

## 6. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY : THE SECOND AND THIRD DECADES.

During the second decade of the seventeenth century there were no very serious outbreaks of epidemic disease, but several parishes were affected to a lesser extent. This sickness was confined to the north of the county, with the exception of the parish of Aughton, near Ormskirk, where the death-rates for the years 1613, 1615 and 1616 were well above the average. February, March and April of 1611/12 were sickly ones in Cartmel, and in the same three months, and May, 27 people of the parish of Dalton-in-Furness died, where ordinarily there would have been only about 5. Both 1612 and 1613 were bad years in the parish of Hawkshead, where, although the average number of deaths per year was only 38, there were 61 in 1612 and 65 in 1613. In 1611 there were 34 deaths in Clitheroe, where there were usually only about 19.

April, 1613, must have been a distressing month in Stalmine. In that small chapelry 11 people died in the one month, where normally there were only about 20 deaths in a whole year. Cartmel was again affected in the early months of 1614/15—in the four months January to April there were 51 deaths, as compared with a usual 18 or 19.

An interesting note appears in the register of Whittington parish. It reads :

“ From the six daye of December 1616 unto the iijth day of November 1617 next ensuinge it pleased God to visit this parish of Whittington with a dangerous disease or contagious sicknes within which time and space afforsaid there was sicke in this said parish about twoe hundred in which tyme there deceased as followeth.”

Then follow the names and dates of death of 29 persons. In the same December of 1616 the pestilence returned to Dalton-in-Furness, but there it remained only until May,

1617. During those six months, however, 53 people died, as compared with a normal of about 10. The following April there was a recurrence, but this time it lasted only three months, slaying 30 people.

From 1618 until 1622 the county was more or less free from sickness, the only exceptions being North Meols, in which parish grew up Southport, which had an enlarged death-roll in 1619, there being 25 deaths where normally there would have been about 10; and Ashton-under-Lyne, where, during the six months from September, 1621, there were 105 deaths, the normal for a similar period being about 36.

From 1622 to 1624 was the time of a very virulent and widespread epidemic of "a malignant spotted fever." The whole country was afflicted, no district, whether rural or urban, being entirely free. There is little doubt that this pestilence was not plague but typhus, a disease due to insanitary conditions and carried to human beings by head- and body-lice. It is very infectious and contagious. In later times typhus was known as gaol-fever and hospital-fever—the foul conditions of those places, where human beings were herded together under conditions worse than the most horrible of pig-styes, making them veritable breeding-grounds of the typhus germ. In these days, with our comparatively perfect sanitary systems, typhus is extinct in the more civilized countries. This disease must not be confused with typhoid-fever, which, unfortunately, still troubles us from time to time.

A pestilential fever broke out in Scotland in 1622, following a severe famine; but the outbreak in England cannot be connected with any scarcity. Contemporaneous records, as well as not making any direct reference to famine, do not even show any price changes which would be indicative of shortage. Whatever the ultimate origin of the disease, it was very severe and few parts of Lancashire were unaffected. The only parishes and chapelries

which do seem to have been free from the disease are Padiham, Brindle, Melling (Lonsdale), Eccleston (Chorley), Colne and Newchurch (Culcheth).

The first appearance was at Preston in September, 1622, and it took its toll of the parishioners until March, 1623/4. During those nineteen months there were 216 deaths as compared with a normal of about 70 for a similar period. Preston became the centre from which the disease was disseminated throughout the county.

From a study of the parish registers it is possible to trace its path with a reasonable degree of accuracy. In a few cases it is not quite clear as to the precise route taken, owing to the registers of some parishes being incomplete. The following account of the spread of typhus in the years 1622 to 1624 must therefore merely be taken as an approximately correct interpretation of the succession of rises of mortality indicated in such of the parish registers as are available. In order to simplify matters, the number of deaths in each parish will be placed in brackets, together with the average number for a similar period under normal circumstances. The latter is, of course, always the second and smaller number.

From Preston the next parishes to be affected were North Meols, Standish, and Urswick, in November, 1622. It would seem possible that the infection in the latter place was more connected with the Scottish famine plague than with the typhus, as there are no connecting links between Preston and Urswick, and intervening parishes were not affected until later. The period of infection at Urswick lasted until February, 1623/4 (70 : 24); at Standish until the same month (96 : 48); and at North Meols until January, 1623/4 (29 : 13).

The next month, December, 1622, saw the disease spreading rapidly, eleven parishes being infected. These were Manchester, Blackburn, Rochdale, Poulton-le-Fylde, Warrington, Leigh, Warton, Hawkshead, Caton, Cocker-

ham and Chipping. At Manchester the scourge continued until April, 1624 (776 : 340) ; at Blackburn until May, 1624 (568 : 90)—in the single month of December, 1623, there were 63 deaths ; at Rochdale until April, 1624 (633 : 250) ; at Poulton-le-Fylde until February, 1623/4 (262 : 100) ; at Warrington until April, 1624 (257 : 85) ; at Leigh until July, 1623 (93 : 40) ; at Warton until February, 1623/4 (87 : 30) ; at Hawkshead until December, 1623 (111 : 40) ; at Caton until April, 1623 (23 : 5) ; at Cockerham until March, 1623/4 (317 : 80) ; and at Chipping until April, 1624 (192 : 40).

In January, 1622/3, the infection seized upon the parishes of Garstang, Whittington, Cartmel, Croston and Ribchester. At Garstang the registers have a hiatus from March, 1622/3, until after the period with which we are now concerned. During those three months, however, 41 deaths were registered, as compared with about 12 normally. The Croston registers also broke off while the disease was prevalent—during the two months January and February there were 24 deaths where in happier times there would have been about 10. At Whittington the infection lasted until February, 1623/4 (31 : 12) ; at Cartmel until May, 1624 (310 : 68) ; and at Ribchester until March, 1623/4 (225 : 60).

Pennington in Furness (31 : 8) was the only place to become infected in February, 1622/3, and there the disease lingered until the following February.

The next month, March, brought the scourge to two other northern parishes—Halton, where it continued until February, 1623/4 (29 : 8) ; and Coniston, where it stayed for the same period (14 : 5).

Three parishes were affected in the next month, April, 1623. These were Ormskirk, Aughton and Stalmine, in the first two of which the period of infection was until March, 1623/4 (176 : 90) and (46 : 16) ; but in Stalmine the exact duration of infection is not known. Up to

September there were 11 deaths and then there is a hiatus until June, 1624. An interesting but not too exact note by the parish clerk, who was struck by the disease but fortunately recovered, reads, "there was buried the tyme that I were sick fortie and above or thereabout at the parochiall Church at Stallmin within the yeare above written." Thus there were at least 51 deaths in Stalmine, where normally there would be about 20.

In May, 1623, the parishes of Bolton-le-Moors, Woodplumpton, Penwortham and Dalton-in-Furness became affected. At Bolton the disease was very severe, for until the May following there were 491 deaths, as compared with a usual 95. At Dalton-in-Furness it lasted until February, 1623/4 (172 : 35); at Woodplumpton until January, 1623/4 (96 : 70); and at Penwortham until February, 1623/4 (94 : 50).

The next month, June, brought the scourge to Lancaster, Altham and Eccles. At the first-named it continued until February, 1623/4 (232 : 100), and the same length of time at Altham (55 : 13); while at Eccles it remained a month longer (157 : 60).

Five parishes became infected in July, 1623—Ashton-under-Lyne, Wigan, Chorley, Burnley and Prestwich. It is curious that Wigan was affected so late, as Standish had the disease seven months earlier; however, having arrived it stayed until the following May (261 : 60). At Ashton-under-Lyne it continued until March, 1623/4 (155 : 45); at Chorley until February, 1623/4 (38 : 12); at Burnley until December, 1623 (88 : 48); and at Prestwich until January, 1623/4 (80 : 28).

The single parish of Middleton became infected in August, and between that month and April, 1624, 181 deaths occurred. Usually there would have been about 50 over a similar period.

In September, 1623, the disease broke out in Tatham, Walton-le-Dale and Bury. At this last it continued until

the following May (223 : 99) ; while at Walton-le-Dale it lasted until March, 1623/4 (38 : 12) ; and at Tatham until January, 1623/4 (16 : 3).

Four parishes became infected in the October—Kirkham, Radcliffe, Didsbury, and Prescott. In the first, 159 people died in the six months until March, 1623/4, where under ordinary circumstances there would have been only about 30 deaths in the same period. In the December alone 61 people died. At Radcliffe the disease lasted until February, 1623/4 (27 : 8) ; at Didsbury until the same month (35 : 12) ; and at Prescott until June, 1624 (146 : 72).

In November, only one parish was affected, Oldham. In the four months to February, 1623/4, there were 83 deaths, as compared with a normal of about 10. Unfortunately from February there is a large gap in the register, so it is not possible to know when the infection disappeared.

The next month, December, also saw only one parish infected. This was Walton-on-the-Hill, where in the four months to March there were 44 deaths where normally there would have been about 15. The neighbouring parish of Sefton suffered badly in 1623, for although the average was only about 36, in this particular year there were 75 deaths.

After this no fresh outbreak occurred, and the infection gradually died away, finally disappearing in June, 1624, at Bury. During the period in which it raged it slew three times as many people in Lancashire as would have died had there been no epidemic in the county.

Things were just settling down after the typhus-stricken years when the plague proper broke out in the southern counties in the summer of 1625. James I had just died and his son Charles came to the throne. His reign opened under the political cloud raised by his marriage to Henrietta Maria, and then, as if to add to the unsettlement of

affairs, the old enemy appeared. It was freely said that the coming of the pestilence was in the nature of divine wrath.

Although the outbreak was in the south, the northern parts of the kingdom were in mortal terror of its spreading to them, and various means, the chief of which was a rigorous keeping of watch and ward, were used as a prevention. The Privy Council took the matter in hand, and addressed the following letter to the Archbishop of York on 5 August. It was sent from Oxford, to which place government had been removed owing to the severity of the plague in London :

“ The lamentable informacions which wee dayly receive of the great spreading of the contagion of the plague through the kingdome, do contynually sollicite us to thinke of all possible meanes for prevencion of the same. And finding that the frequent assembling of the people in places infected doth so much the more disperse the infeccion, wee by the King's commandment have thought fitt to pray and require yor Lordshipp to take order, within yor Province of Yorke, that the several Bishoppes doe give charge within their Diocese, and doe signifie to their church wardens that in such parishes which are, or shall fall out to bee, infected, during the tyme that the infeccion shall last, they doe abstaine from assembling together in the churches for celebration of the Fast, lately proclaimed by his Majestys authoritye, but that they doe cause those of the parishes infected to be exhorted to observe the said Fast and other devotions accompanying the same privately in their houses. And that the churchwardens be further carefull, in the publicke assemblies which shalbe made for the said Fast in the parishes clear from infeccion, not to admitt any [persons] of the parishes infected to their said publick assemblies, which might else prove a likely meanes to pass the contagion to the places which yet remain cleare.”

This letter was twelve days on its way to York, and three days after receiving it the Archbishop wrote the following letter to the Bishop of Chester, in whose diocese the greater part of Lancashire then was :

“ I send yor lordship hereinclosed the copie of a lettre which I lately received from the llords and others of his Majestys most honorable privie counsell : according to the contents whereof I

praie and require yor lordship to give officiall charge within yor Diocese, that the severall churchwardens in each parish be verie circumspect to performe the direccions therein mencioned : whereby not only his Majestys princely law, but their llordships' most provident regarde for the welfare and safetie of this realme maie be duly and dutifully observed as appertaineth."

Presumably the Bishop acted on the instructions from above. In Wigan, of which parish he was both rector and lord of the manor, he instructed the mayor that the townspeople were not to allow any stranger to remain in the town unless prepared to swear on oath that he had not been in any infected place within a fortnight and was free from infection himself. These instructions would be rigorously enforced, as the neighbouring parish of Leigh was infected, there being 125 deaths during 1625, the normal being 55. The Bishop also ordered that a place was to be provided outside the town for such to spend the night as were simply passing through Wigan in the course of their journey ; and another place as a pest-house for lodging any who were infected. Some ale-house in the upper part of Wigan Lane was selected at which to deliver travellers' food in exchange for their money, when they came from London.

Things did not quite work out as my Lord Bishop wished, and he must have been very annoyed when beggars and others left the road when entering the town and, making their way over the fields, hung about his very gates. In order to remedy this he made the mayor appoint a watchman at the entrance to his estate to drive the vagrants away. Men were appointed as searchers after the bodies of the dying, with a weekly wage.

All this cost money, and to pay for it the Bishop ordered that a rate be levied throughout the parish by the overseers of the poor, charging them to spend the proceeds only on uses concerned with the plague. As a further measure he asked for a list of alehouse-keepers who were

fit to keep their houses open—the others were closed down. He even went to the extent of having the inn-signs taken down, so as to discourage travellers from staying in the town.

In September, it was learnt that

“ the infection is now in Mary Bibby’s house, two of her children have died of it and a third hath the sore now running on him ; yet her sister and two of her children are escaped out and wander the country, and one Grimshaw (who is to marry her) hath also gone out of that house and is lodged in Haigh, so it is now uncertain what places in the parish are free from infection.”

This actual breaking-out of plague led the Bishop into telling the churchwardens that no one was to be buried in the church during the visitation. However, by good fortune and the strong measures, the plague did not spread in Wigan, and soon the normal business of the town was in full swing again.

Wigan was not the only town in Lancashire which was fearful of the pestilence stretching its tentacles from the south country. In October, 1625, the Court Leet of Manchester ordered that watch and ward be very strictly kept. They even went to the extent of hiring twelve assistants to the constables in these terms :

“ The Jurye of this present Leete duellie consideringe the great perell of theis contagious tymes, and the fearefull miseries whereunto the poore inhabitants of this towne are like to be exposed if Almighty god doe send the plague of pestilence amongst us, is earnestlie desireinge (if it bee gods good will) to prevent the first, or to the latter, by good order, to give some ease (if god doe soe afflict us), have thought fitt to nominate, and doe hereby order and apoint theis twelve persons whose names are hereunder written to be aydinge and assistant to the constables.”

In order to pay the wages of these men, a tax was levied upon the town. Their duties were, at least once a week to enquire at every house for particulars of any who might be lodging there. If anybody were found who “ may bee perillous or noysome unto this town,” the

constables were to be informed, and steps would then be taken to have the offenders removed. In addition, the householder who sheltered the offender could be imprisoned or his house shut up, or if the occasion warranted the matter could be taken before the Assizes or a justice of the peace.

Their fear was very great, and they went to great lengths in order to make sure that the town remained free. The son of a certain William Scholes contracted some disease from which he eventually died. The exact cause of his death will never be known, but it must have been something which, if not plague itself, at least bore some resemblance to it; for we find that the constables paid 17s. 4d. to Scholes "in recompence of his paynes taken in buryinge off his sonne and towards the loss off the clothes which weare buryed with him."

Another payment made by the constables at this time is significant of the extreme care taken to prevent the importation of plague. On 19 October they paid 6d. to a messenger who was sent to certify against "infectious goods in xii packes newlie come from London, and tho it were night they were put out of the towne." The continued fear of plague's being carried from one place to another by means of merchandise must have had a very deleterious effect on the general internal trade of the country.

The following presentment at the Court Leet of Prescott (June, 1626) shows that at that place also every effort was made to prevent an outbreak of plague

"Wee presente John Rainforth in the sicknesse tyme for inconvenient companie beinge harbored in his howse, and I was forced to take the watch and carrie them fourth of the towne with manie evell words and abuse."

All these precautionary measures were effective—there was no extensive occurrence of plague in Lancashire, and

the county remained free until 1629, in which year there were 105 deaths in the parish of Leigh—nearly twice the normal number.

In the winter of 1630 it came again, and gradually increased in severity until the summer of 1631, when it raged in several centres with exceptional violence. The mortality in Preston was enormous, approximately one-third of the people succumbing. This was much worse than the famous "Great Plague" of 1665 in London, in which about 69,000 died out of an estimated population of 460,000. Granted that thousands fled from London; but they were mainly the well-to-do, and their number could hardly have exceeded a quarter of the total. Even with this adjustment the death-rate in Preston was considerably higher than that of London—but literature is silent about it.

#### 7. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: THE FOURTH DECADE.

November, 1630, saw the commencement of the pestilence in Preston, the parish registers stating that "heare begineth the Visitation of Almighty God, the plague." For some months it progressed slowly, reached its climax in July and August, 1631, and died away suddenly. Its results can perhaps best be shown in tabular form. The average number of deaths per month about this time was about six:

November .. 6	April .. 62	September .. 80
December .. 15	May .. 58	October .. 14
January .. 29	June .. 92	November .. 13
February .. 39	July .. 328	December .. 6
March .. 54	August .. 279	

In November, 1631, it is laconically recorded in the registers that the "Plague ceased."

At the end of December, 1630, Alexander Rigby of

Middleton Hall, Goosnargh, wrote a letter to his brother George, who was Clerk of the Peace of the County of Lancaster. The letter is addressed from Preston, where the family was in residence, having, like most of the gentry of the surrounding district, a town house there. He states that in the past five or six weeks about twenty deaths had occurred, that three houses were shut up, and that the disease was a very infectious one "which our tradesmen will not call the plague." Poor deluded traders; the plague was not to be fought by refusing to recognize it, for fear of spoiling the market. Perhaps if they had not persisted in shutting their eyes to the grim presence the final death-roll would not have been so appallingly long.

Rigby, while hoping that there would be no great danger, intended to send his children away for safety, but he is greatly to be admired for the sentiment which prompted him to write, "I am loath to remove rashly, because I would not wrong the towne by my example," for the general policy of the time was *sauve qui peut*, to get away as quickly as possible. Eventually, however, things got so bad that it was suicidal to remain. The letter concludes: "It is to noe purpose for you to speake of removeing the Sessions till the next weeke, and then it will not be any use that you come, or send, over for that purpose to the Justices about the midle or latter end of the week." The January Sessions were held at Preston, but it became necessary, as will be shown later, for the April and July meetings to be adjourned to Blackburn and Kirkham respectively.

Things got worse, and although a pest-house was provided and many houses were shut up, the pestilence spread. At the Spring Assizes at Lancaster an order was issued for raising £60 weekly over the whole county towards the relief of the town. Distributors were appointed, and the first payments, some 1372, including

63 in the pest-house, and amounting to £45 1s. 5d., were made. [See Appendix B.]

