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A HISTORY OF LIVERPOOL

RAMSAY MUIR

M.A.

ANDREW CLODES AND JOHN RANKIN
PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY IN
THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

MAPS & ILLUSTRATIONS

SECOND EDITION

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PUBLISHED FOR THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
OF LIVERPOOL BY WILLIAMS & NORGATE,
HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W.C. 1907.

Frontispiece

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To

John Rankin, Esq.

Preface

THIS book is an attempt to present the life-story of the community of Liverpool in a concise and consecutive narrative, designed rather for the citizen than for the professed historical student. It makes no claim to be regarded as a final or authoritative treatment of its subject; for, though it contains new facts or new views upon a good many points, its author is well aware that a vast deal of painstaking investigation will still be necessary before any such treatment will be possible. On the other hand it does not aim at being suitable for use in elementary schools: I am glad to think that a little book, designed for that purpose, is being prepared by an abler pen. Nor does this book pretend to supersede preceding works on the same theme: its scale and plan having necessitated the omission of great masses of fact for which the inquirer will still repair to BAINES and PICTON.

In view of the purpose of the book, it has been thought wise not to load its pages with references to authorities. I have, however, added in an appendix a short descriptive essay on the principal sources from which information can be drawn on the history of Liverpool. Perhaps I may take this opportunity to say that on all questions related to the vexed and difficult subject of municipal

government I have assumed without argument the conclusions put forward in my Introduction to the *History of Municipal Government in Liverpool*. That work has now been before the public for eight months; and as during that time its conclusions have not on any material point been refuted or even impugned, I have felt myself justified in assuming that they were accepted.

I owe many and deep acknowledgments. Mr. WILLIAM FARRER has placed me under an inexpressible obligation by lending me his splendid collection of transcripts, etc., for the mediaeval period; I have had the advantage of being able to use Miss E. M. PLATT's voluminous and painstaking transcripts for a later period; and Mr. R. J. MCALPINE has placed at my disposal his large MSS. collections for the History of Municipal Government in Liverpool during the Nineteenth Century. I do not attempt to enumerate my obligations to those scholars whose work has been made available by publication: perhaps they will regard the Appendix as one long expression of obligation.

Professor MACKAY, Mr. W. FERGUSSON IRVINE, F.S.A., Mr. R. D. RADCLIFFE, F.S.A., Mr. J. H. LUMBY, and Mr. T. H. GRAHAM have been good enough to read my proofs for me, in whole or in part, and have saved me from many blunders. The proofs of the difficult final chapter (in which I have solved the difficulty of knowing what and whom to mention by omitting the bulk of the facts, and almost all names) have been also very

kindly read for me by the VICE-CHANCELLOR of the University, the TOWN CLERK (Mr. E. R. PICKMERE) and the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH (Dr. E. W. HOPE). With such generous aid, I am almost encouraged to feel that the book *ought* to be a good one. But I am responsible not only for any blunders which these kindly critics may have overlooked, but also for any deeper defects which they may have felt to be beyond remedy.

My great debt to those who have provided me with the illustrations by which the book is embellished is duly acknowledged in the notes which I have appended to the 'List of Illustrations.'

In conclusion, it is inevitable that this succinct rendering of a long story should contain slips of detail or mistakes of emphasis, as well as (I doubt not) more serious errors. I shall be much indebted to any reader who will be good enough to indicate to me any of these which he may discover.

RAMSAY MUIR

The University,
Liverpool,
Easter, 1907

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Three-quarters scale of the original. Reproduced by kind permission of the Town Clerk, from a photograph by Brown, Barnes and Bell. An exact and very beautiful facsimile is issued by the Corporation.

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From Gregson's *Portfolio of Fragments*. From an oil-painting by Richard Wright, a Liverpool artist, 1735-1765 (?). The water-line is shown coming up to the edge of St. Nicholas' Churchyard and the outer wall of the Tower, over the made ground now occupied by the Pier-head and the dock railway. The spire of St. Nicholas' here shown is that which fell in 1810.

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10. LONDON ROAD AND THE GALLOWS MILLS.
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11. MAP OF LIVERPOOL IN 1725 . . . *To face page* 176

This is the first surveyed map of Liverpool, made by John Chadwick in 1725 (*see* pp. 179, 180). Note especially the position of the old dock which was not long completed when the map was made, and the line of streets representing the Pool. It should be studied in connection with Buck's view, taken at about the same time.

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A History of Liverpool

Introduction

It is only necessary to glance at the map to see why Liverpool has become the greatest of British ports. The city lies, as nearly as may be, at the exact centre of the British Isles. Seated on the slopes of a low ridge, she looks down upon a great estuary, which is sheltered from all winds but the north-west and (thanks to its narrow mouth) is scoured out twice a day by the rush of racing tides. This estuary opens upon the central reach of the only purely British sea, which laves the shores equally of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, and leads, round the north and south of Ireland, into the open waters of the Atlantic, the highroad to all the world. To the south and east the estuary extends towards the centre of England. On the one hand lie the clustered and populous towns of Lancashire, with its mines and factories, the busiest tract of land in all the world; on the other hand the plain of Cheshire stretches between the mountains of Derbyshire and those of Wales, forming the one great gateway (with the exception of the lower Severn Valley) in the long chain of mountain land which cuts off the west coast of

England from the main mass of the country. Through the Cheshire gap, as geographers call it, the Romans drove their roads to the west and north; and to-day roads, railways and canals converge upon it, and make it the channel of communication between midland and southern England, and the great central port of the British Isles.

Liverpool would have been a great city if she had been nothing but the port of Lancashire. But she is far more than that. Even before the day of railways the broad gateway of Cheshire opened to her the trade of the greater part of England, and the waters of the Irish Sea gave her the trade of Ireland, Wales and Scotland. She is the meeting place of the Four Kingdoms, with more Welsh citizens than any Welsh town but Cardiff, more Irish citizens than any Irish town but Dublin and Belfast, more Scottish citizens than any but some three or four of the great towns of Scotland. The height of her greatness only came, indeed, when she reached beyond these nearer seas, captured the trade of Africa and America, and became the gateway not of England only but of Europe, to the west. But even before that, her geographical position had secured her place among the most flourishing of English towns.

It may perhaps seem difficult to understand why, with such advantages of position, Liverpool was so long in establishing her supremacy. But it was only very slowly that these sources of her

wealth began to be opened up. Until the seventeenth century all the main connexions of England, both in trade and in civilisation, were with the opposite coasts of Europe. All her own wealth was concentrated in the low and fat lands of the south and east; the north lay desolate, savage and very thinly peopled. It was not till the eighteenth century that the mineral wealth of Lancashire began to be developed, or the cotton industry to be fostered by the fortunate moistness of her climate; and, apart from mines and climate, Lancashire is a poor county. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, Lancashire was one of the least important counties of England; and she was isolated from the rest by the mountains on the east and by a range of marshes on the south.

Even from inland Lancashire Liverpool was long cut off by the marshes which lay between Prescot and Ormskirk on the north-east, and by Chat Moss on the south-east; she was hemmed into the most isolated corner of an isolated county. Moreover, her estuary, though it led inland, did not lead to navigable rivers. The streams that run into the Mersey estuary—the Mersey itself, the Irwell, the Weaver—run short courses from the neighbouring hills, and cannot compare with the rivers of the east, which trace long and sinuous courses through level lands, and are in many cases navigable for boats for many miles from the sea.

And finally, so long as the channel of the Dee estuary remained open and unsilted, Liverpool

was faced by a serious rival for the trade even of Ireland in Chester, which was also admirably placed for commanding the northern roads into Wales, and, being an ancient city of the first military importance, had on its side all the advantages of prestige.] [From the beginning of its history, in spite of Chester, Liverpool always commanded some share of the Irish trade, by virtue of her position.] But the Irish trade was never great until, in the Tudor period, the real subjugation of that unhappy country was begun. [Thus the great natural advantages of her position were largely nullified for Liverpool, during many centuries, by a combination of adverse circumstances; a poor and thinly peopled surrounding country; isolation; great physical obstacles to inland communication; a lack of natural waterways; a successful rival long established and close at hand. All these obstacles had to be overcome, either by the energy of her townsmen, or by the development of events, before the town rose to a place among the great trading centres of the world.]

[The story of the gradual disappearance of these obstacles forms the main thread of the history of Liverpool. The chief causes of her ultimate victory were no doubt beyond her control—the discovery of America, the transference of the main English trade-routes from the North Sea to the Atlantic, the rapid development of the cotton industry by the great inventions of the eighteenth century—these were movements over

which not the most vigorous groups of citizens could have exercised any material influence.[7] Yet the townsmen proved themselves worthy and able to make use of these opportunities when they came, by the constant and successful struggle which they carried on against the nearer obstacles to their success. The driving of roads over the surrounding marshes, the making of canals, the deepening of shallow streams, the building of railways, the creation of safe harbourage in the first docks ever built in England—these were activities in which the townsmen took their full share; and it was the vigour and enterprise which they showed in these regards which gave to them their ultimate victory over rival ports, such as Bristol, which started with every advantage.

These enterprises, indeed, belong to the later part of the story of the town, beginning in the latter half of the seventeenth century. But they were preceded by other long and obscure struggles which paved the way for them. In almost ceaseless resistance to the feudal lords of the town, to the king, and to the extravagant claims of the rival port of Chester, the townsmen of Liverpool gradually emancipated themselves, taught themselves self-reliance, and established a tradition of vigour. They also made great material gains; built up for the town a large corporate property; got possession of the trade dues, which elsewhere were under external control; and made Liverpool a free town and a free and cheap port. Without the long struggles of the obscure burghers of the

Middle Age, the vigorous corporate action and immense commercial advance of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would have been difficult if not impossible. And even if it be true that the real beginning of Liverpool as a town of any importance belongs to a late period, yet it is in no small degree to be placed to the credit of the humble and in most cases nameless townsmen who fought for freedom in the long centuries of small things. And so the dim and difficult story of the Middle Age is an essential part of our narrative. It has more than a mere antiquarian interest; it is vital to the understanding of the more splendid progress of the later ages.

CHAPTER I

The Berewick of Liverpool, 1066-1207

BEFORE the end of the eleventh century the history of Liverpool is a blank. There is no means of knowing when or by whom the first settlement was made on the site of the future city; it is not even possible to say from which of the many races who have dwelt in South Lancashire the place got its name, for the name of Liverpool is a puzzle to the etymologists.

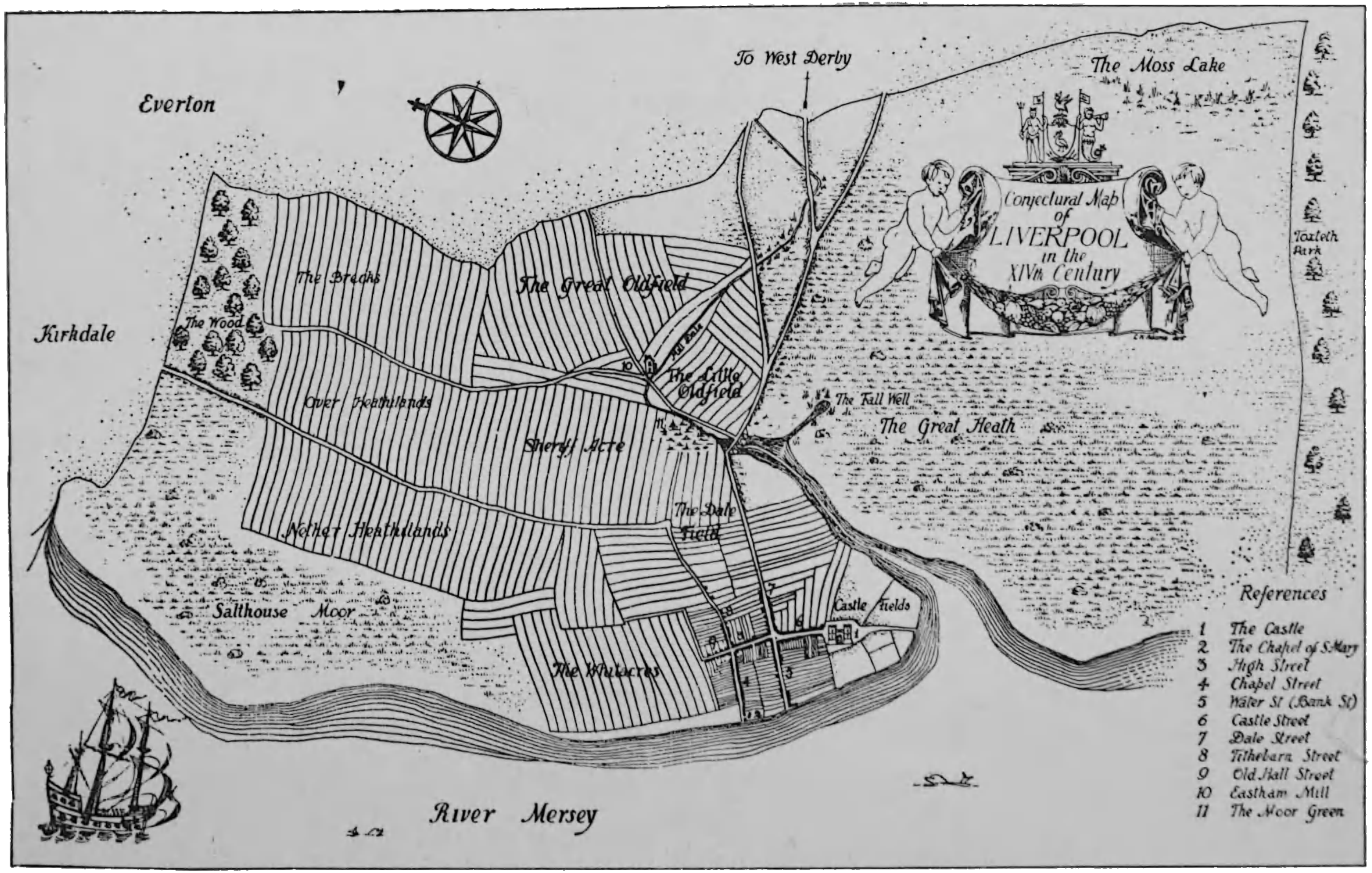
Our earliest information comes from those diligent commissioners whom William the Conqueror sent round the country to discover the extent of its taxable resources, and whose investigations were the basis of Domesday Book. But even they have strangely little to tell us. They do not even mention Liverpool by name, and it is only by inference that we can gather some notion of what the place was like at this period.

The Domesday commissioners found Lancashire a very desolate and thinly peopled county, covered with forests, moors and marshes, amid which small clearings were sparsely scattered, each peopled by a handful of serfs. The West Derby hundred, which extended from the modern Southport to Hale and inland nearly to Wigan, was the most

populous part of the county, containing sixty-six of these cultivated clearings or townships. But even in the West Derby hundred, nine-tenths of the total area lay waste, and the total population only amounted to some 3,000. In Western Europe there were few more remote and isolated corners.

Among the settlements in the West Derby hundred several are mentioned by the Domesday commissioner which have now been submerged by the advancing tide of Liverpool's brick and mortar: Crosby, Litherland, Bootle, Walton, Kirkdale, Esmedun or Smithdown, Wavertree and Toxteth. But the most important of these settlements was that of West Derby itself. It was, in a sense, the capital of the whole district. It had, at this time or soon after, a castle of some importance. It was the seat of the hundred court, to which cases came from all the townships. And it had dependent upon it a group of half-a-dozen small clearings, called 'berewicks,' which the Domesday commissioners did not even think it worth their while to name. One of these 'berewicks' was Liverpool. And though neither the Domesday commissioners nor anyone else has a word to say to us about it, it is possible to form a very fair idea of what this little 'berewick,' the humble ancestor of the great city, must have been like.

First let us try to imagine its geographical surroundings. An explorer who penetrated the silent waters of the Mersey estuary at this period,


To West Derby
Everton
The Moss Lake
Conjectural Map of LIVERPOOL in the XIVth Century
Toxteth Park
The Brechs
The Great Oldfield
Kirkdale
The Wood
Kall Brook
The Little Oldfield
Over Heathlands
The Kall Well
The Great Heath
Sherif Acre
Nether Heathlands
The Dale Field
Castle Fields
Salthouse Moor
The Whitacres
River Mersey
References
1 The Castle
2 The Chapel of S.Mary
3 High Street
4 Chapel Street
5 Water St (Bank St)
6 Castle Street
7 Dale Street
8 Tithebarn Street
9 Old Hall Street
10 Eastham Mill
11 The Moor Green

after he had passed a line of sandhills which ran along the coast as far south as Kirkdale and concealed the few scattered patches of cultivation behind, would have come to a small tidal creek, which entered the Lancashire shore from the estuary, and, running inland in a north-easterly direction for nearly half a mile, enclosed a small triangular peninsula, a low ridge of ground, rising gently from the north until it reached its highest point (some fifty feet above sea level) at the southern point or apex of the triangle, overlooking the entrance of the creek.

This creek was the Liverpool Pool, which until the eighteenth century (when the earliest dock was made out of its mouth) formed the dominant feature of Liverpool geography, and was probably the cause of the creation of a little town here. The Pool left the river where the Custom-house now stands, and its course is marked by the line of Paradise Street, Whitechapel, and the Old Haymarket. To the south and east of it, where Lime Street, Church Street, Bold Street are to-day, the ground lay waste as far as the boundary of the neighbouring township of Toxteth, marked by the line of Parliament Street. To the north and west of the Pool lay the handful of mud hovels which formed the berewick of Liverpool. They probably lay somewhere about the site of the Town Hall.

East and north of the hamlet were cultivated fields, divided into long and narrow strips, separated from one another not by hedges, but by balks

of turf. Each of the villagers probably held two or three of these strips, and the rest belonged to the lord of the manor; the whole being cultivated by the villagers working together as a gang, with one of themselves for reeve or foreman, under the direction of the bailiff of the West Derby manor.

Behind the village and its fields, our imaginary explorer would see a long ridge of hill, varying in height from one to two hundred feet, and probably covered for the most part with heather and gorse. At one point on this ridge, a little to the north-east of our hamlet, there lay another 'berewick,' that of Everton; further south again a level stretch of ground, half way up the hill and covering the ground between the modern Hope Street and Crown Street, was occupied by a marsh, later known as the Moss Lake. It was overlooked by a rocky knoll, the Brown-low, or hill, where the University now stands. And past the Brown-low a little stream ran down the hill from the Moss Lake, emptying itself into the Pool near the bottom of the modern William Brown Street.

Behind the long ridge of hill, four miles from the estuary, was the parent manor of West Derby, to which there ran a track from the hamlet, following the line of Dale Street down to the upper end of the Pool, and then climbing the hill by the line of London Road. By this track the serfs went to and from the parent manor; and probably their journeys seldom extended further. Another track led from the hamlet

through the fields to the north towards Walton, where was the parish church that served for all this district.

So much we may safely say about the external aspect of our little hamlet, as we dimly peer at it through the mist of years. As for the life of its humble inhabitants, we can only guess from what we know of other similar places. The chroniclers have nothing to tell us about the doings of this handful of serfs. So far as they are interested in Lancashire at all, they are concerned only with the ravages and rebellions of the great lords to whom the serfs belonged; and these have little interest for us. Liverpool passed from one lord to another repeatedly during the hundred years following the Conquest, as part of the vast estate of South Lancashire. But only once does any of these changes seem to have any direct effect upon the history of Liverpool. Henry II, who held these lands in his own hands for a while before making them over to his son John, made a grant of Liverpool, with some other estates, to one Warin, Constable of Lancaster castle. The deed by which this grant was made is lost, but another deed survives, dating from about 1191, in which John, after taking possession of the estates, confirmed to Warin's son, Henry, the grant which had been made to his father. This document is the oldest in which the name of Liverpool is mentioned. But of the way in which Warin or Henry treated Liverpool we know nothing. Whether they lived

there, or ever even visited it; whether they were good lords or bad; we know nothing at all, either about them or any other lords of the bercwick of Liverpool.

Yet the most important fact about the inhabitants of the hamlet in this period was that they were the serfs of a lord; and little as we know about them, we know what their state of serfdom meant. It meant that, in addition to the work they did on the lord's land, they owed him a variety of other services and dues. It meant that they might not leave the land; they were bound to it for life, part of the live-stock of the estate, going with it if it were sold or given away. They might not give their daughters in marriage without the lord's consent. They must send their corn to the lord's mill to be ground, and pay for the grinding. They must bake their bread in the lord's oven, and pay for the baking. Finally, they must regularly attend the lord's court, to which they were subject. Perhaps at first they attended the courts in West Derby; but probably a court existed in Liverpool itself, presided over by the lord's steward, where breaches of discipline or failure to perform due service would be dealt with. Here also would be issued any new regulations or bye-laws affecting the township.

But if the serfs were very much at the mercy of their master, there were some aspects in which their condition showed promise of development. If the lord's court had juris-

diction over them, they themselves constituted the court. The steward was only the president; and the tenants acted as the judges to the extent of declaring what was 'the custom of the town-ship' on any question in dispute. Here was the feeble germ of future self-government.

Probably a good part of the livelihood of these serfs consisted in fishing. The Pool was an excellent place for drawing up fishermen's cobles out of reach of the swift currents of the estuary. The Mersey was long famous for the abundance of its fish, and as late as the end of the seventeenth century salmon-trout were caught in such plenty that they were used to feed the swine. The fishermen would have to pay their lord for license to fish, and give him a share of their catch. But the fish would find a ready sale in the inland townships, for fish was a necessity of life in the Middle Ages.

In all probability a ferry ran across from Liverpool to the Cheshire side. It would be in charge of one of the serfs, but the greater part of the fares would go into the pocket of the lord. This ferry would be used by an occasional travelling chapman from Chester, trading with the inland townships. The lord would make him pay for license to pass through his lands, and if he stopped to do business, would exact further dues on every purchase or sale that he made. Perhaps, once in a long while, a smack from Dublin or Wales would find its way into the Mersey and beach in the Pool, to buy cattle or

hides, or sell salt or tar. But the trade of Liverpool at this epoch cannot have extended beyond these humble limits. There would be exceedingly little contact between the hamlet and the outer world. For, like all such communities, it would be almost self-sufficing. It could supply nearly all its own wants: even the rough clothing of the serfs being spun and woven at home from the wool of their own sheep. The few requirements which could not be met by the hamlet itself—such as ploughshares and other metal instruments—would be bought by the lord's bailiff on an annual expedition to Chester, or some other fair.

Such was the little community of serfs which the slight allusion of Domesday Book, supplemented by what we know of the place at a later date, and filled in by the common features of all such communities in the Middle Ages, allows us to imagine as the germ of the future city. But in the year 1207 there came a sudden and striking change. The hamlet and its lands and men changed hands once more, and the change was to lead to great results. On August 23rd of that year, John, now king, made a new arrangement with Henry, Lord of Liverpool. He resumed the lordship of the berewick, and gave other lands to Henry in compensation. This exchange ends the first stage of the history of Liverpool. For John's reason for making it was that he had resolved to turn the hamlet into a borough.

Before, however, we proceed to explain what John did to Liverpool in 1207, there is a change

which had taken place in a neighbouring township during the period covered in this chapter, which deserves to be noted, because it was to have important effects upon the history of Liverpool. It was probably the great Norman baron, Roger of Poitou, lord of all Lancashire south of the Ribble soon after Domesday Book was drawn up, who, about the end of the eleventh century, took the two townships of Toxteth and part of the township of Smithdown or Smeddon, and transformed them into a great deer park, dispossessing all their inhabitants, just as William the Conqueror did when he formed the much greater New Forest. This new park occupied an area of some 2,300 acres of undulating ground, and the wall which surrounded it was about seven miles long. Its low wooded promontories and little bays fronted the river for three miles from the modern Parliament Street to Otterspool, while it extended inland as far as Smithdown Lane. Two streams ran through it. One of these streams to-day supplies the ornamental water in Sefton Park. Of this extensive and beautiful deer-chase, only Sefton and Prince's Parks remain to-day uncovered by streets and houses; but a wide expanse of dreary streets still retains the name of Toxteth Park in rather ironical memory of its green glades. Near as it was to the site of the future borough, the park was to be intimately connected with its history, and we shall hear of it repeatedly in the course of our story.

CHAPTER II

The Foundation of the Borough, 1207-1229

THE citizens of Liverpool owe reverence to the worst king who ever ruled over England, for [King John was the founder and creator of the city.] By royal fiat, for his own purposes, he turned the obscure hamlet at which we have been looking into a thriving little borough, and endowed it with substantial privileges.

John was anxious to complete the conquest of Ireland, which had begun in his father's reign; and for this purpose he wished to use the men and supplies of his Lancashire lands. But he had no convenient port of embarkation. There was no port at all in Lancashire, and Chester was too much under the control of its powerful and independent earl. In the year 1206 John travelled through Lancashire from north to south, and it was probably on this journey that his attention was caught by the convenient sheltered creek of Liverpool. In the next year he made the exchange with Henry Fitzwarin which has been already recorded; and five days after the exchange was completed, on August 28, 1207, he issued letters patent inviting settlers to come to his new port, and promising them liberal privileges

if they came. It is this invitation which is commonly, though inaccurately, described as King John's charter; and with it began the existence of Liverpool as a borough and trading centre.

[The preparations which John, or his agents, had made for the new population may be very briefly described. They seem to have laid out seven main streets in the form of a cross; the High Street, running across the modern Exchange Flags; the streets afterwards known as Castle Street and Old Hall Street, continuing it to south and north; and, at right angles to these, two streets on the lines of the modern Chapel Street and Water Street, running down to the water's edge, and two more on the lines of the modern Dale Street and Tithebarn Street, running inland. Along these streets they carved out a number of building plots, with room for long crofts or gardens behind. These were known as burgages, and their rent was one shilling per annum. At the end of the century there were one hundred and sixty-eight of these burgages, but the number was probably not so large to begin with. John also appears to have enclosed some of the waste land on the north of his new town, in order to provide allotments of arable land for his tenants, each of whom was given, without extra rent, strips of land in the fields at the rate of rather more than two acres for each burgage.]

The inhabitants for the new borough were provided partly by a transplantation of a good many of the tenants in West Derby, and partly by

immigrants who came in response to the invitation conveyed in the letters patent; while the original serfs of the 'berewick' now became burgesses, or tenants of burgages. It was not wonderful that settlers should come in considerable numbers, for the advantages they obtained were very great. For one thing, they were free men; once they had paid their modest rent, they had no further services or labours to perform for their lord. So free a place was a borough that if any serf escaped to it and managed to become a tenant of a burgage for a year and a day, his lord could never again claim him. And there were still further advantages. Any stranger who came to trade in Liverpool would have to pay a variety of dues and tolls to the lord, but the tenants of burgages were freed from all such payments, and so placed in a very favourable position for carrying on trade. King John started a weekly Saturday market in Liverpool, and probably also an annual fair, held in November, and these would become the main buying and selling centres for the whole district lying behind Liverpool. And both in market and fair, the burgesses had the right to have stalls in the best position at a merely nominal rent, while all strangers had to pay what the king's bailiff demanded.

It was a marvellous change for the better which had been produced in the little hamlet by one stroke of the pen. John's reason for doing all this was that he wanted to make the place a centre of

trade, and to attract to it merchants whose ships he could use on occasion. He also hoped for profits from the tolls paid by strangers trading here. His new borough was administered for him by a royal bailiff, who saw to the collection of all the dues, and who presided over the Portmoot, a court which took the place of the old manorial court, and at which the burgesses were bound to be present at least twice a year.

It is likely that John's changes included also the erection of a water-mill on the little stream which ran into the Pool behind the modern Art Gallery, for this mill was in existence twenty years later. At this mill all the inhabitants of the town would be bound to have their corn ground. And it is probably to this date that we should attribute the erection of the first Liverpool church—the little Chapel of St. Mary of the Quay, which is known to have been in existence sixty years after this date. It stood by the water's edge, in what was later St. Nicholas' churchyard.

During the next few years the infant borough enjoyed a modest prosperity. It is true that the king only succeeded in making £9 a year out of all the rents of the burgesses, and all the trade dues. But from the taxes paid by the burgesses we can see that they were gradually growing wealthier, probably because the transport of troops to Ireland brought a modest trade in its wake. In 1219 Liverpool paid only 13s. 4d., while the older borough of Preston paid £6 13s. 4d., but eight years later Liverpool paid £7 6s. 8d.

while Preston paid only £10, so that the new borough was creeping up to its older rival.

The result of this growth was that in 1229 the burgesses of Liverpool were able to buy from King Henry III, who was in great straits for money, two very valuable grants. Somehow or other they scraped together £6 13s. 4d., in exchange for which the king gave them a new charter, of a most comprehensive kind. This charter enabled them, in the first place, to elect their own officers instead of being governed by the royal bailiff. It empowered them to try and to settle, in their own Portmoot court, all cases affecting rights or property in the borough, and relieved them from the burden of attending, as they had hitherto done, the hundred courts held at West Derby. It freed them from the payment of royal tolls not only in Liverpool itself, but throughout the kingdom.

But by far the most important right which this new charter granted to the burgesses was that of forming themselves into an association or Gild for the regulation of the trade of the borough, and of extracting an entrance fee or Hanse from the members of the Gild. They were further empowered to prohibit anyone not a member of the Gild from trading in the borough; and this power, by enabling them to lay down the conditions upon which a stranger might trade, practically gave them control over the whole trade of the borough. Though we have no record of the way in which they used these powers in

this period, we may be quite sure that, like other boroughs which had the same powers, they used them to secure to themselves the greatest possible advantage in their own market. At a later period we find them electing men as freemen of the Gild who were not burgesses, that is, who did not hold burgages. Probably they claimed the right to do this from the very first, and thus threw open the privileges of the borough more widely than would have been the case had they been restricted to the holders of burgages.

[This charter therefore marks a great step in advance in the history of the borough.] But scarcely less important was the second grant which they got from the king on the following day. Even after the charter was granted, there were of course many profitable rights which the king owned in the borough: the rents of the burgages, the tolls paid by strangers resorting to the market and fair, the fees and fines paid in the Portmoot court, the profits of the mill or mills, and the profit of the ferry over the Mersey. For the collection of these dues a royal bailiff, representing the Sheriff of Lancaster, would still remain in the town, and he would still preside over the court. And so long as he remained, the borough could scarcely be fully self-governing. Now, as we have seen, the king only derived from these rights £9 a year, paid to him by the sheriff, who probably made a comfortable profit on the transaction. The astute burgesses offered to pay £10 for the right of collecting all these dues

themselves; and on these terms they got what is called a 'lease of the fee-farm' of the town for four years.

In this way the burgesses got rid of the royal bailiff; and so long as their lease lasted, they were left as a surprisingly independent, self-governing community, electing their own officers, running their own courts, paying their rents to themselves, working their own mills and ferry, and not meddled with at all by any outside authority.

