who suffered during the reigns of Charles II. and James VII., particularly those in honour of two female martyrs, who were drowned in the Bladenoch in 1685. Wigton was the site of a monastery, founded in 1267, for Dominican friars, by Dervorgille, daughter of Alan, the last lord of Galloway, and mother of John Balliol the Scotish king. This monas­tery never attained to eminence, and no remains of its ruins can now be traced. This latter remark is also applicable to the castle of Wigton, once a place of great importance. It fell into the hands of Edward I. in 1291. (c. I.)

Wigton, a market-town of the county of Cumberland. It is in the ward of Cumberland, twelve miles from Carlisle, and 305 miles from London, in the vicinity of the ruins of an ancient Roman work called *Caer Leol.* The market is on Tuesday. The population amounted in 1821 to 4056, and in 1831 to 4885 ; but the parish comprehends three other townships, and in 1831 contained 6501 inhabitants.

WILBERFORCE Cape, a rocky promontory on the north coast of New Holland, at the west entrance into the Gulf of Carpentaria. Long. 136. 33. E. Lat. 11. 52. S.

WILBERFORCE, William, was born at Hull on the 24th of August 1759. His father, a merchant of that town, traced his descent from an ancient family which had long possessed a large estate at Wilberfoss, in the east riding of the county of York. The father of Wilberforce died before his son had completed his tenth year, and he was then transferred to the care of a paternal uncle, on whose death the ample patrimony which he inherited from his father was largely increased. His uncle’s wife was a great admirer of Whitefield’s preaching ; and through her instru­mentality his early years were not suffered to pass away without permanent impressions of religion. From school, Wilberforce was transferred, at the age of seventeen, to St John’s College, Cambridge. On leaving college, he im­mediately entered upon active life. At the general elec­tion of 1780, when he had just completed his twenty-first year, he was returned to the House of Commons for his native town, and soon found his way into all fashionable and political society. At Cambridge he had formed an acquaintance with Mr Pitt, which speedily ripened into an affectionate union, that none of the vicissitudes of political life could afterwards dissolve. In the autumn of 1783, Wilberforce set out with Pitt for a tour in France; and on his return to England lie gave his friend most efficient sup­port in his memorable struggle against the majority of the House of Commons. At a public meeting held in the Castle Yard at York in March 1784, he attacked the mea­sures of the coalition with such eloquence and success that he was immediately nominated as a candidate for the repre­sentation of Yorkshire; and so strongly did the current of popular opinion flow in his favour, that in spite of the hitherto predominant influence of the great Whig families of that county, his opponents gave up the contest without venturing to the poll. In the autumn of 1784, accompani­ed by some female relations, and by the celebrated Isaac Milner, dean of Carlisle, he undertook a journey to the continent. This excursion forms a memorable era in his life ; for, through the influence of Milner, his early impres­sions of religion, which had been greatly dissipated, were revived, and a deep and fervent piety now took entire pos­session of his mind, and regulated the whole of his future conduct. In the year 1787, he was much occupied in con­certing measures for the reformation of manners ; and about the same time he became the founder of an association for the discouragement of vice. It was in this year also that Mr Wilberforce entered upon his labours in that great cause with which his name is unalterably associated, the aboli­tion of the slave-trade. To that cause he now dedicated his days and his nights, even to his closing hours. It was in 1789 that he first proposed the abolition of the slave- trade to the House of Commons; and the zeal, the pa­tience, the talents, and courage which he displayed dur­ing the many dispiriting delays and formidable difficulties which he had to encounter before the cause of justice and humanity finally triumphed, are above all praise. In 1797, he published his celebrated work on Practical Christianity, which met with such remarkable success that within half a year five editions had been called for. Not less than fifty large editions have now been published in England and America; and it has been translated into the French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and German languages. Eccle­siastics of every class, from old John Newton to the arch­bishop of Canterbury, welcomed it with the loudest ap­plause ; and Burke spent much of the two last days of his life in reading it, and said that he derived much comfort from its perusal. It would be difficult to overrate the in­fluence of this work in stemming the tide of irreligion and nominal Christianity, especially among the higher classes of society, and in giving a powerful impulse to that warmer and more earnest piety which has happily distinguished the last half-century. In 1807, after twenty years of anxiety and unremitting labour, Mr Wilberforce had the high grati­fication of seeing the slave-trade abolished, and that stain on our national character for ever obliterated. During the debate on the second reading of the abolition bill, when Sir Samuel Romilly entreated the young members of parliament to let this day’s event be a lesson to them how much the re­wards of virtue exceeded those of ambition, and then con­trasted the feelings of the emperor of the French in all his greatness, with those of that honourable individual who would this day lay his head upon his pillow, and remember that the slave-trade was no more, the whole house, surprised into forgetfulness of its ordinary habits, burst forth into accla­mations of applause ; a tribute of approbation “ such as was scarcely ever before given,” says Bishop Porteus, “ to any man sitting in his place in either house of parliament.’’ Though Mr Wilberforce survived the abolition of the slave- trade for more than a quarter of a century, he quitted the House of Commons in the year 1825. He had resigned thc representation of Yorkshire in 1812, on account of his declining health; and during the remainder of his parlia­mentary career he was returned for the borough of Brem­ber. The interval between the passing of the abolition bill and the close of his parliamentary labours was devoted to a ceaseless watchfulness over the interests of the African race. He lived to witness the consummation of the struggle for the abolition of slavery throughout the British dominions ; and the last public information he received was, that his country was willing to redeem itself from the national dis­grace at any sacrifice. He died July 27, 1833, when within a month of completing his seventy-fourth year, and was in­terred in Westminster Abbey, near the tombs of Pitt, Fox, and Canning. “ Few persons,” says Lord Brougham, “ have either reached a higher and more enviable place in the esteem of their fellow-creatures, or have better deserved the place they had gained, than William Wilberforce.” His immense influence was no doubt greatly owing to the homage paid to his personal character, but he possessed many other qualifi­cations which must of themselves have raised him to great eminence. As a public speaker, he enjoyed great and well- merited celebrity. His eloquence, though for the most part of the persuasive and pathetic kind, was also occasionally bold and impassioned ; and he possessed an extraordinary power of sarcasm, which, however, the singular kindness and gentle­ness of his disposition rarely permitted him to employ. Sir Samuel Romilly esteemed him “ the most efficient speaker in the House of Commons ;” and Pitt himself said repeatedly, “ of all the men I ever knew, Wilberforce has the greatest natural eloquence.” In politics, Mr Wilberforce uniform­ly acted on independent principles, and steadily refused all office through his whole life. Though strongly attached to Pitt, both by political opinions and by the ties of friend.