This order was ratified at the April Quarter Sessions held at Lancaster on the 18th, Blackburn on the 20th, Ormskirk on the 25th, and Manchester on the 28th, at which latter place the Justices also ordered that in the event of any inhabitant of Salford Hundred refusing to pay, distraint should be effected on his goods. At the Ormskirk meeting it was further ordered that

“the petty Constables wythin the hundreds of [West] Derby and Leyland shall carefully sett and duely keepe watche and warde within their severall townships for restraint of wanderers and suspected persons during the tyme of this dangerous infeccion now spred in the cuntry, and if any constable shall bee found remyst herein, or that watch and ward bee not Dilligently kept, then the fyne of xx<sup>s</sup> now imposed shall bee levied by the high Constable of the same hundred of his goods.”

And at the Manchester meeting there was a further order to the effect that

“in respect of the great and apparent danger which the cuntrey is now exposed unto, that the constables within every Towne and hamell within this hundred shall appoint watch and ward to bee carefully sett and kept . . . and shall give notice and warning unto every inhabitant housholder within their Townes and hamells to watch and ward accordingly, and that every Housholder shall watch and ward in their owne person unlesse they shall bee allowed by some Justice of peace . . . to provide and hyre some fitt and able person to serve . . . in their steeds. And if either the constable bee negligent in appointing the same watch and ward to bee kept, or that any person so appointed . . . , doe neglect his dutye and doe not carefully watch and restraine wandering pedlers and other suspected persons for staying, remaineing, or wandring up and downe their townships then . . . they . . . shall be bound to answer their contempts . . . , and if any person or persons suspected shall refuse to give satisfaccion . . . whether from whence they came or whether they have beene of late tyme before in any place infected or suspected to bee infected, and will not bee pleased to bee conveyed through the same towne without any stay or abroad, then the same persons shall be bound as afforesaid.”

The Preston Sessions had been adjourned to Blackburn because of the risk of infection, as the following letter, dated 18 April, from Edward Veale of Whinnyheyes, Layton, to the Clerk of the Peace, shows :

“ I perceave by an Order at the last Assizes Mr. Radcliffe Ashton and myself are (together with Mr. Undersheriffe and you) to meete upon Wednesday next within the libertyes of Preston, and then to adiourn the Sessions from Preston to Blakeburne ; for the effecting of which service with best expedicion I have sent a messenger to you this day, desiringe you to certifye by him certainly in what place and at what houre wee shall performe this dutye, and (god willing) I will not faile to observe both, but if Mr. Ashton bee not as fully mynded to observe time and place as myself, I feare it may happen to bee an impedement to the service. I pray you therefore ether take the paines to bee with mee at my house tomorrow at night, and soe wee shall goe together the next morning to meete Mr. Ashton ; or else let me receive from you by this bearer certaine notice where, and at what houre of the day, wee shall meete, which (for the safety of us all in this tyme of perill and woeful daunger) I hope you have appointed to bee in some remote place from the towne, whereunto the libertyes doe extend.”

On 21 June, the Judges of Assize wrote to the Justices of the Peace in Blackburn hundred as follows :

“ Whereas we are informed that the town of Preston continueth still dangerously infected with the sickness, to the great impoverishment of the town . . . and whereas the town did consist most of tradesmen and handycraftsmen that had no carriages, and therefore always had fuel brought in the summer time to the town, which now they want, nor cannot be suffered to be fetched by themselves into the said town, and which in the winter time cannot be well brought into the town ; we therefore think fit, and do pray and require you, that you take order that some of the next Justices of the peace to the said town do take course that sufficient fuel may be brought to some convenient place nearest to the said town, where they may buy the same, as likewise they may have provision of victuals brought to some convenient place near the town whither they may resort to buy the same.”

On 25 June, the constables of Manchester heard rumours that the infection had spread to Warrington, so, in order to be certain, they sent a messenger to make enquiries. Nothing further is known of plague in Warrington at this time. On the same day, Thomas Covell wrote from Lancaster, saying that "the sicknes is dispersed in dyvers places in Furneis, which will make the Sessions small."

This letter from Thomas Covell shows how the plague was upsetting Quarter Sessions arrangements :

"I have received your lettere, and for answere thereunto theis are to noetify you that Mr. Alexander Rigby affirmed verie confidently that he wold not sit the sessions accordinge to the sumons alrede come forth, since when I sent to Mr. Parker, whome is soe farr from sittinge that day, that he voweth (but in regard of the love he beareth to me) he wold have us all in the Star chamber for keepinge the sessions the last yeare contrary to our othe. What resollution Mr. Kirkby is of I know not, but I thincke he will not want to sit on the fourthe of July. I conceive this wold be yor saffest way, to make a new *venire fac.* for the sessions to be kept at Lancaster the xvij<sup>th</sup> of July and at Kirkham the xx<sup>th</sup> of the same, which will be after you have donne both at Ormeskirke and Manchester. And to save yor labor in comeinge on Monday next, for I verily thincke you will have noe companie neither of Justices nor countrie people."

Covell's suggestion was acted upon—the Lancaster meeting called for the fourth of July was postponed until the 18th, but the meeting at Kirkham was held one day later—on the 21st.

On 4 July, a special session was held at Brindle, and its findings ratified at the Ormskirk Sessions a week later :

"Whereas Rich., Lord Viscount Molyneux, Sir Charles Gerrard, Knight, and Gregory Turner, Clerke, in respect of a certyficat of the 4th day of this Instant July under the hands of Sir Gilbt. Houghton, knight and Baronett, Sir Rauffe Ashton, Baronett, Rich. Shuttleworth, and Thomas Standish, esqrs. and divers other Justices of peace, at a privat sess. of the peace holden at Brindle, that notwithstanding the weekly payment of 60<sup>l</sup> to contynue upon this Countye for releeffe of the Distressed estate

of the infected within the towne of Preston, that the said Infeccion hath broken out into many and divers townes within the severall hundreds of Blackburne, Amoundernes, and Leyland, which are soe fearfully visited that unlesse some speedy releeffe bee hadd it is most apparent such neglect will endanger the whole county, for prevencion whereof they have already given way and allowed and taxed the severall Townes within this hundred of [West] Derby in severall somes of money in a scedule or list under their hands. The which taxacion and sessment this Cort hath duly considered of and the maior voyces of the justices here present for and in regard of the great necessitye and apparent danger of the same places infected, doe ratyfy and confirme the same."

The spreading of plague into Blackburn hundred is illustrated by the following writ sent on 7 July by the Bishop of Chester to the "constables and others of the parishes of Bolton and Blackburn and all places between Bolton and Huntcoate":

"Whereas Henrie Towneley hath discontinued to dwell at Bolton and inhabited the parish of Church, in or near places infected by the plague, and hath sent his wife and children wandering and begging in the country, who have in these dangerous times laid in the highways about Bolton, and it is suspected that they are infected with the plague, these are to command you that you convey them forthwith to the town of Huntcoat, where they have lived all or the most part of this year, and that the inhabitants of the said town permit and cause them to stay there, that they wander not abroad to the endangering or affrighting of the country."

The general unrest in the county showed itself in several ways, not least by disturbances in the alehouses, resulting in control of them by the justices, as is shown by the following orders made on 11 July at Ormskirk and 14 July at Manchester, respectively:

"Forasmuch as the cuntry is now exposed unto great danger by reason of the disposicion of the sicknes into parts of this country and that there is for the most part the greatest disorder in alehouses, now upon due consideracion thereof it is thought fitt and ordered that Richard Aughton, Laurence Rymer, Richard Ball, and Peter Rymer, beeing alehouseskeepers lycenced and

inhabiting within the parishe of Northmeales, are allowed to contynue their alehouseskeeping during the tyme of their good order and Rule."

"Yt is ordered by this Cort in respect of the present and apparent danger the cuntry is now exposed unto by reason of the disposition of the sicknes in sundry parts of this county and other partes not farr remote, of that as well the severall persons within the hundred of Salford beeing of the trayned band, as all others beeing under the degree of esqrs which the constable of the Township or hamell wherein they shalbee resident or inhabiting shall appoint to watch and ward, and shall watch and ward in their owne persons according to the same direccion and appointment duly and carefully, and if eyther the constables bee deficient and careless in appointing watch and ward, or that the persons soe appointed doe deny to watch and ward or bee negligent in keeping and contynuing their watch and ward during the same tyme; or if any alehouseskeeper shall manteyne, keepe, or permit, any publicke assemblyes to consort together for drinking, dancing, pyping, fiddleing, bowling, diceing, carding, shooting, or any other such exercises in their houses, or any other places within their government; or if any person beeing warned to forbear to resort to such publicke assemblyes, or use any the games or exercises afforesaid shall the second tyme frequent the same during the tyme of visitacion . . . the delinquents to answer their contemptes before the Judges of Assyses."

On 14 July, the first of many deaths in Kirkham parish occurred, a note in the register stating that "the First that dyed in Kirkham of the sicknes was the wiffe of Tho : Watson." In July there were 17 deaths, in August 92, in September 96, in October 34, and in November 15. Thereafter, the monthly rate was normal, although in the *Records of the Thirty-men of Kirkham* the following occurs :

"This was a great plague year in Kirkham, in which the more part of the people died thereof. It began about the 25th of July and continued vehemently till Martinmas but was not clear of it before Lent."

There are other entries in the Thirty-men's records which refer to the plague in Kirkham parish, but unfortunately precise dates are not given :

“ Paid to the Constable of Treales for the relief of such as were shut up for fear of the sickness.”

“ Gatherings were made thro’ the parish for the relief of the poor and more was paid to those shut up at Treales.”

“ Spent at Kirkham the 1st Sunday after the Sickness, 2/3d.”

“ Paid for perfuming the Church 30/-.” [This was an attempt at disinfection.]

“ Paid for carrying of the Rushes out of the Church in the sickness time 5/-.”

“ Paid William Tomlinson for Registering the names in the sickness time 3/4.”

The keeping of watch and ward was the subject of disagreement in some composite townships, as is shown by the following orders made at the Lancaster Quarter Sessions on 19 July and 3 October respectively :

“ It is ordered by this Cort that diligent watch and ward shalbee sett and kept within the townships of Halton and Aughton, and that the Inhabitants within Halton Green and Park Houses shall keepe theire watch in Halton, and th’inhabitants of Aughton, Sydgarth, and Highfeild shall keepe their watch within Aughton.”

“ It is ordered by this Court that in respecte of these dangerous tymes the inhabitants within Over Kellet shall keepe theire watche and ward within Over Kellet, and that the inhabitants of Caponwray shall keepe theire watch and ward within Caponwray, upon payne that every inhabitant within either of the same places denying to keepe watch and ward according to this order shall forfeit xx<sup>s</sup>, and the constables not appointeing watch and ward to bee sett and kept accordingly shall forfeit xl<sup>s</sup>, the same forfeitures to bee leyved and disposed of to and for the use of the poore.”

As was suggested in Thomas Covell’s letter of 25 June, Furness was badly stricken by the plague, and at the Lancaster Sessions of 19 July, steps were taken to provide relief :

“ Forasmuch as it hath pleased almighty god to visit the Towne of Dalton and the hamell of Broughton with the plague, by reason whereof the marketts and comerce with others are restrayned and the number of the poore there are greatly increased, and unless course be taken is likely to bee very Dangerous to the country. In respect whereof this Court doth order that the weekely paye

of six pounds shalbee given and allowed weekly for and towarde the manteynance and releeffe of the persons infected and poore within Dalton, to bee taxed, rated, gathered, and collected in form following: that th'inhabitants within Dalton parishe dwelling and resident upon the south syde of Creake shall pay the some of twelve pounds towards their releeffe and manteynance for the space of one moneth, to Comence and begin in and upon the first day of August next, and that the Inhabitants of the North syde of Creake, together with the resydue of Cartmell and Forness (except the said hamell of Broughton which is to manteyne and releeffe their own poore upon and to their owne charge) shall pay the some of xij<sup>l</sup> towards the releeffe of the said poore within Dalton for the same tyme and space, and the same taxacion to bee contynued, rated, and taxed, as Roger Kirkbye shall thinke meetest and necessarye. And it is further ordered that the highe Constables shall collect and levy the said severall somes and shall make speedy payment thereof to the said Mr. Kirkby, and that the said Mr. Kirkby would bee pleased to take paines and care in Disposing and Distributing thereof according to his Discrecion."

Between 17 July, 1631, and 5 March, 1631/2, there are no burial entries in the Dalton parish register, but the following note tells the story:

"In this moneth of July 1631 did the plague begin in Dalton and Bigger. There died in Dalton of this sicknes Three hundred and three score and in Wa[l]ney one hundred and twenty: it ceased about Easter followeinge."

The Preston Sessions which had been adjourned to Kirkham were duly held there on 21 July, and among the small amount of business done was an order tightening up the collection of money for relief:

"Yt is ordered by this Cort that yf any constables, greaves, or barlawmen within the hundreds of Amoundernes and Blackburne that either have any moneys in his hands for releeffe of the poore people and infected persons doo not forthwyth make payment thereof, or shall not make payment of any other moneys hereafter to bee gathered for the same use and purpose, at the same tyme and place to bee appointed by these precepts, that then upon Complaint . . . the Delinquents . . . to bee imprisoned until they shall make payment thereof."

The accounts of the Constables of Manchester show that precautions were being taken, for on 24 July, £1 was "paid and given to them the said Fornace, Allen, [and eight others] to cause them to retorne whence they came because they were Suspected to have been in some Infected place."

In a letter addressed from Middleton Hall, Goosnargh, on 29 July, Alexander Rigby states that

"the sicknes in these partes increaseth much and disperseth ; it is now in Fulwood, Cadeley, and Broughton, and in Kirkham, so that the inhabitants and bordering neighbours leave their howses and seeke and resort to forrein places. I pray God preserve us and stay his hand in his good tyme. If it should spread further I purpose, God willing, to send my children into Cheshire."

A letter of 1 August shows that Ellel, although between two great areas of infection, was at that time free from plague.

By this time the authorities in London were becoming aware of the state of things in Lancashire, and the orders referred to in this letter of 15 August from Thomas Barton of Smithills, were made :

"I have receaved notice that there are some instruccions come downe from his majestie for restrayninge of travellers and orderinge of the people at home for the better prevencion of the infeccion of the plague ; in which I understand that the Justices of peace maye appoint and nominate such sufficient men in everie towne and village for the furtherance thereof ; as to them shall seeme meete ; yf theis instruccions are with you, I pray you send me notice for I would send my man to take copies ; but however I desire you doe send mee the names of all the cunstables in the severall villages of Deane parish, and I pray you send mee word what twoo men in every of the Hultons you thinke meetest for this service."

On 22 August Sir Gilbert Hoghton, Ralph Assheton, Roger Nowell and John Starkie addressed the following to the justices of the peace :

“Takeinge into consideracion the distressed estate of the people yet living in the towne of Preston . . . wee thought good to certifie unto all you present what wee conceive thereof. According to the agreement at the last Assizes and other orders since, there hath been a continuacion of the allowance of £60 a week unto them, which has been paid by most hundrethes, yet in some places part is behinde, which they who solicit for the towne will make to appeare. Wee received accompts from Mr. Langton for 15 weekes, ending the xxij<sup>th</sup> of July last, which wee have caused to bee perfectly cast upp and examined, by which wee are (for our partes) satisfied that there hath beene reall and faire carriage in the business, by employing of honest and careful men as distributors, by the competency of the sommes given, and by the plainenes and particularitie of the accomptes [see Appendix B]; nor can we judge, in reason, that time of the weekly allowance could hitherto have been spared. For the further continuance of their allowance wee shall humblie submit yt to the judges and yourselves, with declaracion unto you how wee conceive the present estate of the town to stand. By a perfect survey sent us by the maior, subscribed and explained by himself, yt appeareth there was living, the xvj<sup>th</sup> of this month within the towne, 887 persons, whereof, weekly relieved 756, not relieved 131. The unrelieved, or most of them, wee heare (and doe believe yt) cannot longe subsiste by their private stores, but will shortly become needers also. Their winter’s fuell is whollie unprovided, and all those that live their needs still increase. What in the beginninge would have served well, will now doe them little good, all their owne helps being gone. What tax shalbee laide will fall as heavie on us as others; yet their miseries are enough by the plague: yt were pittie famine should also distroy them. Soe wee leave them to Godes mercie, and, for their reliefe, to your better judgement.”

The following is the “perfect survey sent us by the maior”:

“ August 16th, 1631	The number of persons	
In the Fishergate and Markett place whiche have releifes		78
which have noe releifes		25
In the Churchgate relieved		245
which have noe releife		27
In the Fryergate relieved		180
which have noe releife		79

In the pesthouses and houses shutt upp	253
Summa Totalis of them which have releife	756
of them with no reliefe	131
Total of all	887

WILLIAM PRESTON, Maior."

This was accompanied by a letter from the Clerk of the Peace. He writes :

" I have perused and examined the accounts of the distribution of the moneys levied in the county for the relief of the infected and poor people of Preston. I find that in the 15 weeks from the 16th of April there hath been distributed £856.5.5. The receipts I find to be £812, and so more distributed than received by £44.5.5. The rates given to every person weekly are uncertain, viz., to some 8d, to some 9d, 10d, 11d and 12d, I suppose as their needs were, but now of late few have had less than 12d."

He concludes significantly that he does not " purpose to receive any more books till God make it less dangerous."

The reference to famine is supported by an entry in the diary of the Reverend Edward Burghall, of Acton in Cheshire. He states that the plague in Preston " so raged that the town was depopulated and corn rotted upon the ground for want of reapers." The sum of £53 was gathered in Chester for the relief of Preston and other places stricken with the plague.

On 16 September, Alexander Rigby wrote another letter from Middleton Hall, to the effect that

" the sicknes doeth not (God be prayed) increase behind Garstange. The last week their dyed eighteen in Preston [the registers record 22] : this week I know not how many [24 are in the registers]. Kirkham continueth infected, and some parts of Woodplumpton. Our parish (God be prayed) is, for anything I know, free from the plague."

The registers of Woodplumpton show 8 deaths in August, 24 in September, 10 in October, and 9 in November.

That the plague at this time was not confined to Lancashire is made clear by the fact that Viscount Wentworth, Lord President of the North, informed Secretary Dor-

chester on 22 September that Lancashire and Lincolnshire "being miserably distressed with the pestilence, within these six weeks the infection is cum'd into divers parts of co. York."

The plague continued to affect the business of the Quarter Sessions, for on 3 October Edward Veale wrote to the Clerk of the Peace from Whinnyheyes, Layton :

"The miserable distresse of this pore Fylde is now soe greate, by reason of the fearfull infection, so dangerously dispersed in divers places amongst us, that I conceive it were greate indiscretion to admit ether the cunstable or partyes bound by recognizances (inhabiting within these partes) to appeare at the Sessions to bee houlden at Blakeburne [to which place the Preston Sessions had been adjourned] upon Wednesday next, and soe much I suppose my good neighbour and frend Mr. Rigby [of Layton Hall] will impart unto you that day at Lancaster. My humble desire therefore to the bench at Blakeburne is, that they would bee pleased that those recognizances which are taken and delivered into your hands by Mr. Rigby and myself ioyntly, or by myself only, may bee continued untill the Sessions after the Epiphany next, without preiudice to the partyes that are bound, and withall both Mr. Rigby and myself doe desire that our cunstable there of the Fylde may not be fyned for being absent at this tyme from Blakeburne, because the times are dangerous. I thinke they would hardly bee admitted into the towne if they should come."