CHAPTER III

The Baronial Lords of Liverpool, and the building of the Castle, 1229-1399

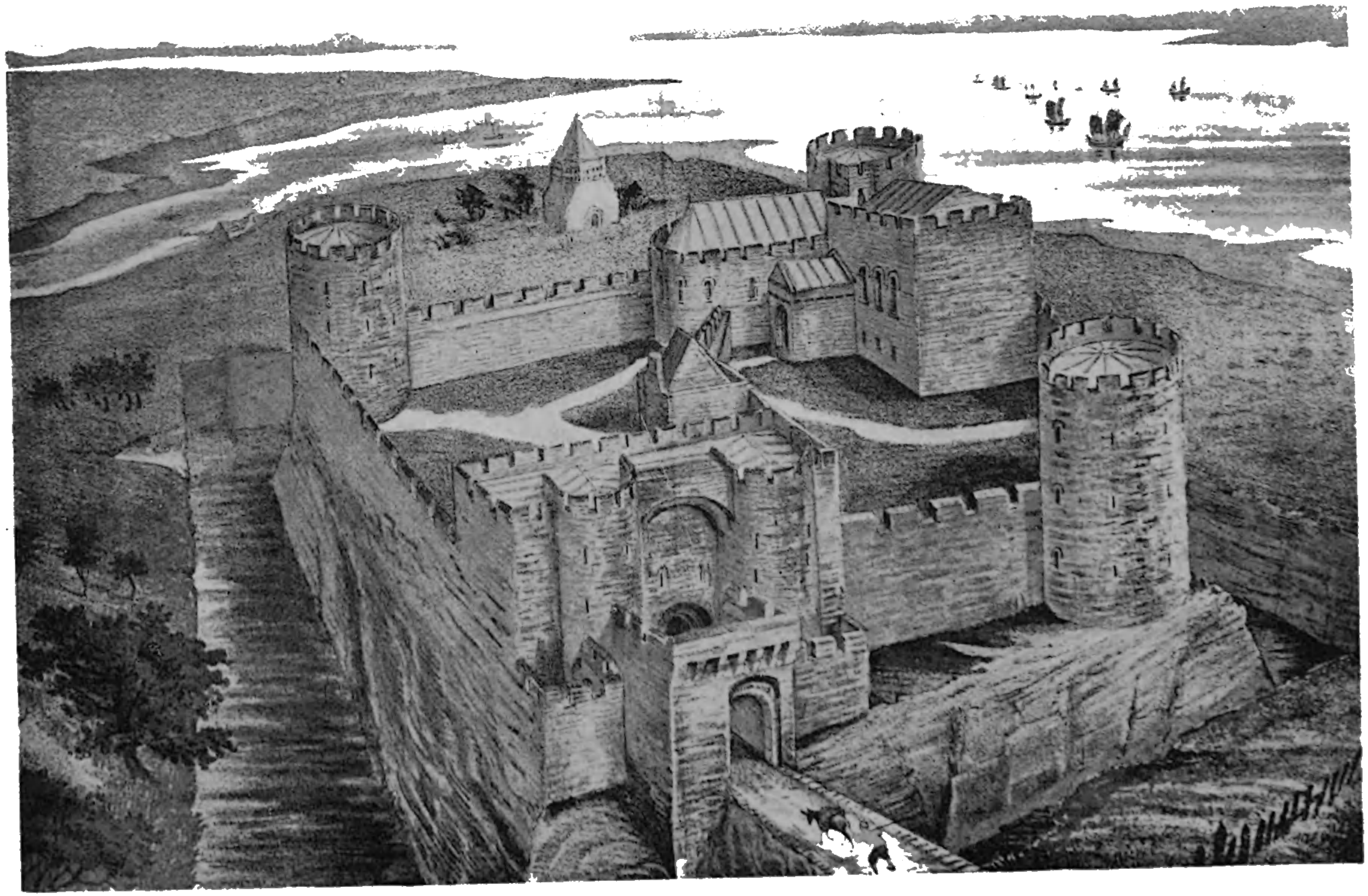
ALL that had hitherto been gained had been due to the passing of Liverpool under the control of the king. But this fortunate relation was not to last long. Seven months after the grant of his great charter, Henry III, anxious to obtain political support, granted all his Lancashire lands, including the borough of Liverpool, to Randle Blundeville, the great and powerful Earl of Chester; and one hundred and seventy years were to pass before the borough again came under the direct control of the crown. Randle was an old man when he obtained this grant, and he only lived for three years more. From him Liverpool passed to his brother-in-law, William de Ferrers, Earl of Derby, who was succeeded by his son, a second William, and by his grandson, Robert. Robert, the last of the Ferrers, was an impetuous young man, who threw in his lot with Simon de Montfort in his rebellion against the king; and after his defeat in 1266, his lands were confiscated and granted to the king's second son, Edmund, Earl of Lancaster.

During this long period we hear next to nothing about the fortunes of Liverpool. The burgesses

must have seen with misgiving the coming of new baronial masters, who were much less likely to deal gently with them than the distant king. They now had to pay to the new lords their annual £10 for the fee-farm lease, and it was within the power of the lords to refuse to renew it if they thought they could make more profit by taking the management of the town into their own hands. Even if they chose to ride roughshod over the chartered rights of the burgesses there would be no one to say them nay; for the king was not likely to trouble himself about the fate of the borough now that it had ceased to yield him any profit.

But, so far as we can tell, the Ferrers earls used the borough very kindly, and renewed the grant of the fee-farm lease from time to time as it fell in, without increase of payment; while right at the end of the period, Robert de Ferrers granted a confirmation of King Henry III's charter. He probably did this as a means of getting money out of the burgesses for his rebellion. But, in any case, the borough was allowed to retain its liberties in full.

The most important event of this period was the building of the great Liverpool Castle, which was the work of the first William de Ferrers, between 1232 and 1237. The site of the Castle was well chosen. At the highest point of the little triangular peninsula enclosed by the Pool, and at its southern end, overlooking and controlling the mouth of the Pool, was a rocky



E. W. Cox, delt.

LIVERPOOL CASTLE

knoll, some fifty feet above sea-level, just at the top of the modern Lord Street. Here the architects cut out a square plateau of rock, some fifty yards long on each side, and surrounded it with a broad moat or ditch twenty yards wide, cut in the rock; the ditch was probably a dry one, as it stood on the top of the hill. On the square plateau a formidable fortress was erected. At the north-east corner, looking down Castle Street, was a massive square gatehouse, crowned by two small towers. An archway, reached by a causeway over the moat, passed through the centre of this gatehouse, and was guarded by a portcullis. At the north-western and south-western corners—on the side next to the river—two round towers were erected; and lofty and strong walls ran all round the square, joining tower with tower. Only the south-eastern corner was unprovided with its tower: this was added more than two centuries later. The courtyard thus enclosed was divided into two parts by a wall running from north to south, which would form a second defence if an enemy succeeded in forcing his way through the gatehouse. The south-western tower formed the keep, the most important building of the Castle, probably containing the residential quarters of the lord. From this tower a small chapel extended along the southern wall, as far as the cross-wall dividing the courtyard; while the western wall, looking toward the river, was occupied by a large banqueting hall, with kitchens

and a brew-house and bake-house. A small postern gate on this side led to some steps into the moat, whence an underground passage ran, parallel with James Street, to the edge of the river; by this provisions could be brought into the Castle, or the garrison could make its escape if necessary. Under one of the walls of the Castle was a large dove-cot, from which the lord derived considerable profits; while from the edge of the ditch on the east a pleasant orchard, occupying the site of the modern Lord Street, sloped down to the Pool.

Such was the Liverpool Castle, as we can infer it from later documents; unfortunately it was destroyed by our prosaic ancestors in 1725, and no accurate pictures or plans of it survive. Its erection, no doubt, added greatly to the importance and certainly to the picturesqueness of the town. But at the same time it was a menace to the freedom of the burgesses, and we may imagine that they had a good deal of trouble with its captains and its garrison.

Edmund of Lancaster, who succeeded to the lordship of Liverpool after the forfeiture of Robert de Ferrers in 1266, was the most powerful and wealthy baron in England; his son and successor, Thomas, was strong enough to hold his own against the unfortunate King Edward II, and to turn England upside down with his wars and tumults. Under these two earls the burgesses of Liverpool were much less kindly treated than they had been by the Ferrers. Edmund seems to have formed the opinion that a good

deal more could be made out of the borough than the £10 per annum which the burgesses paid for being left to themselves and allowed to collect all the dues of the lord. He seems to have done his best to develope the town; but, in order that he might himself reap the benefit of its growth, he refused to renew the fee-farm lease, and his agents appeared in the town to collect the dues directly; with the result that instead of the old £10, he made no less than £25.

But, worst of all, he unscrupulously overrode the chartered liberties of the borough. This we learn from the report of the proceedings at an enquiry held in 1292 before the king's justices at Lancaster, when the 'bailiffs and community' of Liverpool were ordered to appear and show on what ground they claimed their various liberties. No bailiffs came; but some of the burgesses appeared on behalf of their fellows, and producing their precious charters explained that they had been accustomed to have a free borough, until the Lord Edmund impeded them 'and permitted them not to have a free borough' or to elect a bailiff 'of themselves.' Wherefore, said these plaintive burgesses, 'they do not claim these liberties at present, for the Lord Edmund has them.' The king's justices ordered Edmund to appear before them on a date which they fixed; but there is no record that he did so. Probably he was too powerful a lord to be meddled with unnecessarily, and the unfortunate burgesses were left to his tender mercies and those of his officers.

One new privilege, however, the burgesses acquired at this period, though they probably did not regard it as a privilege but as a burden. They were called upon to elect two members to the Parliament of 1295, and again two to the Parliament of 1307. But after that, their brief electoral powers lapsed for over two hundred years.

Earl Edmund's successor, Earl Thomas, was much too busy stirring up trouble for his cousin, the unfortunate Edward II, to pay much attention to Liverpool; he attached *so* little importance to it that towards the end of his reign he granted it, borough and castle together, to a vassal of his, Robert of Holland (Upholland). Holland's tenure lasted only as long as the power of his master, and we need say nothing about him.

But there were two things which Thomas of Lancaster did before he gave Liverpool to Holland which were of importance to the borough, and show that it was still growing. In 1309, during a visit to the Castle, Earl Thomas granted to the burgesses for ever twelve acres of peat in the Moss-lake, at a rent of one penny per annum. This was the first piece of property ever owned by the burgesses as a body, and may be called the beginning of the corporate estate of Liverpool. The land thus granted seems to have lain near the top of Brownlow Hill. It supplied the burgesses with peat for their fires, which they had previously been in the habit of digging in Toxteth Park. At some unknown date during his reign, Earl Thomas also caused fifty acres of land beside the

river, at the northern end of the township, to be enclosed and let out for cultivation in small plots. This land was called the Salthouse Moor, perhaps from some saltpans which may have existed here with a warehouse for storing their products. While some of the tenants in this new enclosure were burgesses, there were about thirty of them who were not burgesses, and did not share the burgess rights. This shows that the population of the town was growing.

The last years of Earl Thomas were filled with fighting and confusion, and inevitably the little borough was affected by it. In 1315 we hear of a band of rebellious tenants of the earl, knights and men at arms, who, in warlike panoply and with banners flying, came marching through the streets of Liverpool to attack the Castle. They were beaten back, and probably revenged themselves by plundering the defenceless townsmen. This is the only occasion on record in which the Castle was actually besieged during the Middle Ages; but we may be quite sure that it would not stand alone if the records were full.

With his own vassals rebelling against him, the turbulent earl was unable to hold his own against the king whom he had so long defied. He was defeated and executed, and for five years Liverpool and its Castle passed under the royal control. The king himself paid a visit to Liverpool during this period, staying for a week in the Castle in the year 1323. We may imagine, if we will, the bustle and excitement which this

royal visit would cause in the little borough, the swaggering of soldiers, the splendour of court favourites, the banquets and the councils, the flocking of obedient vassals of the fallen earl, the constant passage of wagons full of provisions. But the only record of it all that survives is the fact that 1s. 8d. had to be spent in mending the roof of the great hall of the Castle in preparation for the king. Luckily the royal agents for these years have left very full accounts of their administration, and these will supply us with a good deal of material for a later chapter.

But the weak and unlucky Edward II, though he had got the better of Thomas of Lancaster, was not long left at peace. A new rebellion was raised against him, headed by his wife and his son. And now the bailiffs of Liverpool began to be pestered by all sorts of feverish orders. They must stop all ships in the harbour and send them round to Portsmouth for the king's service; they must arrest all suspicious persons, and seize all letters disloyal to the king; they must prevent any horses or armour from being exported. But all this was in vain. The luckless king was captured and imprisoned. His son succeeded him, and at once restored Henry, the brother of his father's enemy, Earl Thomas, to that brother's forfeited estates. And with this change, a new period began in the history of Liverpool.

The reign of Edward III was to be a period of remarkable advance for Liverpool. But at first this did not seem likely, for it took some years to

get rid of the disorder left by the weak rule of Edward II, and there are indications that Liverpool and its district were in a very tumultuous condition. Several riots and murders in the streets are recorded—the work of the turbulent gentry. The worst of these took place in 1335, when the sheriff, Sir William Blount, was murdered in the town while in the execution of his office; and the only punishment which could be imposed on the riotous gentlemen who perpetrated this crime was to make them serve for four years in the king's army in Gascony. Ten years later a body of lawless men, including several men of position in the county, entered the town in arms 'with banners unfurled as in war,' forced their way into the court where the king's justices were in session, and 'did wickedly kill, mutilate and plunder of their goods and wound very many persons there assembled.' Even these violent gentry were pardoned on condition that they went to fight in Gascony for a year. It may be imagined that the peaceable burgesses had a hard time of it among such turbulent neighbours, and had need to be men of their hands if they wished to exist at all.

But in spite of disorder, the period is one of advance both in prosperity and in freedom. In 1333 the king granted a charter, and although it was only a renewal of the old charters, this meant that the burgesses resumed the practice of self-government so long suppressed by the earls. Moreover we find the king and the earl granting a

continuous series of licenses to the burgesses to collect certain tolls and dues on various kinds of merchandise, and to spend the proceeds in paving the streets. The reason for the attention which the town now received from both king and earl was that Liverpool was being found very useful as a port for the shipment of men and supplies. The reign of Edward III was full of warfare; with the Scots in the beginning of the reign, with the French in the middle, and with Ireland in the later years. In the great French wars of the middle period Liverpool took little part. It used to be supposed that one Liverpool ship had been present at Calais, but this is a mistake; it was only from the southern and eastern ports that the king drew ships for these wars, and the only echo of them which the surviving records contain is a warning from the king that ships had better sail in fleets for mutual protection, the seas being made dangerous by French pirates.

But in the Scotch war at the beginning and still more in the Irish wars at the end of the reign, the part played by Liverpool is so considerable that it is clear she was already regarded as one of the principal ports on the west coast. When the reign opened an invading Scottish army was ravaging the north of England, and the constable of Liverpool Castle received orders to throw its gates open for the reception of refugees fleeing before the Scots. Presently the English king takes the offensive, and then there is more active work for Liverpool sailors to perform. Several orders for

the detention of the shipping of the port for warlike purposes survive; but the most interesting of these is a hurried demand, in 1335, that Liverpool shall send forth her two best ships, fully manned and armed, to pursue and capture a 'great ship loaded with wine and arms,' which was coming from France to the aid of 'the king's enemies in the Castle of Dumbarton.' In the same year six of the largest ships on the west coast were ordered to be collected at Liverpool and sent to attack the Scottish fleet. Unfortunately no record survives of all these stirring fights, which must have provided thrilling themes for fireside talk in the little town.

Still more important was the part played by Liverpool in the later Irish wars. Twice the viceroy and his army passed through Liverpool; several times all the shipping in all ports on the west coast was ordered to be collected in the Mersey to transport armies; and scarcely a year passed but the town was enlivened by the visits of troops, and the Great Heath dotted with the tents of encamping armies waiting for fair winds. All this must have been good for trade; for a state of war, while it is bad for the country at large, brings wealth to the ports of embarkation. For not only had the armies to be transported, but they had to be kept supplied with provisions and warlike stores. Clearly the shipping of Liverpool must have grown in this period; and trade with Ireland must have increased in the wake of the royal armies.

The consequence of this rising prosperity is that we find the burgesses rapidly regaining the powers they had lost since 1266. They had already regained their chartered liberties: now we find them step by step regaining the invaluable fee-farm lease. First they take a lease of the market tolls, mills and ferry; then they add to these the fees and fines of the Portmoot courts and the burgage rents; and finally, in 1393, they obtained from John of Gaunt, who had succeeded to the Duchy of Lancaster, a lease so comprehensive in its terms that briefly they may be described as taking over all the lord's rights in the town, up to the very edge of the Castle wall.

There are two points about the rights acquired by this lease which deserve special mention. It included a grant of control over the whole of the waste or common which lay between the borough and Toxteth Park. This waste, though it was used by the burgesses for pasturing their cattle and swine, was always regarded as the property of the lord. The burgesses never gave up this acquisition, in spite of the fact that the control over the waste was not definitely included in later leases. Thus all the land upon which Lime Street and Church Street and Bold Street and Abercromby Square now stand became the property of the borough; and the bulk of the magnificent corporation estate of to-day still lies in this part of the city, though much of it was alienated in the centuries which followed.

The second point which deserves notice is that

the tenants in the recent enclosure of the Salthouse Moor who were not burgesses, were now brought under the control of the borough officers and courts. Just because they were not burgesses they had not been regarded as being subject to the ordinary burghal authorities, but as being under the special control of the lord; and, but for this great lease, Liverpool might have been left with a group of inhabitants in its midst, who were governed by a distinct authority from that of the burgess body at large. This lease decided that the borough officers should control not only the privileged burgesses, but also all inhabitants, and though there was a good deal of dispute on this question later, the burgesses never gave up their point.

An important consequence of these acquisitions of power was that the constitution of the borough underwent a substantial change. Hitherto the supreme officials had been two bailiffs, one of whom was elected by the burgesses, while the other was appointed by and represented the lord. Of these two the lord's bailiff was the more important; he was the greater bailiff, the *major ballivus*. But now that the lord's power had practically vanished from the town—now that the burgesses had taken over all his rights and powers—it was necessary for him to be replaced by someone. So the burgesses elect their own *major ballivus*; who presently comes to be called simply the *major* or mayor, and after a while actually appoints a bailiff of his own, just as the

lord had done. Hence the supreme authorities of the borough are in future a mayor, elected by the burgesses, and two bailiffs, one of whom is elected, while the other (like a vicar's churchwarden) is nominated by the mayor. The possession of a single supreme officer, able to speak and act on behalf of the borough as a whole, marks a great advance in burghal organisation. The first recorded Mayor of Liverpool was William son of Adam of Liverpool, in 1351; we shall hear more of this gentleman later, for he played a very big part in the life of the Liverpool of his time.

And there is another change which we can dimly see taking place. The ordinary burgess did not want to be bothered with municipal politics; he was quite content to leave them in the hands of a group of leading men; while the lord, on his side, wanted to make sure of his annual payments by having the surety of substantial men. So we find a little group of leading burgesses forming itself; its members sign the leases from the lord, and divide the offices of the borough between them. One of them is mayor eleven times, another nine, another sixteen. This little group comes to be called the Mayor's Brethren, or the Aldermen or Elders, and it mainly conducts the government of the town. At a later date it had come to be understood that every mayor, after serving for a year, became an Alderman for life. So the borough is gradually passing under the control of an oligarchy.

The prosperity which led to these great constitutional changes was reflected in other ways also, and most notably in the building and endowment of a handsome new chapel. The old chapel of St. Mary of the Quay was too small for the growing borough; so the burgesses built a new one beside it, the Chapel of St. Nicholas, the predecessor of the modern church, and in 1356 we find them obtaining license from the king to acquire £10 worth of land from the Duke to serve as an endowment for the new chapel. Liverpool still remained part of the parish of Walton, and the marriages and funerals must take place there still, and tithes be paid to the rector; but it was to their own chapel, built and supported and controlled by themselves, that the loyalty of the burgesses was mainly due. They were generous in their bequests and gifts to the chapel. Before the end of the century three chantries had been founded in it, one by Duke Henry, one by his successor John of Gaunt, and one by John of Liverpool, son of the first known mayor. These chantries were endowments for the provision each of a priest whose duty was to pray for the souls of the founder and his ancestors; but the three chantry priests performed other functions also. We see them playing an active part in the life of the town, serving as trustees, witnessing deeds and so forth; and they brought into the borough a valuable new element of cultivation.

But the story of Liverpool in the fourteenth century was not one of uninterrupted prosperity.

That terrible plague, the Black Death, which in the middle of the century destroyed half the population of the country, did not leave Liverpool untouched. In 1361 its ravages were so great that it was impossible to carry the dead to be buried in Walton churchyard, and the burgesses had to obtain from the Bishop of Lichfield a license to use the churchyard of St. Nicholas as a burial ground. And the popular discontents which followed the Black Death and culminated in the great rising of the peasants in 1381, were felt in Liverpool also. John of Gaunt, the lord and patron of Liverpool, was one of the chief objects of the peasants' anger, and one of their main demands was the abolition of the monopolist privileges of the chartered burgesses in the towns. It was most probably as a result of this rising that in 1382 King Richard II issued a new charter for Liverpool, in which he formally abrogated the right of the burgesses to exclude from trade any persons who were not members of the Merchant Gild of the borough. The burgesses certainly cannot have applied for this charter, which destroyed one of their most cherished privileges; and it was more than a little cruel that they should have been forced to pay £5 of their scanty money for it.

Nevertheless, in spite of these checks, the fourteenth century was one of steady advance, and at its close Liverpool had reached the highest point which it attained in population, prosperity

and freedom, during the middle age. The next century was to see a woeful decline, due to the anarchy and turbulence of the age. But before we turn to that distressful story, it will be well to try to piece together some picture of the life of mediaeval Liverpool, which the records of this period for the first time enable us to do in a satisfactory way.

CHAPTER IV

The Life of Liverpool during the Middle Ages

By 1393 Liverpool had become a thriving little self-contained and self-governing community. The limits of this tiny commonwealth, within which (excepting the Castle) its own officers were supreme, were marked by a series of 'mere stones' or boundary marks, which were very jealously guarded. Once a year it was the duty of the officers of the borough, followed by a crowd of townsmen, to march solemnly from stone to stone round the whole of the township, in order to see that the stones had not been shifted to the detriment of the borough. This boundary included the town, with its harbour, the Pool; the cultivated fields, which supplied most of the town's needs; the extensive pastures stretching from the Pool to Toxteth Park; and the broad peat bog, the Mosslake.

The town proper consisted of the same little cluster of half-a-dozen streets which we have already noted as being laid out by King John. The central point was the High Street, sometimes called Juggler Street, perhaps because

jongleurs or musicians took up their stand here on fair days. It ran north and south across the site of the Exchange Flags, and at each end of it was a town cross. Of the other streets, Chapel Street, Dale Street, and Castle Street already bore the names they bear to-day; Water Street was known as Bank Street, Oldhall Street as Whitacre Street, and Tithebarn Street as Moor Street, being so called because it led to the Moor Green, a stretch of wet ground which lay near the upper end of the Pool. Round this cluster of streets ran a wall, which left the river near the Old Hall, curved round Tithebarn Street to the lower end of Dale Street, and after following the line of the Pool, ran along the line of Lord Street and James Street to the river.

The streets were narrow, and, like those of other towns, very dirty. They must have been particularly bad before they were first paved in 1328. It was the duty of each burgess to keep the street clean in front of his own house, and it was one of the multifarious duties of the bailiffs to see that he did so. But if Liverpool was like other towns these duties were not very well fulfilled. The extreme dirt of any mediaeval town can scarcely be exaggerated; and the entire absence of sanitation was one of the principal reasons for the terrible ravages of the plague. We must not imagine very much traffic in these narrow and dirty streets. In the early mornings the swineherd would come along to collect the pigs from the crofts behind the cottages

and drive them out upon the waste; and on market days cattle would be driven along them, bellowing and jostling, to the market-place. But there would be little wheeled traffic, except that of a few springless country wains: there was no good carriage road out of Liverpool until the eighteenth century.

The houses which faced upon these sordid lanes were of the meanest description; there do not seem to have been more than three or four stone houses in the town, and the rest would be wooden-framed earthen huts. The furniture, too, was of the scantiest. The will of William son of Adam, the wealthiest burgess of his time, shows that his furniture and domestic utensils were only worth £7 6s. 8d.; and there is evidence that the average value of the furniture and other personal property of the burgesses was not above 10s. a head.

In this squalid little town there were, in the middle of the fourteenth century, 197 householders; which, on the usual reckoning, would give a total population of about a thousand. Perhaps we should add a few more for sailors, apprentices and other dependents, and estimate (the population of mediaeval Liverpool at something like 1,200.) [In spite of the prosperity of the second half of the century, this number must have diminished rather than increased before 1399, for the ravages of the Black Death have to be taken into account. Among this population we can discriminate four distinct social grades:

a few representatives of county families, who held burgages probably in order to enjoy the privileges of the market; a few leading families of the borough, who held groups of burgages; the mass of the ordinary burgesses, whose normal holding was half a burgage; and a number of non-burgesses.]

[All this population was largely engaged in agriculture; for in becoming a trading centre Liverpool had not ceased to be also a rural village. Every burgess held strips, fewer or more in number, in the great open fields which stretched to the north and east of the streets; and there is evidence that half of the inhabitants derived their main subsistence from farming.] The will of William son of Adam, already alluded to, shows that his property was mainly agricultural in character. Apart from furniture, what he had to bequeath was grain in his barn worth £6 13s. 4d., twenty-four 'strips' of growing wheat in the fields, worth £7, nine oxen and cows worth about 10s. apiece, six horses worth about 7s. apiece, and eighteen pigs worth 1s. 6d. apiece. Several of the officers annually elected by the burgesses had to do with the management of the fields: such as the hayward, whose duty was to see that the hedges round the great fields were in good repair, so that cattle coming to the market should not be able to spoil the crops.

[The trade of the borough was mainly local in character. The weekly Saturday market and the annual fair on St. Martin's day were chiefly

resorted to by people from the neighbourhood who came to sell their agricultural produce; while the more enterprising burgesses sold them spices and wines and fine stuffs, brought from the great English fairs like Stourbridge and Winchester, to which foreign traders came; or iron goods, or salt, or fish, or rough woollen stuffs from Kendal or Lancaster. A few 'stranger' merchants would come to the fair, but not often to the market.]

[To both market and fair a good many customers were brought by the ferries over the Mersey.] In addition to the ferry which the burgesses worked, the Prior of the monastery of Birkenhead had a right of ferry; and since 1318 he had kept houses of entertainment for the use of the 'great numbers of persons wishing to cross' to Liverpool who were 'often hindered by contrariety of weather and frequent storms.' The fares by this ferry were ¼d. for a man on foot, 2d. for a man with a horse; but on market days the fares were doubled. The Prior sold the produce of his own lands at the Liverpool market, and for this purpose had a house and barn at the bottom of Water Street, where he stored his corn.

[With regard to the sea-going trade of Liverpool, evidence is scanty. The main trade was with Ireland, which sent hides and wool, and received woollen cloths, iron and grain. It would appear that Liverpool mainly dealt in rough woollen cloths from Lancashire and Yorkshire, iron from Furness, and perhaps salt from Cheshire. A

modest trade also existed with France, whence a certain amount of wine was imported. Both the home trade and the foreign trade were under the control of the body of burgesses, acting as a Merchant Gild, but no details survive as to the way in which they used their powers at this period, and we must wait till we come to the sixteenth century, when the material is abundant, for an account of the way in which trade was regulated. The industries which were carried on were few, and of such a character as might be expected in a small rural market town. In 1378 there were three weavers in the town, one of whom was a foreigner from Brabant, while the other two made only 'shalloons' or coarse woollen stuffs. There were four drapers, two tailors, one maker of bows, one tanner, four bootmakers, five 'souters' (who probably made saddles and leather jerkins), and five fish merchants, who traded chiefly in herrings, and probably owned most of the shipping of the port. We hear also of two smiths, and at an earlier date there is mention of a goldsmith. But all these were trades which simply catered for the ordinary needs of the neighbouring district.

The most active industry was undoubtedly that of brewing, which in 1378 formed the principal occupation of no less than eighteen householders. Beer was the universal beverage, and would be in large demand on market days, and still more when soldiers were passing through the town. In 1324 no less than thirty-five persons

were fined for brewing and selling ale of bad quality or at too high a price. Probably the greater part of the population turned an honest penny in this way.

[As the townsmen were mainly engaged in agriculture, and as it was principally agricultural produce which was brought in to the market, milling was naturally also an active business.] The old water mill on the mill dam behind the modern Art Gallery had vanished by this time; but it had been replaced by two great windmills, the more important of which, known as Eastham mill, stood just beside the old water-mill, while the other, known as Townsend mill, was within a stone's throw of it, on the site of the modern Wellington Column, opposite to St. George's Hall. At one or other of these two mills every inhabitant of Liverpool was bound to grind his corn.

[The importance of the mills is indicated by the fact that they were worked by the two leading families of the town.] These were the Liverpool family and the Moore family.]

The very fact that the Liverpool family used the place-name as a surname shows that they had been settled here for a long time. In the middle of the fourteenth century the various members of the family appear to have held among them no less than fifteen burgages, and they played an extremely important part in the history of the borough. One of them may have been one of the first members of parliament for Liverpool in

1295; another paid a larger share of the subsidy of 1332 than any other Liverpool man; and they take an active part in the regaining of the fee-farm lease.

But beyond question the greatest member of the family was [William son of Adam of Liverpool], to whom several references have already been made. He [was the first recorded mayor of Liverpool, in 1351] and though the list of mayors is far from complete he is known to have held the office eleven times. He took a main part in the erection of the Chapel of St. Nicholas; and so outstanding were his services that in 1361 the duke rewarded him by a pension of 20s. a year for life. He was the tenant of the principal Liverpool mill, that at Eastham, and he also worked a bakery in Castle Street, and a fishing station near Toxteth Park. In short, he is at once the wealthiest and the most public-spirited Liverpool burgess of his day. He died in 1383, and his will is almost the only Liverpool document with a personal note in it which survives from the middle ages. 'I bequeath,' it runs, 'my soul to God and the Blessed Virgin and all Saints, and my body to be buried in the Chapel of Liverpool, before the face of the image of the Virgin, where is my appointed place of burial. I leave to be distributed in bread on the day of my burial three quarters of wheat. I leave six pounds of wax to be burned about my body. I leave to every priest in the chapel of Liverpool fourpence. I leave the rest of my goods to Katherine my wife and our children born of her.'

Somewhere beneath the flags of St. Nicholas' still rest the crumbled bones of this honest old merchant and citizen, who laboured his best for Liverpool in his day.

