL;

TO

JOHN LEAK, Esq., ALDERMAN, (CHAIRMAN OF THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE).

AND TO

THE MEMBERS OF THE HULL TOWN COUNCIL.

P R E F A C E.

UP to 1884, the Records of the Borough of Kingston-upon Hull were in the state in which too many of our local muniment collections have been and are—one of chaotic confusion, caused, for Hull, by the vast quantity of the materials comprised, which rendered any cursory efforts powerless to remedy the disorder. In the above year the very unsatisfactory state of the records engaged the serious attention of the then Mayor, Mr. Alderman Rollit, LL.D. (now Sir Albert K. Rollit, M.P.) and the Chairman of the Property Committee, Mr. Alderman Leak, the present Mayor, and, at their instance, I entered into an agreement with the Corporation to arrange and index the collection. This is not the place to enter into the details of that work; suffice it to say that nearly two hundred hundredweights of papers have been, after thorough critical examination of every leaf, condemned as devoid of the slightest use or interest, and the remainder—a far greater bulk—put into as much order as the time permitted.

By this means, it was discovered that the almost incredible confusion had preserved—as well as obscured—one of the most valuable and complete collection of Borough Records in the Kingdom.

Among these was a large number of soiled, crushed rolls of folio sheets, as well as very many loose, which, when dried, cleaned, and pressed, revealed a series of several thousand letters and other papers, extending from the reign of Henry VIII. to the present century.

From these have been selected the matter of the following pages, which are here presented as a memorial of the inauguration of a work which may, locally, be considered one of the most important of its time.

DECEMBER, 1886.

T. T. W.

Not by either the past alone, or the present alone, can we gain true views of Life—yet the knowledge of what Was and what Is, combined, though it cannot enable us to pierce the veil which screens from us futurity, may give us some judgment of the nature of things, a clue to the scenes which are preparing for us behind the curtain, and rays of light upon that highest object of sympathetic human contemplation—the destinies of a people. ;

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

A WRITER in the *Athenaeum*, in 1878, remarks that English literature is growing so fast that it is idle to try to rescue from obscurity that which deserves to be forgotten. We can well agree that such efforts are not only idle but blame-worthy. The question is: What deserves to be forgotten and what remembered? Much that is antediluvian is excellent, while much that is printed to-day is worth no more than to light a fire to dry the mould off an old tome. The caustic sentence of the above-quoted writer, however, suggests a train of ideas not devoid of use in entering upon the consideration of the collection of letters here presented.

As from the beginning of this century the fugitive publications of the hour have well-nigh swamped the performances of earlier literature, so have the sub-divided and stratified politics of this age engrossed the general attention, and made us loth to bestow a thought upon the volcanic throes of the political past. Yet just as a disposition to "try back" to the study of the works of great departed authors is commendable, so also may be considered any attempt to keep alive the spirit of modern inquiry and interest in momentous periods of our national history.

The comparison between neglected literature and forgotten history is not in this case without aptness. The great authority for the transactions of Civil War times is Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, written at and about the time of the actual occurrences,—from observation, from the original documents

which bore to and fro the passions of the strife, and from notes prepared for the specific purposes of that History, by, among others, the King himself. What wonder, then, at the tone and colour of the history! Clarendon saw everything through purple spectacles. What a curious phase of feeling, too, must that have been which prompted men to carefully edit an elaborate and favourable account of their own proceedings while engaged in a protracted struggle for very life. None of the contemporary accounts on the other side are at all parallel with this work.

Had there been such a one, it would have contained the expressions, the opinions, and statements to be seen—among other matter—in the following pages, and should the numerous vindications of the Parliament and its leaders ever be condensed into a full and circumstantial account with reflections and animadversions after the manner of Clarendon,* these letters would afford a well of information. In the meantime, it is something to render them available.

It is now too late to pretend to alter or much enlarge the outlines of the history of the nation for the period here concerned. It is sufficient to attempt to fill up—or allow the Past to do so itself—a little detail of the picture, and, perhaps, even to render more distinct some greater feature. Whatever part of the information here offered is to be met elsewhere in other forms, it is, for the general reader, a good thing to have the corroborating testimony of these contemporary voices speaking from the dust; while for the localist is a rich treat in the mass of national matter focussed upon a Yorkshire town. If the Civil War was a great historic drama, then this is to some small extent a "book of words," not reputed, but actually spoken. It is hard to get at the character of a dumb man. Tongues were the first weapons of the Civil War.

In brief terms let us state the case of the nation at the commencement of the Stuart period. It was suffering from

* Guizot can probably never be removed from his eminence by any subsequent attempt.