Mr. Veale certainly read matters aright. When the townspeople of Blackburn learnt that the Sessions had been adjourned to their town from Preston they were much annoyed, and put their collective foot down, with the result that the Clerk of the Peace received the following letter from Richard Lawe, Giles Bolton, George Tomlinson, Ellis Edge and James Cowper :

"Wee, and divers others of our towne, resorted to Sir Raphe Assheton, and some other of our neighbouring Justices of peace, and enformed them that the infeccion of the plague is lately much broken out and scattered aboute us, as in Eggeshill, Lyvesay, Walton, Clayton-super-Moras, Altham, and other places besides,

the same fearful contageon spred in soe many parts in Amondernes Hundred: Whereupon, and upon consideracion of God's late mercifull deliverance of our towne, wee desired the Justices to give us leave to keepe out of our towne all persons whom we know not to come from free places, and that the Sessions might not hold; which they agreed unto, as in reason we thought they had cause. Therefore, to prevent your travel, we thought good to give you this advertisement, assuringe ourselves there will not two Justices come, and thoughte you may come your selfe, yet we purpose to keepe out all or moste of the common people."

The following letter from John Osbaldeston to Thomas Walmsley, and written sometime in 1631, casts further light on the plague in the Blackburn area:

"It lies not in my power to constrain my neighbouring adjoining towns, much less the rest of the parish of Blackburn, to pay the contributions for the town of Clayton-super-Moras. Their principal reason is because the town of Over Darwen is infected and restrained from church and market, and moved to have some contribution for the relief of their poor which was at least 300 and more, and was utterly denied to receive any contribution at all."

There is no record in the Quarter Sessions material of a tax for Clayton-le-Moors—perhaps the collection was unofficial.

In the early autumn the township of Chorley became badly infected and on 10 October the Justices at the Wigan Sessions issued the following Order:

"Forasmuch as it appeareth to this Cort that the Justices of peace resident within Leyland hundred, upon the eight[h] day of September last past, by order under their hands did order and allow the some of xx<sup>l</sup> to bee collected within the hundred of Leyland, except the Townshipp of Chorley, then and as yett infected with the plague, for one moneth next following, which order this Cort doth approve of. And now upon Informacion given to this Cort that the contagion of the sicknes within Chorley is very Ferefull and is dispersed into many parts of the same Townshipp, and that persons of sufficient meanes to manteyne themselves and their famely and to give allowance to others, cannot have their Corne ground nor sundry other necessaryes

provided for their releeffe. In regard of their misery and extremity this Cort doth order that an other taxacion of xx<sup>l</sup> shall bee collected and gathered within the residue of the said hundred (the same Townshipp of Chorly only excepted) and to bee payed over by them to Rauffe Lever, Alexander Liptrot, and John Parker, or any two of them, to bee by them disposed of and distributed among of the poore and infected persons within Chorley for one moneth now next following. If eyther the constables of the severall Townshippes or any of them, or any inhabitant doe not forthwyth make payment, or that the high constables of the same hundred doe not presently send forth their precepts and collect the same and make present payment thereof as aforesaid, then . . . warrants of good behaviour shalbee awarded against the delinquentes."

There is a note in the Chorley parish register to the effect that the plague began on 1 June. In that month there were 11 deaths, in July 21, in August 25, in September 25, in October 22, in November 10 and in December 6. Although these figures do not seem very large, they contrast greatly with the average of seventeen in a year.

Steps were taken to safeguard the township of Blackrod, only four miles from Chorley, and the scheme received the support of the Manchester bench on 13 October :

"Whereas Lawrence Worthington, Nicholas Turner, George Vause, gentlemen, all of Blackrode, were by the lord bishopp of Chester intrusted, requested, and appointed, to bee assistantes to the Justices of peace in taking care for the Townshipp of Blackrode in these tymes of Danger, according to the order and course that William Leigh, bachelor in divynity, and Edward Wrightington, esqre, did take and appoint within the parishe of Standishe. Now this Cort, conceaveing the same to have taken some good effect, doth nominate and appointe the said gentlemen to persever in the same in regard the same Towne is farr remote from any Justice of peace within this hundred of Salford, and yf any Inhabitant within the same Towne shalbee refractorye to such their, or any two of their, direccions and appointments as may in anywyse tend for the safty and good of the same town, or that the Constables bee negligent and disobedient to their appointmentes and shall neglect, delay, or refuse to goe about and

execute their office for prevention of ensuing danger, then . . . a warrant of good behaviour shall be awarded against the delinquents."

Although Hollingworth tells us that only the inhabitants of one inn were plague-stricken at this time in Manchester, the following order made at the October Sessions in that town shows that the situation was rather worse than he would have us believe :

" The order made by Sir Cecill Trafford, knight, Rauffe Ashton, Roger Downes, Edmund Ashton, Leonard Asshawe, Edmund Hopwood, and John Bradshawe, esquiers, for taxacion of th' inhabitantes within Manchester and Townes and places within Fyve myles of Manchester, for releeffe of the infected and poore people within Manchester, is by this Cort approved of, Ratified and confirmed according to the statute in that case provided. And further it is ordered that those townes and places as were thereby ordered to pay towards their releeffe, and have not as yett made payment thereof, shall upon notice hereof make payment presently of the severall somes of money soe arrere for one moneth, unto John Gilliam, gentlemen, high constable, and if any of th'inhabitantes within the said Townes and places shall refuse to pay his taxacion, or doe rescowe the Constable for levying of the same, then upon Complaint made . . . warrantes of good behaviour shalbee awarded against all . . . soe making default."

In Chester £43 was collected for the relief of Manchester. The Constables' accounts show several payments for infected people :

- " 15th Oct. Received of Robertt Taylor of Ouldham by an order from the Bench towards the mayntenance of his wiffe att the cabbins £3.6.8
- 20th Oct. Paid John Kempe for provision for Diet for the people at Collihurst and for watch and warde for 2 men day and night to wit 21, 22, 23 October the som of £1.1.0
- 26th Oct. Paid John Kempe which hee Disbursed for strawe and other necessaries for people at Collihurst £1.10.3
- 27th Oct. Received of Mr. Jo: Gilliam for mone[y] which

was resting in his hands of the Taxe for the sicknes  
£5.16.5 \*

Received of the mysgatherers, and by ourselves,  
out of the 1st laye, which was by order of the bench  
for the releefe and watchinge of those att Cabbins as  
appeareth £21.11.11

29th Oct. Paid John Kempe for meate and drinke for v  
persons at Collihurst for 7 dayes to wit from 24 till  
31 Octob[er] 4s 2d day is £1.9.2"

There are many other entries of a similar nature, the  
last being in January, 1631/2. On 30 December this  
entry occurs: "paid William Shelmerdyne to pay 10  
labourers for makinge a Cave in Meriot's midding to  
burn the hay 4/2." This is the Meriot referred to by  
Hollingworth:

"The Lord sent his destroying Angell into an Inn in Man-  
chester, in which died Richard Meriot and his wife, Master and  
Dame of the House, and all that were in it, or entered into it for  
certain weeks, till at last they burned or buried all the goods in  
the house, and yet God in the midst of His judgment did remember  
mercy, for no person else was touched that year with the  
infection."

These deaths are shown in the Manchester Parish  
register:

" Buried 11th August	:	Richard Meriot, dyed of plague.
" 13th "	:	Grace, wife of Richard Meriot, dyed of plague.
" 29th "	:	Robert Meriot, dyed of plague.
" 29th "	:	George Scotsonne, suspected to dye of the plague.
" 13th September	:	John Heaton, dyed of the plague with dressinge the howse."

With the coming of Christmas, the plague abated some-  
what, and the county was left to recover itself. At  
Westleigh, now Leigh, however, it was hanging on, with  
the following order made at the Wigan Sessions on  
16 January as a result:

“ This Cort doth intreat John Atherton, esqre, that hee would take paines in appointing some convenient course to bee taken for the releeffe of the poore and infected persons within Westleigh, and for the Clencing and dressing of Dunsters house there infected with the plague.”

And echoes of this were still coming on 8 October, 1632, when the following order was made at the Wigan Sessions :

“ Whereas Henry Smyth, late constable of Westleigh, did the last yere disburse certen moneys out of his owne purse for and towards the clencing of certen housing infected with the plague within the said Towneshipp, and was to have received the same againe from the inhabitantes of the said towne according to a taxacion thereof made, now for that divers of the inhabitantes of Westleigh doe refuse to repay to the said Henry Smyth the somes severally taxed upon them, amounting in all to the some of xij<sup>s</sup> vj<sup>d</sup>, yt is therefore ordered by this Cort that if upon notice hereof any of the said Inhabitantes shalbee delinquent . . . then Mr. Atherton is intreated . . . to grant his warrant to distreyne the goods of such person or persons soe making default.”

Although the plague was wearing itself out, there were still the needy to be provided for, infected houses had to be cleaned, and the closed markets had to be re-opened. The following orders at the several Sessions deal with these matters :

Lancaster, 9 January, 1631/2 : “ Whereas the Towne of Dalton hath bene this longe tyme infected with the plague, and now of late itt hath pleased almighty god to withdrawe his visiting hand, yet notwithstanding there remains both many poore persons in the same Towne, and the charge of clencing and dressing the same Towne wilbee greate, and the inhabitants thereof all together are unable to disburshe and beare the burden thereof, yt is nowe ordered that th'inhabitants within Dalton parishe resident and dwelling upon the south syde of Creake shall pay the some of twelve poundes, and the inhabitantes of the North syde of Creake and the residue of Cartmell and Fournes, except Broughton, shall pay the some of twentye foure poundes, which said severall somes shalbee presently collected by William Knype, gentleman, high constable there, and payed over to Roger Kirkbye esqre,

before the XXth day of this instant Januarye, to bee by him payed and disbursed for releeffe of the same poore, and for and about the clensing and dressing of the houses within the same Towne of Dalton."

Also :

" Upon deliberate and due consideracion of a letter sent and directed to us and others the Justices of peace att the severall sessions of the peace now ensueing to bee holden for this Countye, By the mayor, Aldermen, Vicar, Baylyffes, Church Wardens, and others within the Towne of Preston, that there hath not any dyed of the plague or any other sicknes within Preston for the space of seaven weekes last past and upwardes, And this Cort likewise beeing informed by Mr. Rushton Hodgkinson and Mr. Edmund Wearden that there hath bene very great care and paines taken to clense, purify, and dresse the same Towne, This Cort doth thinke itt fitt that the Faires and markettes bee hereafter sett open and kept within the same Towne of Preston, provyded that this present order doe not in any wyse repugne any former order made concerneing the same."

The latter order was ratified and confirmed by the Justices at Blackburn on 11 January, Wigan on the 16th and Manchester on the 19th. The following order also was made at Manchester :

" Forasmuch as it appeareth to this Cort that by and with th' assent and consent of the greatest part of th'inhabitanτες within Manchester, and by the privyty and assent of the jurye of the last Cort leet there holden, the some of xxij<sup>l</sup> xij<sup>s</sup> xj<sup>d</sup> was taxed, rated, proporcioned, and sessed to bee collected and gathered within the said towne of Manchester for and towardses the manteynance and releeffe of the persons infected and suspected to bee infected with the plague, and for the charge of keeping watch and ward about them in the Cabyns, which order and taxacion this Cort doth approve of, ratyfyfe, confirme, and allowe, and thereupon itt is ordered that if any person or persons taxed and sessed within the same taxacion shall upon demaund thereof deny and refuse to pay his said taxe, then . . . warrantes of good behaviour shalbee awarded against the delinquentes."

At the end of January, the survivors were withdrawn from the cabins at Collyhurst, and were kept in a pest-

house in the town for a period. The Constables paid 8s. to "Mr. Robert Langlye for the Rent of the house for those that came from the Cabbins."

The following interesting document is undated but must be referred to the late autumn of 1631 :

"Instrucions for Mr. Roger Kenion of the estaite of the Towne of Preston.

1. first beeing most Miserable afflicted under the great hand of Almighty god for on[e] whole yeare.
2. next having beene releved by a taxe from the Countrie of some 3d, others 2d, and Most by three half pence [per] day, consistinge of poore handie crafts men, whose meanes is now whollie spent in releavinge them selfs and families from fam[ish]inge.
3. the Countrie not Continuinge the[i]r accustomed kynds, nor the mark[et]s restored hath caused the able and well mynded Burgeses yet inhabitinge to impoverish them selves for releving of there neybor.
4. the Countrie beinge att a infinite charge, the plauge beinge dispersed in most parts of the Countie.
5. A petition to his Majestie or the lords of the Council for a breeve within London for o[u]r better meanes, it beinge mouch dessired of many of o[u]r well wis[h]inge frends in London."

The proposed petition does not appear to have been presented, probably because the infection died away ; but a petition presented shortly afterwards to the Privy Council by the local company of drapers, mercers, grocers, salters, etc., illustrates the effect which the pestilence had had on the trade of the town :

"Your petitioners at the present doe consist of very neere 80 poore persons which doe bear Scott and Lott with their neighbours . . . But nowe so it is that the said Burrough having beene visited with the plague and pestilence, which infeccion continued amongst them for a whole yeare, and thereby your petitioners and others of the surviveing inhabitants for that time were altogether barred from the exercise of their trades, and so are become very much impoverished and weakened in their estates, and divers persons boarding to the said Towne, taking advantage

of that woeful tyme, do take upon them to exercise and employ themselves to your petitioners' several trades, having never served any apprenticeships to the said trades and misteries . . . to the general impoverishment and discountenancing of the inhabitants of the borough which since the late visitation amongst them . . . lost a great part of their former trading and their marketts are become smaller."

Parenthetically, it is illustrative of the paucity of borough records in Preston that the following is the only reference to the plague of 1631 :

"Sexto et Septimo Caroli R. The great Sicknes of the Plague of Pestilence wherein the number of eleven hundred persons and upwardes dyed within this Towne and parish of Preston begunn about the tenth day of November in Anno 1630 and continued the space of one whole yeare next after. William Preston gentleman Maior."

The parish of Penwortham, adjacent to Preston, also was seriously affected. There were usually about 30 deaths in a year, but in 1631 there were 5 in May, 10 in June, 15 in July, 20 in August, 34 in September, 24 in October, 14 in November and 9 in December.

Thus the intensive outbreaks of plague of the year 1631 faded away, but several minor occurrences took place during the next few years.

The plague of 1631 had an ill effect on the Commission which had been sent to assess the gentry of Lancashire for obligatory knighthood. Meetings had been held in several places in the hundreds of West Derby, Leyland, Salford, and Blackburn in September, but the hundreds of Amounderness and Lonsdale "being soe dangerously infected with the plague . . . the Commissioners durst not adventure to call any assemblyes of people together or at this tyme medle with the inhabitantes of those two hundredthes." It was not until March and April, 1631/2, that they were able to perform their duties there.

There was an outbreak in Rochdale, where there were

usually about 7 burials per month, in January, 1631/2, when 32 died. In February there were 25 burials, in March 18, April 17 and May 13. Then Garstang Churchtown became infected, with the result that at the Preston Sessions on 11 July, 1632, the following order was made :

“ Forasmuch as Kirkland within the Townshipp of Garstange is at this present infected with the plague, yt is therefore ordered that the parishe of Garstange shall from hencefurth keepe, releave, and manteyne, the poore people within there owne parishe, beeing about the number of a hundred att the least, and shall in regard thereof bee Freed and discharged from paying or contributing to St. Michaells parishe or any other towne or parishe infected, any former order or taxacion to the contrary notwithstanding, which taxacion is to bee sessed and taxed according to the forme of the statute in that case provided.”

When the Justices met at Ormskirk on 16 July, 1632, there was some trouble over the accounts for the relief of the recent infection of Chorley. The result was the following order :

“ Whereas this Cort is informed that Raph Lever of Chorley, and others apointed distributors of the moneys given by order within Leyland hundred for the releeffe of the poore and infected persons within Chorley, have disbursed out of their purces the some of viij<sup>l</sup> and upwardes amongst the poore there more than they have alreadye receaved, and that there is remaineing asyett unaccompted for by the late highconstables of Leyland hundred the some of viij<sup>l</sup> xvj<sup>s</sup> or thereaboutes, part of the xx<sup>l</sup> last granted for their releeffe. Yt is now ordered in respect the late highconstables have not made their accomptes before Thomas Standish, esqr, and William Leigh, bachelor in divinity, according to the order of the last Sessions here, that as well the said highconstables as any other of the constables of the same hundred as shalbee found delinquent and doe not furthwith pay those moneys as shall appeare before the said Thomas Standishe as they bee charged with, unto the said Raph Lever, shall bee comitted . . . to his majesties gaole att Lancaster.”

In the autumn of 1632 there came a call for help from Ulverston, so the bench at Lancaster made this order on 1 October :

“ Forasmuch as this Corte is informed that there nowe is in the Towne of Ulverston two hundred fortye pore persons and upwards that are to have contribucion and manteynance, and that there are divers others that are likelie to become chargeable to the Cuntrye by reason of the infeccion lingering longe amongst them, and for that this Corte is informed that the parishe of Ulverston is not able to manteyne and releeve them nor the next adiacent parishe without the aide and assistance of the cuntrye. Ytt is therefore ordered that the some of Thirtye pounds shalbee furtherwith taxed, sessed, Rated, and colected, throughout the whole hundred of Loynsdale by the now high constable of the same hundred, and by them paid over unto Roger Kirkeby, esqr, whoe is intreated by this Corte to nominate and apoint distributors of the same to bee by them paid, disposed of, and distributed, to and amongst the same pore of Ulverston for there present releeffe for these sixe next ensuing weekes.”

At the next Lancaster Sessions, on 7 January, 1632/3, a further order was made for the helping of Ulverston :

“ Whereas this Cort is informed that asyet the towne of Ulverston is suspected to bee infected with the plague, and that the poore people within the same have not had any allowance for the space of one moneth now last paste and are verye poore and not able to subsist without there bee allowance given them out of the Cuntrye. Yt is therefore ordered by this Cort, upon due consideration had, that the some of xxx<sup>1</sup> shalbee presentlye collected and gathered within the hundred of Loynsdale by the now high-constables of the same hundred, and by them payed over unto Roger Kirkbye, esqr, who is intreated by this Cort to apoint some fitt person to distribute and dispose of the same moneys to and amongst the same poor people, for and towards theire manteynance for the space of six whole weekes, to take comencement from the tenth of December last past.”