He left behind him two sons, one of whom founded one of the three chantries in the chapel. But his lands and his mill soon passed to Richard Crosse, son of his wife by a later marriage; and thus begins the connexion with Liverpool of the Crosse family, who were to play a very important part in its affairs during the next century. Perhaps the mansion of Crosse-hall, from which the modern Crosshall Street takes its name, and which, with its croft sloping down to the Pool, occupied the corner at the lower end of Dale Street, may represent the home of William son of Adam, first recorded mayor of Liverpool. The other branches of the Liverpool family adopted various surnames, especially Williamson and Richardson, and became indistinguishably merged in the mass of burgesses.

The main rivals of the Liverpools were the Moores, who have left deep traces on the map of Liverpool as well as on its history. Their descendant, Sir Edward Moore, in the seventeenth century claimed that they had been settled in Liverpool from the beginning of its history. They held even more land in the town than the Liverpools, but unlike the Liverpools they also acquired large holdings outside of the borough, in Bootle, Kirkdale, West Derby, and other townships. Their original seat, Moore Hall, lay at the

northern end of the village, and its croft and gardens ran down to the shore of the river. When they acquired lands in Kirkdale, and built a country house at Bank Hall, their older house was called the Old Hall; in this form it has given its name to a modern Liverpool street.

The first Liverpool official of whom there is any record was a Moore. It was a Moore who went to plead the case of the burgesses against Edmund of Lancaster, in 1292, and down to the middle of the fourteenth century we find them constantly serving as bailiffs. The younger members of the family often served as scribes and engrossed deeds relating to lands in the township; and these deeds, preserved in the archives of the family, and now housed in the Free Library, provide us with much of our knowledge of the internal details of the mediaeval borough. But about the middle of the century the leadership of the town seems to have been wrested from them by the Liverpools. While William son of Adam lived, no Moore was allowed to hold the mayoralty, but immediately after his death Thomas Moore became mayor, and for a long time his family almost monopolised the office. Evidently there was a keen rivalry between these two families, a rivalry which would be not less keen because they were rival millers, for the Moores held the Townsend mill. This rivalry even got into the law courts, in 1374, when Thomas Moore strove to get possession of William of Liverpool's bakery in Castle Street, and of his fishery near Toxteth Park. These are the dim

echoes of what must have been a pretty lively feud, which probably tore the town asunder.

[The system of borough government, for the control of which these two families fought so keenly, was still rudimentary in its form. The centre of it was the Portmoot court, which in its form and procedure was a direct descendant of the old manorial court. It had two solemn sessions in each year, at which every burgess was bound to be present on pain of a fine. When the burgesses held the fee-farm lease, this court was presided over by their bailiff or by the mayor; when the lord's agents collected the dues, his steward or bailiff presided over the court. In this court were elected the borough officers, at the annual meeting in October.] In the sixteenth century only the lesser officers were elected in this court, the mayor and bailiffs being chosen by a distinct meeting, the General Assembly of Burgesses, held a few days earlier, but it is unlikely that this distinction had already grown up.

[The Portmoot also tried all sorts of minor offences, especially breaches of the burgesses' duty, and it was in this way that the mayor and bailiffs got the work of the town performed. 'Presentments' or charges of this kind were made by a jury of twelve members, empanelled by the bailiffs; and this jury was the nearest approach to an executive committee or council of the burgess body. Apart from the control exercised by this jury, there was no means of regulating the action of the mayor and bailiffs, who during

their year of office were practically irresponsible rulers. The mayor especially was a much more powerful and independent person than his modern successor in the office; all the minor officers were under his orders, and he was almost a little king. The only body which really served as a check upon him was the informal body of aldermen or leading burgesses, which we have seen coming into existence.

In addition to the solemn annual meetings of the Portmoot there were also more frequent meetings held every three weeks in theory, but at irregular intervals in practice. These meetings were held for minor legal business, and those only were required to be present who were concerned in cases before the court. The mayor presided over this court, which came to be called the mayor's court, and afterwards the Court of Passage. The modern Liverpool Court of Passage (the only court of that name in England) is one of the very few examples of the survival of a mediaeval borough-court into modern times.

We have observed that a large part of the business of the Portmoot dealt with the performance by the burgesses of their common duties, under the supervision of the mayor and bailiffs. The extent to which these obligations were carried, the magnitude and number of the co-operative enterprises of the burgesses, forms one of the most striking features of the life of the mediaeval town. There was no police force in the borough, there were no scavengers, no paid

public servants of any kind. All these functions had to be performed by the burgesses themselves. They had to take their turn in guarding the town by night; they were bound to join in the pursuit of a thief or other suspicious character, or in suppressing riots in the streets or the market, or in quenching the fires that easily broke out among the closely huddled wooden cottages: they must often have had difficulty in maintaining order when large bodies of troops were in the town. Every burgess also had to take his part in cleaning the streets, and in keeping the town walls in repair; and they were bound by law to be provided with arms according to their means, and to be ready to take part in the defence of the town or even in national military service. Just as the burgesses performed their public duties in common, so they enjoyed many of their festivities in common. Though we have no direct authority on this point, we may safely assume that Liverpool was like other boroughs which we know of, and that when there was any money in hand it was spent in great ale-drinkings, in which all would have a share, and the officers a double portion.

All this points to the most valuable and promising feature of the life of the community. It was a small, rude and ignorant society, far from wealthy, living amid the most sordid conditions; but it was a society whose members were constantly being taught to regard common interests, and to act in co-operation. Here was

being learnt the great and difficult art of self-government; and it is just that fact which makes the obscure story of these humble burgesses essentially more interesting than the more romantic intrigues and feuds of the great nobles from whom they had painfully wrested their liberties. The huge and massive Castle, as it towered above their mean hovels, seemed to be a sign of their permanent inferiority. Yet the Castle has vanished from the face of the earth, and it was the descendants of the burgesses who destroyed it, and spread busy streets and shops over its site.

But we must not close our survey of mediaeval Liverpool without a glance at the economy of the Castle, for which a few sentences will suffice. It was presided over by a constable, who received an annual salary of £6 13s. 4d., and who was usually also ranger of Toxteth Park, and sometimes of the two other local deer parks, Croxteth and Simonswood. The constable, however, did not always reside in the Castle, but sometimes in a house just outside the gate, at the south-end of Castle Street. In normal times no standing garrison was kept in the Castle, which seems to have been used merely as a gaol, and the permanent staff apparently consisted merely of a watchman and a doorkeeper, who were paid 1½d. a day each, and had to find their own meals.

A curious list survives of the equipment kept in the building for the use of the garrison, when there was a garrison. There were 186 pallet-beds,

which seem to represent the usual number of the garrison, 107 spears, 39 lances, 15 great catapults for hurling stones, and several other engines of defence, together with a large vat for brewing, two tables, one large and two small brass pots, and so forth, down to 'one ewer with a basin,' (the only washing utensils mentioned) which seems to be a somewhat inadequate allowance for the people who slept in the 186 pallet beds.

CHAPTER V

The Anarchy of the Fifteenth Century
1399-1485

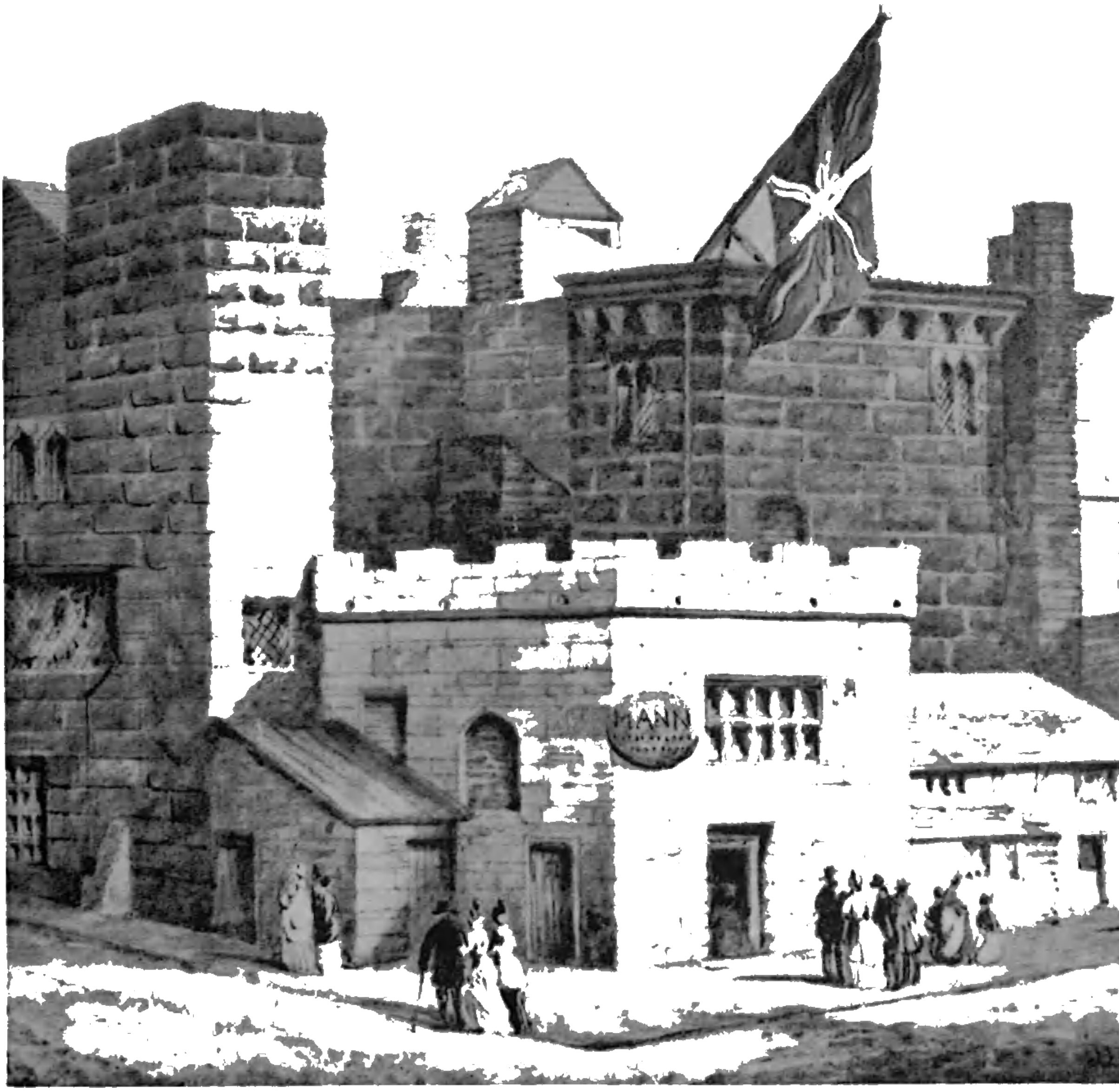
For the greater towns of England the fifteenth century was a period of steady growth. It was in this age that England began to take her place among the trading nations; York and Norwich began to compete with the looms of Flanders, and the merchants of Bristol, Sandwich and other towns began to challenge the mercantile supremacy of the German cities. But for Liverpool the period was one of steady decay. Her trade was too local in character and too insecurely established not to suffer greatly from the wild anarchy which resulted from the Wars of the Roses, and which was nowhere worse than in Lancashire; her burgesses were neither numerous enough nor strong enough to be able to shut their gates upon the turmoil of war, as the towns of the south and east could do.

Yet at the opening of the century the prospect seemed promising enough. By the succession of the son of John of Gaunt to the English throne Liverpool once more came under the direct control of the crown, and it might have been expected that this would result to the profit of the borough. But the issue was the exact

opposite. So long as the great lease of the lordship rights granted to the burgesses by John of Gaunt in 1393 continued, all went well. But when it expired, as it did in 1410, trouble at once resulted.

There survives a curious memorandum, the oldest document relating to the history of Liverpool written in the English language, which shows how anxious were the discussions of the burgesses over this question. They applied for a renewal and even an extension of the lease; they thought of asking also for a new charter conveying to them sundry new powers; and they engaged the aid of Sir Thomas de Lathom, one of the most powerful magnates of the neighbourhood, to back their claim. But the memorandum shows that there was a good deal of difference of opinion among the inhabitants of the town. The tenants of the recent enclosures from the waste who were not burgesses had been subject to the control of the burgess-body since 1393, and they seem to have resented the way in which this control was exercised, to have desired to return to the conditions existing before 1393, and therefore to have opposed the renewal of the lease. In other words, the great question at issue was the question whether the burghal authorities should exercise authority over all the inhabitants of the town, or only over the holders of burgages.

The consequence of these squabbles was that the burgesses got nothing of what they asked



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for. They got a new charter, indeed, from King Henry V in 1413, but it contained none of the grants they desired, and its only value was that it restored the trade monopoly which Richard II had abolished. But the crown decided not to renew the lease in full. The burgesses were only allowed to collect the burgage rents, the market tolls and the ferry-dues, for which they paid £22 17s. 6d. in place of the £38 they had paid since 1393. But officers of the Duchy of Lancaster re-entered the town, after an absence of fifty-four years, to work the mills, to hold the Portmoot courts and take the profits, and to exact all other dues owing to the king. It seemed that all the gains of the previous half-century had been lost.

But the burgesses, after their long experience of freedom, showed no such timidity as they had once exhibited in their contest with Edmund of Lancaster. They boldly defied the crown, and insisted on holding the courts themselves and taking the profits, though they had no shadow of legal right. They even sent up a petition to the House of Commons for protection against these officers of the king who 'now of late have come, usurped and held certain courts in the borough by force' so that 'the said burgesses are grievously molested, vexed and disturbed in their liberties. . . . by the said officers . . . . . contrary to law and reason . . . . . to the great hindrance and detriment of the said borough and the disinheriting of the

said burgesses, if they be not succoured and aided in this present parliament.' And though Parliament gave them very little succour and aid, merely referring the matter to the King's Council, the burgesses, undismayed, continued to exercise what they regarded as their rights for no less than six years.

The king found that he could not get a penny out of the borough beyond the £22 17s. 6d. paid by the burgesses, and a couple of pounds for the rent of the mills. He summoned all the mayors for six years to appear before the Exchequer court in Lancaster, and answer for 'the time they have held our courts' and 'the tolls and other profits they have collected.' But it was all in vain; in the end he had to give way and grant them a lease for one year at the rent of £23, pending an enquiry into the whole question. The enquiry never came off, for Henry V died before the year was out, and during the minority of his son the court was too much engaged with the disputes of the nobles to have any attention to spare for the obscure usurpations of a petty borough like Liverpool. So the burgesses were allowed to continue to hold their courts, and their lease was regularly renewed for nearly thirty years.

In this brisk little struggle with the crown the burgesses had gained a striking victory, and they were left in the enjoyment of all the rights they had previously exercised, for £15 less of annual payment. What had happened was that in the long tenure of their rented rights they had lost

the distinction between the rights they enjoyed in permanence by charter and the rights they enjoyed only temporarily by lease. But great as the victory was, it was a sign that there were troubles in store. The very weakness of the crown, which had been the cause of their success, was to be their undoing. For it meant that the king would be unable to protect them from the turbulence of the nobility which was to rage so fiercely in the middle of the century.

The main feature of the history of Liverpool in this period is the establishment within the borough of two great noble houses, which have been intimately connected with its fortunes ever since. One of these had already planted itself in the town before the great quarrel between the king and the burgesses. Sir John Stanley, a cadet of an ancient Cheshire family, had, towards the end of the previous century, married the heiress of Thomas of Lathom, and obtained as part of her dowry the manor of Knowsley and a patch of land in Liverpool, on the shore of the river next to the chapel, at the foot of Water Street. Stanley was a man of immense boldness and vigour, and he rapidly made himself the most powerful magnate of South Lancashire. As a reward for his services at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403 he received large grants from the forfeited estates of the rebellious Percies. Among these was included the Isle of Man, of which the Stanleys remained kings, owing fealty to the King of England, until 1737.

Desiring a link between his Lancashire lands and his new dominion, and a base for men and supplies, Sir John Stanley, in 1406, obtained leave to fortify a house of stone and lime in Liverpool. This house was the Liverpool Tower, which remained standing at the bottom of Water Street until 1819, and is to-day represented by Tower Buildings.

The erection of the Tower marks the beginning of the intimate connexion of the family of Lord Derby with Liverpool, a connexion which has now been one of the outstanding features of the life of the borough for exactly five hundred years. Liverpool thus became the official point of contact between England and the Isle of Man, and this may have been good for trade. But the erection of a second feudal stronghold in the town must have been regarded with some disquietude by the burgesses. They must have felt somewhat nervous as to the probable behaviour of these new and embarrassing neighbours.

The trouble that was soon to come was foreshadowed by an episode which took place in 1424. At that date, under the feeble government of the regency of Henry VI, the barons had already begun to get out of hand. In south Lancashire a feud had broken out between the Stanleys and their chief rivals, the older family of Molyneux, ancestors of the Earls of Sefton. Just after midsummer, 1424, the Sheriff of Lancaster found it necessary to collect the posse comitatus and ride down to Liverpool to prevent bloodshed.

There they found Thomas Stanley 'in his father's house' (the Tower) 'with a multitude of people in the town to the number of 2,000 men and more.' When he was asked the reason for this assembly, Stanley told them that 'Sir Richard Molyneux will come hither with great congregations, riots and great multitude of people, to slay and beat the said Thomas, his men and servants, the which [very naturally] he would withstand if he might.' So the sheriff arrested him, and went after Sir Richard, whom he found marching across the Mosslake somewhere near Abercromby Square, 'with great congregations . . . . . to the number of 1,000 men and more, arrayed in manner as to go to battle, and coming in fast towards Liverpool town.' Molyneux also submitted to arrest, and the storm blew over. But the Liverpool streets had very narrowly escaped being the scene of a pitched battle. And if this was the state of things when order was still tolerably respected, what are we to imagine of the period of full anarchy, for which no records remain, because it was hopeless for the sheriff to attempt to check the disorder!

Nor was the riotous conduct confined to the great nobles. It was a Liverpool man, one William Poole, a relative of the Stanleys, who in 1437, along with 'many other felons and disturbers of the peace . . . harnessed and arrayed in manner of war,' burst into the house of Sir John Butler, of Bewsey, near Warrington, at five o'clock one Monday morning, carried off

Lady Butler by force, transported her to Bidston and compelled her, under threat of death, to go through the ceremony of marriage. For this outrage no redress could be got from the courts; Butler had to petition Parliament, and all that Parliament could do was to pass a special act outlawing the ruffianly 'William Poole of Liverpool.' It cannot have been easy for the mayor to keep order or for trade to thrive in the borough when its population included gentry of this type.

But worse was yet to come. In 1441 Sir Richard Molyneux was made Constable of Liverpool Castle and Ranger of Toxteth, Croxteth and Simonswood parks. Five years later these offices were made hereditary in the Molyneux family. The effect of this grant was practically to turn the Castle into a private stronghold of the Molyneuxes; and the year after his occupancy began Sir Richard made it more formidable than ever by the erection of a new tower at the south-east corner.

The two most powerful baronial families of South Lancashire were now both entrenched in impregnable fortresses in the heart of the borough; the crown was quite incapable of maintaining order; and the mayor and burgesses were helpless indeed. From their little thatched town-hall in the High Street they looked down on the one hand to the massive embattled Tower by the wharf, and on the other up to the huge and frowning Castle on its rocky eminence; they were ground between the upper and the nether millstone. Their only

hope was in playing off one of their dangerous neighbours against the other; and as the Molyneuxes were on the whole the more dangerous of the two, they tended to throw themselves on the protection of the Stanleys, who thus became (as they are described in the next century) 'the patrons of the poor decayed town of Liverpool.'

No details survive of the extent to which Liverpool was dragged into the Wars of the Roses. Fortunately both of the great Liverpool barons were adherents of the Yorkists; so that the wretched borough was spared the misery of continued war between them, which might have snuffed it out altogether. But as the Lancastrian party drew much of its strength from the Duchy of Lancaster, it is likely that Liverpool saw many bloody affrays of which all record is lost.

All the evidence which survives goes to show (what might be expected) that the borough underwent a rapid and terrible decay. It cannot pay even the reduced rent of £23 for its precious fee-farm lease. It gets it reduced to £14 and even to £11—which means that the revenue from the borough was not much more than it had been at the time of its foundation—but still falls into hopeless arrears. Finally the lease of the king's rights is taken from the burgesses altogether, and transferred first to the Crosses, fortunately a local family, and then, at the end of the period, to a Welsh retainer of Henry VII, one David Griffith.

This was a very serious loss; but not so serious as at first sight appears. For after all, this age of misery and disorder had one advantage, that nobody paid much attention to what the unlucky burgesses did. They were allowed to go on holding their courts, ruling the inhabitants who did not hold burgages, and treating the waste lands of the township as if they were their own property. While kings and great lords were frenziedly fighting for power, the petty usurpations of an insignificant and decaying borough passed unregarded. At the end of this century of gloom no one knew very clearly what were the rights of the burgesses and what were the rights of the crown; and the burgesses, who desperately clutched everything they could, managed to keep many things which, then almost valueless, were to be in the future of untold value. In particular we may attribute to this age of anarchy the securing of the burgesses' control over the waste, which means the establishment of the corporation estate, and the submission of all the inhabitants of the town to the burghal authorities. If Henry V had lived, if his successor had been a vigorous ruler, Liverpool would have been saved much misery. But it is also pretty certain that she would not have been able to retain these properties, over which she was still fighting with Henry V in the last year of his life.

CHAPTER VI

The Age of the Tudors, 1485-1603

MODERN England begins with the sixteenth century. No longer torn asunder by the feuds of a turbulent baronage, she enjoyed, under the firm rule of a succession of shrewd and masterful despots, leisure for the development of her commerce and her industry. It was then that, with gradually increasing boldness, English barks began to steal their way to the New World; while at home the steady growth of industries, especially wool-spinning, provided material for the rising over-sea commerce. Lancashire was beginning to be a seat of industry, humble enough as yet; and Manchester, as the topographer Leland reports in 1533, is already 'well set a-work in making of cloths as well of linen as of woollen.'

But Liverpool, still languishing after the afflictions of the previous century, had little share of this prosperity until the end of the period. Her mariners did not yet dream of venturing beyond the Atlantic; and she profited little even from the new prosperity of Lancashire, which seems to have sent its products rather to eastern ports. Whether in population or in trade, Liverpool spent this century in laboriously climbing back to the position she had occupied at the end of the fourteenth. Her population in 1565, the

first year for which there are definite figures, amounted to about 700. A quarter of a century later, in 1590, it had attained to something over 1,000, or less than it had been in 1346. The slowness of the growth of population is largely accounted for by the ravages of the sweating sickness, which repeatedly visited the town, and in 1558 raged so furiously, that the annual fair had to be dropped, no markets were held for three months, and 240 persons, or a third of the population, are said to have died.

But the plague can scarcely account for the surprisingly slow advance of the shipping in the port. In 1557 Liverpool owned thirteen vessels, the largest being of 100 tons, manned by 200 seamen in all; eight years later there were fifteen vessels, but three of them belonged to Wallasey, the largest was only of forty tons, and the number of seamen had fallen to eighty; while towards the end of the century there may have been about twenty ships. In spite of these figures the borough was really advancing; and though it describes itself on occasion as a 'poor decayed town,' its burgesses show throughout this period a vigorous spirit which was in itself the cure for all ills.

They needed a high spirit, for we find them continually compelled to battle for their rights. The Tudor kings were too acute and energetic to allow any recoverable crown rights to slip out of their hands, and the burgesses found themselves much more closely looked after than they had

been in the age of anarchy. In 1498 Henry VII required them, by what was called a writ of *quo warranto*, to produce evidence of their legal right to hold their various liberties, with what result we do not know. In 1514 Henry VIII, dissatisfied with the amount yielded by the tolls, commissioned Sir William Molyneux and others to find out whether the mayor and burgesses had been admitting persons not resident in the town to membership of the Gild, and so enabling them to 'defraud us of our tolls,' from which, of course, members of the Gild were exempt. The king regarded this action as illegal, but he did not succeed in stopping it. In 1528, William Moore was ordered to make enquiries about wrecks which legally belonged to the king, and about 'concealments and subtractions of our tolls,' which the king suspected to be going on.

Not only were the burgesses worried by the king, but they were at issue with the holders of the fee-farm lease. It will be remembered that the burgesses had lost the lease (which conveyed the right of collecting all the royal dues in the borough) during the troubles of the previous century, and down to 1537 it was held, at first by David Griffith and his family, and afterwards by Henry Ackers, a well-to-do squire of West Derby. The burgesses managed to keep the control of their own courts and markets, however, by making an arrangement with the lessees whereby they collected all the dues and kept half of them, paying £10 for the privilege. But in spite of this arrangement, a quarrel broke

out over the right of ferry. Some of the burgesses had been working a ferry to Runcorn without paying anything for the right to do so, and Ackers maintained that he alone had the right of carrying on any ferry from Liverpool. The rights and wrongs of this question are rather obscure, but in any case, the mayor was very promptly ordered to put a stop to the illicit ferry.

In spite of these quarrels, however, the affairs of the town were looking up. It can be shown that Ackers made a very handsome profit out of his fee-farm lease, the payment of which had nearly ruined the town in the previous century. And the secret of the revival is doubtless to be found in the fact that Henry VIII took up in earnest the problem of subjugating Ireland, and that Liverpool began to be used again, as she had been in the fourteenth century, for the transportation of men and provisions; though now Chester took a much larger part of this business than her younger rival.

The army of Skeffington, Henry's most vigorous viceroy, was transported from Chester and Liverpool in 1534; and a paper of instructions on the conduct of the Irish campaign says that the troops in Ireland 'must be victualled with beer, biscuit, flour, butter, cheese and flesh out of Chester, Liverpool,' and other ports. The revival of this military business brought with it a revival of the more regular trade with Ireland; and the antiquary, Leland, in 1533, notes Liverpool as a place to which 'Irish merchants come much. . . . Good

merchandise at Liverpool, and much Irish yarn that Manchester men do buy.'

Within the town, too, things were improving. In 1524 Sir William Molyneux rented a patch of waste land near the Moor Green from the burgesses, as a site for a new barn to hold the tithes of Walton, which had come into his possession. It was this barn which gave its name to Tithebarn Street; and what is more important, the transaction shows the burgesses acting as owners of the waste, unchallenged. A borough rental of the next year showed that they drew 7s. 5d. from the rents of various patches of waste.

These years saw also a very valuable benefaction to the borough from one of its sons. John Crosse, of the family of Crosse Hall, had entered the church, and become vicar of St. Nicholas of the Shambles, in London. In 1515 he made over all his property in Liverpool, consisting of several burgages and holdings in the fields, for the endowment of a new chantry, the priest of which was not only to pray for the souls of all the members of the Crosse family, but also to keep a grammar school, to which all poor boys and all boys of the name of Crosse were to be admitted without payment, while the fees of other scholars were to go to the augmentation of the teacher's salary. The priest and teacher was to be appointed by the mayor and the testator's brother or his heirs. At the same time, the good priest presented to the borough

the 'new house called Our Lady's House, to keep their courts and such business as they shall think most expedient.' Thus, by one generous act, the town was equipped with a grammar school and a Town Hall. The new Town Hall, a thatched building, stood in the High Street, on part of the site of the Liverpool, London and Globe Insurance offices; it appears frequently in the records later in the century. The grammar school seems to have been held in the ancient chapel of St. Mary, in St. Nicholas' churchyard; though, sad to relate, the first priest of the chantry, a member of the founder's own family, was so lazy that he neglected the school altogether.

This new institution had scarcely had time to get itself well established before the Reformation began, which very nearly resulted in its abolition. The first events of the Reformation made little material difference to Liverpool. The suppression of the monasteries, which aroused the greatest popular discontent, scarcely touched the borough, for the only monastic property connected with it was the house which the Prior of Birkenhead had in Water Street, and his ferry-right over the Mersey. But the later suppression of the chantries touched the borough much more nearly, for the four chantries of St. Nicholas were the only public endowments which the borough possessed. The endowments of the four chantries consisted entirely of lands in the borough. When, after the suppression, these lands passed to the crown, those belonging to two of the chantries

were disposed of on leases which, for the most part, were taken up by members of the burgess body. The lands of the other two chantries were retained by the crown. The income accruing from them seems to have been used for paying the salary of a priest for the chapel and of the schoolmaster of the grammar school. It is, however, a little doubtful whether during the first years after the suppression the school was permitted to survive.

So much for the material effects of the earlier Reformation upon the borough. As to the way in which the great change was regarded by the burgesses, it is exceedingly difficult to say anything. Perhaps at first they were inclined to resent the changes. The chantry priests continued to live in the borough after the suppression, and they must certainly have exercised a deep influence on a population accustomed to look up to them. So in 1564 the Bishop of Chester had to enjoin the curate and churchwardens of Liverpool to 'use no beads,' and to 'utterly extirpate all manner of idolatry and superstition out of their church.' But as time went on the townsmen became more Protestant, till, as we shall see, at the end of the reign of Elizabeth they had become almost Puritan in temper.

Perhaps religious difficulties had something to do with a very bitter quarrel which sprang up between Sir Richard Molyneux and the burgesses, in the first year of Queen Mary's reign. In 1537 the Molyneuxes had succeeded in obtaining the fee-farm lease of the town, and later they had

secured a renewal of it for so long a period as forty-one years. This was nothing less than a disaster to the burgesses; it was bad enough to have their markets and courts at the mercy of a local squire like David Griffith or Henry Ackers; but to be delivered over into the hands of a family which already controlled the Castle and received their tithes payable to Walton Church, was ten-fold worse. At first the Molyneuxes were content to allow the burgesses to collect the dues, as Ackers had done. But in the first year of Queen Mary's reign the unfortunate burgesses somehow angered their great neighbour, and instead of renewing the old arrangement with them, Sir Richard, in 1554, put his own officers into the town to collect the dues and hold the courts.

At once the burgesses blazed up in opposition, ready to fight the lord of the Castle as they had long before fought King Henry V on the same question. They refused to allow the officers to collect the tolls. One of them, Hugh Dobie, was a burgess. He was promptly deprived of the freedom of the borough, and when he persisted in trying to collect tolls, the mayor, Thomas Moore, imprisoned him in the cellar of the Town Hall, and kept him there for four months. When Sir Richard Molyneux tried to proclaim a meeting of the Portmoot, which he claimed the right to hold, his officers were roughly handled, and the mayor insisted upon holding it himself. Sir Richard indicted the mayor, the bailiffs, all the aldermen, and fifty-seven of the burgesses at the

Quarter Sessions, for taking part in this business.

