**STRAFFORD, THOMAS WENTWORTH,** Earl of (1593-1641), English statesman, son of Sir William Wentworth, of Wentworth Woodhouse, near Rotherham, a member of an ancient family long established there, and of Anne, daughter of Sir Robert Atkins of Stowell, Gloucestershire, was born on the 13th of April 1593, in London. He was educated at St John’s College, Cam­bridge, was admitted a student of the Inner Temple in 1607, and in 1611 was knighted and married Margaret, daughter of Francis Clifford, 4th earl of Cumberland. In 1614 he represented York­shire in the Addled Parliament, but, so far as is now known, it was not till the parliament of 1621, in which he sat for the same constituency, that he took part in the debates. His position towards the popular party was peculiar. He did not sympathize with their zeal for war with Spain, but James’s denial of the rights and privileges of parliament seems to have caused him to join in the vindication of the claims of the House of which he was a mem­ber, and he was a warm supporter of the protestation which drew down a sentence of dissolution upon the third parliament of James.

In 1622 Wentworth’s wife died, and in February 1625 he married Arabella Hoiles, daughter of the earl of Clare. He was returned for Pontefract to the parliament of 1624, but appears to have taken no part in the proceedings. He had no sympathy with the popular outcry against Spain nor for wars undertaken for religious considerations to the neglect of the practical interests of the country. He desired also to avoid foreign complications and a do first the business of the commonwealth.” To the advances of Buckingham he replied coldly that “ he was ready to serve him as an honest man and a gentleman.” In the first parliament of Charles I., June 1625, he again represented York­shire, and at once marked his hostility to the proposed war with Spain by supporting a motion for an adjournment before the house proceeded to business. He took part in the opposition to the demand made under the influence of Buckingham for war subsidies, and was consequently, after the dissolution in Novem­ber, made sheriff of Yorkshire, in order to exclude him from the parliament which met in 1626. Yet he had never taken up an attitude of antagonism to the king. His position was very different from that of the regular opposition. He was anxious to serve the Crown, but he disapproved of the king’s policy. In January 1626 he had asked for the presidency of the council of the North, and had visited and been favourably received by Buckingham. But after the dissolution of the parliament he was dismissed from the justiceship of the peace and the office of *custos rolulorum* of Yorkshire, to which he had been appointed in 1615, as the result probably of his resolution not to support the court in its design to force the country to contribute money without a parliamentary grant. At all events he refused in 1627 to contribute to the forced loan, and was imprisoned in consequence.

Wentworth’s position in the parliament of 1628 was a striking one. He joined the popular leaders in resistance to arbitrary taxation and imprisonment, but he tried to obtain his end with the least possible infringement of the prerogative of the Crown, to which he looked as a reserve force in times of crisis. With the approbation of the House he led the movement for a bill which would have secured the liberties of the subject as completely as the Petition of Right afterwards did, but in a manner less offen­sive to the king. The proposal was wrecked between the uncom­promising demands of the parliamentary party who would give nothing to the prerogative and Charles’s refusal to make the necessary concessions, and the leadership was thus snatched from Wentworth’s hands by Eliot and Coke. Later in the session he fell into conflict with Eliot, as, though he supported the Petition of Right in substance, he was anxious to come to a compromise with the Lords, so as to leave room to the king to act unchecked in special emergencies.

On the 22nd of July 1628, not long after the prorogation, Wentworth was created Baron Wentworth, and received a promise of the presidentship of the Council of the North at the next vacancy. This implied no change of principle whatever. He was now at variance with the parliamentary party on two great subjects of policy, disapproving both of the intention of parliament to seize the powers of the executive and also its inclination towards puritanism. When once the breach was made it naturally grew wider, partly from the engrossing energy which each party put into its work, and partly from the personal animosities which of necessity arose. Such and no other was the nature of Wentworth’s so-called “apostacy.”

As yet Wentworth took no part in the general government of the country. In December he became Viscount Wentworth and president of the Council of the North. In the speech delivered at York on his taking office he announced his intention, almost in the words of Bacon, of doing his utmost to bind up the prerogative of the Crown and the liberties pf the subject in indis­tinguishable union. “ Whoever,” he said, “ ravels forth into questions the right of a king and of a people shall never be able to wrap them up again into the comeliness and order he found them.” His government here was characterized by the same feature which afterwards marked his administration in Ireland and which it was the gravest charge in his impeachment that he intended to introduce into the whole English administration, namely the attempt to centralize all power with the executive at the expense of the individual in defiance of those constitutional liberties which ran counter to and impeded this policy.

The session of 1629 ended in a breach between the king and the parliament which made the task of a moderator hopeless. Wentworth had to choose between helping a Puritan House of Commorfs to dominate the king and helping the king to dominate a Puritan House of Commons. He instinctively chose the latter course, and he threw himself into the work of repression with characteristic energy, as if the establishment of the royal power was the one thing needful. Yet even when he was most resolute in crushing resistance he held that he and not his antagonists were maintaining the old constitution, which they had attempted to alter by claiming supremacy for parliament.

In November 1629 Wentworth became a privy councillor. In October 1631 he lost his second wife, and in October 1632 he married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Godfrey Rhodes. In January 1632 he had been named lord-deputy of Ireland, and arrived in Dublin in July 1633.

Here he had to deal with a people who had not arrived at national cohesion, and amongst whom English colonists had been from time to time introduced, some of them, like the early Norman settlers, being Roman Catholics, whilst the later im­portations stood aloof and preserved their Protestantism. In his government here he showed the most remarkable abilities as a ruler, "The lord deputy of Ireland,” wrote Sir Thomas Roe to the queen of Bohemia, "doth great wonders and governs like a king, and hath taught that kingdom to show us an example of envy, by having parliaments and knowing wisely how to use them.” He reformed the administration, getting rid summarily of the inefficient English officials. He succeeded in so manipulating the parliaments that he obtained the necessary grants, and secured their co-operation in various useful legis­lative enactments. He set on foot a new victualling trade with Spain, established or promoted the linen manufacture, and encouraged the development of the resources of the country in many directions. The customs rose from a little over £25,o∞ in 1633-1634 to £57,000 in 1637-1638. He raised an army. He swept the pirates from the seas. He reformed and instilled life into the Church and rescued church property. His strong and even administration broke down the tyranny of the great men over the poor. Such was the government of "Thorough,” as Strafford expresses it. Yet these good measures were all carried out by arbitrary methods which diminished their use­fulness and their stability. Their aim moreover was not the prosperity of the Irish community but the benefit to the English exchequer, and Strafford suppressed the trade in cloth “ lest it should be a means to prejudice that staple commodity of Eng­land.”@@1 Extraordinary acts of despotism took place, as in the case of Esmond, Lord Chancellor Loftus and Lord Mountnorris, the last of whom Strafford caused to be sentenced to death

@@@1 Strafford’s Report of 1636. *Cat. of State Papers; Irish, 1633- 1647,* p. 134.