On 3 October, 1632, another order was made at the Preston Sessions which indicated that the plague was spreading in the parish of Garstang :

“ Yt is ordered by this Cort that th'inhabitantes within the parishe of Garstange shall, upon notice hereof, make provicion by way of taxacion for the manteynance, releeffe, and sustentacion, of all and every the Infected persons and poore people

within Garstange Churchtowne and the residue of the parishe of Garstange, and that they shall in respecte thereof bee Freed and discharged from any taxacion or sessment for any other place."

Evidently this money for Churchtown was slow in coming in, for the following order was issued by the bench at the Preston Quarter Sessions of 9 January, 1632/3 :

" Yt is ordered by this Cort that if any Constable within the hundred of Amoundernes doe not, upon notice hereof, pay unto Richard Blackburne of Skirton [Scorton], highconstable within the same hundred, all and everye such moneys as are imposed upon theire Townships towards the releeffe of the poore within Garstange churchtowne and asyett bee unpayed ; Then this Cort doth intreat Richard Shuttleworth, esqr, to send out his *mittimus* against everye of them soe makeing default, to send them to the gaole at Lancaster."

The registers of Blackburn parish indicate an outbreak in the winter of 1632/3. Although there were usually only about 6 deaths per month, in December there were 10, in January 17, in February 23, in March 29, in April 23, in May 18 and in June 12. The adjacent parish of Bolton-le-Moors also was stricken in the same December. There also there were usually about 6 deaths a month, but in December, 1632, there were 22, in January 20, in February 20, in March 26, in April 32, in May 21 and in June and July each 14.

An order from the Preston Sessions of 9 January, 1632/3, shows that the infection had spread from Churchtown into the nearby township of Out Rawcliffe :

" Yt is thought fitt and ordered by this Cort that the inhabitantes within Out Rawcliffe shall not pay any taxacion for and towards the manteynance of the poore within Garstange Churchtowne, but shall bee Freed of and from the same taxacion in respect of the same towne of Outrawcliffe hath been and is infected with the plague."

A slight outbreak occurred in Croston in 1633 when an average of 4 burials per month rose to 10 in November,

18 in December, 11 in January and 10 in February. Wigan's average of 12 burials a month rose to 25 in December, 1634, and 29 the following month; and then Rochdale suffered again in 1635, as shown in the following table, there usually being about 7 per month:

March ..	16	July ..	.. 33	October ..	36
April ..	17	August ..	45	November ..	28
May ..	21	September ..	36	December ..	18
June ..	36				

The nearby parish of Radcliffe had twice the usual number of deaths in the same year; and in Manchester the death-roll rose from 17 in September, 1635, through October with 37, to November with 87, and then descended through December with 51, January with 38, February with 28, March with 34, to 24 in April, 1636.

In the north of the county, in Cartmel parish, an outbreak occurred about Christmas, 1635. Usually there were 4 or 5 deaths per month, but in January, 1635/6, there were 14, in February 11, in March 27, in April 21, in May 12 and in June 13. With the coming of summer, it was generally feared that the county might be swept again by a serious visitation, so the Justices at the July Sessions at Preston on the 13th, Ormskirk on the 18th, and Manchester on the 21st, made the following order:

“ Ytt is ordered by this Corte that, in regard of the apparent dangers that the cuntry is now exposed unto is likely to bee most susteyned by permission of wanderers and forreine beggers to travell, have aboade, and wander begginge, in this cuntry, for the prevencion of the infeccion and other inconveniences very likely to ensue are much dreeded if some carefull course bee not taken therein presently, ytt is therefore . . . ordered that the Constables of every hamell or Towneshipp within these hundreds of Amoundernes, Blackburne, Leyland, [West] Derby, and Salford shall presently call together all or the most parte of the inhabitantes within their severall townshippes and then take course before the twenty-eighth day of this instant July, for the keepinge and hiringe of a beadle within every Townshipp to goe and walke

upp and downe for the takinge, restrayninge, and conveyinge away, of wanderers and forreine beggers, and that they shall likewise sett and see watch and ward to bee diligently kept within their severall Townshipps accordinge to lawe, and if any of the said Constables bee remisse and doe not performe this order, or that any inhabitante shall refuce or deny to beare their proportionable parte of the wages and stipend of the said beadles, or doe negligently keepe watch and ward, or obstinately refuce to doe the same, then the Fyne of ten poundes shalbee Imposed upon every one of the delinquentes, to bee estreated, levyed, and disposed of in and about the same purposes. And this Corte doth desire the Justices of peace in their severall divisions that they would bee aydinge and asistinge the said Constables, and that the high constables within the same hundreds would send forth copies of this order to the said petty constables."

The growing determination to prevent infection coming from outside the county, and the measures taken to ensure this, are well illustrated by the following order made by the Justices at Preston on 5 October, 1636 :

" Ytt is ordered by this Corte that the gr[e]aves of the Forrest of Pendle shall furthwith sett diligent watch and ward about the house of Nicholas Hargreaves, in respect the said Nicholas hath received and taken into his house a daughter of his lately come from London, who brought with her certen clothes packed upp in a bundell or truncke, much dreaded to bee infectious, and that the same bee carefully and diligently sett and kept aswell for the restraint of the said Nicholas Hargreaves and his famely as for the prevencon of others to have concurse or company with them or any of them, and that the same bee contynued untill such tyme as further direccions and order shalbee given to the contrary by Richard Shuttleworth, esqr, and John Starkye, esqr, or th'one of them."

In the winter of 1636/7, an outbreak occurred in the parish of Tatham, where, between December and February inclusive, there were 29 burials registered. In that wild parish there were usually only about 5 deaths in a whole year. The year 1636 was a bad one in the parish of Hawkshead, there being almost double the usual number of deaths.

On 20 July, 1637, a further preventive order was issued from the Manchester Sessions. It would seem that the effect of the plague on the trade of the town was the main thought :

“ Forasmuch as itt hath pleased almighty god to permitt and suffer sundry places in other cuntreys to bee infected with the contagious sicknes of the plague which is much dreeded and feared in respecte of the comerce and tradinge from those places and the partes neare there adioyning with the towne of Manchester, and for that itt is very good to foresee and labor to prevent with diligence and care an amynent danger threatened, This Corte . . . doth order and appointe watch and ward to bee exactly kept within Manchester and other places of the greatest trafique thereabouts, and doth appointe the constables of the same places to sett, direct, and appointe the persons housholders within there severall limitts to ward and as need shall require to watch in their owne persons or to find such fitt persons in their roomes as the constables . . . and . . . Justices of peace . . . shall allowe to serve in their steeds.”

In 1637 there was twice the usual number of deaths in the chapelry of Torver, in Furness ; and in the summer of 1638 Croston was again affected. Here there were usually about 5 deaths per month, but in that August there were 12 and in September 23. The usual number of deaths per year in the parish of Ormskirk was about 90, but in 1638 there were 120, in 1639 there were 124, and the same in 1640 ; while in the adjacent parish of Aughton a normal 16 was doubled in 1639, and the two succeeding years were also above the average.

#### 8. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY — THE FIFTH DECADE.

The story of the plague in the forties of the seventeenth century opens in 1641, when the danger of infection returned to Manchester, and the following order was made at the Sessions there on 14 October :

“ Upon due consideracion of the eminent danger that the cuntry is [in] and may bee exposed unto by reason of the Infeccion which is now dispersed in many parts of the Cuntry by suffering travellers and others to soiorne and lodge, comeing from suspicious and infected places ; This Corte doth thinke fitt and order that there shalbee watch and ward duely and carefully sett and kept by the constables of the severall towynes and hamells within this hundred of Salford, and that the same bee continued untill further direccion and order be given to the contrary. . . .”

In November the following items occur among the accounts of the constables of Manchester :

“ Item, paid Fr[ancis] Gorton and his partner for warding 3 dayes  
3/-  
paid Edw[ard] Rausthorne and his partner for warding  
7 dayes at Hyde Crosse 7/- ”

The keeping of watch and ward probably served its purpose just then, but a few months later the death-rate rose :

January .. 17	April .. 44	July .. 42
February .. 28	May .. 68	August .. 24
March .. 24	June .. 50	

The parish of Bolton-le-Moors also was affected in 1641/2 :

February .. 14	May .. 29	July .. 18
March .. 23	June .. 28	August .. 11
April .. 44		

Here the deaths from plague are marked “ pox.” This might be taken as evidence that the outbreak was of smallpox, but there are several points which make it unlikely. There is no record of smallpox being elsewhere in the district ; plague was in the nearby parish of Manchester ; and later outbreaks, in 1647 and 1655, also marked “ pox,” coincide with visitations of true plague in adjacent places.

Early in 1642, Wigan was slightly affected ; an average

of 12 burials per month rose to 30 in April, 33 in May, and 19 in June. Ormskirk also was infected in the same year, for there were 125 deaths, as compared with a normal of about 90. In 1644 there were 158 burials at Ormskirk.

The Rochdale register shows enhanced figures from July, 1643, to June, 1644; and at Preston, where there were usually about 70 burials a year, there were 101 in 1644. In the same year Aughton, near Ormskirk, had well above the normal number of deaths, and in the chapelry of Church, near Accrington, there were 36 burials, as compared with a normal of about 16.

The infection continued to hang about south-east Lancashire, and from April, 1644, until the winter of 1645, Manchester was plague-ridden. The following figures from the register show how the numbers of burials fluctuated, ending in a formidable manner:

March ..	18	November ..	38	June ..	135
April ..	33	December ..	28	July ..	173
May ..	28	January ..	18	August ..	308
June ..	36	February ..	24	September ..	269
July ..	35	March ..	20	October ..	111
August ..	48	April ..	24	November ..	51
September ..	36	May ..	61	December ..	23
October ..	20				

The notes in the registers are also significant:

Baptisms.	August, 1645—	“ There was no more [than one] christenings in this moneth by reason of the extremitie of the sicknesse.”
	September	“ The same reason is to bee given in respecte of this moneth.”
	October	“ The extremitie of the sicknes was the cause why baptisme was altogether deferred this whole moneth.”
Marriages.	September	“ There was not anie at all by reasonn of the sicknesse was soe greate.”

The Didsbury registers have the note "Pestilence in Manchester this yere." Adam Martindale, in his autobiography, tells us that a "public fast day was held at Blackley Chapel on behalf of the poor of Manchester."

There is little doubt that the stress and strife of the civil war were largely responsible for the years of plague which fell on the county between 1644 and 1657. During that period there were few years in which some part of the county was not stricken with greater or lesser degrees of severity. There do not appear to have been any sessions held in the years 1643, 1644 and 1645, so for those years we must rely on other sources for our information.

From an Ordinance of Parliament, dated 9 December, 1645, we learn that the plague raged in Manchester so violently that for many months none had been allowed to enter or leave the town, and that "most of the inhabitants living upon trade, are not only ruined in their estates, but many families are like to perish for want, who cannot sufficiently be relieved by that miserably wasted country." Collections were to be made in all the churches and chapels in London and Westminster, and the money thus raised was to be sent to John Hartley of Manchester, to be equally distributed among the poor inhabitants as should be agreed upon by the officers and chief persons of the town. The collections were made in London because of the divided state of Lancashire and the consequent uncertainty of collecting a tax such as was levied in times of peace.

There are a few items in the Manchester Constables' accounts which cast some light on the state of the town :

" 1645. July 11th.	Paid souldiers for goinge to Collihurst to reforme disorders there	3/-
	Paid Major Hea's charges at Collihurst	£3.4.11

1645. September 26th.	Paid to Doctor Smith for his charges to London and a free guifte	£4
	Paid Doctor Smith for parte of his wages for his service in the tyme of visitacion	£39
November 22nd.	Received from the Countie in the tyme of the visitacion for which wee have given an accompte to the Justices	£918
December 16th.	Paid Tho: Minshull for apothecarie stuffe for the towne's service	£6.2.6
February 14th.	Paid Roger Hadocke for gatheringe up the Counties money for our infected poore	£5.1.0
	Paid that was charged upon the towne in the visitacion	£39.9.3
February 25th.	Received of Mr. Smith, Phissition, for bottles and stuffe delivered him which was left after the sicknesse	£1.0.0

The payment to the soldiers is interesting in the light of the following extract from John Rosworm's *Good Service Hitherto Ill Rewarded* :

" For Major Ratcliffe and his Company having withdrawn, and quartered themselves without the works for fear of the plague, myself having onely 12 Musketteers, whose hearts stood fixed to run my hazard, the poor, many of whom were at the pest-houses without [i.e. at Collyhurst], and the rest within entered into a dangerous combination with about a dozen of the middle sort of men."

The making of collections gave opportunities of which men who were not quite honest were not slow to take

advantage. This is well illustrated by the following extract from the proceedings of the Portmoot of Salford :

“ Whereas there is informacion this day brought unto this Jurie by severall of the inhabitants of this Burrowe of Salford that Thomas Wooffenden and others of this Towne have received severall sumes of money from severall of the Inhabitants of the said Towne upon the retorne unto their owne habitations after the late tyme of visitacion of this Towne with the Pestilence (under the name of Mulct money). This Jurie therefore doth order that the said Thomas Wooffenden and all others shall restore and repay to every person so much money as they received of them severallie within the space of one moneth after this present Court.”

The sad state of Manchester was proclaimed by the Reverend Richard Hayrick, B.D., Warden of Manchester, when he preached before the House of Commons on 27 May, 1646. He likened the town to “ a widow desolate, the hand of God hath lately gone out against them, the only town untouched by the enemy, and the only town in all the country stroke of God.”

At the April Sessions at Ormskirk on the 13th and at Manchester on the 16th in 1646, orders were made stressing the need for the careful control of travellers. I will quote the Ormskirk order ; the Manchester one is similar, except that it refers to Salford hundred :

“ Ytt is ordered and required in these tymes of emynent danger, and for the end and endeavor to prevent the further overspreading of the contagion and infeccion of the plague, that the severall high constables within these hundreds of Derby and Leylond shall take speciall care to send out there preceipts and comand thereby all pettie constables within there severall Towneshippes for the staye, examinacion, and restraunte of all and everye suspicious or suspected persons travelling or passing by daye or night through the same Towneshipes, and them to bring before some Justice of peace or other officer to bee delt with all according to lawe.”

The plague broke out to the north-east of Manchester,

and at the Sessions held at that place on 23 July, 1646, the justices made this order :

“ Forasmuch as it hath pleased almighty god to visit divers houses and persons with the infeccion within Chatterton soe as it appeareth to this Cort that there are fiftye five persons of them asyett liveinge which want releeffe, and the towne of Chatterton hath beene and is overburden[ed] with them and keepinge of gards to looke unto them ; Now for the helpe of the Inhabitants of the same Towne and for the releeffe of the said poore infected persons ytt is ordered by this Cort that Mr. John Gilliam of Newton, treasurer of the moneys gathered within this County for the releefe of the poore infected persons within Manchester and the townes neare adioyning, haveing some moneys remaineing in his hands, Shall disburse and paye over unto the Constables of Chatterton such some and somes of money as the Justices of peace neare there aboutes, or anyone of them, shall order and appoint, soe as the same maybe disposed of and distributed unto and amongst the same infected persons, or any other that may happen hereafter to bee infected, according to there severall necessities and wants. And this Cort doth order and appoint that the Churchwardens and Overseers of the poore within the parishe of Ouldham . . . as often as they . . . shall bee there unto called upon, shall assist the said constables . . . in and aboute the providing for and garding of the said infected persons.”

In 1647, plague was raging in Cheshire, and the constables of Manchester paid the following :

“ July 21st.	Tho: Bradshawe for bringing George Bevinton backe to Midlewich who came before hee was thought free from danger	3/-
August 20th.	Paid for waches and wards scince Michaelmas for feare of Infeccion	14/6
	Paid 2 men for wachinge James Worthingington att Townse end when he came from Chester	1/- ”

And on the same date, 20 August, 1647, they paid a long overdue account :

“ Paid Roger Haydocke for monie oweinge him scince the sicknesse tyme for collecting Monies for Manchester

£1.4.6 ”

Earlier, in June, fear of the infection's spreading over the border from Cheshire entered the minds of the people of Liverpool. On the 12th, the corporation ordered "that strict wach shall be kept by the townsmen because of the rumour of sicknes to be begune in Warrington." The only record in the registers of Warrington is one single entry which states that on 4 July was buried "Mrs. Ann Neild that dyed of the plague." The number of burials registered is little above the normal.

Everything else apart, the town of Liverpool was in any but a settled state, being controlled by a large Parliamentary garrison. The corporation was hard put to keep the peace between the townsmen and the soldiers; and the coming of the fear of plague did not improve matters. On 29 June, a memorandum occurs in the *Town Books* to the effect that

"Concerning the distractions betwixt the Army, etc., and other particulars at this Assembly, whereunto answer was made that it is the desire of Mr. Mayor, etc., that in all things there may be free and fair compliance betwixt the townsmen and the Soldiers and for all business concerning the Militia and Soldierie, they refer all to the discretion of the Governor, and withal do hold it fit and order that the Townsmen from time to time according to Mr. Mayor's discretion shall join with the Soldiers in keeping watch, and that no Chester nor Warrington people nor their goods during the time of this infection shall be admitted to come into this Town."

In August an order was made by the Corporation that the townsmen and soldiers "shall watch every day their turn, upon warning to them given, in their own persons, and if any, being able, shall neglect or refuse to perform the same accordingly, they are to forfeit 5/- for every default, at the discretion of the Mayor." In September a collection was made in Liverpool for "raising of moneys for the poor of Warrington who have lately been visited with the sickness, in regard of an Order of the Justices at the Sheriff's board, for contribution through the Hundred of West Derby."

In the summer of 1647, Newton-in-Makerfield was stricken, and the following orders were made by the Justices at the Sessions held at Wigan on 11 October :

“ Forasmuch as . . . the Justices . . . did confirme the order . . . for Colleccion of the some of one hundred poundes within the hundred of [West] Derby for releeffe of the poore and infected persons within Newton . . . Now for that this Cort is informed that there is but the some of Forty two poundes payed thereof by the said High Constables unto James Fletcher, Willm : Dumbell, and Henry Houghton, and that they have already . . . disbursed for theire releeffe the some of 133<sup>1</sup>5<sup>s</sup>4<sup>d</sup>, and likely to disburse much more, yt is therefore ordered by this Cort that the said High constables shall furthwith . . . collect and gather and make undelayed payment of the remainder of the said some of one hundred poundes unto the said James Fletcher and his partners.”

“ Forasmuch as it appeareth to this Cort, upon affidavit made, that there is disbursed . . . for and about the releeffe of the poore and infected persons within Newton, over and besides the some of 100<sup>l</sup> formerly Imposed upon the hundred of [West] Derby, the some of thirty three poundes and odd money, and that as yett there remaines sixe persons in the cabins there and are duly attended by watch and must have releeffe, therefore it is ordered by this Cort that the some of Fyfty poundes more shalbee furthwith . . . layed and collected within the same hundred.”