The anxious burgesses held frequent meetings to consider the best course to be taken. Sure that their charters secured them in the disputed rights, they sent the mayor up to London to get them confirmed by Queen Mary, and great was the rejoicing when the confirmation came down. They also elected a good Catholic, Sir William Norris of Speke, as their next mayor, in the hope that his influence might outweigh that of Molyneux. But alas! the laws (or at any rate the lawyers) were against them. Thomas Moore, on going up to London again, was imprisoned in the Fleet on the indictment of Molyneux, and only released when Hugh Dobie was let out of his Liverpool jail. And when the whole case came to be tried before the Chancery Court of Lancaster, judgement was given at every point against the unfortunate burgesses. They were told that their charters did not convey to them the rights they claimed, and that all tolls of all sorts levied within the borough legally belonged to Molyneux, who was also entitled to hold the Portmoot court and to compel the attendance of all burgesses.

This was a woeful issue for so gallant a struggle; and a very different from that of the last struggle on the same question. It delivered over the borough bound and gagged into the hands of the Constable of the Castle. Fortunately, however, the friendly patron of the borough was at hand to give aid. On the intercession of Lord Strange, eldest son of Lord Derby, Sir Richard Molyneux

was persuaded to renew the old arrangement, whereby the burgesses held the courts and collected all the dues, paying over half of them and £14 more to Sir Richard. On these terms peace lasted between them for the rest of the period; but, not unnaturally, they regarded the Molyneuxes henceforward with very strained feelings.

Another trouble, of a more amusing and less serious kind, arose directly out of this dispute. In 1547 the Liverpool burgesses had again been called upon to elect two members, a privilege which they had not enjoyed since 1307, but which they were not again to lose. But, like others in this period, they did not choose their own members: their regular practice was to invite their patron, Lord Derby, to nominate one of the members, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, on behalf of the crown, to nominate the other. In 1562, however, the burgesses ventured to depart from their ordinary practice, and in order to celebrate their reconciliation with Molyneux, they offered him the nomination to one of their parliamentary seats for his son, reserving the other, as usual, for Lord Derby. But this aroused the anger of the Chancellor of the Duchy, who was thus deprived of his customary nomination. So enraged was he that he actually returned writs duly filled, and the writs of Parliament for that year contain a duplicate set for the borough of Liverpool. He also threatened—on what legal ground it is impossible to imagine—to prosecute the borough.

In such a predicament there was only one thing to be done. Lord Derby's help must be obtained. So Ralph Sekerston, the most active and individual figure in the Liverpool of that age, went to see my lord, who was so pleased with his spirit that he not only intervened to protect the town from the Chancellor's wrath, but gave Sekerston his own nomination; and for sixteen years the borough had a real member of its own. It had to pay for the privilege, for Sekerston had to receive 2s. a day for his service, while the usual nominees were glad enough to serve without pay. But Sekerston was an admirable representative, who cared for nothing but the interests of the borough, and his pay was well earned.

In later Parliaments the earl and the chancellor as of old were allowed to make the nominations. It was probably on the chancellor's nomination that in the year of the Armada no less a man than Francis Bacon for four months represented Liverpool. Like most of the representatives of the period he probably never visited the borough, and the burgesses most likely knew (and cared to know) nothing about him. He was the chancellor's member; that was enough for them.

This episode, which shows how slight was the interest of the burgesses in national politics, brings us into the stirring reign of Queen Elizabeth. In the world-shaking events of that reign, Liverpool was strangely little concerned. Though a Liverpool trader, who had escaped after a year's imprisonment in Spain, is said to have been the

first man to bring to England the news of the preparation of the Spanish Armada, the only trace of the excitement caused by that great danger in Liverpool is the fact that the burgesses raised enough money to erect one gun on the 'Nabbe,' at the mouth of the Pool.

The continual piratical raids against Spanish shipping which preceded the Spanish Armada, first in the English Channel and later on the Spanish Main, concerned Liverpool rather more directly. In 1555 a Spaniard, Inigo de Baldram, complained to the privy council that he had been robbed by 'pirates of Liverpool and Chester,' and later one or two captured French and Spanish ships were brought into the Mersey. Piracy raged in the Irish Sea as well as in the English Channel, and the government of Elizabeth, which secretly encouraged it when it was directed against Spain, found some difficulty in keeping it within limits.

Far more than in the Spanish struggle, Liverpool was interested in the ferocious Irish wars in which Elizabeth endeavoured to complete the work of subjugation recommenced by Henry VIII, and did it by turning the Green Isle into a desert. The Earl of Essex and part of his army were transported from Liverpool, and on at least six other occasions substantial forces left the port. The activity thus caused was far greater than it had been under Henry VIII, and must have brought a good deal of profit to the ship-masters of the borough. The cost of transport averaged more than £1 per man, 2s. was allowed to each

soldier for food during the voyage, and while the troops were detained in the town, as they sometimes were for long periods, 3d. a head was allowed for each meal, and 4d. a day for the feed of each horse.

But there were drawbacks to this constant use of the port for transport of troops. Quarters and food had to be compulsorily provided while the troops lay in the town. Even when these were promptly paid for, it must have been difficult for so small a town to make adequate provision, and soldiers have a way of helping themselves if they are not well provided.

Moreover the troops were often riotous. A very vivid account survives of an affray which broke out one Sunday morning in 1573, between the captain and the lieutenant of two detachments bound for Ulster. Captain Bartley with a company of his motley-coats met Lieutenant Sydenham with some of his blue-coats, in the street; swords were drawn, and such was the 'rageous persecution of the said Bartley' that the other side had to take refuge in a house, where by the 'good previse and fortunate shift of the wife of the said house' they were conveyed into 'an high loft-chamber by the ladder, and so they drawn up the ladder up to them in the said loft, and so escaped death, as pleased God.' The victorious party then seem to have broken into riot and terrorised the town, sacking and plundering, while 'Roger Sydenham, poor gent, was in cover all the while.' As it was Sunday morning,

however, the burgesses were at home, and on the ma or's summons all trooped out to the heath beyondy the Pool, where the mayor drew them up in battle array, 'every man with his best weapons,' and all 'as eager as lions.' This had the effect of bringing Captain Bartley to his senses; and 'after all this done,' says the chronicler, 'the captains and their soldiers were more gentle to deal with all whiles they abode within the town.' Eight years later we hear of a formidable mutiny breaking out among the troops at Liverpool, which had to be visited with 'sharp and exemplary punishment.'

Another drawback of this transport business arose from the fact that, by royal order, the shipping of the port was often withdrawn from trade and detained for long periods in harbour, waiting for troops which did not arrive. In 1593 it was only the intercession of Lord Derby for the 'poor masters and owners of vessels stayed at Liverpool,' which obtained their release, though the expedition for which they were detained had been given up.

In the transport of troops to Ireland, however, Liverpool at this point played a less important part than Chester; so much so, that the government treated Liverpool as a sort of dependency of Chester. Chester was also the centre of a large customs district, including all the North Wales ports as well as Liverpool. This was a convenient arrangement, because the customs at Liverpool were so small that they had apparently

not been worth the trouble of collection between the end of the fourteenth and the middle of the sixteenth century.

But the position thus held by Chester was made the ground of a general claim to supremacy over the port of Liverpool, first put forward in 1565, which the Liverpool men very vigorously resisted. Chester claimed that the Mersey was only 'a creek of its port,' and that all ships entering there should pay dues through Chester. This claim was successfully rebutted by the help of Lord Derby, who got a friendly commission of enquiry appointed, and by the energy of Ralph Sekerston, M.P., who 'of his own politic wit and wisdom' drew up a petition to the queen, in which he cunningly pointed out that the subordination of Liverpool to Chester would be an indignity to the royal duchy of Lancaster, of which he said (not quite correctly) that Liverpool was the only port. The Chester claims came up again in a modified form in 1578, when Chester tried to compel ships calling on the Cheshire side of the Mersey to pay dues to her. The Liverpool men were as vigorous as ever in resistance, ordering the water-bailiffs to arrest and confiscate any such ship which did not pay dues at Liverpool.

But this quarrel was dropped without formal settlement, because at the moment the two rival ports had a common danger to face. A charter had been granted giving a monopoly of the English trade with Spain to a new company, and empowering it to impose heavy fines upon all merchants

trading with Spain who were not members of the company. This would have crushed out of existence the small Spanish trade carried on by a few shippers in the two towns. Once again it was to Lord Derby that the burgesses were indebted for protection and aid. He obtained from the privy council a promise that the merchants of Liverpool and Chester should be exempted from the payment of fines to the Spanish company, on the rather humiliating ground that their trade was of so small and retail a character as to be of no importance.

This danger, the last of the long series of troubles which had afflicted the burgesses during the century, was the direct cause of a striking change in the government of the borough. It had long been felt that the general assembly of all burgesses was not a suitable body to handle difficult questions; in 1555, during the heat of the quarrel with Sir Richard Molyneux,' the Assembly itself had assented to the statement of the mayor 'that it were not convenient to declare there all things which was done .... forasmuch as he well perceived all in the whole house were not to be credited and trusted.' Several attempts had been made to institute a sort of standing committee or council, to take over the normal management of affairs; but these attempts had all failed because after once electing a council, the Assembly always became jealous of its powers, and did not re-elect it.

In 1580, however, a more drastic change was

made. The then mayor, Edward Halsall, told the Assembly that all the misfortunes of the borough were due to the lack of a body consisting of the most discreet and substantial of the burgesses, to administer the burghal business. He therefore made a proposal which was carried after much discussion. This was that a council of twenty-four ordinary members and twelve aldermen should be appointed, and empowered to administer all the borough business without reference to the Assembly. To prevent the Assembly from destroying this body as it had destroyed its predecessors, it was determined that the members should sit for life, and that vacancies as they arose should be filled, not by the Assembly, but by the Council itself.

Thus there was established the close self-elected Town Council, which continued to govern the borough from this time till the Municipal Reform Act of 1835. It was the direct outcome of the troubles and disputes of the period with which we have been dealing in this chapter. The Assembly now retained no power except that of electing the mayor and one of the bailiffs, and perhaps passing occasional by-laws.

In form the borough thus suddenly passed from the government of the widest of democracies to that of the narrowest of oligarchies. But the change was probably not so startling as it seems. The same process had been going on in most other English boroughs; and the way had been prepared for the final step in Liverpool

by the practice, which had so long existed, of leaving the ordinary administration in the hands of the mayor and of that group of leading burgesses who constituted the mayor's brethren or aldermen. Still the definite establishment of the Town Council as the ruling body in the borough marks a very definite epoch in the borough's history. One inevitable result of it may be briefly noted. The mayor becomes at once a much less important person. Instead of being almost a dictator, only capable of being called to account after his year of office, he becomes merely the agent and mouthpiece of the permanent Town Council.

CHAPTER VII

Trade and Society in Tudor Liverpool.

In the middle of the sixteenth century the regular Municipal Records of Liverpool begin. They are far from being mere dry minutes of proceedings. Parts of them were written by some unknown scribe who had a very vivid pen, and they enable us to realize the life of Liverpool in that age with quite extraordinary clearness.

The town had changed scarcely at all in its external aspect since the fourteenth century, and we need not repeat what was written in a previous chapter about the streets and the houses. The only new building of importance since that date was the great square Tower at the bottom of Water Street, where the Earls of Derby occasionally stayed when they visited the borough. Nor had the fields or the system of agriculture materially changed, though it is now possible to describe them in more detail, and to mention (for example) the booth which stood at the end of what is now Scotland Road for the collection of ingates and outgates, which were the tolls taken from country-folk coming to or leaving the market.

Of the town's trade we now have a much more minute knowledge. Foreign trade, as we have

already noted, was as yet very small, though there were two or three merchants who traded with Spain and Portugal, taking out corn, fish and rough cloths, and bringing back wine and iron. Spanish iron was highly esteemed, for the English mines, as yet, were little worked, and their product was inferior: in 1586 some English iron which came to Liverpool was declared to be 'very coarse metal, brittle, and very unfit for this place.'

But the bulk of the sea-borne trade was with Ireland. During three months of 1586, for which we have full returns, sixteen vessels entered the port, all from Irish ports, Dublin, Drogheda or Carlingford. In every case their cargoes consisted of linen yarn, hides and sheepskins, with sometimes a little tallow. The linen yarn was destined for the hand-looms of Manchester; many of the hides were tanned in Liverpool. In the same period seventeen vessels cleared for the same ports. The outgoing cargoes were much more varied. Six consisted largely or wholly of coal, probably brought by road from Wigan. But the most important item is textiles of various sorts, 'cottons' or 'coatings' of rough linen stuff from Manchester and Kendal, and Yorkshire woollens. There are also Sheffield knives and scythes, pewter cups and trenchers from Chester, saddles, bridles and other leather goods. 'Smallwares' form a frequent item, including gloves, leather 'points' (laces which took the place of buttons), stockings, shoeing-horns and soap, with, on one occasion, 1400

tennis balls and 24 rackets. It may be observed that Liverpool is already engaged, though on the smallest scale, in exporting manufactures and importing raw materials; and her manufactures already come from the looms of Manchester and the furnaces of Sheffield.

But if there is a faintly modern air about the commodities dealt with, there is nothing modern about the way in which traders were treated when they arrived in the port. On the arrival of a vessel it was promptly boarded by one of the water-bailiffs, a place of anchorage was assigned to it, and unless the ship belonged to a freeman, the master had to pay anchorage and wharfage dues. He then (whether he was a freeman or not) had to see the mayor to arrange the terms on which he would be allowed to dispose of his cargo. The mayor consulted with the aldermen, or the Assembly, or (later) the Town Council, as to whether the cargo or any part of it should be taken as a 'town's bargain.'

If it was decided to make a town's bargain, the officers called merchant prysors were sent to value the cargo: they, and not the seller, fixed the price. If the trader chose to take the town's offer his cargo was landed and weighed under the supervision of the merchant prysors, and he paid weighage dues, while at the same time the 'customers' collected the customs duties. The goods were then carted to the common warehouse under the Town Hall, where the keeper of the common warehouse charged hallage dues. Every

freeman of the borough then had the right of taking his share of the goods, at the price fixed by the merchant prysors.

If, however, the seller did not choose to take the town's offer, he might make a bargain with the mayor to 'have an open market,' that is, to sell his goods on his own terms. Thus in 1591 'one Mr. Pratt came before the mayor and the whole assembly concerning certain rye and barley brought by him from Ireland, which he proffered to the mayor and the town to be sold, for the which the mayor with the consent of the whole assembly proffered 7s. 8d. per barrel of the said rye, and 6s. per barrel of the said barley, which price the said merchant refusing, did then and there voluntarily make proffer to the mayor of the sum of 33s. 4d. to have license and free liberty to make his best market for the sale of the said grain, which in the end was granted.' Until the mayor and assembly had considered the matter, and either made a town's bargain or got a substantial fee for license to sell, no burgess might bargain with the importer. Non-burgesses were not allowed to buy direct from him at all—they must buy at second-hand from the burgesses.

The control of the burgesses or freemen over the trade of the port, however, went still further. They imposed special duties of their own on special kinds of goods. They prohibited the export of other commodities: to deal with a scarcity in 1587 the water bailiffs were ordered

to seize and sell all corn found in ships leaving the river. Their jurisdiction extended over the whole of the river, and boats making for Frodsham or Warrington were boarded by the water bailiffs and made to pay dues before going on.

In the ordinary local traffic much the same system of regulations existed, though it does not appear that town's bargains were made in goods coming by land. Everyone entering or leaving the township on market days had to pay ingate and outgate dues: though, in virtue of ancient royal grants, the men of Altcar and Prescot were free of these. No goods brought into the town by a non-freeman were allowed to be sold to any but freemen: 'all the merchants of Bolton, Wigan and Manchester which bring hops, tallow, soap, or any other kind of wares . . . shall sell the same to the freemen of this town, and not to any foreigner in any wise'; the freemen intended to have all middleman profits. One exception only was allowed to this rule: sheep-skins and yarns could be sold direct by foreigners to foreigners, because they were chiefly sold by Irish traders to Manchester weavers, who came to Liverpool to buy them.

Even on the freemen themselves narrow restrictions were imposed. To prevent 'cornering,' 'no townsman shall buy above eight windles of corn on one market day.' To prevent under-buying 'no townsfolk, neither men, women nor servants shall buy any butter, eggs or fish before the same are brought to the usual place of market.' A

sharp watch was kept over the quality of the goods sold in the town. Thus any shoemaker who brought to market shoes made of horse-hide or unlawful barked leather was liable to have the shoes confiscated, to be fined, or to be imprisoned at the mayor's discretion.

The market, at which all ordinary trade was carried on, was held every Saturday, in High Street, the northern end of Castle Street, and Dale Street as far as the modern Stanley Street. Different parts of this line were set apart for different commodities. Country folk who brought in corn had to arrange their sacks in rows along the sides of the street, Lancashire men on the east and Cheshire men on the west. With the mouths of their sacks open, they waited till the mayor and his officers came round in their robes. After the mayor came the 'levelookers' to check the seller's measures by the standard town measures, for the borough had measures of its own, and goods were not allowed to be sold by any others. Then the market opened, and for the first hour only freemen were allowed to buy. At first the cattle-market was held in the same place as the rest, but in 1567 the cattle were removed to the open fields on the far side of the castle, in what is now South Castle Street (then Pool Lane), because 'the town is much troubled on market days with cattle and beasts.'

The annual fair in November was still more lively, for merchants came to it from much greater distances. The opening of the fair was



W. G. Herdman, delt.

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marked by the hoisting of the sign of a hand from the Town Hall, and during the three days that it lasted all frequenters were free from arrest within its limits. It was not easy to keep order in these circumstances; the mayor had to peregrinate the fair in his robes, followed by a number of men carrying halberds, and every freeman was bound to come to his assistance at need. For this purpose the mayor and each of the aldermen had to keep 'four honest and seemly bills or poleaxes,' and every bailiff and ex-bailiff two bills, and every freeman one bill; 'the same to be provided before the fair day on pain of 3s. 4d.' With all these bills and pole-axes there must sometimes have been lively work in the fair.

From the commerce of the town we may next turn to its industries. Of these the most important was still milling. The mills were still the same as in the fourteenth century; but the universal compulsion of grinding at them was felt to be vexatious, and many burgesses set up illicit handmills or horsemills of their own, or sent their grain to mills outside of the town. In 1586 William Moore, who, like his ancestors, worked the Townsend mill, went to law and had all the private mills destroyed, but illicit milling still went on.

The most interesting feature of the period in regard to the industries of the town is the rise of craft-gilds, or associations of all persons engaged in a particular trade. These craft-gilds must

not be confused with the merchant-gild, which included all freemen. They were empowered to regulate their own industries. They had long existed in other boroughs, but in Liverpool they seem either to have come into existence for the first time, or to have been reorganised, about the middle of the sixteenth century. The first of which mention is made is the Gild of the Tailors, who in 1558 paid 50s. to the assembly for the right of excluding from the tailoring business all but their own members. This precedent seems to have been generally imitated, for a little later comes an edict 'that no craftsman not free shall set up his occupation without license of the brethren of the occupation upon forfeiture of 6s. 8d.' The tailors charged 4s. 6d. for admission to their gild and license to practise the trade, while the weavers charged 5s. The nearest modern analogy to these gilds is to be found in such bodies as the Cotton Association in our own city. But the craft gilds never took root in Liverpool as they did in other towns; by the middle of the next century they had died out altogether.

One industry the borough officers kept very strictly under their own control—that of brewing. Two officers, the ale-founders, were annually appointed to see that all beer sold was of the proper quality and measure. 'We find it convenient,' the Portmoot decrees in 1584, 'that every one that hath ale to sell shall sell a quart for a penny if it be called for, and that

they shall bring a full quart open (that is, in a pot without a lid) to the intent they shall use no deceit.'

To carry out these elaborate regulations a number of special officers were required. All were burgesses. Some of them served without payment; some took commissions; others were paid fixed salaries, like the keeper of the common warehouse, who was paid 22s. 9d. per annum, or the 'customer,' who got 15s. per annum, with 10s. extra for the 'keeping of a horse or nag to ride upon to attend upon the mayor, or otherwise about the town's business.'

But the dues were large enough to pay these salaries and leave a good deal over; besides, there were rents of the patches of the waste, let out by the burgesses; and there were also the fines for the admission of freemen. For men no longer obtained admission to the liberties of the borough by holding a burgage, but by being elected to the 'freedom'; and that is why the name freeman is replacing the name burgess. Sons or apprentices of freemen were admitted as by right, on payment of a fine of 3s. 4d. in one case and 6s. 8d. in the other; other persons paid higher sums, fixed seemingly in proportion to their ability to pay.

From all these sources the borough derived a considerable revenue, quite sufficient for ordinary needs, and rates were only raised on special occasions, as when expenses were involved in fighting the claims of Sir Richard Molyneux, or the

city of Chester. The highest figure reached by the borough revenue during this period was about £92, but it varied very widely from year to year, and the average was about £60.

Of this sum a comparatively small proportion was expended on what are now the most costly departments of municipal government, because most of the public works were carried out by the freemen themselves. But a very large proportion was spent on public amusements. Cock-fighting and bull-baiting were the favourite sports, and they were encouraged by the borough authorities. In 1567 the jury at the Portmoot 'find it needful that there be a handsome cock-fight pit made.' Bull-baiting was perhaps more cheaply run than the sister sport, because it was the rule that no bull should be killed until it had been baited, and no doubt there was a bull-ring outside of the town. Horse-racing, too, received municipal support. Every year, under the patronage of the mayor, a race was run for a silver cup over a four-mile course on the Kirkdale sands. Then the town kept and paid a musician, or wait, who wore a silver badge and played in the market-place morning and evening. His instrument seems to have been the bagpipes; and he was ordered to play every day before the houses of the mayor and all the aldermen. The little town must have echoed continually to the mellow music of this attractive instrument. It is to be hoped that the wait knew more than one tune.

But the kinds of merry making in which the

freemen most delighted were banqueting and drinking. Every new freeman, on admission, was expected to stand drinks: if he wished to be popular he would give a *parvula collatio*, a little dinner, to his fellow townsmen. At fair times there was generally a banquet in the Town Hall at the public expense, open to all freemen. And special occasions were eagerly seized upon for celebration in this congenial English manner.

In November 1576, on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession, the mayor 'caused a great bonfire to be made in the market place near to the high cross, and another anenst his own door, giving warning that every householder should do the like throughout the town, which was done accordingly.' In the midst of this impressive illumination, the jovial mayor 'caused to call together his brethren the aldermen and divers others of the burgesses of the said town, and so went altogether to the house of Mr. Ralph Burscough, alderman, where they banqueted a certain time, which done, the mayor departed to his own house accompanied of the said aldermen and others a great number, upon whom he did bestow sack and other white wine and sugar liberally, standing all without the door, lauding and praising God for the most prosperous reign of our most gracious sovereign lady . . . . . And so, appointing his bailiff and other officers to see the fires quenched, he departed'—rolling jovially up to bed by the light of two hundred bonfires.

Occasionally one of the neighbouring magnates would send in the materials for a feast, as in 1562, when my Lord Derby 'gave the town a buck, a pure good one, and merrily disposed of and eaten in the common hall; many of the town absent, the others had more plenty. Also Sir Richard Molyneux gave the town a buck, which proved but mean, and that was divided between the mayor, the aldermen, and the bailiffs, whereat many of the commoners loured and something murmured.'

The scene of all these festivities was the Town Hall, 'Our Lady's Hall,' the same that was given to the town by the good old parson John Crosse. It served a variety of purposes—it was at once meeting place, court room, jail and common warehouse. The mayor had to pay for mending the windows; and the roof was kept in repair free of charge by a slater, who was given the freedom on this condition. Most of the wedding feasts of the burgesses took place here; 1s. 6d. was the charge for festivals of this sort, but for dances and other festivals the charge was 5s., 'to be paid beforehand.' The townsmen were very proud of their one public building, and gave it many fine names—the Town Hall, the Gild Hall, Our Lady's Hall, the Common Hall or *Aula Communis*, and even the *Praetorium*.

But of all the festivals with which the Praetorium's rafters rang, the most brilliant were those organised in honour of the great patron of the borough, Lord Derby, who indeed, as

we have seen, had earned every honour the burgesses could give him. Several such occasions are recorded, but the most splendid was the 'great triumph' which was organised in the earl's honour in April, 1577, when he stayed for four days in the Tower.

First the earl went in solemn procession to church, with the mayor, bailiffs and aldermen, in strict order of precedence. When he came out from St. Nicholas', there were ready to greet him a great number of townsmen, whom the mayor had got together and 'furnished and trimly set forth as soldiers in warlike manner to march and skirmish before the right honourable earl.' They 'skirmished very bravely and orderly,' and fired off many guns in the churchyard. Next morning the earl went to church again, escorted by his skirmishers, and no doubt striving to maintain his gravity. He presented the chaplain with a gold piece and listened to a 'pious and godly sermon.' All day long the skirmishers went on unweariedly, 'so that there was shot at the least 1,200 culver shot'; and in the evening, when it was dark, Roger Powell fired off a fine squib, 'whereat his honour took great pleasure.'

On another occasion the earl, on his way to the Isle of Man, was met at the Town's End by the mayor, bailiffs, aldermen and freemen in procession; and 'the said earl rested and had a couple of partridges,' to which the freemen begged to be allowed to add 'a banquet of delicious delicates of two courses of service.'

Evidently these townsmen, like all England in this age, were fond of pageantry and ceremonial. All the borough officers had robes of a particular pattern which they were obliged to wear on all public occasions. Questions of precedence were very strictly regulated. In the chapel, as was usual in that period, the men sat on one side and the women on the other; the mayor in the place of honour, then the bailiffs, then the aldermen in order of seniority, then the ex-bailiffs. A long entry in the records defines the precedence of officials' wives, with the object of putting an end to the 'contention and variance' which had arisen among the women 'about their place of kneeling and sitting in the church.'

Everything connected with the chapel, indeed, was regulated by the borough officers. Repairs to the fabric were carried out by the bailiffs at the town's expense. The parson was elected by the burgesses, but not for life—only 'during the time he useth himself well and in good sort, but yet always to be removed at the appointment of the mayor and his brethren.' His salary (paid partly by the borough, partly from the endowment of one of the chantries administered by the borough) amounted to £10 per annum with a house; but it sometimes fell seriously into arrears.

The burgesses kept a very sharp watch upon the conduct of the parsons. One of them was fined 'for suffering the churchyard to be spoiled with swine'; a second was requested 'to cut his hair of a comely and seemly length,

as best beseemeth a man in his place'; another had to pay 6d. for cutting down the great thorn in the churchyard without license, and again 'for keeping horses and kine in the churchyard.' This same parson, Sir Hugh Jannion, frequently quarrelled with his masters; they rebuke him 'for not keeping the gate of the churchyard open at divine service'; and they inform him that they 'think it not meet nor convenient that he do continue his journeys so often as he hath done to Chester.' Finally they give him notice to quit.

Perhaps religious differences may have had something to do with some of these quarrels, for as the century grew old the burgesses became more and more Protestant and even Puritan in temper. The name of Sunday gives place to Sabbath, and all ale-houses are ordered to be closed on the Sabbath day; they are very particular that the lessons shall be read in the body of the church, and actually fine the mayor for allowing them to be read in the chancel. The priest becomes the minister; the freemen begin to insist that if he does not preach a sermon he shall at any rate read a homily every Sunday, and in 1591 a special rate is levied to engage a godly preacher, one Mr. Carter, who received £4 per annum.

Like the parson, the clerk or sexton was also an elected officer, his wages amounting to £3 6s. 8d. He was required to be able to 'sing his plain-song and prick-song and play on the organs.' But he had also to perform more

humble functions; he is strictly enjoined to whip the dogs out of church and keep the clock, which seems to have been constantly out of order. 'The clerk shall have no wages' it is decreed, 'unless he look well to the keeping of the clock.' It was also his duty to ring the curfew bell for half an hour from seven to half-past seven every night during the winter, beginning on October 31 and ending on February 2.

Occasionally the clerk added to these duties that of schoolmaster; for the grammar school was now fully under the control of the burgesses, Queen Elizabeth having, in 1565, transferred to the borough good old John Crosse's endowment. As the lands in the borough of which this endowment consisted yielded only £5 13s. 4d., a rate had to be levied to supplement it; and to enjoy the munificent salary of £10 per annum (perhaps supplemented by fees) Mr. Ralph Sekerston, the borough's own M.P., was instructed to find a suitable schoolmaster. A special assembly of burgesses was held to receive and inspect the first borough schoolmaster, Mr. John Ore, B.A. Thus the grammar school was definitely established in much the same way and on much the same scale as the corresponding school in Manchester. The Manchester grammar school is now among the biggest and most distinguished schools in England; the Liverpool grammar school has altogether vanished. The reason for this diversity of fate will be seen in a later chapter.

Not only did the borough authorities regulate the church and the school, they held it to be part of their duty to keep an oversight of the morals of the town. To keep down 'the exceeding number of alehouses and tippling-houses' they forbid the opening of any such house without license from the mayor, and all licensees have to give surety 'against unlawful games.' Gambling was rigidly suppressed; so also were bowling alleys, which persuaded people to waste time. Apprentices who played cards were to be whipped. Jugglers, players and showmen must be licensed by the mayor. Bachelors might not walk out after nine o'clock. Apprentices were very strictly kept in order: 'no manner of apprentice or servant shall depart out of their master's or dame's house after eight of the clock, unless it be on his master or dame's business, on pain of imprisonment.' 'Scolders and chiders' were liable to a fine of 10s. or to imprisonment at the mayor's discretion; and while in prison no 'wine, beer, ale or other kind of drink' was to be brought to them. Every burgess was responsible for the behaviour not only of his apprentices but of his guests; and in 1592 (when the town had become thoroughly Puritan) the mayor himself was fined for having persons staying in his house who did not go to church on the Sabbath day.

The police regulations of the borough were of a primitive kind; for the most part, police duties had to be performed by the burgesses

themselves. Watch and ward was kept in the town from eight at night till four in the morning, and all freemen had to take their turn in this service. Indeed, the participation of all burgesses in the common labours of the town remains, as in the middle ages, a feature of its life. When the paving needed repair 'every townsman having a team' was required 'to serve with the same half a day apiece, in due order and course.'

Perhaps the most striking example of this co-operative self-help was provided in the year 1561, when a violent storm broke down the old harbour. 'The mayor' thereupon 'called the whole town together unto the hall, where they counselled all in one consent for the foundation and making of a new haven.' The mayor himself, Robert Corbett, opened a subscription, and 'of his own free will gave a pistole of gold towards the beginning, which that day was good and current all England through for 5s. 10d., although after, in a few days, but by proclamation . . . . . was prohibited and not current. Also the same day, Mr. Sekerston (M.P.) did give, also all the rest of the congregation did give, so that in the whole was gathered that present day the sum of 13s. 9d. current, and put into the custody of Richard Fazakerley and Robert Mosse.' 13s. 9d. may seem a somewhat inadequate capital for the construction of a new harbour, but note the sequel. 'On the Monday morning then next, the mayor, and of every house in the Water Street one labourer, went

to the old Pool and there began and enterprised digging, ditching and busily labouring upon the foundation of the new haven; and so the Tuesday, of every house in the Castle Street,' and so on in turn, each street taking its day, 'and this order continued until St. Nicholas' day then next after, gratis.' There is something almost heroic in these proceedings, but that was the accepted mode of performing the common labours of the town.