The registers of Bolton and Rochdale suggest that these towns were infected to some extent. In the latter, where there were usually about 12 deaths per month, there were 16 in May, 1647, 26 each in June and July, 32 in August, 26 in September, 20 in October, 28 in November, and 24 in December ; while in Bolton, with usually about 8 per month, there were 13 in December, 1647, 34 in January, 29 in February, and 17 in March.

On 29 December, 1647, Sir Thomas Stanley and Sir Gilbert Ireland sent “ to all and every the Constables within the parishe of Walton [on-the-Hill], and especially to the Constables of West Darby,” the following :

“ Forasmuch as wee are informed that your Towne of West Darbie is visited with the grievous Plauge and Pestilence : These

are therefore to charge and comand you forthwith upon receipt hereof to set sufficient watch and guard about such howses and places as is suspected to bee visitted with that visitacion afore-said, and also to Levy and gather such sumes of money within your Townshipp as may bee requisitt for the reliefe of such as are under visitacion and not able of themselves to subsist without reliefe, and also untill further direccions."

This document is endorsed :

" This warrant hath bin Received and viewed by the maior of Liverpoole and by him allowed. Received by the Constables of Everton the first of Januarye and sent it to Kirkedale. Received by the constables of Kirkedall the second daie of Januarie and Delivered to the constables of Bootle cum Lineker. Received by the Constables of Bootle cum Linaker and delivered to the constables of Walton. Received by the constables of Walton cum Fazakerley the second day of January. Received by the cunstables of Kerckbie the 3<sup>th</sup> of Januarie and sent to Formbie."

This evidently did not satisfy the people of West Derby township, for they returned the warrant with the note :

" Our demand and desire in Derby is for one whole fiteene to bee gathered through the whole parish and speedilie paid to the cunstables of Wes[t] Derby towards the relieff of the poore people shutt upp for suspicion of the sicknes according to the warrant above written, and lykewise that you would forthwith paie to the Cunstables of Derby two partes of the Charges for the maintenance and keeping of one of Sir Thomas Fairfax's Troopers and his horse since the troopers came to bee quartered within this parish."

It is signed by William Dwarrihouse, Robert Mercer, William Ryding and William Smith, and accompanied by a note that " Theis somes hereunder written for the visitacion yett unpaid : Ker[k]dall vj<sup>s</sup> iij<sup>d</sup>, Formbie xvj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup>, Leverpool for the visitacion j<sup>l</sup> xiiij<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup>." There is no record of the " whole fiteene " having been collected, but on the document is a note in the writing of the Clerk of the Peace to the effect that " those that are behind shall pay or bee distreaned."

In a *Civil War Tract*, under the date of 24 March, 1649, the following occurs :

“ A true representation of the present sad and lamentable condition of the County of Lancaster, and particularly of the towns of Wigan, Ashton, and the parts adjacent. In this county hath the plague of pestilence been ranging these 3 years and upwards, occasioned chiefly by the wars. . . . But particularly the townes of Wigan with the neighbouring parts, lying at present under the sore stroke of God in the pestilence, in one whereof are full 2000 poor who, for three months and upwards have been restrained, no relief to be had for them in the ordinary course of law, there being none at present to act as Justices of the Peace.”

This passage by no means exaggerates the situation in Lancashire in the years 1647-9, except the last few words which are manifestly incorrect, as Quarter Sessions were held quite regularly, as will be shown.

The Liverpool *Town Books* record that in April, 1648, “ the third Portmoot Court which should have been held after Christmas was deferred and put off by reason of the sickness and infection happening in certain houses in the Chapel Street, which through the blessing of God (great care being taken), [‘ Trust in God, and keep your powder dry ’], and much cost bestowed in building of Cabins and removing the said families forth of the Town unto the said Cabins, it ceased in 2 month’s time with the death of about 8 or 9 persons of mean quality.”

A little later comes an order that

“ the persons shut up in their houses upon the suspicion of the sickness and infection may tomorrow be set at liberty and the Gards taken off, upon condition they first show themselves unto the officers appointed for the providing of the poor, that they are all in health. Praised be God for his mercie in our speedie deliverance.”

An order was also made for the release of those shut up in Cabins ; and an account of income and expenditure on the poor and infected was sent to the Judges of Assize at Lancaster.

In the same summer of 1648, Ormskirk was badly

stricken, with the result that on 13 June the following petition was presented to Sir Thomas Stanley, Peter Egerton, and Ralph Worthington :

“ Whereas itt hath pleased God to Visitt the Towne of Ormeskirk with his heavie Judgment of the Pestilence whereby some Families are sent unto Cabbins and others confyned to their owne houses to the number of 33 persons, who have hitherto lived upon the charitie and reliefe of the Towne. And forasmuch as by reason of this contagion the Marketts and all manner of trading amongst us and the onely subsistance of the most part of the Towne is interrupted and stopt, and the Poore, who had formerly the greatest part of their maintenance forth of the Country, are now Debarred of that reliefe, and confyned to the Towne. By reason whereof not onely those who are suspected to bee infected, But alsoe the Poore and many others (who formerly lived upon the Benefitt of their trades) and to the number of 800 people, are not able to subsist without speedie contribution forth of the County. Maie itt therefore please yor worships to grant your Warrants unto the next adiacent Parishes for their contribution by such a Monethly tax as you maie thinke convenient for the mentainance of such a number of Poore : whereby wee maie bee enabled to keepe them within our owne Towne, without Doeing of any violence or preiudyce to the Country, which other waies wee are not able to performe.”

This petition was signed by William Dun, minister, Silvester Ashcroft, George Tipinge, Richard Birchall, schoolmaster, Thomas Waynewright, Emanuell Morcroft, Richard Simkin, William Holland, Thomas Walton, John Heyes, Richard Dokerfield, Edward Breres, Gilbert Ambrose and Richard and Thomas Morcroft.

The application was granted, but it was not sufficient, so at the Sessions held at Prescott on 17 July, the following order was made :

“ Whereas there hath been a taxacion allowed, assesed, and taxed within fyve myles of the towne of Ormskirke for the releeffe of the infected and poore people within the same towne, confyned therein by Sir Tho : Stanley, Baronett, and other Justices of peace, according to the forme of the statute ; Now this Cort is

informed aswell by the Certificate of divers gentlemen of good repute neare unto the same towne, that the number of the said infected persons are increased since the granting thereof, and the poore within the same towne doe increase, having many of them spent all the provision they hadd in their houses and for want of marketts to have been kept from buying and selling of corne, whereby they are exposed unto great misery and are soe neare starved that it is feared they will breake out of the towne into the Cuntrey and thereby expose the Cuntry to great perill and danger yf speedy course bee not taken for their releeffe ; And for that the Cuntry hereabouts are unable to manteyne them. . . . Yt is therefore thought requisite and soe ordered by this Cort that one whole fiteene shalbee allowed and presently collected and levyed within the hundred of [West] Derby . . . and furthwith payed over unto Silvester Ascroft and Myles Barton, gentlemen, or th'one of them, for and towards the releeffe and manteynance of the said infected people."

It appears that in respect of the first levy " the constables of theis Townes [are] in Arreare with their Assessments towards the reliefe of the infected and poore of Ormskirke—Lathome, Skelmersdale, Scarisbrick, Melling, Maghull, Bickerstaff " and that they were " to pay the arreare or [be] comitted and there goods distreyned of."

In Ormskirk is a house with the legend " God's Providence is our habitation " carved across its front. Tradition has it that the occupants escaped the outbreak of plague in 1648 and thus perpetuated their thankfulness.

The following petition presented to Sir Thomas Stanley casts an interesting sidelight on the infection of Ormskirk :

" Whereas there was a woman, one Rowland wiffe, after the Death of her husband and her child came out of Ormskirke into our towne of Sutton, [now part of St. Helens] whereupon yor peticioners were forced to put her into a Cabin and to cause 2 men in the night and 1 man in the daye to attend her for the space of 5 weekes ; during that tyme yor peticioner was put to great charges, and your honor beeing therewith acquainted by Edward Roughley, did tell him yor honor would speake unto those that were appointed to looke unto the poore of Ormskirke that before yor peticioners had payed the money out of their hands that

were for the infected in Ormskirke they should keepe soe much in there hands they were at charges in keepeing the woman, but soe it is yor petitioners have payed the money unto the high constables upon promise the[y] will repay back again what yor honor will allow for the charges of keepeing the said woman in the Cabin. Wherefore yor petitioners humbly prayes you would bee pleased to allow the charges disbursed by yor petitioners, and an order under yor hand to the high constables to repay it."

This petition was passed on to the Justices who ordered that the account was "to bee allowed and repayed."

Another petition, presented to the Wigan Sessions on 8 October, 1648, shows that the parish of Aughton, adjoining Ormskirk, also was stricken :

"Wee, whose names are subscribed, mak[e] bold to Certifie of a trueth that there are three Houses at this present within the Parish of Aughton that are infected with the Sicknes of the Plague, some of them have beene shoot upp for the space of one moneth and about nyne or Tenn persons are already dead, which hath caused a great charge upon the Parish in Garding their houses and burieing the Corps, and the said Families being poore have beene hitherto releevd at the only Charge of the said Parish which being very smale and many Poore in it, they are noe longer able of themselves to maintaine them, and therefore they humbly desire the releeffe . . . in that Case made and provyded."

This petition was signed by Bar: Hesketh, Edw: Starkie, Hughe Cooper, Roger Letherbarrow, and George Clapham. The number of deaths recorded in the Aughton register is little above the average, and one gets the impression that the petitioners were trying to get something for nothing. This idea is strengthened by the note made by the Clerk of the Peace to the effect that "the whole parishe to take itt into consideracion," and the fact that nothing further is heard of the matter.

The next place to become infected was Formby, as a result of which the following order was made at the Wigan Sessions on 15 January, 1648/9 :

"Forasmuch as itt appeareth to this Cort that the some of Forty poundes was formerly allowed and ordered to have beene

payed proporcionably within fyve myles of the towne of Formby by the inhabitantes of the severall townships within that compasse and division, for the manteynance and releeffe of the infected poore people within the same towneshipp, And that all or the most part thereof is asyett in arreare and unpaid ; Yt is therefore ordered by this Cort that the said arreares shalbee furthwith collected, gathered, and paid unto the receavers and distributors of the same moneys. . . . And if any person or persons shall refuce or deny payment thereof, inhabiting or haveing any estate or meanes charged or chargeable towards the releeffe of them . . . a warant shalbee awarded against the delinquents."

At this time there is an entry in the *Town Books* of Liverpool which states that :

" by certain intelligence the sickness is broken forth in Altcar and Formby which may endanger this town if good care be not taken. It is therefore ordered that from henceforth during the time of danger every Inhabitant of this town, upon warning, shall watch in person, or find such able men as Mr. Maior shall approve, upon pain to forfeit for every default 5/-."

The following document was laid before the Justices at Wigan on 15 January, 1648/9 :

" A Note of those persons which have not payd for Clensing theyr howses and meterialls in Ormskirke as is sett downe by the Clensers in the time they were heare in the Visitation 1648 for theyr worke.

Thomas Moorcroft	1 day and a halfe vj <sup>s</sup>
Thomas Scarisbrick house	6 dayes xxiiij <sup>s</sup>
Robert Seftons	2 dayes viij <sup>s</sup>
James Rivingtons	2 dayes viij <sup>s</sup>
Widdow Cookson	one day and a halfe vj <sup>s</sup>
Daniell Travers	three dayes xij <sup>s</sup>
Robert Cooper	1 day and a halfe vj <sup>s</sup>
William Atherton	one chamber iiij <sup>s</sup>
Robert Gore	one daye and a halfe vj <sup>s</sup>
Georg Rotherham	2 dayes and a halfe viij <sup>s</sup>
Myles Gerrard	2 dayes and a halfe viij <sup>s</sup>
Arthur Winstanley	2 dayes viij <sup>s</sup>
James Rotherham for	
Hugh Rotherhams houses	3 dayes at both xij <sup>s</sup>

Willm. Atherton	2 dayes viij <sup>s</sup>
Widd[ow] Cooksons	1 daye iiij <sup>s</sup>
Robt. Cooper	2 dayes viij <sup>s</sup> ”

The Justices therefore made an order that these people were to

“ furthwith upon notice hereof pay unto the Constables of Ormskirke the severall somes of money particularly imposed upon them for dressing of their houses in the tyme of the visitacion within the same towne . . . or otherwise upon complaint thereof . . . a warrant shalbee awarded against every of them soe making default.”

The chapelry of Blackrod became seriously infected, for although there was usually only about one burial there per month, there were 60 between November, 1648, and September, 1649.

Certain petitions presented to the Wigan Court Leet in October, 1649, relate to the infection of that town in the summer of that year. For example, there was the petition of William Getenbee, physician “ and servante for yor toune in their late distressed tymes of sicknes,” that he had been asked by the Mayor “ to visite the sicke persons and minister them ” at 30s. a week, and he had been at great expense. It was ordered that he was to be given an extra £7.

And there was the complaint of John Catterall, cooper, who “ lately before the sickness called the plaage or pestilence fed amongst us ” had taken a cottage and garden in Gudlawe Lane, but could not go into it in the previous May because it was used for the sick, some of whom pulled down his walls and burnt his doors. It was ordered that he was to have 16s. 8d. towards the losses “ which hee sustayned by the makeinge his house a Cabin or pesthouse for the Inflicted of the plague.”

And James Finch, one of the sergeants of the town, petitioned the Court Leet that “ in the late distressed and

disturbed tymes of the great Vizitacione of the sicknes that was amongst us Called the plauge and pestalence," he had to attend the Mayor and had to send his wife and children to the country at great cost " untill such tymes the towne by God's providence was sett Cleare." He asked for relief and was referred to the Mayor—it is not known with what result. The Court Leet had " by reason of the danger at the time of the visitation of the Plague within the Borrough " been adjourned from 17 May, 1648, to 11 August, 1649. Between March, 1648/9, and July, 1649, there were 71 deaths specifically marked in the parish register as having been caused by plague.

Another nearby township, Ashton-in-Makerfield, was stricken, and the following petition was presented to the Judges of Assize at Lancaster on 5 September :

" The Township of Ashton-in-Makerfield hath beene for these eight months last past and asyet doth ly under gods heavy hand of the plague, and the poor people therein in these sad and heavy tymes of dearth and scarcity consisting to the number of four hundred persons that dayly have releeffe, and that for there present support and releeffe yor peticioner and some others with him have disbursed of there owne money, and stand ingaged for meale and other necessary provision for them the some of 363<sup>l</sup> 14<sup>s</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> and upward over and besides the moneys that have beene given and Charged upon and payed by the Cuntry, and unlesse some Course bee taken they are likely to bee sued and the poore people therein exposed to meare famishment, and the adiacent townes and places neare adiacent much indangered by there wandring abroad to seeke releeffe."

This petition was signed by " James Wood, pastor, William Gerrard, Edo: Sorocold, James Pilkington, John Houghton, Jo: Garrett, Mathew Lowe, Rich: Lyon, Bryan Lowe, Rich: Talbot, John Humphrson, W: Hasleden, Richard Orrell and Tho: Gerrard," and there is a note that the amount of money received " from the Cuntry is 65<sup>l</sup> 5<sup>s</sup> 10<sup>d</sup>."

A similar petition was presented to the Sessions at

Ormskirk on 8 October, except that the cost had risen to "500<sup>l</sup> and upward," so an order was made for the collection of "c<sup>l</sup> a weeke for two monthes to bee taxed upon the whole County."

The following petition, relating to the visitation of Ormskirk, was also presented to the October Sessions there :

"Your poor pet[ititioner's] husband In the time of the late visitation In Ormskirke was shutt up in his own House and died of the visitation, after which time your pet[ititioner] was convayd forth of the Towne to a Cabin with five small Childer, where shee Continued for 5 weekes space, and Confined to her own house for 5 weeks longer. In which time all her goods was utterly spoyld and lost, to the utter overthrow and undoing of her selfe and her poor Childer, haveing not any thing left to Reliefe them withall . . . the pet[ititioner] humbly prayeth the honourable Bench to . . . grant Order to the Churchwardens and overseers of this parish to grant what Releife shalbee by you thought fitt towards her great Losses."

It was ordered that relief should be paid to the petitioner, one Dorothy Standish.

As late as 3 May, 1652, echoes of the visitation of Ormskirk were still to be heard. On that date a petition was presented to "the truly honourable Sir Thomas Stanley, Baronett, Col. Gilbert Ireland," etc. It stated that

"your poor pet[ititioners] liveinge in the late Visitation was many of us Confined to Cabbins in the yeare 1648 : In which Times by extreame misery, with the loss of many of our childer, wee spent and wasted all our Estates, haveing neither meanes nor help to releife our selves and families, beinge soe farre Impoverished and brought to Ruine by those sadd tymes, yet neverthelesse knowing for Certainty as shall appeare that In those times, when it pleased God to send that wonderful deliverance against the Scotts in Lancashire, that there was certaine somes of moneys (upon a day of humiliation) collected, gathered, and payd Over by Certaine Citizens and other well affected persons in London, unto certaine persons inhabiting in Ormskirke, being for and towards the Releife of the poore Confined, afflicted, and Infected in Ormskirke, which

at that time was in great Misery, as shalbee truly made to appeare, yet neverthelesse the said Receivors of the same moneys have and do detayne the moneys soe payed over, not making any Account at all, which proves to the great damage of above three hundred poore people all living at this present; . . . the pet[itioners] humbly prayeth . . . that some certaine tyme may bee limited to call the parties to Account before any . . . to whom you . . . shall thinke fitt, that . . . some further Releife may bee had . . . in and towards theyr great Losses sustained."

The petition was heard and it was ordered that

"the Constables and other officers within the Township of Ormskirke for the twelve years last past (who have not formerly made their Accompts) and alsoe all others who have benee intrusted with any summes of money [for] the use of the Towne, shall forthwith give an Accompt thereof."

It is not to be wondered at that there was such great difficulty in collecting all these taxes. The county was in a deplorable state from the ravages of the war, and the continual levying of taxes for the relief of infected towns was comparable to the proverbial attempting to squeeze blood from a stone. A further order had to be made at the Wigan Sessions on 14 January, 1649/50, to attempt to complete the collection for Formby; and on 29 April following there was trouble at the Ormskirk Sessions over the still incomplete levy for Ashton-in-Makerfield.