To some extent the problem of poverty was treated in the same spirit, though it must be admitted that, in the treatment of the poor, the Liverpool freemen were often more than a little harsh. But one of their experiments deserves note. A list was drawn up of all 'poor and impotent people and children,' who were licensed to beg; and certain definite houses were allotted to each of them where their begging must be done. That was a mode of making the well-to-do sensible of their obligations to their fellows which was not without its advantages. It at least brought a personal relation into the administration of charity, and it forms a curious tail-foremost anticipation of the much lauded Elberfeld system.

On that not unpleasant note we may close this survey of sixteenth century Liverpool. It is a piece of great good fortune which enables us to get into such intimate contact with the burgesses on the eve of an age of rapid change upon which they were about to enter.

CHAPTER VIII

The Beginning of a New Growth, 1603-1642

THE first forty years of the seventeenth century, between the death of Elizabeth and the outbreak of the great Civil War, are marked by two outstanding characteristics, in the history of Liverpool as in the history of England. In the first place this period witnessed the rise of two acutely divided parties, divided on questions both of religion and politics, whose differences increasingly obscured older grounds of quarrel, and in the end attained such a pitch of embitterment as could only be relieved by the blood-letting of civil war. But these differences did not prevent a steady growth in prosperity, in which Liverpool had its share. This was the age when England founded her first colonies beyond the seas, and when the ships of the East India Company made their first voyages round the Cape of Good Hope.

In Liverpool, old causes of quarrel still survive in this period, and occupy a great space in the records; but their interest for us has now largely vanished. There are disputes of the old type with Sir Richard Molyneux about the powers

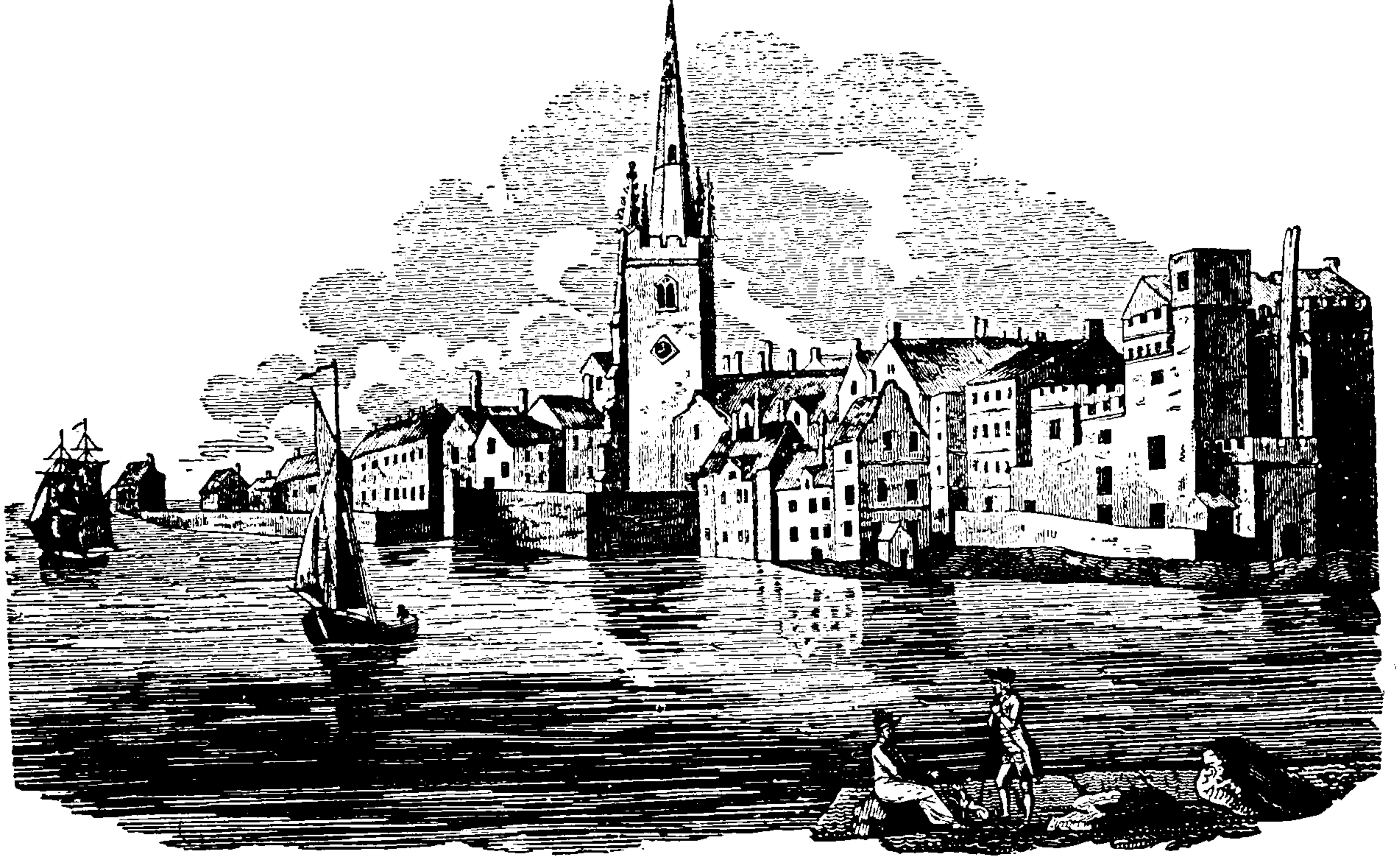
conveyed by the fee-farm lease; there is a revival of the old quarrel with Chester about that city's claim to superiority over her younger rival; there are controversies with the courts of the Duchy over the borough's claim to settle all local matters in its own courts; and the freemen of Liverpool fight these questions with as much determination and with far more self-confidence than in the previous century. But the chief interest of these often-fought battles is the evidence which they afford that the freemen were now far more capable of self-help, and needed much less the condescending protection of their 'patron' than of yore.

The town was very steadily progressing in these years; its population more than doubled by the middle of the seventeenth century. Its shipping was still of modest proportions, so much so that when, in 1625, five Liverpool ships, carrying troops for Ireland, were wrecked off Holyhead, the mayor represented to the crown that the town would be entirely ruined unless it received state aid. Nevertheless the shipping of Liverpool had far outstripped that of Chester, which had to confess that it had no ships at all, but traded only in small barks. In face of this the Chester claim to superiority had become ridiculous; and though the mayor of Chester still acted as a royal officer for the whole district in the transport of troops to Ireland, yet the main bulk of that traffic was necessarily carried on by her rival. By the middle of the century Liverpool had

become, *par excellence*, the northern port for Ireland, and not merely one of the less important of a group of ports.

This expansion of trade was probably mainly due to the comparative order and peace which had come to Ireland since the desolating wars of Elizabeth, and to the new industries which grew up in that country when the North was re-peopled by James I, and still more when the firm and intelligent, if somewhat unscrupulous, rule of Wentworth gave to the unfortunate island a prosperity such as she had never enjoyed since the beginning of her connexion with England. Poor Chester, eager to get a share of this growing trade, tried giving bonuses to Irish exporters to persuade them to land their yarn at her wharves, but in spite of all such inducements Liverpool had the lion's share of the traffic. Even the Irish trade, however, was not without its dangers. Piracy still flourished in the Irish sea, and in 1633 a 'Biscayan Spanish rogue' impudently took up his station in Dublin bay, and captured two Liverpool vessels, one with a cargo worth £3,000, while the other carried the Lord Deputy's own linen.

Not only was the Irish trade developing, but new lines of trade were being opened up. We hear of a cargo of woollens being brought from distant Tewkesbury down the Severn and round the coast of Wales to Liverpool. Mention of direct traffic with France and Spain is much more frequent; and there is even recorded the



THE TOWER AND OLD ST. NICHOLAS', FROM MANN ISLAND

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arrival of a ship from the West Indies, laden with tobacco—the earliest forerunner, so-far as we know, of that gigantic Atlantic trade upon which the greatness of Liverpool was to be built. One imagines the greater part of the townspeople turning out to gaze at this first ship from America.

The new independence of spirit which growing prosperity inspired in the freemen is particularly shown in the use they now make of their right of returning members to parliament. One at least of their two members is now always elected directly by the freemen; who pay his expenses at the rate of 2s. for each day's attendance in parliament, because they find it worth while to have their interests specially looked after there. They keep a very strict oversight of their members' behaviour. When Mr. Brook, M.P., in 1611, claimed £28 9s. as his wages for the session, they first deduct £14 4s. 7d. already received by him; from the remainder, £14 4s. 5d., they deduct the odd 4s. 5d. 'in regard of his stay in Chester about his own business four days'; and finally they make the payment of the remainder conditional upon his procuring a new charter for the borough. It can have been no easy service that Mr. Brook had to render.

This anxiety of the freemen to get a new charter is worthy of note. They had made repeated attempts to obtain one, and raised (for them) large sums of money. The reason was

that the continual attacks on their liberties which they had suffered in the previous century had made them very nervous about their rights. Their existing charters were all couched in the same terms—all mere repetitions of the old grant of Henry III; and the legal terminology of the middle ages had now become unintelligible. Nobody knew exactly what powers were conveyed by the antiquated technical phrases of which the old charters were full. But some of the advisers of the borough even doubted whether the borough had ever been really incorporated at all, and this doubt must be resolved. In 1626 they were able to purchase from Charles I (who in the middle of his quarrels with Parliament and his wars with Spain was hard put to it for money) a new charter of the most comprehensive and satisfactory kind. It departed altogether from the old phraseology, and in verbose but unmistakable terms declared that the borough of Liverpool was henceforth an incorporated borough, whether it had been so before or not; and that its burgesses were to enjoy all the rights and privileges which they then exercised, whether they had obtained them by definite grant or by usurpation. That was an invaluable clause. It settled everything in the most satisfactory way. Among other things, it removed all doubts as to the right of the burgesses to act as owners of all the town commons or wastes.

There are a great many points of interest in

the charter of Charles I, which marks an epoch in the history of the borough; but we cannot here stop to examine them. There is, however, an omission in the charter which is even more striking than its contents: it does not mention the Town Council, but gives all legislative and executive powers to the body of burgesses at large. This does not mean that the Town Council was abolished; on the contrary, it was re-elected immediately after the grant of the charter, and continued to exercise all its powers without dispute. But at least a ground was here given for future controversy, of which we shall have something to say in a later chapter.

Though the Town Council continued to be the supreme governing body, and though the ordinary freemen seem to have been quite content to obey it, the Council found a good deal of difficulty in this period in keeping the officers of the borough in order. This was not unnatural, for the Council had only been instituted in 1580, and the officers, who before that time had been left uncontrolled, found it hard to reconcile themselves to the strict subordination which the Council now exacted. In 1627 both of the bailiffs had to be locked up in the Town Hall for refusing to carry out the Council's orders; and two years later the bailiffs of 1629 actually brought an action against the Council, in the King's Bench, for which one of them was summarily deprived of the freedom.

But far more troublesome than the bailiffs

was the Town Clerk, Mr. Robert Dobson, whose irresponsible behaviour fills many pages of the records during this period. Bailiffs changed yearly, but Mr. Dobson went on for ever. For the borough had fallen into the bad habit of selling the office, and Dobson, having paid £70 on his appointment in 1624, assumed that he could not be deposed or called to account. He charged excessive fees; he neglected the records; he behaved disrespectfully to the mayor and bailiffs, whom he regarded as mere temporary officers. Time and again the jury in the Portmoot solemnly 'presented' him to be fined for these offences; but unfortunately Dobson himself was the only person who was entitled to draw up these documents, and all the presentments had to be quashed as informal. The Town Council suspended him, but he refused to pay any attention to them. The mayor ordered one of the bailiffs to imprison him, but 'the said Dobson forcibly broke from the said bailiff and so made an escape, contrary to the oath of a freeman.' As time went on his behaviour became more and more intolerable. He insisted on taking precedence of the bailiffs in church. He 'malignantly scandalously and opprobriously insulted the bailiffs and burgesses by calling them by an English name, to wit, *Bashragges*'—an insult probably all the more cutting because nobody had an idea what it meant. But the crowning point of his insolence was reached when he *immodeste et indecente haec Angli (sic) verba*

utravit, he immodestly and indecently uttered these words in English, 'Whosoever the divell was mayor, he would be the town's clerk.' This absurd quarrel went on for no less than twelve years, and must have gravely disorganised the business of the borough.

During its course a very serious thing happened. King Charles, having borrowed £25,000 from the city of London, and being quite unable to repay because of his quarrel with parliament, granted to the city in 1628 the lordship of a large number of manors, one of which was Liverpool; and in 1635 Sir Richard Molyneux bought the lordship from the Londoners for £450, thus turning his lease into a freehold property, subject only to the payment of £14 6s. 8d. a year to the crown. His position for attacking the burgesses was now stronger than ever; and he proceeded to deliver a new attack upon them, bringing an action in the Court of Wards which they were obliged to compromise. There is no saying what further challenges to the burghal liberties might not have been in store if the outbreak of the Civil War had not come to swallow up all these minor controversies in its all-engrossing interest.

As the war drew nearer it became more and more clear that Liverpool was likely to have a troublous time, for the town was deeply divided on the great questions at issue. Most of the burgesses were Puritan in their religious opinions. Their earnestness is shown by the fact that,

over and above the regular parson of the chapel, they maintained a preacher, to whom they paid £30 a year with 'a good milk cow,' which the Town Council cautiously reserved the right of changing at discretion. But even this did not satisfy their love of preaching, and in 1635 they made arrangements for week day sermons twice a month, engaging for this purpose the services of some of the most pronounced Puritan clergy of the neighbourhood.

Nor was it only on the religious question that they found themselves in sympathy with the opposition to Charles I. When the king first levied ship-money in 1634 without a grant from parliament, a good many 'village Hampdens' were found in Liverpool who declined to pay, and it is clear that their refusal was a matter of principle, for Liverpool was only asked for £15 towards the cost of a ship of 400 tons, which was to be provided by the united subscriptions of all the counties and boroughs from the Bristol Channel to the Solway Firth. A short time before £620 had been raised without difficulty to fight a lawsuit in which the town was interested; and nobody had objected to pay his share of that. But when it came to ship-money, several of the freemen informed the bailiffs not only that they would not pay, but that if their property was distrained they would prosecute the bailiffs. On the second levy of ship-money scarcely anything seems to have been paid in the town.

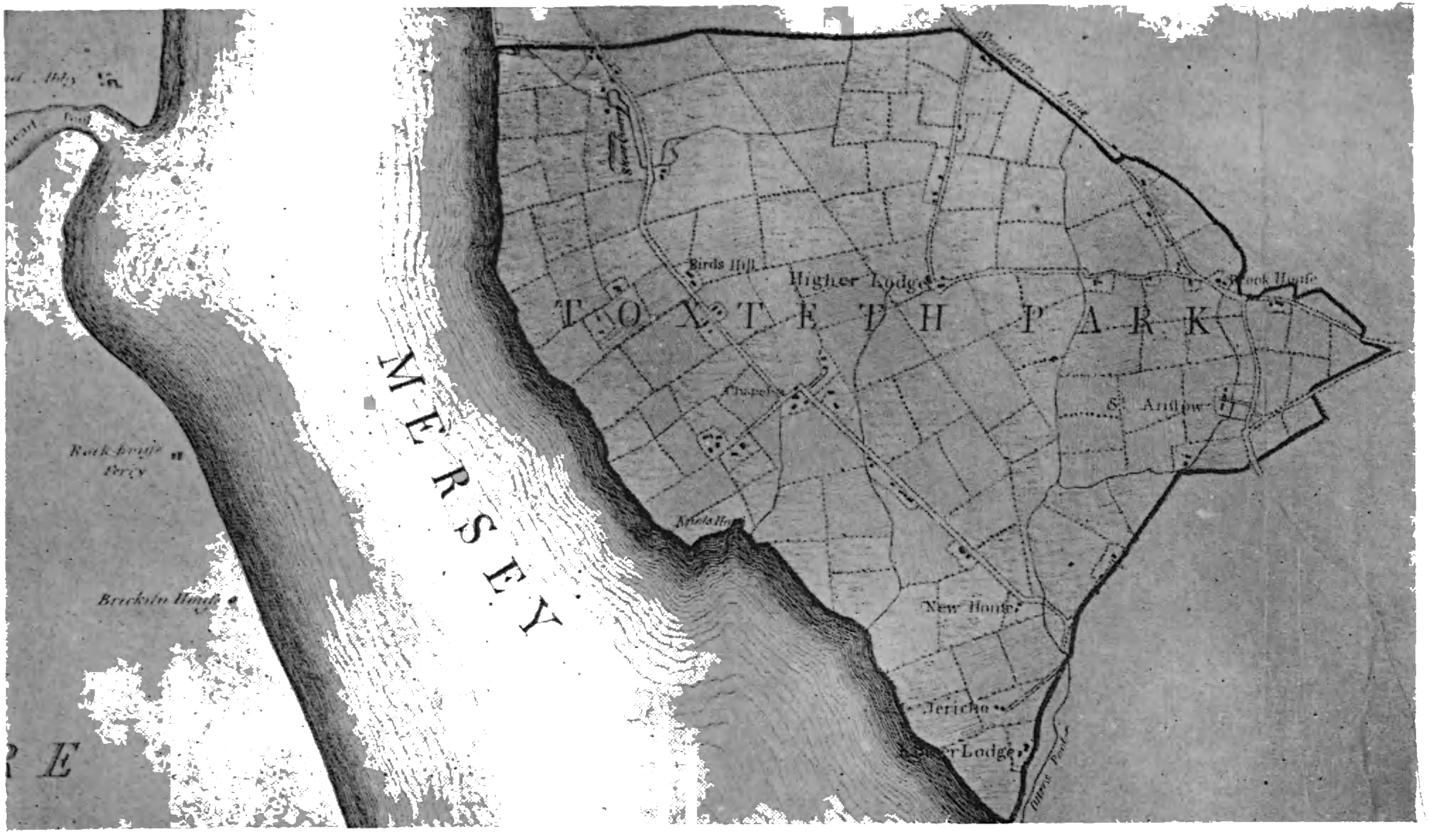
The leaders of this sturdy opposition were

the Moores, who were still, as in the Middle Ages, the most important residents in the town. Edward Moore, as one of the members for the borough, voted steadily against the king in the last parliament of James I—the parliament that impeached Lord Bacon, a former member for the borough. Edward's son, John, was a still more acrid and vehement Puritan. Foremost in the resistance to ship-money, he went to the Long Parliament as member for Liverpool; when the war broke out he threw himself eagerly into the parliamentary cause, and so mortgaged his fortune that the family estates never recovered; and finally he distinguished himself by serving as one of the judges who condemned Charles I to death.

But though the Puritan party in the town was in a majority, and had such vigorous and influential leaders, there were countervailing influences of great strength. All the surrounding gentry were strong Royalists; the Moores stood quite alone among the gentry of West Derby hundred in adhering to the Parliamentary side. Many of them, like the Molyneuxes and the Norrises of Speke, were Catholics; above all Lord Derby, whose influence in the town outweighed all others, showed an unwavering and unselfish devotion to the Stuart cause. The influence of the county gentry was still overwhelmingly powerful in Liverpool, and it was supported by the fact that the two great fortresses, the Castle and the Tower, were both

in Royalist hands. It is not surprising, therefore, that Liverpool should have followed a somewhat wavering course; unlike Manchester, whose own vigorous Puritanism was reinforced by the equally vigorous Puritanism of its surrounding districts. And so, side by side with the Moores, Liverpool sometimes sent up supporters of the court as their representatives to Westminister; indeed in the Petition of Right Parliament both of the Liverpool votes were steadily cast against the popular side. Liverpool thus echoes and illustrates the divisions that cleft England in twain. Like most seaports she was at heart Puritan, but she was isolated in the midst of a fanatically royalist district, and among her freemen were counted many adherents of the great county families.

The Puritan party in the town must have been materially encouraged by a change which took place just outside of its boundaries during these years. In 1604 the ancient deer-park of Toxteth, which during the whole history of the neighbouring borough had only been inhabited by a few keepers and by beasts of the chase, was disafforested by Sir Richard Molyneux, and divided into about twenty small farms. Tenants for these farms were brought mainly from the neighbourhood of Bolton. They were all, or nearly all, strong Puritans, pious simple folk. The district which they occupied, still shut in from the world by the old park wall, was in the eighteenth century called the Holy Land;



MAP OF TOXTETH PARK

the little stream which ran through it to join the river at Otterspool, and which to-day supplies the ornamental water in Sefton Park, was known as the Jordan; and the farm by which it passed, near Otterspool, was nicknamed Jericho. No doubt these quaint names were due to the religious character of the first settlers in the Park.

This handful of Puritan farmers soon organised themselves for religious purposes. In 1611 they brought from Warrington a youth named Richard Mather to serve as schoolmaster for their children, and built him a school-house in the centre of the park, where the Dingle tramway terminus is to-day. After a while young Mather went to Oxford; but on finishing his course he was invited by the Toxteth farmers to return, this time not as a schoolmaster, but as a minister of religion. He was duly ordained by the Bishop of Chester, and licensed to preach in the extra-parochial district of Toxteth Park. For his ministrations the farmers erected a humble little chapel, the predecessor of the still standing Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, long the headquarters of Puritanism in the Liverpool district. Mather was a fiery impetuous soul; he did not confine his eager preaching to his own quiet district; and when Archbishop Laud came into power and began to set the church in order, Mather found it wise to flee to New England, where he played an active and honourable part.

In the year in which Mather came as minister to Toxteth (1618) there was born in the farmhouse

of Jericho, down by the river, a boy named Jeremiah Horrox, who was to earn a name among the greatest of English astronomers. Taught by the zealous young preacher, the boy went up to Cambridge at the age of fourteen, and during three years there proved himself the possessor of an amazing mathematical genius. When Mather fled to America young Horrox's Cambridge course was just completed, and he was called back to take his first teacher's place. In this quiet corner he spent most of what remained of his brief life, preaching in the chapel, teaching in the school, studying the heavens, watching the action of the swift tides as they swept past his home, and corresponding with friends at a distance who shared his scientific enthusiasm. In 1639 Horrox left Toxteth for a year, to become curate of Hoole, near Preston. It was here that he had the delight of being the first human being to observe the transit of Venus across the face of the sun; he had calculated the moment at which it should take place with wonderful precision, and rigged up his own simple mechanism for watching it. The transit took place on a Sunday, after morning service. It is not unlikely that the sermon that morning was short and absent-minded. Soon afterwards failing health brought back the young astronomer to Toxteth. Next year, in 1641, he died, at the age of twenty-three. Yet, mere boy as he was, he ranks, by the testimony of no less an authority than Sir Isaac Newton, among the two or three great pioneers of English astronomy.

Horrox can have had little influence on the honest burgesses of Liverpool; they may have heard him preach, but they knew little and cared less about the scientific interests which engrossed him. But the handful of religious farmers, and their young scholar-parson studying the stars while all England was torn asunder by the controversies between king and parliament, form a pleasant background to the vacillations and the obscure disputes of our perplexed burgesses, and to the growing embitterment of feeling which was presently to burst out into a flame of war. Young Horrox died before he saw armies marching through the quiet corner where he spent most of his short life. But we shall have to listen to their drums and tramplings in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX

The Three Sieges. 1642-1660

We have now reached the most stirring episode in the history of Liverpool, when for a time the borough was drawn from its isolation, and made the shuttlecock of contending armies. And since the part played by the borough in the civil war was by no means unimportant, it will be impossible in this chapter to confine ourselves wholly to local events.

When in January, 1642, King Charles I left London to make preparations for war, and when, as a result, both parties began to arm themselves in every county, there were few parts of the country where the Royalist cause had a more promising aspect than in Lancashire. Though Manchester and the east of the county were Puritan, all the gentry of the western half of the county were devotedly loyal. And they had as their leader the most gallant and romantically devoted of Royalist heroes, Lord Strange, who wielded the immense influence of the Stanleys during his father's illness, and himself became Lord Derby early in 1643. So confident was Lord Strange of the loyalty of Lancashire and Cheshire, of both of which counties he was

lord-lieutenant, that he wanted the king to raise his standard at Warrington, and promised, in that case, an army of 10,000 men from Lancashire alone. The king preferred Nottingham as a centre, and Lord Strange was left to secure Lancashire. To do so he strained every nerve, raising 3,000 men among his own tenantry, while the other gentry imitated his example. Meanwhile the Parliamentarian party had appointed a lord-lieutenant and a number of deputy-lieutenants of their own, one of whom was John Moore of Liverpool, the only Parliamentarian landowner in the hundred of West Derby. Within the first month or two it became clear that the county was sharply divided. Salford and Blackburn hundreds were for the parliament; the four western hundreds were for the king. This cleavage was clearly shown in the beginning of June, when the High Sheriff summoned a county meeting at Preston, to open the king's commission of array. On the moor outside of the town the two parties ranged themselves apart, cheering and counter-cheering. The meeting broke up without bloodshed, but from that moment there was a state of war.

In the first rush to get possession of warlike supplies and fortified places, the Royalists, thanks to the energy and alertness of Lord Strange, had much the advantage. He seized Wigan, Preston, Lancaster and Warrington; he also threw a garrison into Liverpool, where he captured a large store of gunpowder, early in

June. For, Puritan though the townsmen were, they could not resist the masters of the Castle and the Tower, and some of their own leading men were friendly to the king. John Walker, mayor in 1642, got a special letter of thanks from the king for his activity; but there was some opposition, for the mayor was threatened with imprisonment and transportation from the county—perhaps by John Moore. Colonel Norris of Speke became the Royalist governor of the town, and large stores were thrown into the castle. But during a year's occupation the Royalists made little use of their opportunity. They did nothing to strengthen the fortifications, beyond perhaps restoring the earthen ramparts which ran from the Old Hall to the bottom of Dale Street.

Meanwhile Lord Strange had been vigorously pressing the Parliamentarians, and though he was beaten back from Manchester, he had certainly the upper hand of them until he was weakened by the summons to send the bulk of his forces to take part in the main campaign in the south. This gave their chance to the Lancashire Parliamentarians, who in the beginning of 1643 proceeded to attack the Royalist strongholds in the west of the county. Lord Strange (now Lord Derby) by herculean efforts contrived to raise a new army, and for some time held his own against the Manchester men. But when his only trained regiment was once more called off to the south, the Parliamentarians rapidly gained ground again; and as trouble was

breaking out in the Isle of Man, Lord Derby had to betake himself hurriedly thither, only pausing to throw a garrison into Lathom House, near Ormskirk, of which his heroic wife remained in command. The remnant of his army, some 1,600 men, under the gallant Colonel Tyldesley, kept the field for a short time between Ormskirk and Preston.

But the triumphant Parliamentarians, under Colonel Ashton, having captured Warrington in the beginning of May, were marching towards Liverpool and Lathom House, which were now almost the only Royalist strongholds remaining in Lancashire. Tyldesley, fearing to be cut off, hurriedly fell back on Liverpool, perhaps in the hope of getting by water to Chester. But he had left his retreat too late. When he reached Liverpool, Ashton was already hard on his heels, and there was no time to throw up additional fortifications. What was worse, a vessel of the Parliamentarian navy had entered the Mersey before his arrival, and cut off his retreat by water. The townsmen too were hostile, for we are told that they 'readily gave entertainment and assistance' to the Parliamentarian vessel. In these circumstances no serious attempt was made to defend the ramparts. Ashton's army carried them by storm, and after two days' hard fighting captured the whole line of houses on the north side of Dale Street as well as St. Nicholas' chapel, on the tower of which they erected guns which commanded the whole

town. Tyldesley, who still held the Castle, offered to surrender if he were allowed to march out with arms and artillery, unpursued; but these terms were naturally rejected. A new assault was ordered by Ashton, and after hard fighting in Castle Street and the fields and orchards where Lord Street now is, the Royalist army was completely routed. Most of them escaped, probably over the Pool to Toxteth Park; but eighty were left dead and 300 were captured, while the conquering Parliamentarians lost only seven men.

The acquisition of Liverpool was of the first importance to the Parliamentarian cause. Not only would it keep in check the gentry of the most royalist part of the county, and form a base for attack on Lathom House, which still held out; but still more important, it was the only port on the west coast not in Royalist hands, and could be of the greatest value for keeping a watch on the Royalists in Chester and Ireland. A military governor was appointed, at first one Lieutenant-Colonel Venables, but in the beginning of 1644, on the petition of the burgesses, Colonel Moore became governor of his native town. He was also appointed vice-admiral under the Earl of Warwick, and thus controlled both the naval and the military operations of which Liverpool was the base. A German engineer was brought in to reconstruct the fortifications. Under his directions a deep ditch, thirty-six feet wide and about nine feet deep, was cut from



W. G. Herdman, delt.

LIVERPOOL IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

the river north of the Old Hall, round Tithebarn Street to the Town's End at the top of the Pool, beside the modern Technical School. Behind the ditch a lofty and thick rampart of earth was raised, broken at the ends of Oldhall Street, Tithebarn Street and Dale Street by massive gates which were protected by cannon. A series of earthworks, with batteries of cannon, protected the line of the Pool; a strong fort, with eight guns, was erected at the corner of the Pool; and a number of guns were also mounted on the Castle.

To defend the town a regiment of foot and a troop of horse were sent in, their expenses forming a first charge on all public money raised in the West Derby hundred. In addition, the burgesses were required to perform military duties, and for their use the mayor and aldermen were entrusted with 100 muskets, 100 bandoliers (shoulder straps from which little tin cases containing charges of powder were suspended) and 100 rests, on which to level the heavy muskets. Military discipline was rigidly enforced; any burgess who failed to turn out for the performance of his military duties 'at the beating of the drum' was fined 1s. for each offence. The bailiffs had to go periodically through the town 'and take notice of all strangers and other lodgers'; and if they found any who were not 'faithful and trusty' they had to 'remove them forth of the town with all speed possible.' During the period of war, the authority of the governor overrode

all the ordinary borough authorities.' This must have been very vexatious; and still more vexatious was the necessity of providing quarters for the soldiers. They seem, indeed, to have been very well behaved. A young Puritan, Adam Martindale, who was in Liverpool during these months, tells us that he 'enjoyed sweet communion with the religious officers of the company, which used to meet every night at one another's quarters by turns, to read scriptures, to confer of good things, and to pray together.' But if the regimental mess was a model of seemliness, far other was the governor's establishment. This same Adam Martindale acted for a time as Colonel Moore's secretary; and he reports that 'his family was such an hell upon earth as was utterly intolerable. There was such a pack of arrant thieves, and they so artificial at their trade, that it was scarce possible to save anything out of their hands . . . . . Those that were not thieves (if there were any such) were generally (if not universally) desperately profane, and bitter scoffers at piety.' This surprising description suggests that Colonel Moore was one of the most undesirable type of Roundheads. Other hints suggest that he was a bitter and unscrupulous egotist.

Nevertheless under his rule Liverpool played for some months a very vigorous and effective part. A small fleet of six warships was kept in the Mersey; and under the command of one Captain Danks it ranged the Irish Sea and inflicted

serious damage on the Royalist cause. The only rivals whom Danks had to fear were the ships of Bristol, then in Royalist hands; but the Bristol merchants and seamen seem to have been half-hearted Royalists, for one of their ships, laden with warlike supplies for Chester, deserted and put into the Mersey, where it joined the Parliamentarian squadron. The ravages of the Liverpool vessels in the Irish Sea were all the more important because at this time the king was hoping for large reinforcements from the Royalists of Ireland under the Marquis of Ormond; and by preventing the importation to Ireland of necessary supplies, and interrupting communication between Dublin and Chester, Liverpool made the transport of this force difficult. Thus Liverpool was the one weak spot in the Royalist position on the west coast, and it is not surprising to find Lord Ormond writing to the Royalists of Cheshire, 'earnestly recommending' them to attack Liverpool 'as soon as they possibly can,' and urging that 'no service, to my apprehension, can at once so much advantage this place (Dublin) and Chester, and make them so useful to each other.'

The rooting out of this 'pirates' nest' was one of the tasks entrusted to an army of 3,000 men under Lord Byron which landed from Ireland at Chester in November, 1643. During the next two months, when this force was overrunning Cheshire, there was serious alarm in Liverpool; but in February, before Byron had

begun to invade Lancashire, he was defeated at Nantwich by two Parliamentarian forces, one under Ashton from Manchester, the other from the main Parliamentarian army in Yorkshire. Byron fell back on Chester, and the garrison of Liverpool, relieved from its fears, was able to devote itself to the siege of Lathom House.

Ever since April, 1643, the heroic Countess of Derby had successfully maintained herself at Lathom, the defence of which, though it is no part of our story, forms one of the most romantic episodes in the Civil War. Isolated, and with scarcely a prospect of relief after Byron's defeat, the countess had to deal with two besieging forces. The most important of these was drawn from the east of the county, and had its base at Bolton; the other consisted of the garrison of Liverpool, under Colonel John Moore. By April of 1644 the countess was hard pressed, her ammunition was running low, and her fortress was almost battered about her ears. And her friends in Chester were addressing piteous appeals to the king's headquarters not to allow so gallant a struggle to end in disaster. Her noble husband, now returned from the Isle of Man, sent to Prince Rupert, most chivalrous of the Royalist leaders, a strong and simple appeal. 'I do take the boldness,' he wrote, 'to present you again my most humble and earnest request in her behalf that I may be able to give her some comfort in my next. I would have waited on your highness, but that I hourly receive little letters

from her, who haply a few days hence may never send me more.' But Lord Derby urged also that the occupation of the bulk of the garrison of Liverpool in the siege of Lathom presented a splendid opportunity for an attack on that town, 'which your highness took notice of in the map the last evening I was with you, for there is not at this time fifty men in the garrison.'

Other reasons also were urging Rupert to march to the north. The main Royalist army of the north, under the Marquis of Newcastle, was penned into York by the combined forces of Fairfax, Cromwell, and the invading Scots, and its surrender seemed imminent. In May of 1644, therefore, Rupert set out from Shrewsbury with an army of 10,000 men. His main purpose was to relieve Newcastle and drive the Scots home, but on the way he intended to relieve Lathom House and recapture Liverpool. Once started, he swept with the rapidity of movement which was the secret of his success up into Lancashire by way of Stockport. At the news of his approach the besiegers of Lathom hastily broke up the siege, Moore falling back on Liverpool, while Rigby with the main body retreated to Bolton. Before, however, the latter force could reach its retreat, Rupert flamed down upon it, scattered it, and stormed the town, which he gave over to his soldiers to plunder. Twenty-two standards which had waved over the besiegers of Lathom were sent by special messengers to be presented to the countess, and Rupert

swept on through Wigan, amid the cheers of Royalists pouring in to join him from the lands of the Stanleys. Two days later, on June 7, he came down over the hill by way of London Road, and saw the cottages of Liverpool beneath him, behind the muddy Pool and the long lines of earthworks, and with the Castle in the background. A mere crow's nest, he called it, that a parcel of boys might take.

Meanwhile inside the mud walls there had been feverish preparation for the defence against 'that viper,' as the frightened Parliamentarians called the fiery prince. The garrison, already large, had been reinforced by 400 men from Manchester. The ships were drawn up in the Pool to assist in repelling the attack, or to take off the garrison if that should become necessary. On the ramparts sacks of Irish wool had been heaped, to break the enemy's fire; and all women and children, together with all men suspected of disloyalty, had been removed from the town. All who remained, says a correspondent of the *Mercurius Britannicus*, were resolute to defend the place.

But the little town was far from capable of standing a siege conducted in force by a large army. It was completely overlooked by the ridge of hill on the east, and especially by that part of it which looks down on the old town from Lime Street and St. George's Hall. Artillery placed here might be expected to batter the place about its defenders' ears very easily. Even

from an assault it was ill-protected, for its long straight earthen rampart had no salient angles from which a cross-fire could be directed against an advancing enemy. Rupert might well imagine that so poor a place ought not long to delay him. He had, indeed, no time to spare; for the situation in Yorkshire was highly critical.

He seems to have begun the attack with a fiery and impetuous assault, hoping to get the same success from a sudden onslaught as he had won at Bolton. But his stormers were repulsed; in this and the subsequent assault he lost no less than 1,500 men. There was now nothing to be done but to bring his artillery into play; entrenchments were cut for them along the line of Lime Street and in the open fields to the north. For several days a fierce cannonade went on, so vigorous that the besiegers used up a hundred barrels of gunpowder, the lack of which left them ill-provided for their northern campaign. Perhaps it was after this furious bombardment had silenced some of the opposing batteries that the second assault was ordered. But it too, was triumphantly repulsed; while the impetuous prince, in his headquarters at Everton, fumed at the delay. Every moment was precious, for while the siege went on, Newcastle wrote from the north to implore the Prince to make haste, assuring him that he could not hold out more than six days longer. The unexpected resistance of Liverpool was imperilling the whole Royalist cause.

At length, on the 12th or 13th of the month,

Rupert resolved on a night attack, the command of which was entrusted to Caryll, brother of Lord Molyneux, on the ground of his local knowledge. Molyneux led the surprise party round through the fields on the north of the town, and along the path which pierced the rampart beside the Old Hall. They reached the rampart in their stealthy advance at three o'clock in the morning. To their intense surprise they found it deserted. Creeping through the breaches which had been made by the cannonade in the outhouses of the Old Hall, they found themselves inside the fortifications before they met with any resistance. The reason for this was that Colonel Moore had come to the conclusion that the town was no longer defensible; determined to save his men and supplies, he had drawn off the greater part of the garrison and embarked them in the ships which lay in the Pool, during this same night, without giving any notice to the burgesses.

But there still remained some four hundred men of the garrison, besides the townsmen; and though the governor had deserted and his ships were sailing down the river, the attacking party had a good deal of hard fighting before they made themselves masters of the town. The street fighting lasted for several hours; and the Royalists gave no quarter, slaying 'almost all they met with, to the number of 360, and among others . . . some that never bore arms in their lives, yea, one poor blind man.' Caryll Molyneux is said to have

killed seven men with his own hand. But after the Royalists had fought their way along Old-hall Street and Juggler Street, the remnant of the garrison surrendered at the High Cross, in front of the modern Town Hall. They were imprisoned for the time in the Tower and St. Nicholas' Chapel, where some of them remained till the town was recaptured by the Parliamentarians in the following November. The town was given over to the soldiers to plunder: 'whatsoever was desiderable was the soldiers' right for their hard service.'

From the sack and from the fighting Liverpool suffered very severely. Six months later, every household had to be ordered to send a man with a spade to aid in 'better covering the dead bodies of . . . the great company of our inhabitants murthered and slain by Prince Rupert's forces.' The freemen found it very hard to forgive Colonel Moore's desertion, to which, not unreasonably, they attributed these misfortunes; for the town could certainly have resisted for some time longer, or, at the worst, have got good terms for surrender. It is indeed hard to defend Moore's action, especially since he knew that every day's delay at Liverpool was of the utmost importance to the campaign in Yorkshire. It was openly said that he had betrayed the town; and neither he nor his family ever recovered their old leadership.

After the capture Rupert stayed for two or three days in the castle, not leaving for Ormskirk till the 19th. An elaborate plan for re-fortifying

the town was drawn up by a Spanish engineer, one Captain Gomez, but nothing was ever done to carry it out, for the Royalists were not long allowed to remain in possession. Rupert left behind him a large garrison of English and Irish under Sir John Byron, and hastened off to Yorkshire. There, on July 2nd, he fought the fateful battle of Marston Moor, in which the Royalist cause in the north was ruined, and the steadier flame of Cromwell's genius dimmed Rupert's lustre. Next day he began a hurried retreat through Lancashire. He was expected to stop at Liverpool, but he passed it on one side and hastened by Runcorn to Chester. Lancashire was again left to its own resources, and, as in 1643, two places alone, Lathom and Liverpool, stood out for the Royalist cause.

To deal with the two strongholds a large Parliamentarian force was told off, under Sir John Meldrum. During July and August Lord Derby and Sir John Byron were still able to keep the field, and several skirmishes had to be fought round Ormskirk before the two garrisons were finally cooped up within their respective lines. The third siege of Liverpool seems formally to have begun about the commencement of September. It was very different in character from its two predecessors. There was a large garrison in the town, with ample supplies, including a number of cattle; and the Parliamentarians were in no such hurry as Rupert, and tried no assaults. They calmly sat down before the town, drew

lines of entrenchment, and prepared to starve it out. But there must have been many sallies of the desperate garrison, and the Royalists of the surrounding country strained every nerve to relieve the place. Lord Derby, left much to himself while the siege of Liverpool proceeded, raised a new force and marched to the relief, but a detachment of the besieging army routed him with a loss of 500 men. The Cheshire Royalists were active too, and planted guns on the Wirral shore to prevent the advent of Parliamentarian ships; while a considerable army from Shropshire started northwards, only to be met by a superior Parliamentarian force. Presently the runaway Colonel Moore returned with his ships to the Mersey, and the wretched garrison found themselves beset by sea as well as by land, and with no chance of escape.

The English soldiers of the garrison began to grow desperate, fearing to share the vengeance that had been threatened to the Irish, and one night, at the end of October, fifty of them deserted, driving with them all the cattle. At this the Irish too began to murmur. Some of the officers, suspecting them, determined to imitate Moore's example, and make a dash for it with the ships which lay in the Pool; but while they were quietly embarking their ammunition, the private soldiers mutinied, took all their officers prisoners, and surrendered to Sir John Meldrum, who rewarded them by sparing their lives. Row-boats were promptly put out to seize the ships, and the

whole of the stores and supplies passed into the hands of the besiegers without a blow. Among the captured officers were two colonels, two lieutenant-colonels, three majors, and fourteen captains and other junior officers. The success thus gained was considered by the Parliamentary leaders sufficiently important to warrant a special thanksgiving service, which was held in St. Paul's Cathedral on November 5.

Thus ended the last of the three sieges which had brought such unwelcome excitement into the lives of the townsmen in 1643 and 1644, and completely disorganised the trade and administration of the borough. Liverpool now settled down again under the rule of a Parliamentarian military governor, supported by a substantial garrison, the only part of the army in Lancashire which was not disbanded. Though the tide of war several times swept over Lancashire in the years from 1644 to 1650, Liverpool was not directly affected by it; but more than once the Liverpool garrison had to march out, as in 1650, when a forlorn dash from the Isle of Man was made by Lord Derby. A small naval squadron used Liverpool as its base to crush out Royalist privateering in the Irish sea; and the port was one of the places of embarkation for Cromwell's troops on the way to Ireland.

But on the whole, peace was restored under the iron rule of the soldiers, and trade began to revive. The town, too, got handsome recompense from parliament for the suffering it had endured.

There were pensions for the widows and orphans of the slain; there were grants of timber from Knowsley and Croxteth, and of lead from Lathom House for the repair of ruined houses; there was even a magnificent grant from Cromwell of 10,000 acres of land in Galway, but this turned out to be entirely illusory, for after wasting a good deal of money, the burgesses failed to get possession of their shadowy estate.

More practical, if temporary, advantages also resulted from the Cromwellian regime. Not the least of these was the disappearance of Lord Molyneux and his claims; all of which were transferred, by a formal grant of Parliament, to the burgess-body, which thus (for a time) got rid of every shadow of feudal supremacy. Another boon which the Commonwealth Parliament gave was the turning of Liverpool into a separate parish; the tithes which had been paid by the burgesses to Walton Church since before the foundation of the borough, being now devoted to the maintenance of the minister of St. Nicholas', the Rev. John Fogg. This arrangement, however, lasted only until the Restoration. Liverpool was, like east Lancashire, frankly Presbyterian, and formed the chief centre of the fifth of the nine *Classes* or Presbyteries into which Lancashire was divided during the period of Presbyterian ascendancy.

But though the Commonwealth brought many advantages, its stern and exacting rule had many defects also; and even Liverpool, which had

gained so much, became more and more weary of the military dictatorship. The Independent army officers treated the Presbyterian ministers very harshly, harried them about, and imprisoned divers of them in Liverpool Castle. The continued maintenance of the military regime in the town was deeply resented, and many were the demands for the reduction of the garrison to such numbers as could be housed in the Castle without invading the freemen's dwellings, and for the demolition of the walls and gates, with the vexatious military regulations about ingress and egress. Above all, the practical suppression of self-government by the subordination of the town to the military governor was an infraction of the burgesses' liberties such as they had not experienced since the days of Edmund of Lancaster. Even the Puritans of the town, who were many, welcomed with enthusiasm the restoration of the old monarchy and the return to the old state of things. But the effects of the revolution were indelible; and, as we shall see in the next chapter, there is quite a different atmosphere in Liverpool after 1660. The storm of war had obliterated many old landmarks, which could not be restored.

CHAPTER X

The Beginning of Modern Liverpool 1660-1700.

THE storms of the Civil War had rudely shaken out of its rut the quiet market town and coasting port which we have so long observed, and the half century which followed the restoration of Charles II saw a new beginning in the history of Liverpool. This fresh start is observable on every side: in the trade and industries of the town, in the form of its government, in the character of its inhabitants and their relation to their neighbours, and in the part which the borough plays in the life of the nation. Though the growth of this period, in numbers and wealth, was small in comparison with that which some later periods have shown, yet there is no period in the long story of Liverpool which witnessed a more radical change. The Liverpool of 1710 is almost unrecognizably different from the Liverpool of 1660.

And first, the period saw a surprising development of Liverpool's trade. In 1699 the burgesses could boast (perhaps with some exaggeration) that their town had become 'the third port of the

trade of England,' and that 'from scarce paying the salaries of the officers of the customs,' it now yielded 'upwards of £50,000 per annum' in customs duties. Several causes conspired to produce this striking advance. One of these was undoubtedly the growth of the manufacturing industries of Manchester and eastern Lancashire, which had now begun to spin a little cotton (brought at first from the East) as well as wool and linen. These new industries gave Liverpool commodities for export both to Ireland and to more distant markets. The settlement of Ireland no doubt helped, and the Irish trade of Liverpool steadily increased, completely dwarfing that of Chester. With the continent also there was an expansion of commerce, and Liverpool ships are found plying not only to Spain and France, from which they brought much wine, but also to Baltic ports, where they began to compete with the ships of Hull.

But the most important feature of the period, which marks it as the beginning of Liverpool's greatness, was the opening out of a direct trade on a comparatively large scale with the American colonies, and especially with the West Indies. The secret of all the buoyant prosperity of these years is to be found here. At last Liverpool was finding her way to her kingdom. As early as 1673, when the traveller Blome visited the town, he reported that it contained 'divers eminent merchants, whose trade and traffic, especially with the West Indies, make it famous';

and he added that the neighbourhood of Manchester and other rising industrial centres 'afforded in greater plenty and at reasonabler rates than most places in England such exported commodities proper for the West Indies.'

But it was not only the prosperity of Manchester, but the adversity of London, that told in favour of Liverpool. The great plague of 1665 and the great fire of 1666, together with the insecurity of southern waters during the Dutch wars of the same years, drove several merchants to find a new seat for their trade in the north, and thirty years later Liverpool men themselves traced the commencement of their greatness to this fact. When the fierce struggle with France, which was to last for more than a century, began in 1689, Liverpool gained a new advantage at the expense of her southern rivals; for London merchants were persuaded that it was better to bring their American imports 'north about round Ireland,' and transport them by land from Liverpool, rather than 'run the risk of having their ships taken' by the French pirates who infested the English Channel. The Irish Sea, indeed, was not free from privateers: in 1690, we hear of 'fifteen privateers and two French men-of-war waiting nigh the north channel for the return of the West India ships belonging to Liverpool.' But if these pirates ventured so far, how much more insecure must the narrow waters of the English Channel have been! So the Liverpool vessels increased rapidly in number,

and were kept actively employed. When King William III, preparing to invade Ireland, made enquiries as to the best ports at which to get shipping for his troops, he was told by the customs officials that Chester had no ships and only a few small barks for coasting trade, while Liverpool had '60 or 70 good ships of 50 to 200 tons.' But the officials were doubtful if much use could be made of them, 'because they drive a universal foreign trade to the Plantations (colonies) and elsewhere,' and were continuously engaged. The business of transport was now despised by Liverpool shipowners, and the terms they charged were so high that the royal officials were frightened and applied for further instructions.

The chief commodities imported by these busy ships were sugar and tobacco, both mainly produced in the West Indies, which were then, and for a century afterwards, the centre of the most lucrative traffic in the world. The sugar trade was greatly encouraged by the erection of sugar-refineries in the town. The first of these was built about 1668 by a 'Mr. Smith, a great sugar baker of London,' who was probably one of those driven to Liverpool by the plague and the fire and the Dutch wars. He rented from Sir Edward Moore a piece of land in Cheapside, on the north side of Dale Street, on which he erected a building 'forty feet square and four storeys high'; and Moore joyfully anticipated that this would bring to Liverpool 'a trade of at least £40,000 a year from the Barbadoes, which

formerly this town never knew.' From that date the sugar trade and the industry of sugar refining never looked back; Liverpool steadily made herself their chief centre in England.

Even more important was the tobacco trade. It was claimed that all the tobacco for Ireland, Scotland, and the north of England came to Liverpool. Sir Thomas Johnson, one of the foremost of the vigorous men who were busy re-making Liverpool in these years, spoke of it in 1701 as 'one of the chiefest trades of England,' and asserted that any interference with it would 'destroy half the shipping of Liverpool.' 'We are sadly envied, God knows,' he said, 'especially the tobacco trade, at home and abroad.' Liverpool can scarcely have been the object of much envy before this period.

The growth of trade brought inevitably a rapid growth of population; and though it is difficult to arrive at accurate figures, the population of the town seems to have risen from 2,000 or less at the time of the Civil War to over 5,000 at the beginning of the eighteenth century. These may seem small figures; but England at that date included few large towns. Among the newcomers were many men of some wealth and position. Commerce at this period was becoming respectable, and we are told that 'many gentlemen's sons of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire and North Wales were put apprentices in the town.'

To accommodate the growing population

building went on apace. The original seven streets, which had held all the townsmen of Liverpool for more than four hundred years, were rapidly added to. The most energetic pioneer in this direction was Sir Edward Moore, who thus hoped to coin money out of his Liverpool lands. Before 1668 he had made Moor Street, parallel with Water Street, Fenwick Street (which he named after his father-in-law, Sir John Fenwick, of Northumberland), Fenwick's Alley, and Bridge's Alley, and was full of schemes for further improvements. Lord Molyneux, anxious to share in the prosperity, cut a street through the Castle orchard down to the Pool, and gave it his own name—afterwards abbreviated to Lord Street.

Many of the streets in the centre of the town owe their names to the burgesses of the period. Alderman Preeson was the first man to build a house on the edge of the castle ditch, and is commemorated in Preeson's Row. Thomas Lancelot was a 'drunken idle fellow' and scarcely deserves to be commemorated in the name of the street which was cut through his Hey or field; but Roger James, who gave his name to James Street, was 'a very honest man,' and had 'a good woman to his wife.' Sir Thomas Street owes its name to Sir Thomas Johnson, already named, who owned a croft on the site of the Municipal Buildings; and 'a brave street,' now known as Hackins Hey, was cut through the Hey of John Hacking.

But the most important extension of the town

was that over the waste, which now first began to be built upon. We shall have occasion later to allude to some troubles which were connected with this development. But it may here be noted that the opening up of the waste, which was claimed as corporation property, led to a great increase in the revenue of the borough, which was also swelled by the increase of trade dues. In 1662 the corporate income, exclusive of rates, which were seldom levied, was £281 19s. 3d.; in 1700 it had risen to £1,203 5s. 2d.

While the town was thus expanding, it was impossible that it should be content to remain under outworn feudal restrictions, or to continue its traditional dependence upon its great neighbours. A new generation of prosperous merchants—the Claytons, the Clevelands, the Johnsons, the Tarletons—wielded the destinies of the town, and 'knowing not Joseph,' they were the less likely to take for granted their own inferiority to the old patrons of the town. These connexions had already been shaken by the wars; and the greater income now controlled by the Town Council gave a new confidence in fighting the battle of independence. And so, in many ways, we feel a different spirit in the burgesses in these days.

In nothing was this new independence of temper more strikingly exhibited than in the relation of the burgesses to the Moores, who, after being the principal inhabitants of the town for four hundred years, now found themselves

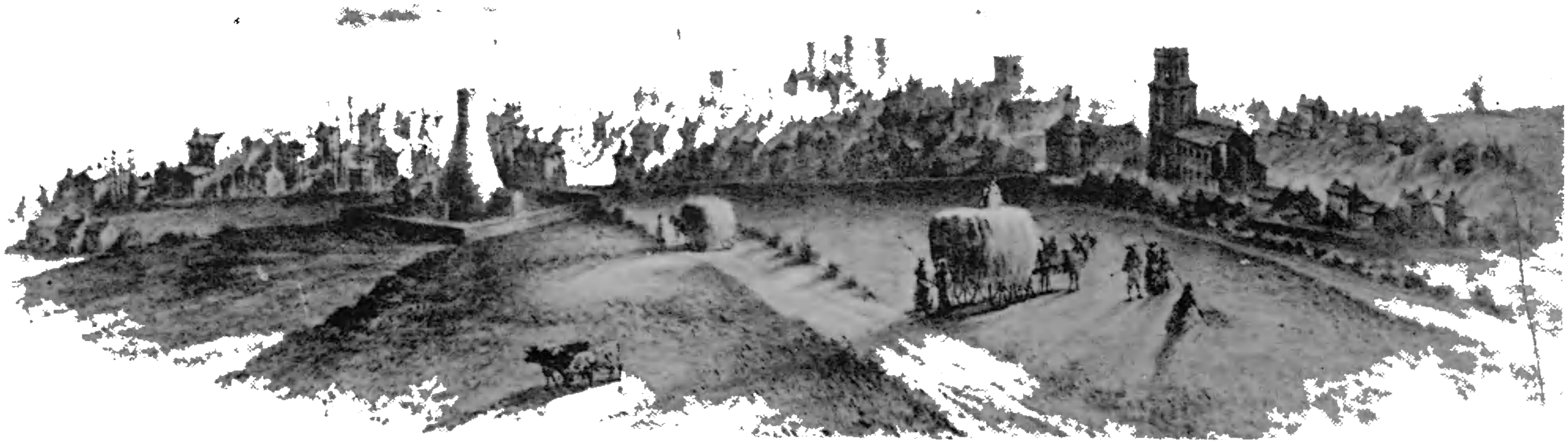
flouted, and before long were driven to cut their connexion with the town altogether. Sir Edward Moore, son of the runaway regicide colonel of whom we have heard so much in the last chapter, had succeeded, on the death of his father in 1650, to an estate which was deeply encumbered with debt. At the Restoration he would have lost it altogether, confiscated as a punishment for his father's treason, had he not fortunately married Dorothy Fenwick, daughter of a stalwart Northumberland royalist, on whose account he was pardoned. The unwavering affection of the gentle Dorothy reflects a pleasant light on Moore's character, which otherwise shows unpleasantly enough. For he was utterly soured by his misfortunes, and a harsh and vindictive temper showed itself in a constant series of disputes with the burgesses. The family had been discredited by the behaviour of Colonel Moore in the siege of 1644, and Sir Edward was not the man to regain lost popularity. He found his pet schemes for improving his Liverpool property checked by the Town Council's malice. He saw himself ousted from his family's traditional leadership in the borough. Moore was loyal enough to the town; but his view of the right relation between them was that they should 'hold closely together,' and that he should 'as a gentleman countenance them before the king' with 'their purse to back' him. In other words, the relation was to be that of patron and clients. But the new generation of merchants declined to accept such

a relation, and refused to elect him either to the mayoralty or to parliament. In a very full description of his lands and tenants in Liverpool, which he wrote for the guidance of his son, he cannot find venomed words enough to characterise his fellow-townsmen. 'They have deceived me twice, even to the ruin of my name and family, had not God in mercy saved me; though there was none at the same time could profess more kindness than they did, and acknowledge in their very own memories what great patrons my father and grandfather were to the town. . . . . Have a care you never trust them, ... for such a nest of rogues was never educated in one town of that bigness.' Each of his opponents in turn is characterised in the bitterest words his pen could find: 'one of the lurchingest knaves in town,' 'a sour dog fellow' 'a notorious knave,' 'a base, ill-contrived fellow,' 'a knave of knaves,' 'a very cunning woman,' 'one of the hardest men in town,' 'an idle drunken fellow,' 'a base fellow and a knave and his wife worse,' and so forth. 'The Lord Jesus forgive them!' he prayed—appealing to Heaven to do what was beyond his own power. Sir Edward Moore died in 1678, a worn-out old man at the age of forty-four, and his shrewd plans for making advantage of the town's growing wealth were never carried out. His son, a thriftless 'useless spark,' was the last representative of the family in Liverpool. He mortgaged his lands more deeply than ever; and at length, in

1712, the mortgages were foreclosed, and the last of the Moores retired to the south of England. The disappearance of the oldest and chief family was the breach of one of the chief links with the middle age.

Another link, of a more vexatious kind, was broken in this same period by the final settlement of the old quarrel with the Molyneuxes. They had regained the lordship of the town at the Restoration, with all its vague and ill-defined powers, and the old disputes were promptly renewed. Lord Molyneux, like Sir Edward Moore, hoped to profit by the prosperity of the town. It occurred to him that the waste, which had so long been left to the burgesses because it was practically valueless, ought to belong to the lord of the manor; and, supported by counsel's opinion, he resolved to continue his new road, Lord Street, over the Pool and across the waste.

But when his servants began to build a bridge at the busy tramway junction of our day where Lord Street joins Church Street, they were met by forcible resistance: the mayor pulled the bridge down and confiscated the wood and stones. Lord Molyneux responded by a whole series of actions at law, in which the question of the right of ownership of the waste as well as many other questions were raised. The burgesses were quite ready to fight him, the more so as the charter of Charles I confirmed them in all that they claimed, and probably it was because he realised this that Lord Molyneux agreed to a compromise.



W. G. Herdman, delt.

LIVERPOOL, FROM DUKE STREET

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Under this settlement the borough undertook to pay him £30 a year, and to let him build his bridge for a nominal rent of 2d. per annum in acknowledgment of their ownership of the waste; and in return received from him a lease of all his rights for a thousand years. Thus, after centuries of struggle, all feudal superiority over the borough came to an end, and the right of the corporation to the great expanse of waste ground, now becoming a valuable property, was finally admitted. We shall hear no more about fee-farm leases; and another link with the early history of the borough has been severed. More than a century later the transaction was completed, in 1777, when the borough paid Lord Molyneux's descendant, then Earl of Sefton, a lump sum of £2,250 in commutation for their annual payment.

But though he had thus parted with his lordship of the manor, Lord Molyneux did not yet cease to be connected with the town. He was still hereditary constable of the Castle, which continued to be outside of the control of the borough officials. It was partially dismantled in the years following the restoration, and it was no longer inhabited by a garrison; but Lord Molyneux allowed a number of men to live within its limits, who, as they were not subject to the control of the borough courts, were a perpetual centre of disorder. At the time of the revolution of 1688 Lord Molyneux, who vigorously took the part of King James II against the Prince of Orange and his supporters, once

more made use of the Castle as a storehouse for arms and supplies; and when a few years later, in 1694, he was implicated in an attempted Jacobite rising, he was punished by being deprived of his hereditary constableship, and not long afterwards the burgesses obtained a lease of the Castle site. Its ultimate fate we shall see in a later chapter. In the meantime it is enough to note that the once terrible fortress, which had kept their ancestors in awe, had come under burghal control; and that is another breach with mediaeval conditions.

A still further sign of the new age is that in 1699 Liverpool was again, and this time finally, cut off from the parish of Walton, and transformed into a distinct parish. This very reasonable change had been already made during the Commonwealth, but the old arrangement had been restored in 1660. Now the burgesses were able to present so strong a case that their petition could not be refused. At the same time, as St. Nicholas' Chapel had become too small for the growing population, the burgesses obtained powers to erect a second church at the public expense on the waste beyond the Pool, afterwards known as St. Peter's; and by a curious arrangement Liverpool became a parish with two rectors and two parish churches. Before this new arrangement could be completed Lord Molyneux, owner of the great tithes of Walton, had to be compensated, as had also the Rector of Walton; but the borough had no difficulty

now in finding the necessary funds. Under the acts which completed this change the right of appointing and the duty of paying the two rectors was given to the corporation, and thus Liverpool became ecclesiastically as well as feudally independent. But it should be noted that the creation of the parish involved the establishment of a new governing authority, for the vestry, or meeting of parishioners (whether freemen of the borough or not), became automatically responsible for the administration of the Poor Law. This was the first of a series of ruling bodies distinct from the town council, which was to be greatly extended during the next century, and to bring the government of the borough into a very confused state.

But the most striking feature of this period was the growth of keen party feeling in the borough, where, in a small field, the bitter strife of the two great national parties was echoed. The clear-cut division of the people into two parties is a new feature in this age. Its effects were displayed in the parliamentary elections, which during these years were much more keenly fought than ever before; the days when the burgesses were so little interested in national affairs as to leave their members to be nominated by Lord Derby or the Chancellor of the Duchy had vanished for ever.

But the rivalry of the two parties was still more clearly manifested in the realm of municipal politics. There has never been a period in the

history of Liverpool when party strife was so bitter, or party leaders so unscrupulous in their tactics, as in the half-century following the Restoration. Two parties fought desperately for a monopoly of power; and the result of this half-century of conflict was a remarkable series of changes in the system of local government. It is significant that these changes came about in accordance with the fluctuations of opinion in the nation at large, so that it is impossible to tell the story clearly without frequent references to the state of national politics.