The presence of plague in Ireland caused misgivings in Liverpool, and on 2 April, 1650, the Corporation made the following order:

"Whereas it is certainly reported that the sicknes is in Dublin, which by reason of the intercourse from thence may prove dangerous to this towne: it is therefore ordred that all owners and passengers comeinge from thence shalbe restrained and debarred from comeinge into this towne unless they cann make oath that they have not benee in anie infected place, nor brought over anie infected goods or passingers from thence, and be allowed by Mr. Maior; and a Warrant to be drawn up for the Guard to examine all passingers comeinge from thence, until they be sworne and examined, which was donne accordingly."

On 16 June came this: "It is alsoe agreed that the persons restrained are to be admitted to come into the towne, and if hereafter anie shal presume to goe to Dublin or anie other place infected, they shalbe restrained from comeing on shore."

On 15 July, 1650, the following order concerning Ireland was made at the Ormskirk Sessions:

"It is ordered . . . that all and every the constables within the Township of Lealand and other the neighboring townships there unto adioyneing, shall furthwith . . . take speciall care to apprehend all . . . persons whatsoever comeing into there severall townships out of Ireland or any other place suspected to bee infected with the plague, and them confine and sett such gardes upon soe that they doe not wander abroad . . . and likewise that they doe not suffer any of there goodes to come into there townships without speciall lycence first obteyned and had from some Justice of peace."

Fear of the plague in Middleton led to the following order being made by the bench at the Manchester Sessions on 18 July:

"Forasmuch as this Cort is informed that there is great Suspicion of a man that was harbored and lodged in the house of Willm. Leigh of Middleton, Innkeeper, to bee infected with the plague, and that the same person contynued there for divers dayes together, yt is therefore thought fitt and ordered by this Cort that the said Willm. Leigh and his family bee furthwith upon notice hereof confyned, and that Mr. Robte. Leaver of Alkrington, gentleman, high constable within the hundred of Salford that hee . . . take care and see that writing bee sett and kept . . . for the restraint of the said family . . . within or aboute his said house from accompanying or any wayes trafiqueing with the said Willm. Leighe or any of his famelye, for the space of one month now next ensuing, or untill further order shall bee made. . . . And that convenient provision of such necessaryes as shalbee needfull and expedient . . . shall bee made . . . during the tyme of there said restraynt."

And now the pestilence moved north, after having ravaged the south of the county for so long: although

the south by no means became free from infection. On 6 July, 1650, the inhabitants of Pilling implored the local justices to grant the levying of a fifteen throughout the parish of Garstang for their relief. This was done, but it was not enough, for the two justices, Thomas Whittingham and Jeremiah Aspinwall, laid the following before the bench at the Preston Sessions of 11 July :

“ These are (according to the direction of the statute of 1<sup>o</sup> Jacobi cap. 31) to certify this Court, That at the Suit and request of the Inhabitants of Pilling, upon Saturday last wee did graunt an Assesment of one Fifteene within the Parish of Garstang (which doth amount unto the sume of viij<sup>l</sup> xix<sup>s</sup> according to the Booke of Rates) for the reliefe of the Poore infected of Pilling. The number of the Poore is certified to bee above 260 under the handes of John Lumley, clearke, Richard Johnes, William Bell, James Bradshawe, Lawrance Garner, Thomas Johnes. And since the[y] doe Sollicite to have the same enlarged and continued weekelie for the better keeping of their poore within themselves.”

It was therefore

“ Ordered . . . that the some of Thirty five poundes, sixteene shillings shall . . . bee proporcioned and taxed within the parish of Garstang for one month now next ensueing, for and toward the releeffe of the poore and infected persons within Pilling lately visited with plauge, and that the same shall furthwith bee collected by distresse and sale of goods or otherwise by the Constables . . . within the same parish, and pay[ed] unto Will: Tompson of Thistleton, gentleman, to bee by him disbursed for the releeffe of the said poore.”

Meanwhile the following “ petition of the inhabitance of Rigbie cum Wray ” was presented to the Justices at Preston :

“ Yor petitioners haveinge a house within their townshipp which is in a verie sade condicion and in great danger to bee the plague, haveinge one alreadie deade, beinge verie poore people not having much to reli[e]ve themselves withall but what yor petitioners doth reli[e]ve them withall, and having agreat number more poore people, both Infants and aged past worke, some others having trades if they could have beene suffered to [have] gone abroad

could have gotten moneyes by their workings. Wherefore wee humly prayeth that yor worships wilbe pleased to comisserate our poore condicions and to grant yor warrantts to some townes to helpe us for present relie[fe].”

Cockerham and Thurnham also had become infected, and there are significant entries in the registers. Usually there were between 40 and 50 deaths per year, but in 1650 there were 60 between July and October, and all but 9 of these occurred in July and August. In one family there were 11 deaths ; and there were several cases similar to that of the Fishers—one child died on 31 July, the mother on 4 August, the father on 21 August, and three more children on the 23rd of the same month. The minister, Thomas Smith, was a victim. There is a note in the register stating that the visitation commenced on 14 July and ceased on 8 October. In connection with this outbreak at Cockerham the following documents are of interest :

“ Money disbursed Since Julij 27th, 1650, for reliefe of The pore and infected persons within the townshipes of Cockram and Thurnham.

By Mr. Toulson, Lancaster j q[uar]te[r] meale	5	6	8
For travell and paines buying of it	0	0	6
More oates 40 windles at 8 <sup>s</sup> per windle	16	0	0
Beanes 10 pecks at 10 <sup>s</sup> per windle	2	0	0
For 2 men and 3 horses 3 deyes carriage at 5 <sup>s</sup> per day	0	15	0

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24 2 2

By John Bailimay 53 windles 3 pecks oats 8 <sup>s</sup> per win[dle]	21	10	0
Barley 2 bushell at 10 <sup>s</sup> per bushell	1	0	0
For Badger Michell Pawler for makinge and worke	1	6	0

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23 16 0

By Rich: Edmundson 16 windles Barley at 10 <sup>s</sup>	8	0	0
Meale j q[uarte]r at 13 <sup>s</sup> 4 <sup>d</sup> per windle	5	6	0
	<hr/>		
	13	6	0
	<hr/>		
By John Preston 4 q[uarte]r Meale at 10 <sup>s</sup> per windle	16	0	0
	<hr/>		
Toto	77	4	10

lxxvij<sup>l</sup> iiij<sup>s</sup> x<sup>d</sup> allowed "

" Wee the Constables of Cockerham whose names are subscribed doe Certifie yor Worships that we have disbursed severall sommes of money towards the releefe of sundrye poore infected people before we received any allowance from you : as may appear by these particulars here under written, viz. :

Imprimis bought of Tho: Reeder 3 windles of Barley	}	xxx <sup>s</sup>
Itm oweinge to the High Constable for meale and malt		
Itm for one windle of meale to poor infected in the Bankhouses	}	xij <sup>s</sup>
Itm to a man that was sent for from Manchester to veive infected people		
Itm paid for Comodities for medicines to preserve poore infected people at sundry tymes	}	xj <sup>s</sup> iiij <sup>d</sup>
Itm promised to Tho: Wilson five shillings per weeke for 18 weeke together, beinge a gard to the Clensers and bringinge provision Dayly to infected people, when none else durst		
Itm paid for a peece to secure him withall and for shooteinge of Doggs and Catts	}	xxiiij <sup>s</sup>
Som. Total. x <sup>l</sup> iiij <sup>s</sup> iiij <sup>d</sup>		

JOHN BROWNE JOHN BRADSHAWE FRANCES DEANES  
 THO: ALLENSON EDWARD LEEDER JOHN HEBER  
 Constables JOHN BOND RICHARD LEEDER."

When the Sessions was held at Lancaster on 1 October, the troubles of all these places were laid before the bench,

and, after due consideration, the following lengthy order was issued :

“ Forasmuch as it appeareth to this Cort that the Townships of Cockerham, Thurneham, Ribby cum Wrea, Pillinge, and Cabus, and other adiacent Townships and places, have lately beene, and some of them asyett are, sore visited with the plague, and the Country thereabouts are exposed to very great danger and necessities, the poore within the same places beeing very numerous and indigent and no wayes able to subsist but by wandring abroad and begging, exceeding the number of Fyve hundred persons, For releeffe of them the places adiacent have beene taxed, and colleccions made according to Lawe, And severall persons have Ingaged themselves and asyett stand charged for the payment of great somes of money for the . . . said poore people and infected persons, and for the Restraint of them from wandring abroad to the apparent danger and hazard of the cuntry, severall attempts haveing been made by divers of them consorting together. And upon perusall of the order of the honorable the Justices of Assyse at the last Assyses holden att Lancaster, . . . wherein they declare itt to be iust and reasonable that timely and convenient provision bee made for the said infected and poore persons by a moderate assessment through the whole County, and did thereby recomend itt to the speciall care of the Justices of peace of this County att their next Sessions of the peace to see the same effected accordingly. All which this Cort takeing into due and mature consideracion . . . Yt is ordered . . . that one whole Fifteene shalbee presently taxed, assessed, collected, and gathered by distresse and sale of goodes or otherwyse, within this County of Lancaster by the now high Constables of the severall hundreds . . . And that the high Constables within the hundreds of Loynsdale, Amoundernes, and Blackburne, shall pay their proporcionable parts thereof unto Mr. Gyles Heysham of Lancaster, named one of the Treasurers thereof, and the High Constables within the hundreds of [West] Derby and Salford shall pay . . . unto Mr. Alex: Tompson of Wigan, likewise named the other Treasurer thereof, at or before the first day of November next. And the same Tresurers are by this Cort required to pay over the same moneys soe by them severally received unto George Towlinson, esqr, mayor of the towne and Burrough of Lancaster, Mr. Willm. West, and Mr. Jerehiah Aspinwall . . . to bee by them payed and disbursed for the manteynance and releeffe of the said poore and persons infected,

and the reimbursment of the moneys and discharge of the Ingagements of the persons soe charged. And it is alsoe required that aswell the said Tresurers as those who have already beene or shall be appointed distributors of the same moneys, shall give upp perfect accomptes of their doeings and proceedings when and as often as thereinto they shalbee required."

The collections were made <sup>1</sup> and used both for direct relief and to repay those who had pledged their credit in the interests of the distressed people. But it seems that it was not sufficient, for it was reported to the Bench at Lancaster on 7 January, 1650/1, that there was still an amount of £77 unpaid in respect of Cockerham and Thurnham. It was ordered, therefore, that £77 should be levied throughout the hundred of Lonsdale, and, an unusual thing, the details of the taxacion are included with the order on the Sessions Roll:

" Lancaster	£4 14 11½	Tunstall	5 4¾
Cayton cum		Melling cum	
Claughton	4 11 1½	Wreaton	13 8½
Middleton	10 3¾	Wrea	13 3¾
Tatham cum		Wennington	8 4
Ireby	15 5¾	Ar[k]holme	17 2
Lecke	17 8¾	Horneby	9 5¼
Skerton	5 4½	Heaton cum	
Whittington	23 2¾	Oxcliffe	12 0
Ellel	57 2¼	Boulton	58 4
Urswicke	51 5¾	Dalton cum	
Burrow	31 0½	Hutton	25 9
Slyne cum Hust	19 3	Overton	19 5¾
Kirby Ireleth	47 3	Yealand cum	
Penington	14 10½	Silverdale	21 1¾
Lees	29 9	Gressingham	18 2¼
Poolton	38 11½	Ashton	23 7¾
Scotforth	34 3¾	Thurnham	7 5¾
Ulverston	7 8 8¾	Farleton	5 4½

<sup>1</sup> In the Township Book of Halliwell, near Bolton, is a payment of 1s. 4½d. to the High Constables "for poore infected in Cockerham and Townes adjacent."

Halton	28	0	Dalton-in-Fur-		
Carneforth	35	5½	neis	4	19 3
Aldingham	45	3	Heasham	33	4½
Holker	49	6¾	Alethwaite	30	5¾
Nether Kellett	8	9½	Broughton	5	4½
Bu[l]cke cum			Cockerham	40	9½
Aucliffe	25	1¾	Over Kellet	24	7½
Warton	28	7½	Quarmore	26	0½
Cansfield	5	5	Wiersdale	39	2½

And so the fifth decade of the seventeenth century closes with the straightening out of the collections for southern Lonsdale and northern Amounderness.

9. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: THE FINAL PHASE.

The collections made for the relief of "the Townships of Pilling, Cabus, Forton, and Holloweth" and for the repayment of those who had engaged themselves for that relief, were, like those for Cockerham and Thurnham, not sufficient. The amount short was £50 17s. 5d., so the Justices at the Sessions at Preston on 10 April, 1651, ordered that the money should be taxed throughout the hundred of Amounderness. The receivers were to be "Willm: Tompson, Willm: Colbert, Jon: Jackson, Rich: Cason, Jon: Charnocke, Tho: Corles, and Anthony Rigmaden." (See Appendix Ci.)

It may be remembered that the constables of Cockerham had promised to pay 5s. a week to one Thomas Wilson for bringing food to the infected people when no one else dared. However, when the constables came to raise the necessary money amongst the remaining inhabitants they were unable to do so, for many refused to pay. In the autumn of 1651, therefore, the then ex-constables complained to George Tounson, a Justice of the Peace and Mayor of Lancaster, that certain inhabitants of Cockerham had refused to pay, so, on 7 October, 1651, he sent the following to the then constables:

" Forasmuch as I am informed . . . under the hands of John Browne and Thomas Allenson, late Constables of Cockerham, that Thomas Wilson, late of Cockerham, webster, was hired by the said Constables in the time of infeccion to watch the infected people for breaking forth and to carry provision unto them, which worke the said Wilson undertooke and performed for the space of twenty weekes and upward. And that the Inhabitants within Cockerham did promise to give him for his paines five shillings per weeke. And forasmuch as I am this day informed that the said Inhabitants doe refuse to pay the said sume of money . . . hee haveing received but twenty shillings of the said Mone[y]s, there yett remaininge due to him the sume of Foure pounds. This are therefore to require you that . . . you cause the said sume . . . to be assessed . . . amongst the severall Inhabitants within yor said townshipp and pay the same over unto the said Thomas Wilson. Otherwise you are to . . . appeare before mee and my fellow Justices upon Tuesday next to shew cause to the Contrary. Faile not hereof."

It would appear that the constables were unsuccessful in raising the money, for on 14 October, an order was issued to the effect that

" the Inhabitants within Cockerham shall, at or before the feast day of St. Martin the bishop in this winter next ensuing, pay unto Tho. Wilson of Cockerham, webster, the some of foure pounds due unto him . . . according to the undertaking of John Bonnd now in open Cort."

Otherwise such people as refused to pay would be sent to appear at the Assizes. Apparently this threat was successful, for nothing further is heard of the matter.

It is evident that there was much trouble over the collections for the Pilling district, as is shown by the following three orders from the Preston Sessions on 15 January, 1651/2, and on 29 April and 15 July, 1652, respectively :

" It is ordered . . . that the high Constables within the hundred of Amoundernes shall . . . Collect, levy, and gather one fiftene within the said hundred for the poore infected persons within Pilling, Cabus, Forton, and Holleth, according to an

estreat formerly granted unto them at this Sessions holden at Preston, 10th Apr. 1651 [see p. 111], notwithstanding any order or direccion already given to the contrary, and shall make present payment thereof unto the treasurers mencioned in the said estreat, for the reimbursements . . . of the money layed out . . . by severall persons within the parish of Garstang."

"Ytt is ordered . . . that the late high constables within the hundred of Amoundernes, together with the treasurers of the taxe layed for the poore infected persons that were within the townshippes of Cabus, Forton, and Holloweth, and other places, shall make and perfect their accompts unto the Justices of peace, and bringe with them the Role for the said Taxe at their next monthly meeting to bee holden for that divicion, of what moneys they have received and what parte thereof hath bene disbursed, and to whom, and how much remaines in their hands, to the end that those persons within Cabus and Winmarly that are asyet unpayed may bee therewith satisfied."

"Ytt is ordered by this Court that John Jackson, Willm: Calvert, Richard Cawson, John Charnocke, Thomas Corleis, and Anthony Rigmaden, shall come before the Justices of peace at their next privy Sessions. . . . And make their accompts . . . of their receipts and disbursments of the moneys they received for the . . . poore Infected . . . of Cabus, Forton, and Holloweth, that further order and Course may be taken therein."

In the late summer of 1651, Liverpool was stricken again, and a series of orders was made by the Justices for its relief. The first emanated from the Wigan Sessions on 6 October:

"Forasmuch as . . . the Towne and Burrow of Liverpoole being visited with the plague, for whole subsistance there within the same towne and through the same visitacion, necessary complaint being made to the next Justices of peace an other further taxacion was allowed and hath been layed and gathered within the Compasse of Five Myles, . . . which said allowance hath not bene sufficient for Reliefe of the said poore yet remaining within the said Towne, . . . upon hearinge the severall Informacions of the said Inhabitants, and the great wants and sadd condicion of the said Neighboring parts adiacent. Itt is conceaved requisit and soe ordered . . . that one fiftene for 3 months now next ensueinge shalbee presentlie taxed, assessed, collected, and gathered . . . within the severall hundreds, by distresse

and saile of goods or otherwise, within this said County, and by them payed over to the Mayor, Aldermen, or Baylives of . . . Liverpoole."

On 8 October the Corporation ordered that "the Ballives shalbee freed from the collecting of the fynes because of the present condicion of the towne in regard to the infeccion." On 25 October

"it was propounded concerning Mrs. Chambers and Balive Sturzaker, who have been seaven weeks confyned for suspicion of the sicknes. It is ordred that they may have libertie to walk to the water syde, but are to sequester themselves from companie, and at the seacond or third dayes of January to bee free and at libertie if nothing hapen but well in the meane tyme: also that Ballive Sturzaker may have libertie in the night tyme to come up to his shop, and to use what meanes hee pleases for cleansing itt. And John Lunt to continue in his howse for a fortnight."

In the *Life of John Angier* it is recorded that

"Mr. Angier and some Ministers and Gentlemen . . . for owning his Majesties interest . . . were carried prisoners to Leverpool, and from thence removed to Ormskirk because of the Plague."

On 14 January, 1651/2, the Corporation "ordered that the Schoolmaster shall have his whole years wages notwithstanding his discontinuance of teaching by reason of the sickness," and that "Mr. William Williamson shall goe to Wigan, concerning the lay to be collected for the poore and Infected, and to solizit the Justices of the Peace for the furtherance of the payment thereof."

From the petition presented at Wigan it is learnt that the poor and infected in Liverpool were "to the number of fyve hundred, seaventie, and od persons"; and Mr. Williamson's journey to "solizit" for them must have been successful, for it was ordered "that a Ley or 15 teene shalbee assessed and collected throughout the whole Countie of Lancaster . . . for 3 moneth next ensueing

. . . to be paid over monthly unto the maior and Ballives of the said Towne for the purpose afforesaid." (See Appendix Cii.)

There was some trouble in the parish of Leigh over the rating of the tax for Liverpool, with the result that the following order was made at the Ormskirk Sessions on 3 May :

" Forasmuch as there was a taxe of Five pounds Tenne shillings imposed upon the severall Townships within the parish of Leigh, for the relieffe of the poore Infected persons within Liverpoole, which doth appeare to bee unequally proporcioned and is a surcharge unto severall Inhabitants . . . and contrary to all former leyas and Taxacions formerly imposed. . . . Therefore this Cort doth desire and order that some three or more of the Inhabitants in each severall Township . . . doe give meetinge unto John Atherton, esqr, at some convenient tyme and place by him to bee appointed, and Consider, agree of, and Conclude, that the said Taxe bee furthwith taxed . . . proporcionably within every Township of the said parish accordinge to their Ancient Custome, Notwithstandinge the former tax and warrant for the same."

At the same Sessions an order unique in style among the records of the Lancashire Sessions, but reflecting the peculiarity of the times, was issued :

" Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God to lay his sore hand of visitacion with the plague upon the Towne and Burrough of Liverpoole, where it hath continued for many months past, and as this Court is Informed the same doth breake out into many new families in the same Towne, and much feared to spread in the Cuntry adiacent, which all good devoted Christians are bound in Conscience and duty to take speciall notice of, and to Implore almighty god who is Infinite in mercie and willing and ready to heare and answer the prayers and supplicacions of those his Children and servants as call upon him in sincerity of heart that hee would withdrawe his heavy hand of and from that Towne and Burrough, and vouchsaaffe to preserve the rest of this County from that fearfull plague and sicknes, for which end and purpose this Court doth will, desire, and order, that Friday the Fourth day of June next shall bee sett apart for a day of Fasting and

Humiliation within these hundreds of [West] Derby and Leyland, and that all and every of the Inhabitants . . . shall desist from their worldly Employments and labours, and to attend that day in the publique places sett apart for prayer, preaching, and expounding of Gods word ; And that all and every the Justices of peace, Maires, Baylives, Constables, subconstables, and all other ministers and officers whatsoever . . . are required to see the same day only observed : And the ministers of every parish Church and Chappell . . . are . . . desired to supply the same, prepaire themselves for the duties of that day, and to give notice in their severall congregacions the lords day before, that the people may observe the same and repaire to the said Churches and Chappells."

The townships around Liverpool were much occupied by the danger of people breaking out of that town and carrying the infection with them. On 3 May, 1652, two Justices, Sir Thomas Stanley and Thomas Birch, issued the two following warrants to the Constables of Walton and Fazakerley and the Constable of Aintree respectively :

"Forasmuch as wee are informed that John Whitfield of Fazakerley, yeoman, upon the seventeenth daye of Aprill last presumptuously, contrary unto the order of John Fox, esqr, one of the Justices of peace of this County, and to the great preiudice of the Inhabitants within the parish of Walton, did receive into . . . Walton severall persons that came the same day out of . . . Liverpoole, much Feared to bee infected with the plague, and the said persons soe by him received put into the Scholehouse there, not having any warrant soe to doe, where they asyett are, To the . . . evill example of the like offenders. These are therefore in the name of the Keepers of the liberty of England by authority of Parliament, straitly to Charge and Comand you . . . [to] apprehend and take the body of him the said John Whitfield and him bring before us . . . att our next privy Sessions to bee holden att Prescott upon thursday the thirteenth day of this instant May."

"Forasmuch as we are informed that Thomas Abby of Aintree received into a kilne of his upon the nynth of Aprill last, four men and a boye that came from the towne of Liverpoole, suspected to bee infected with the plague, to the great danger of the inhabitants of Aintree aforesaid, and likewise to their great troble and

Charges in setting and keeping watch upon them. And for that one Willm: Faireclough, one of the said foure men, did severall tymes breake forth of the said kilne and gave most contemptuous and barbarous words and with unseemly speeches abused the watchmen and others of good quality who came to advise for the good of the said towne, in an evill example of the like offenders, etc."

The fear of the spreading of the infection led the inhabitants of Rainhill to send the following petition to the Sessions held at Ormskirk on 19 July :

" One Richard Williams, Late of Liverpoole, beinge (as it is now suspected) infected with the plague, and having married Katheren, daughter of Dorothy Deane of Rainhill . . . widow, he the said Richard Williams, having also a servant girle which he confessed lay in bed with another girle infected and dead with the plague, did come to the said Dorothy Deane her howse . . . and bring his said servant thither. And she the said Dorothy Deane (albeit she had tymely notice to the Contrary) did receive her said sonne in Law and his servant into her howse upon the xxiiij<sup>th</sup> day of June last : which hath occasioned yor said petitioners to be at very greate Charge and troble of mainteyning and provyding Watch night and Day neere the said howse constantly, two at the least, since the said tyme. That the said Dorothy Deane and Richard Williams (being of ability and Considerable estat) were in a Friendly manner desired to satisfy and Defray the Charge of the said Watch for the tyme past and to come (as long as need required) yet so to Doe the said Dorothy Denied and still denyeth, alledging she will not do it unles compelled therto. Wherefore yor petitioners humbly pray yor worships . . . to order That . . . Dorothy Deane and Richard Williams or th'one of them doe . . . make satisfaccion . . . for the Charge . . . of watchings."

The Bench ordered the accused to pay the requisite charges, which presumably they did, for no further complaint was made.

It was not only the places near to Liverpool which were afraid of infected people coming into their areas, for the inhabitants of Heaton Norris petitioned the Justices at the Manchester Sessions as follows :

“ That one Peeter Hall, sonne of John Hall of Heaton Norrice, haveinge some considerable time lately lived at Liverpoole with his Familye (which towne at this time is infected with the Pestilence) the afforsaid Peeter did about six weeks since come privately into the townshippe and made himselfe a little Cabbin in his fathers tenement, and there hath remained sice that time privately : Moreover about eight dayes since his wife and a child and one dogge are come to the said townshippe and live in another Cabbin neare the first, and have noe meanes of livelyhood (that wee know of) to subsist upon . . . May it therefore please yor good Worshippes to . . . devise some good course for the safty of the country, and preservation of the people . . . from perishinge : Whose Father wee humbly conceive to bee very able to yeild a Competent maintenance for the distressed people, etc.”

This petition is signed by John Holt and John Tomlinson, Constables, and Thomas Williamson, Law: Orrell, and Thomas Colleyer. It was ordered that “ the Constables to sett Watch on the Cabbin wherein the wiffe and child is. John Hall to allow them vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> a weeke untill they bee sett at libertye by order from some Justice.”

The following order from the Ormskirk bench on 19 July also shows the trouble caused by people who would not be restrained :

“ Forasmuch as . . . Henry Hill of Hale hath severall Tymes beene in severall places suspected to bee Infected with the plague, and doth Continually persist therein and will not bee restrayned to the Contrary, Ytt is therefore ordered . . . that if the said Henry Hill shall at any tyme hereafter wander or goe into any place suspected to bee Infected, or shall travell from his owne house without lycense from some Justice of peace, . . . A warrant shallbee awarded against him, etc.”

In the meantime the infection had spread to Bootle and Halsall and on 8 July, Edward More of Liverpool received the following letter from Bootle. It shows the rapidity with which the victims died :

“ There was a boy at Robinson's died upon Saturday in Whitson week, and upon the Wednesday before he was sawying at the Steward Worsley's house with his wrights. The boy and the

steward's man slept together in Worsley's barn ; towards night the boy was not well and could work no longer. All this John Wiggan of Kirkdale did see. Next John Birchall died, and four of his children—all are dead but his wife. At John Rolinson's one child and his wife died last week, and upon Wednesday last two children more died, and it was thought by the constable of Bootle that he would be dead before this day at night. Upon Wednesday at night last, at James Pye's, there died two, his son and daughter ; and a servant of Thomas Doubie's is dead, and it is this day broken forth in Bridge's as we hear."

From the following petition laid before the Bench at Ormskirk on 19 July by Richard Worsley, John Much, James Johnson, William and Robert Ascroft, and Lawrence Wetherby, we learn a little more about the plague in Bootle :

" It hath pleased god to visit our said Towne with that fearefull Judgment of plauge and Pestilence soe that upon the 12 of June last past theire dyed a yonge youth beinge servant to Wm: Robinson in the said towne, and since theire dyed John Birchall, a shoemaker, and 4 of his children, and his wyfe beinge now in the Cabbens not likely to escape ; June the 26 the howse of John Rawlinson beinge likewise visited where there dyed at that time his wyfe and one Child, and hee and 4 Children beinge sent to the Cabbens, one of them beinge dead and hee and th'other three all very sore sicke of the same disease, beinge not able to help one another : and upon the first of this instant a servant maide of Robt: Houghton's beinge sore sicke, and upon the 3d it intered into the family of James Pye, where there is one dead and two more sicke ; and by reason of theire Comeinge together six Families confined, not able to maintaine nor relieve themselves, and that betweene relievinge them att the Cabbons, and theis poore families, and Charges of Continuall watch night and day, and the Continuall Charges and attendants upon the Clensers, soe that the burden of Charges upon our said towne is unsupportable, the number of our said poore and needye . . . are to the number of Threescore persons or more. Wherefor . . . yor Poore Pettitioners humbly desyres that yor worships would . . . order some . . . reliefe, etc."

As a result, a collection was ordered within five miles of the infected places.

The following account refers to charges for watch and ward, etc., in Halsall :

“ Accompte of charges since the gentlemen weare shutt up in my house, beinge 22 daies since the 23 of June

	<i>l. s. d.</i>
Imprimis for Dyett for 4 gentlemen att vj <sup>d</sup> the meile, and to everie gent. a quart of beare att the meile	4 12 8
Item for 2 men at vj <sup>d</sup> aday apeece	1 2 0
for washing of six mens Clothes	0 5 0
for Candles	0 2 0
for 3 poundes of Tobacco	0 6 0
To everie gent. a quart of beare in a morning and everie evening a quart of beare 22 daies	1 6 8

Total 7 14 4

Ellis Arnold.

for watch and warde about the said house for 2 men in the daie and 3 men in the night ever since the 23 daie of June last, according to yor worships Commands	2 15 6
--	--------

besides for the Cunstable's Charges as maie appeare by a note of particulars concerneing the same men	0 15 10
---	---------

The 6 persons came 17 June which charges as ys before mentioned	1 11 8
--	--------

5 03 0

Sum totus 12 17 4”

There is no further reference to this matter in the Sessions Records, but the above document is endorsed :

“ vj<sup>d</sup> a peece every day to bee allowed them for the 22 dayes past and to have the like allowance untill they may be discharged. The parishe of Halsall to keepe a strong watch upon them under the paine of c<sup>s</sup>.”

The following letter from the Mayor of Liverpool, Thomas Williamson, to John Fox of Toxteth Park, a magistrate, on 8 October, 1652, indicates that there had been some trouble over the market, which had been trans-

ferred from Liverpool to Everton. It is so interesting that it is quoted at large :

"S[ir], Youre health wished, youres I rec[eived] whearein you Express that you herd of some intent there was of a markitt to bee kept in ouer towne the weeke followinge. I can asewer you there was noe intent to that Purposse of ouers, but whereas you speake of usinge ouer Indecors for the prevention of it, I could doe noe more than I did unless I would have withstoode them at the Tounes Ende in my o[w]ne person, by keepinge them out perforce, I used all meanes to discorige the markit heire and Incorig[e] it at Everton by goeing to Everton with part of my officers upon Saterdaye last, allsoe by undergoeing reprochfull tearmes beehind my Back by those whoe desire a markit. In respekt god hath soe o[w]ned us with his marcies in this place in that hee hath beene pleased soe to withdraw his hand of the peast off us that for 7 weekes past neither any died in the Towne of the peast nor fell sik in the Towne ; which hath soe Incoriged the people that it is allmost unpossible to keepe them forth, the Lord in his mercy soe fitt us with thankfulness that this great marcy of the remoovall of his Judgments maye still continue. Inde[e]d it hath beene sore with 2 Famillyes upon the hilles For the month past, First Luke Harisones wife and one of his Children died of the pest, since Luke himselfe died, As allsoe one Stringer, a Cobler, died and 2 of his Children. Luke hath 3 Children left, and the Coblers wife and one Child are left, all which are well as yet, blessed bee god. I hope his promis will bee made forth to thereare comfort that hee will bee a husband to the widdow and father to the fatherles. Their is one Rich: Widowes Confined to a cabin on the hills for some miscariges, but wee hope noe danger in him. Wee desire the Lord to Inlarge our hartes with Thankfullness, and desire you and all good Cristians to joyne with us therearein, to which good god I comit you, and Rest, Sir, youre Affectionate Frend to use whilst Tho: Williamson."

The infection of Liverpool had its effect on the work of the Parliamentary Navy Commissioners, for it meant that government ships which were wont to re-victual at Liverpool had to go to Chester or Ireland instead. A letter to the Commissioners from Captain John Soaman on 7 September, 1652, is rather ambiguously worded, for it tells that he has arrived at London with the Ordnance

from Chester for the Tower, but that the inhabitants would not send teams to draw down those from Liverpool Castle to the waterside, as the sickness was so lately in the town. The inhabitants of which town, whether Chester or London, is not at all clear; although it is Chester which is the more likely, as they would know only too well of Liverpool's plight. Another result of the plague was the removal of the customs house from Liverpool into the country, where it remained for a year, no State vessels entering the port in the meantime.

There was the usual difficulty in getting in the money for the relief of Liverpool and the adjacent places, as is shown by the following orders:

Wigan Sessions, 11 October, 1652: "Forasmuch as informacion is given . . . that Hen: Simpson, John Fletcher, Tho: Wrenal, Joshua Abram, Daniell Travis, Ellis Oliverson, John Page, Hen: Foster, John Pemberton, John Taylor, John Billinge, Tho: Smyth, Rich: Spencer, James Foster, Gabr: Greaves, Gilbte: Holm, widow Kendale, Michael Brown, Hector Westhead, Jo: Johnson, Tho: Ambrose, James Walsh, Hugh Bickerstath, Ja: Winstanley, Gabriell Barton, Robte: Poole, Rich: Ambrose, Willm: Lowe, Humfrey Kirby, and Peter Buxtons, all of Ormskirke, wilfully refuce and deny to pay the moneys which they are severally Assessed in for the relieffe of the poore Infected persons in Liverpoole, Lowe Bootle, and Halsall, . . . It is therefore ordered . . . that all . . . the persons above named shall . . . pay to the Court Bayliffe within Ormskirke aforesaid the severall sums of money which they . . . are Assessed in, or otherwise . . . awarrant shall bee awarded against . . . them, etc."

Wigan Sessions, 25 April, 1653: "Ytt is ordered . . . that John Fearnehead of Fearnehead, gent., and Willm: Blundell of Prescott, gent., late high constables within [West] Derbye hundred, shall furthwith, accordinge as they offered in Court, pay in their proporcionable parte of all the moneys they are in arreare of a fiteene and fourth parte of a fiteene thorrowe this hundred, which was for the poore Infected persons in Liverpoole, Bootle, and other Townes, unto the persons Appointed to receive the same . . ., and whereas Richard Spencer of Lathome, gent., late high Constable within [West] Derbye hundred did alledge

hee had not Collected in his proporcionable parte of the said moneys, for which neglect hee is ordered that hee shall stand Charged with the same and furthwith pay it over unto the said Receivors etc."

Wigan Sessions, 9 October, 1654: "Forasmuch as Complaint is made . . . by the Clerke of the peace that hee his Fees due for sendinge out the Rowles to each high Constable . . . for the tax of a Fifteene and fourth part of a Feefteene allowed by the Justices of peace and Quorum att the Sheriffes table at the Assises weeke att Lancaster in August, 1652, for the releefe of the poor and infected persons within Liverpoole, Lowe Bootle, and Halsall, are as yet unpaid, and that there is some money of the said tax remaineinge in the hands of Joseph Tompson, gent., minister of Sephton, ytt is therefore ordered . . . that the said Mr. Thompson shall . . . pay unto the said Clerke of Peace his Fees for the same and to give the same upon an accompt which shall bee his Discharge."

As late as June, 1654, repercussions of the visitation were being felt in Liverpool, for the Corporation made an order allowing Captain Thomas Croft £3 out of the Town's Stock because his house and lands had been spoiled by infected people having been put there during the time of the sickness.

In August, 1652, Great Sankey became infected, and the inhabitants presented the following petition to the Wigan Sessions on 11 October:

"About the beginninge of August last it pleased god to vissent Towe familys in the seide towne with the Contegious disease of the Plauge, which seide howses, by order from Mr. Ireland and Mr. Bold have beene shut upe ever since. And one of the familyes beinge apooore tradesman, a taylor, whoe lived by his trade, and deprived of his libertie, the towne hath beene forced to mentayne him and his famyly, beinge five in nomber for most part, which hath put the Towne to exterordinerie cost, and alltogether undon the poore man: and the rest of the poore inhabitants beinge that they have beene deprived of goinge to markett at Warrington or else wheare. Now yor petticioners humbly desire . . . some Course whereby they may bee Relei[v]ed . . . or that there proporsian of the Ley alredy gathered For the poore of Liverpoole, which yet remeynes in the hands of there Constable, as alsoe

another Ley for the poore of the parrish of Prescott, may . . . be granted for the reliefe only of the seid famyley and the rest of the poore inhabitants."

No general order was made, but as the document is endorsed "an accompt to bee made of the charge and Certified upon oath to Mr. Aspinwall," we may take it that he would, upon receipt of the account, grant their wish.

It will have been noticed that the Great Sankey petition refers to a ley for the poor of Prescot. In the autumn of 1652 that parish, particularly the townships of Prescot and Whiston, had become plague-stricken, and the following petition was addressed to the Justices :

"Forasmuch as it hath pleased God to visitt the Towne of Prescott with the plague (as is sustained in the judgment and opinion of doctor Crouch and doctor Walton who have severally viewed some of the dead bodies) by reason whereof the towne has for the space of a weeke and upwards been shutt up and the poore of the Towne by that means debarred and hindered of any manner of subsistence but what they could get in the Towne or what their charitable neighbors were pleased to bestowe upon them, insomuch as if speedy means be not taken for their reliefe there may be danger of them starving or breakinge out into the country : whereupon wee the inhabitants make bold to certify the number of the families and persons inhabiting who have not any meanes to subsist upon, being now debarred of their liberty, trade, and traffic, recommending the same to the . . . justices of peace . . . to take care and make provision for the said people."

An order was made taxing the countryside within five miles of Prescot and Whiston, but several towns disputed their being within that radius. The following order made at Wigan on 17 January, 1652/3, resulted :

"Upon mocion on the behalfe of the Inhabitants of the severall Townes of Penketh, Asshton and Haydocke and others . . . , taxed for the poore and Infected persons within Prescott and Whiston, as beinge within the compasse of Five Myles of the said Infected Townes, alledging they are not within the said Compasse.