The two parties whose feud distracted Liverpool during this half-century originated in the strife of the Civil War. We have seen that during that period, though there were many Royalists in the town, who were strengthened by the support of the neighbouring gentry, yet the majority of the population were Puritan in temper. The regime of Cromwell had produced a reaction here as throughout England; and when the Restoration came most of the burgesses were doubtless glad to return to the old ways, and saw, without very keen regret, the extrusion of the Presbyterian minister, the Rev. John Fogg, who had occupied the pulpit of St. Nicholas' during the Commonwealth period, and who, with the ministers of Walton and Toxteth Park, was driven out by the Act of Uniformity in 1662. At the same time the town clerk, five aldermen, and seven ordinary members of the Town Council were deposed from their positions; perhaps they

also were not very deeply regretted; and no less than thirty-eight new freemen, all powerful landowners of the neighbourhood, and all good cavaliers, were admitted in a batch to strengthen the Royalist element in the town.

There still remained a good many inhabitants of Liverpool who clung to the modes of worship and belief of the previous period, and who formed a group of dissenters in the town; when travelling dissenting ministers visited Liverpool in secret, as they sometimes did, they got (as one of them reports) 'frequent opportunities' and 'good comfort'; and when Charles II, in his anxiety to win Puritan support, permitted (by the Declaration of Indulgence) open worship in dissenting forms, a chapel was built in Pool Lane, or South Castle Street, the services being conducted by Samuel Augier, the minister of Toxteth. No doubt the Puritan farmers of Toxteth helped to keep nonconformity alive in Liverpool.

The steady nonconformists, however, were few and discredited, and the high church cavaliers seemed to be triumphant in the early years of the period. But there were very many who, though they made no difficulty about taking the oaths or attending the church services, had yet Puritan sympathies both in religion and politics. Among these were included some of the principal merchants of the town, such as Thomas Clayton, Thomas Johnson, and William Norris. It would be misleading to call these men Puritans; it will be convenient to denominate them Whigs and

their rivals Tories, though these names did not come into use till about twenty years after the Restoration.

The Whigs, then (including both conformists and nonconformists), seem to have had a large majority among the freemen. And, in spite of the weeding out of the Council, for some time that body appears to have included as many Whig as Tory members. The Tories endeavoured to secure their ascendancy by obtaining a new charter, to obtain which they enlisted the support of that sound cavalier, Lord Derby, son of the hero of the Civil War; but three applications which they made before 1667 were unsuccessful.

For more than ten years after the Restoration there was no outbreak of actual strife between the parties, partly, no doubt, because all the energies of the town were engaged in the struggle with Lord Molyneux. But in 1672, after that question had been finally settled, the party feud broke out with violence. The Tories by that time were in a majority in the Council, while the Whigs were in a majority in the Assembly of Burgesses. The Tories, therefore, seem to have prevented the Assembly from meeting or passing by-laws, as it had an undoubted right to do under the charter of Charles I, and they would appear also to have taken out of the hands of the Assembly the election of the bailiffs—the only means which the burgesses possessed of influencing the composition of the Council, of which the bailiffs became life-members on election.

In 1673 the trouble came to its height at the annual Assembly for the election of the mayor and bailiffs, which the outgoing mayor declared to be dissolved immediately after the new mayor's election. The Whigs refused to have their rights thus overridden, and a group of twenty-six of them declined to adjourn, kept the mayor in his chair for the space of two hours by force—meetings being illegal unless he was present—and proceeded to transact business, the nature of which is not recorded, because the records were kept by the party in power, who chose to regard the proceedings as riotous and illegal. Eventually the mayor was released by officers with halberds, and the riotous freemen were all deprived of their freedom by resolution of the Tory Council.

But the Whigs still continued to be in a majority in the Assembly of Burgesses, and were thus able occasionally to elect a Whig mayor. The mayor of 1676, a Whig, just before the election day admitted a whole batch of Whigs as freemen, without consulting the Council, no doubt for the purpose of making sure of a majority at the next election. The Council, however, resolved that all these freemen should be struck off the roll, claiming (without any show of law) that it alone could elect freemen; and when a Whig mayor again received a majority of votes, the Council calmly declared his competitor elected on the most trifling grounds.

The immediate outcome of all this strife was

the grant of a new charter by Charles II, on the application of the Tories in the Council, without any consultation of the Assembly of Burgesses, to whom supreme power had been given by the previous charter. The new charter had the effect of absolutely securing the ascendancy of the Tories. It raised the number of the Council (hitherto unfixed, but usually about forty) to sixty, and laid it down that fifteen of the sixty should be non-resident burgesses. As the non-resident burgesses were mostly county gentlemen who were all sound Tories, the object of this provision is clear enough. It gave the Tory party a solid block of votes, which could be used on an emergency.

But the most striking feature of the new charter was that it gave to the Council the right of electing the mayor and bailiffs, the election of whom was the sole relic of power now remaining to the Assembly of Burgesses. There was now no occasion for the Assembly ever to be summoned, and the Tory minority were left in absolute and irresponsible control of all the resources of the town. And there seemed no possible mode of getting rid of their power; for as the members of the Town Council sat for life, and themselves filled up all vacancies in their own body, it was certain that every new member would be a Tory. Naturally there was warm opposition to this intolerable arrangement. But opposition was useless. Some of the principal Whigs in the Council (among them Alderman Thomas Johnson, their most active leader)

declined to take the oaths under the charter, but the only result of that was that they were deposed, and replaced by Tories. The town had to settle down as best it might under the rule of an irremovable oligarchy out of sympathy with the majority of its subjects, and there seemed to be no hope of relief, for it was part of the policy of the crown to establish the ascendancy of the ultra-royalist party in the towns, which had been the strongholds of Puritanism.

But there were some things which even a high Tory Council could not stand; their loyalty to the church was even stronger than their loyalty to the king, and when the Whigs in London began to play upon the popular fear of Catholicism, even the Tory Council grew anxious and restive. When the panic about the Popish plot was used by the Whigs as a pretext for a definite attempt to exclude the king's Catholic brother, the Duke of York, from the throne, all England fell into a fever of excitement, pouring in addresses to the crown on one side or another. The Liverpool Tories sent up a loyal address, but under a veil of devotion its phrases gave expression to their religious fears, and if Charles II (at heart a Catholic) ever read it, he must have found much amusement in it. For the good anxious Tories thanked him profusely for his adherence to the true Protestant religion, 'notwithstanding your many and great temptations to the contrary,' and for his promise to 'endeavour the extirpation of Popery'; and they indicated their

support of the king in his struggle to secure the succession to his 'Papist' brother by undertaking to spend their lives and fortunes in defending his majesty's 'royal persons, heirs and lawful successors against all Popish contrivances and devices whatsoever.'

King Charles got his own way; the 'No Popery' craze was forgotten; and the leading Whigs ruined themselves in the eyes of the country by involving themselves in a foolish plot against the king's life. Toryism was again triumphant, and its doubts were forgotten. The Liverpool Council sent up a new address, couched in a lyrical vein of bombastic loyalty, bitterly condemning 'that sort of men (the Whigs) whose infectious anti-monarchial principles are enough to empoison all who are not sufficiently prepared with the infallible antidote of loyalty,' and devoutly praying (with an allusion to Dryden's topical satire of 'Absalom and Achitophel') that 'the counsel of your faithful Hushais shall ever prevail against the united force of all aspiring Absaloms, and the desperate advice of all pestilent Achitophels.'

But this ardent loyalty was ill rewarded. In 1684 (just a year after this address) Liverpool was required to surrender her charter, in order that it might be revised in such a way as to give the control of the borough not merely to the Tory party, but to the king. The same course was being taken at the same time with most other English boroughs. The mayor, therefore, travelled to Warrington in order to yield up

the precious document to the infamous Judge Jeffreys, representing the crown. The revised charter was issued in the name of James II, Charles II having died before it was ready. In one point only did it shew any material change from its predecessor. The Tory ascendancy was fully maintained, but the new charter also contained a clause empowering the crown at any time to remove any of the borough officers or any member of the Town Council.

This clause was intensely unpopular even with the high Tories of the Council, and the fervour of their loyalty began to abate from this moment. Already, in 1684, a Tory alderman had been fined for refusing to promise not to attend unlawful meetings—probably meetings of the burgesses at large. In 1687 loyalty was still more sorely tried, when the king intervened to protect two Roman Catholics from the persecution of the High Church Council. These were one Richard Lathom, a surgeon, and his wife, who kept a school. They had been prosecuted in the borough courts for pursuing professions unlawful to Papists; but a royal mandate came down ordering the prosecution to cease, and the Lathoms to be left in peace, and when this order was disregarded, the deputy mayor and the senior alderman—both good Tories—were summarily removed from their offices by royal order.

The growing alienation between the Tories and the king on religious questions was still more clearly shown three months later, when a

commissioner came down to enquire whether the mayor and council would do their best to secure the election to parliament of two members who would vote for the repeal of the Test Act against Catholics. The mayor's reply was guardedly hostile: 'that what is required by his majesty is a very weighty and new thing, and that he was not provided to give any other answer but this: when it shall please the king to call a new parliament, he purposed to vote for such persons as he hoped would serve the just interests both of his majesty and the nation.' Loyalty stopped short when the church was threatened; and at first even the Tory Council was ready to welcome the landing of William of Orange and the overthrow of the Stuart line.

But the revolution was not carried out without trouble. Lord Molyneux, a Catholic, was strong on the side of James II, and a body of regular soldiers for a time occupied Liverpool in the interest of the king, even threatening the life of Lord Derby who, though a Royalist, had after some hesitation declared on the side of William of Orange. The flight of James II, however, put an end to all trouble, and the Tory Town Council seized the opportunity to drop the recent charter and to restore the deposed members. For a short time party feuds were forgotten; some of the expelled Whigs returned to the Council; but the Tories remained dominant, and when in 1691 they obtained from the new king and queen a confirmation of the charter of

Charles II, their power seemed to be securely established.

The reconciliation of the parties, however, did not last long. The Whigs, in a large majority among the freemen, were not likely to accept their continued exclusion from power, and began an agitation for a new charter. To push their claims they needed strong supporters at Westminster, and the first great trial of strength between the parties came in the election of 1694. In that year the Whig candidate, Jasper Maudit, a local merchant, polled 400 votes against fifteen cast for his Tory opponent, one Brotherton, though Lord Derby and other magnates strained every nerve to secure Brotherton's election. The Tory mayor even went so far as to declare Brotherton elected, amid riotous scenes at the hustings, but on a petition to the House of Commons this decision was overthrown, and the mayor sharply reprimanded. Now began a vehement struggle on the charter question. The Tory Council commanded all the resources of the town, which they prepared to use lavishly. The Whigs on their side, headed by old Thomas Johnson and his son, raised funds to fight their battle by private subscription, to which the merchants of the town liberally subscribed; while the two members in parliament 'laid their heads close together,' to good effect.

The result was that William III granted a new charter in 1695, which was to be the governing charter of the town till the Municipal Reform

Act of 1835. Unfortunately it was so badly drawn up that it gave room for bitter disputes later. Its object was simply to restore the system of government which had existed before the charter of Charles II. It therefore restored to the burgesses the right of electing the mayor and bailiffs, and also the right of legislating for the town over the heads of the Town Council, but this was so badly phrased that the Council was later able to claim that the clause giving this power was only intended to fix its own quorum. The number of the Council was reduced to forty, and a new Council, predominantly Whig, was nominated in the charter. Thus, after their long exclusion, the control of the borough passed into the hands of the Whigs. In their hands it remained for three quarters of a century.

But this did not end the strife. The Tories refused to accept the new charter, as the Whigs had refused to accept that of Charles II. The ex-mayor actually declined to surrender the town plate, which he had held as surety for the costs of resisting the new charter, a debt which the Whigs naturally repudiated. The 'old-charter' men, as they were called, remained a substantial party for nearly a generation, always ready for intrigue; and their opportunity came when, in the reign of Queen Anne, the high church and Tory party got the upper hand again in national affairs. A petition was sent up to the queen for the quashing of the last charter; but after dragging on for a year, and causing bitter

strife in the town, the agitation ended in failure, and the Whigs remained in power.

Thus on all sides this period is one of great activity and constant change, and the borough has very decidedly emerged from its long obscurity. The new dignity of its governing body, and the greater importance of the interests it had to safeguard, necessitated a much greater formality in procedure, and these years saw the adoption of elaborate rules of debate for the Town Council.

The meetings now took place in a handsome new Town Hall, which was built in 1673, and replaced the old common-hall bequeathed to the borough by John Crosse, which had served for a century and a half. The new building, the first great public building erected in Liverpool, stood in the middle of the broad market place in front of the modern town hall. It looked up the narrow Castle Street, and behind it lay the narrow High Street and the butchers' shambles. It was raised on a colonnade of arches,. open to the air, and the covered place thus provided was used as an exchange, the council chamber and banqueting hall being on the first floor.

Here the meetings of the Council were held regularly at one p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. All members of the Council were required to wear their official robes, which were of different pattern for bailiffs, aldermen, and common councillors. The mayor had four halberdiers to attend him 'on all occasions,'

and when he took the chair a mace, presented by Lord Derby in 1669, lay before him, 'richly gilt and engraven with his majesty's arms and the arms of the town.' The borough owned by this time a good deal of silver plate, for use at the banquets which were frequently given, especially on fair-days and at elections; but the body of freemen were now too numerous to feast all together as they had once done, and these festivities were confined to the members of Council and other leading men.

It was impossible that the town should have passed through so many changes without some modification of the rigid customs which had governed trade and society in the previous age. Space does not permit of any full account of the customs of this period, which indeed were constantly changing. But it is enough to say that the elaborate system of town's bargains, and the necessity of consulting the mayor before any cargo was sold, and the jealousy of strangers frequenting the market, were all vanishing as trade increased—vanishing because it was impossible to maintain them. Non-freemen resident in the town were still forbidden to trade. But the object of this was simply to force them to become freemen and pay the fees due on election, which formed a substantial item in the borough revenue. It is clear that at the beginning of the eighteenth century the great majority of the inhabitants of the borough were freemen, sharing in all the privileges.

The half-century after the Restoration had thus seen the beginning of a new prosperity for Liverpool, and, as a consequence, had seen also many great changes in the social relations and political organisation of the borough. The next age was to bring a still more rapidly advancing prosperity, accompanied by still further, but more gradual, changes in the life and character of the town.

CHAPTER XI

Rising Prosperity, 1700-1756

THE Whig party in Liverpool, established in power by the Revolution, clung very firmly to their position. They had, indeed, the support of the great majority of the inhabitants, and throughout the period covered by this chapter the town was noted for its loyalty to the Whigs and to the Hanoverian line. So strong was this sentiment that at the accession of George I Liverpool presented an address to the new king urging the punishment of the Tory statesmen of Queen Anne. Planted in the midst of a strongly Tory and Catholic district, the Liverpool justices were of great service to the Whig government in sending up the names of 'Papists and other disaffected persons'; and the town reaped many advantages from being in favour with the ruling powers.

It was in connexion with the two Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745 that the stalwart Whiggism of Liverpool was most clearly shown. Curiously enough, on each of these occasions Manchester, with equal decision, took the opposite side. Manchester, which in the Civil War had been the stronghold of the Roundheads, was now

the mainstay of the Jacobites; Liverpool, which had been the last refuge of the Lancashire Cavaliers, was now the bitterest opponent of the Stuart line.

The situation brought about by the rebellion of 1715 was such as to form a serious test of Liverpool's loyalty. A force had been landed in Scotland, and the Highlands were in arms. A second force was organising itself in Northumberland and Cumberland, under the Earl of Derwentwater and Mr. Forster. In Lancashire, eager mobs everywhere cheered for the Stuarts; bells were rung to celebrate King James III's birthday; and in Manchester the mob took possession of the town, organised a force, and sent out emissaries to stir up similar movements elsewhere. Except Liverpool, all Lancashire was aflame; and when, in November, the army of Lord Derwentwater took possession of Lancaster and proclaimed James III king, it looked as if Liverpool, the sole loyal town in the county, would have to look forward to a siege. But the townsmen were quite ready to resist. They dammed up the stream which ran into the Pool to form a protection on the east; they arranged the ships in the river so as to give aid in defence; they cut a deep ditch from the river to the Pool along the line of the old rampart of the Civil War sieges, and on it and in entrenchments commanding the Pool they mounted seventy guns; while the seamen were organised in companies, and the townsmen were drilling.

The ill-organised enthusiasm of the rebels, however, came to nothing, and the loyalty of Liverpool was not put to the test. But when the rising had been put down, and prisoners filled the gaols of Preston, Lancaster and Chester, Liverpool was chosen by government as the place for the trials; no doubt because its townsmen could be trusted to supply well-disposed jurymen. Lord Derby's Tower was filled to overflowing with prisoners waiting for trial. Thirty-four men were executed in various places, and four of them suffered at Liverpool. They were publicly hanged on a special gallows erected in a field between London Road and Islington, long known as the Gallows Field; their entrails were then burned, and their bodies cut into four quarters to be publicly exposed in other towns as a warning to future rebels. Many hundreds more were sentenced to transportation, and Liverpool merchants made good profits in handling the convicts. We know of one case in which £1,000 was paid for the transportation of 130 men; and to this must be added the price obtained for the sale of the luckless wretches as slaves on the plantations of Virginia and the West Indies.

Thirty years later, the gallant but desperate adventure of the Young Pretender afforded another occasion for the display of Liverpool's Whiggism. A Liverpool ship brought the news of the landing of the Prince in the Hebrides, and when the Highlanders began to gather round him and the regular forces were scattered by their

fierce attack, Liverpool again began to make anxious preparations. A regiment of foot, called the Liverpool Blues, was raised for the king's service; it was equipped by a subscription of £6,000, £2,000 of which was contributed by the corporation; while in addition seven companies of volunteers for local service were raised and officered by leading townsmen.

Though much less promising at the outset, the rising of 1745 attained much greater success than that of 1715, and the Highland force, joined by English recruits as it advanced southwards, succeeded in making its way through Lancashire and as far as Derby before meeting any serious check. The Liverpool regiment, sent out to cut bridges in order to check the enemy's southward march, had a successful brush with some Highlanders at Warrington, but apart from this, it confined itself to the defence of the town.

Meanwhile in Manchester the old Jacobite enthusiasm had blazed out again, and a regiment of recruits marched out to join Prince Charlie. But they never had an opportunity of a bout in the open field with their Liverpool rivals; for disaster soon began to dog the little force of rebels. The Duke of Cumberland advanced against them with a considerable army; and the Young Pretender had to retreat through Lancashire back to Scotland.

When the duke got into Lancashire he was joined by the Liverpool regiment, which did good service, and especially was employed in garrisoning Carlisle.

We are told by an officer in the duke's army that 'no regiment in the campaign made a better appearance than the Liverpool regiment; their officers were a set of soldier-like gentlemen, though they had not been bred in the military way, being mostly gentlemen, tradesmen, etc., yet had a very good discipline, having thrown off their trade and merchandise for a time, and ventured their lives and fortunes and everything dear to them in defence of their king and country.'

Liverpool gave a still further proof of its loyalty by sending at its own expense thirteen tons of biscuit for the use of the troops in Carlisle. When the rising was finally crushed on the bloody field of Culloden, the event was nowhere received with more enthusiasm. A less pleasant expression of the fervid Whiggism of Liverpool was given in April and May of 1746, when, in the excitement produced by the rebellion, a mob sacked and burned the only Roman Catholic chapel in the town, and the house of a widow of the Roman Catholic persuasion.

As might be expected, a town so fervently devoted to the Whig cause generally returned Whig members to parliament. Sir Thomas Johnson, of whom some mention has already been made, was one of the borough's representatives from 1701 to 1727. His whole strength was devoted to the service of the town; his influence was strong enough to obtain for it many advantages; and he well deserved the knighthood with which he was rewarded in 1708.

So great, indeed, was his devotion that his private affairs were neglected, and in the end he had to accept a post in distant Virginia, where he died. The only memorial of him that survives in the city he served so well is the name of Sir Thomas Street, the street that runs past what was once the garden of his house. With him served, at various times, Sir William Norris of Speke, famous for his embassy to the Great Mogul in India, and his brothers, Richard and Edward; also John and William Cleveland and William Clayton, representatives of the new generation of merchants which had appeared in Liverpool since the revival of its prosperity.

The only important exception to the list of Whig members was Sir Thomas Bootle, from whom the Earls of Lathom inherit some of their lands in this district. Bootle was one of the representatives of Liverpool from 1727 to 1734. He was a barrister of some distinction, and had been mayor of the town; but despite his personal popularity, he held his own with difficulty against the official Whig candidates, and always had for a colleague a devoted follower of the Whig chief Sir Robert Walpole. Bootle, indeed, was far from being a Jacobite; and his letters to his patron, the Duke of Somerset, show that the secret of his success was to be found in the fact that he was a bitter opponent of the close corporation which still governed the town.

The Whig members of the Town Council, having forced their way into power by using the

cry of popular rights, were determined to stay there, and they used their position unscrupulously enough. The Tories therefore, naturally enough, took up the popular cry of the rights of the burgess body as against the Council, a cry for which the Whigs had now no further use. On this question fierce controversy raged during a large part of the period, and Bootle, both before and during his membership of parliament, was one of the leaders of the anti-council party. What he chiefly protested against was the practice which the Council was now adopting of putting men on the roll of freemen simply for the purpose of securing a majority of votes (the parliamentary franchise being confined to freemen) instead of following the old practice of electing everybody who paid the proper fees; and Bootle's policy was to claim for the burgess body at large the power of electing freemen as well as of passing by-laws that would govern the action of the Town Council. It was the part which he had taken, during his mayoralty in 1726-7, in the struggle to establish these claims which had doubtless won for him his election to parliament in the same year.

Space does not permit of any detailed account of the curious struggle which took place over this question. The leaders of the popular party rested their case on a disputed clause in William III's charter, which laid it down that the mayor with one of the bailiffs and any twenty-five freemen might constitute themselves a Town Council, and



W. G. Herdman, delt.

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'in this kind of common council' might transact any business whatever. The Town Council held the view that this clause was only intended to fix the quorum at Council meetings. Bootle and his followers more correctly took the view that it was intended to give to the Assembly of Burgesses (provided the mayor and a bailiff were present) the right of overriding the Council. They, therefore, during four years, scarcely ever permitted the Council to be summoned, but transacted business, passed by-laws, and elected freemen at general assemblies of the burgesses. The humour of the situation was that the Council was quite powerless, because even on its own reading of the disputed clause it was incompetent to transact business unless the mayor was present, and as the mayors were elected by the Assembly of Burgesses, the popular party contrived for four successive years to carry their own candidates. The struggle came to its height in 1733, when the popular party persuaded Lord Derby to accept election as mayor, and to take up their cause, which he did with much vigour. Unfortunately he died during his year of office; the Council returned to power, and its first actions were to declare all that had been done null and void, to depose from the Council those who had taken part in the recent proceedings, and to do all they could to secure the defeat of Sir Thomas Bootle in the parliamentary election of 1734.

The attempt to democratise the constitution

of the borough had failed. But the Council could not but feel that its position was insecure, and that it was at the mercy of any future mayor. It therefore applied, in 1750, for a new charter to put the question at rest by formally transferring to itself all the powers claimed by the Assembly of Burgesses. The application was refused, and its only result was a brief renewal of the struggle. Mr. Joseph Clegg, an alderman of the borough, published a virulent pamphlet against the Council, for which he was deposed; but in an action at law he forced the Council to reinstate him, and three years later was elected mayor. But even Mr. Clegg did not try to use his position as mayor to re-open the great question. It was left undisturbed, and the Council remained in the undisputed exercise of power for forty years more, in spite of the fact that the law and the lawyers were definitely against them.

This strange collapse of a vigorous agitation is at first sight rather difficult to explain. But the probability is that everybody felt very seriously the dislocation of business caused by these disputes. The Assembly undoubtedly had the right to override the Council if it liked; but it could not but be felt that a miscellaneous assembly of freemen formed an exceedingly incompetent governing body. And though the Assembly could itself rule, it had no power by charter to replace the Council by an elected representative body. For the same charter which left the Council defenceless also established it as a permanent

institution, and provided that its members should hold office for life and fill vacancies as they occurred in their own number. Thus, however successful an attack on the Council might be at the moment, it was always certain that sooner or later the Council would return to power and abrogate all that had been done. To continue the agitation meant only plunging the town in continual chaos, without any prospect of permanent reform; and so Liverpool was left under the sovereignty of a close, self-elected oligarchy. Such was the result of the Whig victory, won on the plea of popular rights. In Liverpool, as in England at large, it led simply to the rule of a privileged minority.

It is probable that the power of the Council would never have been challenged if it had not been out of touch with the mass of inhabitants, and if it had not been following a narrow and exclusive policy. The results of this policy were in many respects unfortunate, and in the event had the most serious influence upon the development of the town.

The principal aspect of the new policy is to be seen in the mode of admitting freemen, to whom alone (as the reader may need to be reminded) all political privileges belonged. Up to the beginning of the eighteenth century it seems to have been the practice that any one settling in the town could, by paying a reasonable sum, obtain the freedom with all its privileges, which included not only the right of voting for mayors and for members of

parliament, but also the more material right of exemption from the payment of town dues on all imported merchandise. Under the old practice the Council had forbidden residents who were not freemen to trade in the town, a prohibition which could only be enforced when every trader might hope for admission to the freedom. These prohibitions cease early in the eighteenth century, and their cessation is a sign that a new policy was being followed in regard to the admission of freemen. The Council was now using its power of electing freemen principally for the purpose of influencing elections; on several occasions we hear of large batches of freemen being admitted on the eve of a parliamentary contest. Apart from these, almost the only new freemen now admitted were those who as sons or apprentices of freemen had a legal right to the freedom.

The new population of enterprising merchants and industrious artizans thus found themselves more and more rigidly excluded from all share in the privileges of the town which they were enriching, until finally, in 1777, the rule was laid down that no new freemen whatever should be admitted except these who were admitted by right. Thus during this period the body of freemen was increasingly becoming a privileged minority of the inhabitants of the town.

A still more unfortunate result of this new policy was that the Council gradually came to regard itself, not as being charged with the government of the whole body of inhabitants

over which it ruled, but as being simply a body of trustees to safeguard the rights and properties of the privileged body of freemen.

It was in this spirit that they administered the corporate estate, now becoming every year more valuable; and one curious result of their new attitude was, that they no longer levied rates, but carried on their work solely on the proceeds of the corporate estate, the town dues, the market tolls, and other traditional sources of revenue. For rates are payments made by the whole community for services rendered to the whole community; and the Council did not consider that it was its business to serve the whole community, but only the body of freemen.

When such services had to be performed, new bodies had to be invented to perform them. Thus the policing, lighting and scavenging of the streets —functions which, of all others, seem to rest among the primary duties of the Town Council— were, from 1748, entrusted by act of parliament to a special body consisting partly of members of the Council and partly of members elected by the ratepayers. A similar but independent body was later charged with the oversight of sewers, for the Council held itself responsible only for the sewering of 'the ancient streets of the borough' —the streets which it had looked to before it began to take a confined view of its duties.

Thus the functions of government were coming to be split up among several rival bodies, and there was no single ruling body which felt itself generally

responsible for the provision of decent conditions of life for all the inhabitants of the town. This was to have serious results, for it meant that there was to be no proper oversight of the new population which, in ever-increasing numbers, was beginning to flock into the town.

But in spite of the narrowness of the policy which was pursued by the Town Council during this period, and the evils which resulted from it, it cannot be denied that the Council showed a good deal of vigour, especially in the earlier part of the century, before the new methods and principles had been fully established. The growing civic pride of a prosperous town was reflected in the erection between 1748 and 1754 of a new Exchange and Town Hall, to replace the outgrown building of 1673. Planned by the Woods, who made Bath a place of beauty, the new hall was almost the first worthy public building erected in Liverpool, and it set the pattern for a style of architecture well suited for civic purposes, and admirably carried out in many of the later buildings of the town. In its first form it was a square block with a low dome; its ground floor, surrounded by pillars, was used as an exchange for merchants, while the upper floors included the council chamber, public rooms and offices. It was later considerably added to and altered with great taste; but the original building still forms the bulk of that dignified Town Hall which Liverpool may regard with just pride.

The provision of a Town Hall was a natural

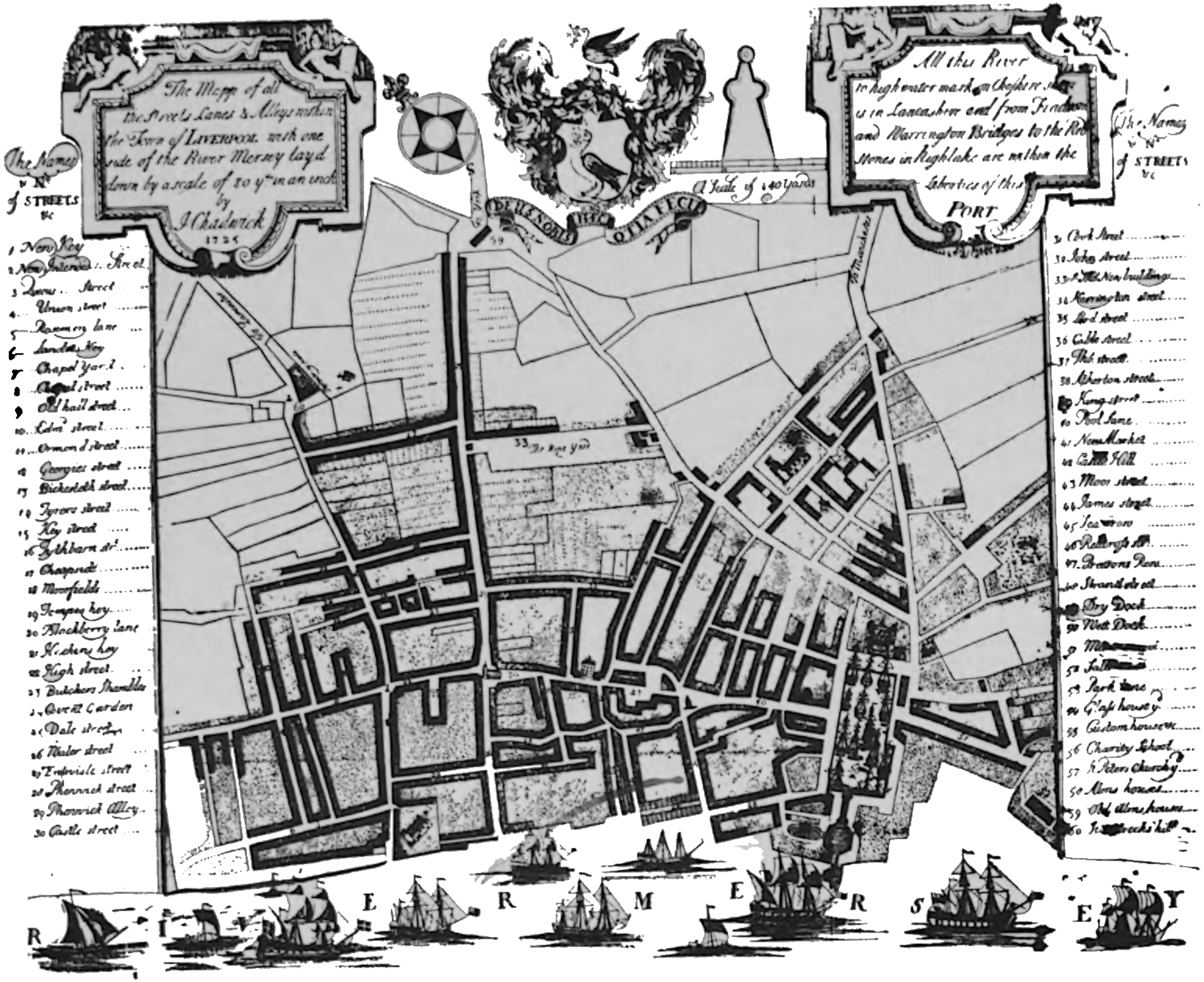
function for the Town Council, even on the narrowest view of its duties. But in the earlier years of the century much more original and adventurous undertakings were carried out with success. In the first place, the Council saw with satisfaction those two relics of a feudal age, the Tower and the Castle, pass under its direct control. The Tower was sold by Lord Derby in 1737 to William Clayton, from whom the corporation first rented it, and later bought it. Part of the building was used as a town gaol; the chapel served for some time as an assembly room for dancing, to which, we are told, ladies came afoot through the streets, wearing heavy blue cloaks and raised from the mud on pattens; for before the middle of the century not even the wealthiest merchants owned private carriages, and hackney coaches were unknown.