It is ordered . . . that all . . . of the said Townes that by comon Acceptacion are reputed to bee within . . . Five myles, shall, at or before Monday next, pay in their proporcionable parts of the said Taxe with Defaulcacion of the rest. And that untill the said day bee past noe distress to bee made."

Other reasons for the non-payment of the tax were made, as is shown by the following petitions from the townships of Halewood and Torbock :

"Whereas the Inhabitants of Halewood and Halebank were charged to pay to the use of the infected poore of Prescottt and Whiston the some of 3<sup>l</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> 10<sup>d</sup>, which by reason of the great feare and suspicion of the infeccion of the Plague in those parts could not with conveniency bee collected, against the tyme fixed for payment thereof, whereupon a Fyne was imposed upon either of the said Places . . . which the said Inhabitants humbly pray may bee taken off, they never refusing to Discharge either that or any other imposition. But in respect that severall lately are thereabouts deceased upon suspicion of the Plague or other such Dangerous Disease (for upon view of the Corps[es] it was Declared to bee the pestilence, and theirupon) not only the Constable and Leygatherer, but also all the said Inhabitants were in soe great feare, that they Durst not have familiarity or comerce with one another. In consideracion whereof (the money being now paid in) the said Inhabitants hope that the . . . Bench will omitt and forgive the said Fines."

Torbock. ". . . Whereas there is (and hath beene) a great visitation of sicknesse upon the people in the Townes of Prescot and Whiston, not unknowne (as yor petitioners conceive) unto yor worships : and that thereby [we] (beeing neare Inhabitants) were dayly oppressed to relieve them by reason of their continuall Outcries, and that eight of [our] families were confined and two Families sore Infected, yet have [we] been taxed and enjoined to pay . . . within the space of 5 weeks the summe of twelve pounds. Nowe therefore . . . [we] . . . craveinge that some restitution of money disbursed . . . may bee restored and reimbursed . . ., haveinge been (as you may conceive) in a most sad and deplorable condition, and allsoe that all Further taxacions in that kind may cease to bee charged . . . untill it may please God to bynd up and heale that sore disease of infection."

The latter was signed by "Thom: Hallsall, Henry Hewart, Edw: Kirkdall, Bryan Southworth, Henry East-

head, Thom: Tarbocke, Edward Holland, Henry Tyrer, Tho: Howard and Rich: Miller," and accompanying it is another petition which casts light upon the infection of Torbock. It is dated 17 January, 1652/3, and is signed by "Bryan Sothworth, Paule Orme, Thomas Halsall, Nicholas Plesington, Edward Holland, Thomas Haward, Willim: Tyrer and John Heyes :

" . . . Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God to permit the infeccion of the Plague to enter into the said Towneship, especially into a certaine mancion house called Dacres-bridge house, wherein one Rich: Pemberton was the Tenant, who upon the violent Decease of his first Child fled away with his Familie into Whiston, and are all since dead of the said Sicknes (except one young Girle of about 8 years of age who is alsoe infected of the same) they having in the night tyme carryed away with them all theire Cattell and household goods of any worth, leaving only some old Chests, Bedstids, and such lyke lumber.

Now forasmuch as there is urgent necessity for cleansing of the said house, not onely for freeing . . . [us] . . . from great trouble and cost . . . susteyned in keeping constant watch . . . ever since the first erupcion of the said sicknes, for the safety (by God's blessing) of yor Petitioners and of Strangers and travellers, the said house being scituate in the Direct road between Warrington and Liverpoole.

May it please yor good worships (now it is agreed the said house shalbee forthwith made cleere) to grant such power unto . . . [us] . . . that the said goods (such as they are) may bee sould towards pay of the Cleansers thereof, Notsomuch for any considerable value of the same, But that none will (enter into the said house or) intermeddle therewith, without first Order had from your worships for feare hereafter to bee troubled for the Debts and engagements of the said Rich: Pemberton."

There is a note on the document to the effect that " the goods above said are valued unto one pound 13<sup>d</sup>."

The following is another order made at the Wigan Sessions on 17 January relating to the infection of Prescot and Whiston :

" Yt is ordered . . . that all and every the Townes within the Compage of Five Myles of Prescott and Whiston shall . . . Assist

the said Townes of Prescott and Whiston in keepinge of watch and ward about the said Townes proporcionably, and that the Constables of the same Townes shall see this Order Duely performed."

Even this seemingly straightforward order was not carried out smoothly, as is shown by the following petition of the inhabitants of Bold :

" . . . At the last Sessions of Peace holden at Wigan the Township of Bold (amongst severall other Townships) was Orderd to Contribute unto the Inhabitants of Eccleston for keepinge of watch within the said Towne of Eccleston to prevent the Inhabitants and Infected persons within the Townships of Prescott and Whiston from wandringe abroad and begginge. Now soe it is may please yor worships that yor Petitioners have Contributed according to the said order, notwithstandinge the poore people within the same Townships of Prescott and Whiston doe breake forthe of the same Townes and wander abroad into the Township of Bold, to the greate danger of the Inhabitants of the same Towne.

. . . Yor petitioners humbly crave yor worships to . . . Discharge yor petitioners from the said Contribucion, and Your petitioners will keepe due watch within Bold aforesaid for their owne safegard."

At the same Wigan Sessions the tax for the relief of Prescot and Whiston was extended to cover the whole county :

" Forasmuch as it playnly appeareth . . . that . . . Prescott and Whiston are, and have beene long, visited with the plague, and the Cuntry thereabouts exposed to very great danger, the poore within the said townships beeing very numerous and indigent, amounting to the number of seaven hundred persons and above that are no waies able to subsist without releeffe, and for whose releeffe the places adiacent have beene severall tymes taxed, and Colleccions made according to lawe. And by Certificate it appears . . . that severall persons have both ingaged themselves and disbursed great somes of money for supplying with some releeffe the said poore people and infected persons, and for restraint of them from wandringe abroad to the apparent danger and hazard of the cuntry. . . . this Court . . . doth order that the some of three hundred pounds shalbee presently taxed, assessed, collected, levyed, and gathered by distresse and

sale of goods, within this County by the now high constables of the severall hundreds . . . and . . . by them payed over unto Capt. John Case of Read Hasles, who is appointed receavor thereof, and to bee by him payed and disbursed for releeffe of the said poore and infected persons. . . .”

As was so frequent, orders had to be made to speed up the collections. The following were made at the Preston Sessions on 21 April, 1653, and at Wigan Sessions four days later, respectively :

“ Ytt is ordered . . . that Mr. Nicholas Butler and Mr. Richard Cowborne, late high Constables . . . of Amoundernes, shall furthwith pay unto Captaine John Case all the Arreares of one Fifteene through the said hundred formerly allowed for Liverpoole, which was, by order of the Justices at the Sherriffs table in the Assizes weeke laste, ordered for the poore in Prescott and Whiston, notwithstandinge the Allegacions nowe made by the said Mr. Butler to the Contrary. . . .”

“ Ytt is ordered by this Court that the constables of Ashton and Haydocke shall . . . pay in all the moneys taxed upon the said Townships for . . . Prescott and Whiston as beinge within the Compasse of Five myles . . . and likewise all other moneys they are in Arreare . . . for the . . . said poore and Infected persons . . . ; and that the Constables of Knowsley and Hyton shall Accordingly pay in all the moneys they are in Arreare for A seacnd months charge unto the poore and Infected. . . .”

It seems that the tax ordered to be raised in January had been respited, but the following order, also made at Wigan on 25 April, provided for its being raised because the infection continued :

“ Whereas at the Sessions here holden in January last . . . it was ordered that the sume of Three hundred pounds should bee taxed upon this County . . . And whereas at the Sheriffs table the justices of peace . . . were pleased to respite the said tax until this present Sessions, allowinge unto the said poore in the meane tyme the moneys that were formerly allowed for Liverpoole, which did amount unto one hundred Twenty seven pounds Twelve shillings five pence or thereabouts, for supply of their present necessity. Nowe for that this Court hath received Certificate under the hands of severall persons of quality that . . .

Prescott and Whiston are still visited, and doe remaine as formerly confined, the sicknes beinge broken out within these fewe dayes in severall fresh houses, and that at present the poore . . . are in number five hundred and od persons. Therefore this Court doth order that the said former tax . . . shall furthwith bee Collected. . . .”

An interesting petition relating to the infection of Prescot was presented at the Wigan Sessions of 16 January, 1653/4 :

“ The humble petition of Lawrence Croft sheweth . . . that your Petitioner was hired and agreed withall by William Lyme and Thomas Walles, Late Cunstables of the Towne of Prescott in the tyme of the Late Infeccion there, for Clensing of the howses . . . and for other services then to bee done. For which Service hee was to receive weekly the some of xxvj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup>, and for every infected Corps that hee should Bury v<sup>s</sup>, and also xl<sup>s</sup> for one monethes Cabbining after. Of which there is unpaid for nine weekes wages the some of xij<sup>l</sup>, and for the Buriall of lxiiij persons att v<sup>s</sup> the head xvj<sup>l</sup>, and for one monethes Cabbining xl<sup>s</sup>. After which yor petitioner was enforced to stay in the same Cabbin one fortnight Longer before hee could procure his Discharge, to his greate Losse. May it therefore please yor worships . . . to take course that yor poore petitioner may bee satisfied what is due to him for his paines and hazard.”

The plea was heard and it was “ ordered . . . that the said Willm. Leyme and Thomas Wall shall, at or before the next Sessions . . . after Easter next, pay unto the said Croft the sume of Fifteene pounds.”

A sidelight on the outbreak in Whiston comes from a petition which states that the great uncle of John Ackers died in September, 1652, his uncle about October, and his father at the same time “ all of them dying of the sore visitation of the plague.”

As late as 1656 Doctor Crouch, who, with Doctor Walton, judged the town of Prescot to be plague-stricken, had difficulty in getting his expenses repaid, for on 21 April and 14 July the following orders respectively were made at the Ormskirk Sessions :

"The petition of Doctor Symon Crouch, now exhibited to the Court, concerninge some moneys pretended to bee due unto him for his medicaments Dispended and paines taken att the tyme of the Infeccion of the Plague in Prescottt, Whiston, Rainhill, and Hyton, is referred to Colonel Gilbte. Ireland and Maior John Fox, who are desired by this Court to appoint some Convenient tyme and call the said Doctor Crouch and the then Constables of Prescottt before them and examyne the trueth of the said Peticion and what may iustly appeare to pertain, and then make such order therein as they shall thinke fitt."

"Itt is ordered . . . that Captaine John Case shall attend Colonel Gilbert Ireland or Maior John Fox att such tyme as eyther of them shall appoint, and give an accmpt of the moneys by him received or in any wise arreare that was layed for the late poore infected persons within Prescottt and other townes adiacent. And what is found to bee in his hands or in arreare This Court doth desire the said Colonel Ireland or Maior Fox to order it to bee payed unto Doctor Symon Crouch towards the Discharge of what is Due unto him. . . ."

The corporation of Wigan took precautions to prevent their town becoming infected, by prohibiting any inhabitants making any sort of contact with the stricken places. Evidently all were not so cautious as they might have been, for on 2 October, 1652, James Molyneux, schoolmaster, was brought before the Court Leet charged with "goeing unto a suspected place and dangerous for the sickenes, contrary to Mr. Maior's command." And at the Court Leet held on 16 April, 1653, information was laid against Henry Reynolds of Wigan, accusing him of telling Roger Anderton of Birchley, on 12 October, 1652, that he was going to Whiston "to helpe the poor Infected disordered people there visited with the plague or Infeccious Sicknes."

In January, 1652/3, Bootle was plague-stricken again, as is shown by the following petition to the Bench at Wigan on 25 April, 1653:

". . . Whereas the 4th part of one Fifteene was heretofore ordered to be paid unto them and other Townes, they have but only received xx<sup>1</sup> parte thereof, and their Towneship being again

vized since January last and yet soe continues, they desire a speedie payment of the arreares. And alsoe a further allowance in regard of this their seacond vizitacion, they haveing already laid out much money for a present suply, until further releeffe might be obtained from yor worships in open sessions. Alsoe they humbly desire that a mistake in the Rowle for the last 15 which was granted for Liverpoole and them and some other Towneshipp, and since ordered to be paid over unto Prescott and Whiston, may be certified, there being 20<sup>s</sup> and 10<sup>d</sup> charged upon Bootle and as much upon Lynaker, which are both but one Towneshipp, and ought but to pay only 20<sup>s</sup> and 10<sup>d</sup>, equall with Kirkdall, for which Duple Charge the High Constable hath distrained certaine Goods and yet doth detaine them. . . .”

The results of this petition are not known, there being no further reference to it among the Sessions records.

In March, 1653, the town of Ormskirk became infected, as is shown by the following petition dated 23 April, 1653 :

“Maie itt please yor Worships to bee Certifyed that the towne of Ormeskirke hath beene hitherto confyned by the heaveie Judgment of the Pestilence since the xxvij<sup>th</sup> of March last, Dureinge which tyme Wee the Constable and other of the Inhabitants within that Towne have upon our owne Charge and creditt mentained the Poore therein, consistinge of above 400 persons, as maie appeare unto you by a List hereunto annexed [See Appendix D]. That wee are not able to mentaine them any Longer without contribucion from the Country, which wee humblie submitt unto yor consideracion.”

This was signed by “Myles Beaton, constable, Henry Lathom, Roberte Lathom, Tho: Moorecroffte, Richard Morcroft, Gilbert Foxcroft, and Henry Maudsley,” and has been endorsed “110<sup>l</sup> to bee taxed in the hundred for 1 month and soe to continue soe long as two next [Justices] shall order ; to bee paid to Tho: Farrer ; to bee layed in an equal way betwixt oxley and souldier ley.”

As usual, the arrears were many, and the two following orders were made at Ormskirk Sessions on 18 July and Wigan Sessions on 10 October, 1653, respectively :

"It is ordered . . . that the high Constables within this hundred of [West] Derby shall furthwith collect, levy, and gather in the arrears of one hundred and ten pounds allowed for . . . Ormiskirke, and make payment thereof to Thomas Farrer of Ormiskirke . . . and that both the high Constables and Treasurer to make their Accompts at the next privy Sessions at Ormiskirke. . . ."

"Ytt is ordered . . . that the high Constables within the hundred of [West] Derby shall . . . pay in all these moneys by them received or were to receive, for . . . Ormiskirk, unto Thomas Farrer, without expecting any allowance for their paines in Colleccion thereof. . . ."

Unfortunately there is a gap in the Ormskirk registers from 1644 to 1656, so that we cannot discover the number of deaths.

Another south-western parish, Sefton, was affected in the years 1653 and 1654, for although there were normally only about 36 burials per year there were 69 in 1653 and 61 in 1654. The nearby Childwall parish had 53 burials in 1654, 80 in 1655, 55 in 1656, and 53 in 1657—the usual number being about 25 per year. Wigan burials show a rise from an average of about 12 to 31 in 1653.

In the year 1653 also, the two widely separated chaperies of Gorton and Coniston show an abnormal number of burials. In the former there were 23 as compared with a usual of about 9; and in the latter there were 18 as compared with a normal 4 or 5.

The end of plague in Lancashire was approaching. In 1655 it was in Preston again. Although there were usually about 70 deaths there in a year, in 1655 there were 147, 59 of them being in September and October. 1656 was more or less normal, but the two following years were decidedly unhealthy, there being 113 deaths in 1657 and 106 in 1658.

Great Harwood, where there were usually about 12 burials per year, had 26 in 1655. From October, 1655, to March, 1656, there were 133 burials at Bolton-le-Moors,

where normally there would have been about 45. Between April and August, 1657, there were 62 burials at Croston, where 20 would be a usual number; and in August, September and October of the same year 63 deaths occurred in the parish of Poulton-le-Fylde, where, under more ordinary circumstances there would have been about 17 in a similar period. At Sefton there were 76 burials in 1656 and 63 in 1657, the usual number being, as stated above, about 36 per year.

After the visitation of Preston in 1658 there does not appear to be any further outbreak of plague in Lancashire. But the fear of it remained, and on 2 November, 1664, the Corporation of Liverpool made the following order:

“ Upon consideracion of the spreading Contagion of the Plague in divers neighbouring Townes in Cheshire and other partes, and of the great Concourse of people usually from those partes att the tyme of the Faires kept in this Towne, Itt is generally voted, agreed, thought fitt, and soe ordered that the keeping of the Faire here on St. Martyn’s day next, the Eve and other usuall daies after, here accustomedly kept, shall on this present Exigent of danger (for this yeare) be absolutely forborne and forbidden, by open publicacion and notice thereof in the open Marketts, the next Markett day.”

The fear which could close the Fair, of such great importance to the trade of the town, must have been a great fear, and when the plague raged in London in 1665 it became greater still. In October of that year the Manchester Court Leet ordered that all precautions were to be taken to prevent “ the Infeccion of the Plauge of pestilence.” And a report from Wigan, dated 6 December, 1665, to the London Gazette, and published by that journal on 11 December, is of interest in this connection:

“ This town was startled at the Death of a Woman, who was found early in the morning before the dore of a poor cottage in the Highway within the limits of the Corporation. The Mayor of this Town was very industrious to find the cause of it, and upon the examination of three persons, that came with her into the

Town from Ireland, and many notorious circumstances, it appears that she was clear from any infection and that being with child, to avoid the shame among her friends, who are of good fashion and live not many miles from this place, she destroyed herself by poison."

A few years afterwards the plague disappeared, for all practical purposes, from this country and retired into the east from which it had come so many centuries before. None has been able to state a definite reason for this disappearance. It would seem probable that there is no single reason, but that a concatenation of circumstances was responsible. Chief among these should be placed the improvement of the sanitary conditions of the country as a whole ; and the better type of house which was taking the place of the rat-infested erections of mud and wattle which had been the residences of rich and poor alike for centuries. And a little later the coming of the brown rat completed the barrier against plague by driving out its plague-flea-bearing cousin, the black rat, which, having lived in such close domestic contact with man, had played so important a part in the disseminating of the disease.

#### 10. PLAGUE IN MODERN LANCASHIRE.

It may come as a surprise to some to learn that plague occurs from time to time in Lancashire of the twentieth century. In these days it is endemic in the Far East, and also occurs in South America ; and if it were not for the constant vigilance of the Sanitary Authority of the Port of Liverpool, the plague would spread itself through Lancashire again. Occasionally the bacillus does, as one might say, creep halfway through the alert fingers of the Inspectors, and a case of plague results, usually in some dock employee. But it does not get past the second line of defence, for the Public Health authorities of the city are quite aware of the danger, and there is little chance of an epidemic's occurring.