The Castle had been acquired still earlier. In 1704 the borough obtained from the crown a lease of the site, with the right of demolishing the ancient fortress, subject only to the payment of the traditional salary due to the constable. Disputes with Lord Molyneux, the hereditary constable, and others, prevented the utilisation of this grant. In 1714 an act of parliament for the erection of a new church on the site was obtained, but even after this there was, for various reasons, a long delay; and it was not until 1725 that the Castle was finally demolished.

The lover of antiquities cannot but regret the destruction of this massive and venerable pile

which, had it survived, would have lent an atmosphere of dignity to a city now devoid of every memorial of antiquity. Yet it would be scarcely just to charge the townsmen of 1725 with mere stupid vandalism. The days when the Castle had overawed and defied them were still too recent for them not to feel a thrill of delight in witnessing the demolition of the one-time stronghold of their masters. Part of the site was later used for the erection of a fish-market; and housewives chaffered over the price of herrings where armed men had once clanked and blustered. On another part of the site a new church was built to accommodate the growing population. St. George's became the corporation church, with seats reserved for all members of the Council; and all the details of the service were elaborately regulated by the Council. Now St. George's has in turn vanished, to make room for the memorial to Queen Victoria. The erection of churches was one of the duties which the Council accepted, and twenty years later, in 1750, a fourth church, that of St. Thomas, was erected.

But the most marked sign of a new age was the building of the first dock—the first wet dock erected in the modern world. The act empowering the creation of the dock was obtained in 1709, but it was not until 1715 that it was completed. It was mainly the enterprise of Sir Thomas Johnson that led to this immense and fruitful departure; but the credit must be shared


The Mapp of all the Streets Lanes & Alleys within the Town of LIVERPOOL with one mile of the River Mersey layd down by a scale of 20 y^rds in an inch by J. Chadwick 1725
All this River is in high water mark in Cheshire shore is in Lancashire and from Frodsham and Warrington Bridges to the Rock Stones in Highlake are within the Liberties of this PORT
A Scale of 240 Yards
DEUS NOBIS HAEC OTIA FECIT
The Names of STREETS &c
1 New Key
2 New Intended Street
3 Lane Street
4 Union street
5 Rumney lane
6 Sandon Key
7 Chapel Yard
8 Chapel street
9 Old hall street
10 Eden street
11 Ormond street
12 Georges street
13 Dickenson street
14 Tyrers street
15 Key street
16 Tythburn st
17 Chapp[el] st
18 Moorfields
19 Tempest key
20 Blackberry lane
21 Hickens key
22 High street
23 Butchers Shambles
24 Covent Garden
25 Dale street
26 Water street
27 Enfield street
28 Shannick street
29 Shannick Alley
30 Castle street
31 Cook Street
32 John Street
33 New buildings
34 Harrington street
35 Lord street
36 Cable street
37 This street
38 Atherton street
39 King street
40 Pool lane
41 Newmarket
42 Castle Hill
43 Moor street
44 James street
45 Seaforth
46 Redbrook st
47 Bretons Row
48 Strand st
49 Dry Dock
50 Wet Dock
51 [illegible]
52 [illegible]
53 Park lane
54 Chapel house y
55 Custom house
56 Charity School
57 St Peters Church
58 Alms houses
59 Old alms houses
60 [illegible]
R I V E R M E R S E Y

with the engineer, Mr. Thomas Steers of London, who carried out the scheme, and who may fairly claim to be the inventor of wet docks. The cost of the dock was materially reduced by utilising the broad mouth of the old Pool. The upper reaches of the Pool were, at the same time, closed and partially filled in, and the site remained a stretch of marshy ground until, at a later date, Paradise Street and Whitechapel arose upon it. The filling up of the Pool removed another and still more noteworthy landmark of mediaeval Liverpool: a geographical feature which had caused the first origins of the town. Had it been maintained and walled in, it would greatly have added to the town's picturesqueness; but it would not be fair on this account to fall short in respect to the townsmen whose spirited enterprise at once turned Liverpool into the best and safest port in the kingdom, and gave it an immense impetus on its career. So valuable did the dock prove to be that it was immediately added to by the creation of a tidal basin or 'dry dock,' to the north of it; while in 1734 a new dock to the south was begun, which (not being built in a natural inlet) took nineteen years to build. Primarily intended for the Cheshire salt-trade, it stood beside a great saltworks which had for some time existed on the waste ground south of the Pool, and thus obtained the name of the Salthouse dock.

Nor was the creation of the new docks the only enterprise for the encouragement of trade

undertaken by the Town Council. They began the buoying of the channel, a task which was entrusted to Mr. Steers, and carried out at the corporation's expense. And they gave their aid also to the accomplishment of other engineering works which helped to overcome that geographical isolation and those defects of communication which had hitherto hampered the growth of Liverpool's trade. A new public road to Prescot made carriage exit from Liverpool for the first time practicable. A well-made road to Warrington brought the town into touch with the great north and south coach routes.

Still more important, means of water communication began to be systematically developed. During the first half of the eighteenth century the main object of the engineers was the deepening of existing watercourses, which, in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, were so poor as to be useless for purposes of navigation. In 1720 the river Douglas was made navigable from Wigan to the Ribble, thus enabling coals to be brought by water to Liverpool more cheaply than was possible by land. Two years later an act was passed for deepening the Mersey and Irwell beyond Warrington, so as to enable barges to go to Manchester, and in the following years the deepening of the Weaver as far as Nantwich made Cheshire salt vastly cheaper and more abundant. Finally, in 1755, the project for deepening the Sankey Brook, from St. Helens to the Mersey, began a new era in inland

navigation. For the Sankey Brook was so poor a stream that the deepening of it really meant the creation of a new canal; Brindley, the engineer, boldly struck away from the course of the stream, merely using its waters as a source of supply, and thus created what was practically the first artificial waterway or canal in England, and began that process of canal building which was to be carried on with such activity during the next period, and to improve so immensely the position of Liverpool as a distributing centre. At last the engineer, the revolutioniser of modern society, had got to work, and was transforming the natural conditions which had hitherto placed Liverpool at a disadvantage in comparison with the ports of the east and south.

These great enterprises, needless to say, were not, like the docks, carried out by the Town Council; but Liverpool found much of the money required for them, and gave them warm support. They were the cause of a steadily accelerating progress. But they were also in part the result of the striking growth which during this period brought Liverpool to the rank of the second among British ports.

The growth by which these enterprises were produced, and which they accelerated, may be readily traced on the maps of the period. In 1725 John Chadwick drew up the first surveyed map of Liverpool, for which he was rewarded by a grant of £6 from the Town Council. This map shows thirty-seven streets in existence, and

presents a marked contrast to the map of fifty years before, which might serve for almost any period in Liverpool history before the eighteenth century. The Pool has vanished, and the Old Dock (on the site of the modern Custom-house) has taken its place. But there is as yet little building south of the old line of the Pool; while to the north the limits of the house-covered area still extend only to the Old Hall. George Perry's map of 1769 shows a remarkable growth. Church Street and Ranelagh Street were well built up; Duke Street and Hanover Street were full of fine houses; houses with big gardens occupied Mount Pleasant; and a dense mass of building was spreading along the riverside southwards. To the north expansion was slower, but building had extended as far as the modern canal basin. The growth of population was even greater than this physical expansion suggests, for most of the houses were cramped and overcrowded. It rose from 5,000 in 1700 to 18,000 in 1750, and 25,000 in 1760.

What had brought this growing population was, in part, the rise of new industries. Ship-building yards were active on the shore to north and south of the docks. Half-a-score of whirling windmills busily at work gave a picturesque aspect to the rising town. Sugar refineries were busy and prosperous. Rope-making was very actively carried on in long rope yards that appear prominently in the maps. There were one or two iron foundries. Liverpool had come to be known

for the excellence of her watches. The Liverpool pottery industry was in its best period, turning out fine blue and white delft, and also (at a later date) printing designs on china-sent from Staffordshire. The principal potteries were, in the early part of the period, in Dale Street and Shaw's Brow (now William Brown Street), and later in Islington and other places.

But manufacturing industries have always been of minor importance in Liverpool, and it was above all the growth of a world-wide commerce which had attracted the new population. In 1700 the port owned about seventy vessels, and employed about 800 seamen. In 1751 the number of vessels owned in the port had risen to 220, and the number of seamen to 3,319. The trade which employed this considerable fleet was of a very varied character. Liverpool now controlled the great bulk of the Irish trade; Chester had ceased to be a competitor, though packet boats for passengers still sailed from Parkgate; even Bristol had been far surpassed. Large parts of Scotland and Wales, too, were commercially dependent upon Liverpool; she was by this time established as the central port of the British lands. In the Baltic trade a considerable footing had been obtained, though here the natural advantages of Hull gave the pre-eminence to that port.

But it was the trade with the new world which brought to the rising port most of its prosperity. As yet the trade of the American colonies, soon to be the United States, was of comparatively

small proportions; but Liverpool had a large share of it, her only competitor being Bristol.

Far more important were the West Indies. Not only were the British West Indies the chief sources of supply for sugar, tobacco and cotton, the main staples of Liverpool trade, but they were also the centre of a still more lucrative smuggling trade with the Spanish dominions in Central and South America. The Spanish government, anxious to secure for the home country the control of its colonial commerce, stringently limited the amount of foreign trade admitted at colonial ports. The result was that on the one hand Spanish smugglers haunted the ports of Jamaica to buy there the goods which their rulers forbade them to buy at home, and on the other hand English smugglers did their best to evade the Spanish coastguards and to trade direct with Mexico and Cuba. In this traffic Bristol possessed by far the greater share at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but before the first quarter of the century was over the energy of Liverpool merchants had given them the lead, and by the middle of the century Bristol was completely distanced. In 1757, 106 Liverpool vessels were employed in this trade, and they are said to have brought to the port an annual profit of £250,000. As the goods exported for this trade were largely paid for in Spanish gold, pistoles and doubloons became common currency in Liverpool.

But we must not attribute the whole of this advance to the energy of the Liverpool merchants.

Two circumstances helped them. In the first place, the growing activity of the Manchester mills provided them with commodities much in demand in the West Indies—coarse woollens and cottons, which were produced much more cheaply than the French and German goods which formed the bulk of the outgoing cargo of the Bristol vessels; and thus the smuggling trade of the West Indies gave to the industry of Manchester as great an impetus as to the commerce of Liverpool.

A second cause of Liverpool's success in the rivalry with Bristol was that the Liverpool ships were more cheaply manned than those of Bristol. Captains and officers received lower pay; while a wide extension of the system of apprenticeship provided a considerable proportion of the crews almost without wages. It was the practice to apprentice boys at fourteen or fifteen for seven years; they received no wages from their masters, whose sole obligations were to feed and clothe them, teach them their trade, and administer to them 'all needful chastisement.' It is said that even the younger officers of vessels were sometimes apprentices, serving without wages.

The most profitable part of this trade, that which was carried on by smuggling with the Spanish colonies, did not outlive the middle of the century; for, after causing a war between England and Spain, it was almost brought to an end by an act of parliament of 1747, which forbade foreign vessels to frequent British West

Indian ports, and thus drove away Spanish smugglers from the ports of Jamaica. But before it died it had led to a still more lucrative and still more questionable traffic. The West Indies had always been closely linked to West Africa; the sugar and tobacco plantations had long been worked by the labour of negro slaves, and the constant demand of their West Indian customers for negroes led the Liverpool merchants to follow the lead of Bristol, and to embark upon the slave trade. By the middle of the eighteenth century Liverpool was fairly launched upon this iniquitous traffic, the most lucrative which the world has ever seen; and before long the port had obtained a proud and shameful eminence as the chief centre of the trade in human flesh. But the slave trade, at once the glory and the shame of Liverpool, is too important not to demand a chapter to itself.

The irregular and adventurous traffic of the West Indies, whether in Manchester goods or in human bodies, brought the traders into constant conflict with the Spanish coastguards, who haunted the seas between Jamaica and the mainland; and the loud complaints of the merchants engaged in this trade, backed by the parliamentary thunders of William Pitt and his 'patriot' followers, were the principal cause of the war with Spain, which began in 1739, and was five years later merged in a still wider war with France. In this long strife, which lasted till 1748 and was the beginning of an almost

unintermitted series of wars extending to 1815, the sailors of Liverpool were very ready to take a hand. The conditions of the West Indian trade had produced a very vigorous, unruly and war-like type of sailors, always ready for riot and fighting, often difficult to keep in order when they were ashore; and such men were very ready to embark upon the gay and profitable enterprise of privateering. These were the days of Captain Fortunatus Wright, one of the prime heroes of eighteenth century Liverpool, a Liverpool man who fitted out the privateer *Fame* at Leghorn, and for months terrorised the Western Mediterranean, capturing no less than forty-six French vessels. But Fortunatus Wright, that dashing pirate, though a Liverpool man, was not actually a Liverpool trader; and it must be confessed that the merchant ships which turned privateers during these years were not strikingly successful. They captured a number of French and Spanish vessels, but their own ships in the West Indies lay very exposed to French or Spanish attacks, and over one hundred Liverpool vessels were taken by the enemy. Nevertheless we are told that Liverpool profited vastly from this war, because her home waters were so much less exposed than those of Bristol and London, and the route round the North of Ireland so much safer than that through the English Channel, that trade increasingly deserted these ports for their northern rival.

It is the picture of a very vigorous and thriving port which emerges as we study the records of

Liverpool in the first half of the eighteenth century; but there is a reverse side to the picture. While trade and wealth were growing, civilisation was not growing with them. The streets were narrow, mean, ill-paved, and dirty. The houses were closely huddled together and over-crowded. The recreations of the people were of a brutal type—cock-fighting and bull-baiting still held their own. It was only in 1759 that the first theatre was built in Drury Lane, though there is a notice of theatrical performances two or three years earlier. There is no mention of any music other than that rendered by the public waits, who were paid by the corporation.

Perhaps the amusements of the well-to-do were more refined. Derrick, the successor of Beau Nash as *arbiter elegantiarum* at Bath, visited Liverpool in 1760, and has left a record of his impressions. He reports that the assembly-room in the town hall 'is grand, spacious, and finely illuminated; here is a meeting once a fortnight to dance and play cards; where you will find some women elegantly accomplished and perfectly well dressed.' As for the men, 'though few of the merchants have had more education than befits a counting-house, they are genteel in their address. . . . Their tables are plenteously furnished, and their viands well served up; their rum is excellent, of which they consume large quantities. . . . But they pique themselves greatly upon their ale, of which almost every house brews a sufficiency for its own use. . . . There are at

Leverpoole three good inns. For tenpence a man dines elegantly at an ordinary, consisting of ten or a dozen dishes. . . . They have plenty of the best and most luxurious foods at a very cheap rate.'

This is a pleasant, even an appetising, description of Liverpool society. But when we turn to things less material than the creature comforts, the tale is not so favourable. The intellectual life of the town was strangely starved. No newspaper was published in the town. The *Liverpool Courant*, a bi-weekly sheet of two small pages, had run for a few months in 1712, but died of inanition. There was no public library, except a small circulating club collection, which amounted to 450 volumes in 1758, and had been kept up to that time in a box in the house of one of the subscribers. These were 109 of the principal gentlemen of the town, who found for a subscription of five shillings per annum sufficient food for all their intellectual needs. In 1759 this library was provided with a more permanent home in a room in North John Street; it was the first nucleus of the Lyceum library.

Nor were there any public schools, except the old grammar school of the foundation of John Crosse, which was dragging out a very precarious existence because the Town Council had merged the lands with which it was endowed in the general corporate estate, and only granted it the most miserable annual subsidy. There were a few feeble private schools; at one of these, in Paradise Street, a boy, William Roscoe, of whom we shall

hear more, was learning to read and write in 1760.

But if the town had not yet learned its responsibility for stimulating and providing for the intellectual needs of its citizens, it had begun at least to feel pity for suffering and poverty. The oldest of Liverpool charities owe their existence to this period. In 1731 the first workhouse was erected at the corner of College Lane and Hanover Street; the object of its erection was declared to be 'to employ the poor . . . . and thereby to ease the inhabitants of the great burthen the poor are at present'; a motive in which not much humanity is perceptible. The period saw also several bequests for the foundation of almshouses. A small group of almhouses for sailors' widows in Shaw's Brow had been established by Silvester Richmond in 1692, and enlarged by John Scarisbrick in 1723; another group, also for sailors' widows, was established in Hanover Street in 1706; and in 1727 Mrs. Ann Molyneux gave £200 for the relief of debtors in the Liverpool gaol, and £300 for the benefit of the widows in the almshouses. These are small gifts, which may seem scarce worthy of mention, when later gifts of far greater amount must be left unnamed. But their significance is in their smallness, and in the fact that they stand almost alone.

Far more important was the foundation of that most venerable of Liverpool charities, the Blue-coat Hospital, which owes its existence to the kindliness of the Rev. Robert Stythe, one

of the first rectors of Liverpool, and its earliest endowments above all to the rare generosity of Bryan Blundell. Blundell was a master mariner and part-owner of his own vessel; he belonged to a family which had been settled in Liverpool since the time of Elizabeth. Deeply impressed by the plight of destitute orphans in the streets of his native town, he joined Mr. Stythe, in 1708, in opening a day school for fifty boys, and then set to work to collect money to establish a permanent building where they could be housed and fed. He left the sea to devote himself to this worthy hobby. He himself gave one-tenth of his whole means, and collected £3,000 by personal begging. Prospering in business, he devoted throughout the remainder of his life a tithe of his income to aid the maintenance of the school; and before he died in 1756, had the satisfaction of seeing his charity firmly established, and commanding the interest and support of all that was respectable in Liverpool.

The fact that the purse strings of the prosperous merchants were being loosened was still more clearly proved by the foundation of the Royal Infirmary in 1745, on the future site of St. George's Hall. These are the first faint beginnings of public spirit, the first awakenings of the sense of mutual civic responsibility in the history of Liverpool. They are a good beginning, but the town had yet to learn that there are other needs besides those of the sick, the orphan and the widow.

CHAPTER XII

The Slave Trade, 1709-1807

THE trade in negro slaves, like many other iniquities, began in misdirected benevolence. Las Casas, a humanitarian Spanish missionary, appalled by the sufferings of the West Indian natives, who were dying out under the forced labour imposed upon them by Spain, suggested, as a means of preserving that simple race, that negroes should be employed in their stead. Negroes were the sons of Ham, condemned by God to atone in eternal servitude for the sin of their ancestor at the time of the flood. To enslave them would be to carry out the will of God; and it would bring them a possibility of eternal salvation by a knowledge of Christianity. So the horror began with a pretence of religious sanction, almost at the opening of the history of the New World; with less and less sincerity the religious pretence continued until the iniquity was abolished in the nineteenth century.

At first Spain and Portugal, which owned the great slave-worked colonies, naturally controlled the trade; though the adventures of Captain Hawkins, who invaded the monopoly in the reign

of Elizabeth, showed that it was not any scruple of conscience that kept Englishmen aloof. But in the seventeenth century, when English, French and Dutch all began to acquire West Indian sugar islands, and lands in Guiana, all these nations began to share in the trade; all founded stations on the West African Coast, and strove for the control of the best sources of supply. The trade in human flesh was already the most lucrative in the world, and to obtain the upper hand in it became a prime ambition with every nation. The proudest triumph of English diplomacy in the early eighteenth century was the Assiento Treaty of 1713, whereby the English obtained the right to supply slaves to the Spanish colonies as well as to their own.

In the early days of the English slave trade London and Bristol practically had the trade to themselves, and from 1698 to 1730 Bristol was rapidly surpassing London. In these years, indeed, Bristol was devoting all her energies to the African trade; she hoped to find here a compensation for the decline of her more direct West Indian traffic, which, as we have seen, the enterprise of Liverpool was rapidly undermining. Liverpool had as yet made no serious attempt to enter the African trade; one vessel of thirty tons went to Africa in 1709 and got a cargo of fifteen slaves, but this beginning was not followed up until 1730. Until that year the trade had been controlled by a company, to which all traders had to pay 10 per cent. for the upkeep

of forts and factories on the West Coast. But in 1730 an act of parliament threw the trade open to all persons willing to pay a registration fee of £2. These fees were to be payable either in London, Bristol or Liverpool, and each of the three ports was to provide a committeeman to reside on the coast and supervise the trade.

Thus encouraged, the merchants of Liverpool entered with all heartiness upon the new speculation. In the first year fifteen ships were sent to Africa. Seven years later the number had grown to thirty-three, and in 1752 Liverpool had fifty-eight vessels engaged in the slave trade. By that time Bristol had been beaten in the race, and London was far behind; and in the second half of the century Liverpool was beyond all competition the principal slaving port, not only in England, but in Europe. In 1792, when the trade was at its height, it was estimated that Liverpool enjoyed five-eighths of the English trade in slaves, and three-sevenths of the whole slave trade of all the European nations. Nearly half of the blood-stained wealth earned by this iniquitous traffic enriched Liverpool pockets; nearly half of the appalling sum of human misery which it caused lay at the doors of Liverpool merchants and sailors. Not that the trade was considered to be guilty or even dubious. Until almost the end of the eighteenth century there was scarcely a man in Europe who would not have regarded such phrases as have been used above as the language of misguided sentimentalism. In

SOUTH WEST PROSPECT OF LIVERPOOLE, IN THE COUNTY PALATINE OF LANC



the eyes of the Liverpool merchants, and in the eyes of all the world, the success of Liverpool was a thing to be envied, the legitimate reward of enterprise which everyone would have been delighted to share.

The magnitude of the trade, and the magnitude of the profits derived from it, may be best exhibited by a summary of the results of a short period, for which full figures are available. In the eleven years from 1783 to 1793, 878 round trips were made by Liverpool slaving ships. They carried 303,737 slaves from Africa to the West Indies; and sold them for £15,186,850. Deducting agents' commissions and incidental expenses, the total amount remitted to Liverpool came to over twelve millions and a quarter sterling. Not all this, of course, was profit; the cost of the cargoes sent out to Africa as purchase for the slaves has still to be deducted, as well as the cost of maintenance of the ships. But even after these deductions have been made, the total profits amounted to over thirty per cent., or an average of nearly £300,000 *per annum* during the whole period under consideration.

But even this does not represent the full profit made out of the business. For after the slaves were sold in the West Indies, the holds of the vessels were filled with sugar, tobacco, rum, cotton and other West Indian produce which yielded immense profits, the amount of which it is not possible to calculate. The amazingly lucrative character of this traffic is not apparent until it is

realised that it produced a double crop of profits, and combined two distinct lines of trade. The slave ship left Liverpool laden with cheap Manchester goods, bad muskets, glass beads and inferior spirits. It exchanged these for a full cargo of 'prime negroes branded as per margin.' After a rapid run on the trade winds it disposed of them at high prices to the planters; and it completed the 'great triangle of trade' by returning full of commodities that were always certain of a sale at good prices.

It is no wonder that the 'African trade' (as it was delicately named) was the pride of Liverpool, and that the vast majority of the townsmen were prepared to defend it through thick and thin, and had no words bitter enough for the faddists who wanted to put an end to it. Not only did it employ nearly one-fourth of the total tonnage of the port; not only did it engage the capital of over one hundred of the town's principal merchants; but many hundreds of humbler citizens were enriched by it. 'Almost every order of people,' says a Liverpool writer in 1795, 'is interested in a Guinea cargo . . . He who cannot send a bale, will send a bandbox. . . . . It is well known that many of the small vessels that import about an hundred slaves are fitted out by attorneys, drapers, ropers, grocers, tallow-chandlers, barbers, tailors, etc.' of whom 'some have one-eighth, some a fifteenth, some a thirty-second' share. An army of sailors, who got better pay on these ships than on any others;

a host of shipwrights, ship's chandlers, manufacturers of chains and implements, whose livelihood depended upon the trade, all equally resented attacks upon it. It had flooded Liverpool with wealth, which invigorated every industry, provided the capital for docks, enriched and employed the mills of Lancashire, and afforded the means for opening out new and ever new lines of trade. Beyond a doubt it was the slave trade which raised Liverpool from a struggling port to be one of the richest and most prosperous trading centres in the world.

The methods of a trade which did so much for the town deserve a more detailed examination. Ships of special design were required, the building of which gave much employment to Liverpool shipyards. They must be swift-sailing clippers, so as to reduce the wastage of the cargo by death, which was the invariable result of the horrors of a lengthened voyage. Then their decks must be designed to accommodate the greatest possible number of negroes in the least possible space. The slave deck ran across the ship, and was usually five feet eight inches high—too low to permit a tall man to stand upright. It was fitted with wooden benches clamped to the floor, close together, with an alley down the centre.

On the West Coast the traders resorted to a few recognised slave depots, the chief of which were Bonny and Old Calabar. Here the development of the trade had produced a contemptible gin-sodden race of 'kings' and 'princes' who

rejoiced in European nicknames bestowed upon them by the sailors, and made a livelihood by selling their fellow-beings. In the romantic picture with which people at home soothed their consciences, these poor creatures appeared as the fierce chieftains of barbarous tribes perpetually at war with their neighbours, and constantly taking large numbers of prisoners, whom they would massacre and perhaps devour if the beneficent trader did not make it more profitable to sell them to Christian masters. In reality the 'kings' made their livelihood by organising raids upon unoffending villages to supply the slave mart.

As the trade developed and the demand for slaves increased, these raiders had to go further and further afield, often finding their victims two or three hundred miles from the coast. Bands of man-hunters burst down upon sleeping villages—usually in the night, so that no spoil might be lost—and, setting fire to the cottages, captured all the inhabitants, except the old, who were killed. Men, women and children were stripped naked; the men were chained together in a long file, but no such precaution was necessary with the rest; and under the crack of the whip the long march to the coast began. Those who broke down were left by the wayside to die; their friends were driven away from them with whips, and the procession continued. When the coast was reached the travel-worn victims were sold to the trader, taken aboard, branded with hot irons,

and thrust down, naked and quivering, into the hold. Sometimes they must wait days or even weeks before the cargo was completed; and the extent of the demoralisation into which the trade had brought the coast would then be displayed. Sons, eager for gain, would sell their fathers, or fathers their sons. Nor were the traders over-scrupulous as to the means by which they got their slaves; to them one 'nigger' was as good as another. It is on record that one negro slave-dealer, having received the payment for a batch of slaves in gold, was fool enough to accept the captain's invitation to drink in the cabin. His money bag had roused his host's cupidity, and he awoke from his hocussed liquor to find himself at sea. Amid the laughter of the sailors, the screaming wretch was stripped, branded, and thrust down among his own victims.

It was not till they got to sea that the worst horrors were revealed. The slaves—men on one side, women on the other—were chained to the benches and to each other, so close together that they could scarcely move or turn. To keep them in health they were brought on deck in batches every morning for exercise; but, lest they should rebel, or throw themselves into the merciful sea (as they did on the least opportunity), a long chain, secured to the deck, was passed over the chain that joined the ankles of every slave. Then they were ordered to dance, on pain of the lash, and sometimes to sing. It is not easy to imagine a more heart-rending spectacle than that of these wretches

jumping sadly up and down to the music of their jangling chains, and wailing the tunes they had learnt in their burnt villages. Often the weather was too bad to allow them on deck; then port-holes and hatches must be closed, and the slaves left to stew in the foetid atmosphere between decks. In these conditions they died like flies, the dead remaining chained to the living till the sailors were at leisure to throw them overboard.

It is not surprising that under such circumstances the slaves should frequently have endeavoured to end their lives by the only means open to them—that of refusing all food. Young children were known to do this, and the practice was so common that in the windows of those shops in Liverpool which were devoted to the equipment of slavers a common sight was a steel appliance for forcing the mouth open and holding the tongue down until nutriment could be poured down the throat.

When the horrors of the 'middle passage' were over, there came the sale, arranged for by the agent for the shipowner in Jamaica. Sometimes the sale was made by private treaty with the agent. Most often it was effected by a 'scramble,' which had the advantage of disposing of the cargo quickly. In this method the slaves were brought on deck, and arranged in four groups—men, women, boys, and girls. The intending purchasers came out in small boats, and at the sound of a gun rushed on board, armed with lengths of string or tape. Seizing the slaves

they intended to purchase, they drew their cord round their bodies. An equal price was paid for slaves of each class bought in this way. The din on these occasions was beyond description, and the negroes are spoken of as trembling like leaves. A third method of sale was by auction, but this was usually only employed with the poorer slaves. Men and women, old and young, were exposed together for public inspection for some days before the sale. Those who were so feeble that no one would buy them were turned adrift and left to die.

The merchants who conducted this traffic were often very genial, courteous and charitable gentlemen. But they lived far away, and never saw any of its horrors, except the worst horror of all—the profits. It may be imagined that the sailors who actually conducted the traffic were brutal, callous, licentious and turbulent. So, for the most part, they were; and their influence on the town when they got home from their voyages could be nothing but evil. Yet there were exceptions. Even among the slavers there were men honourable, upright and kind-hearted, who never questioned the legitimacy of the traffic in which they were engaged.

Two such figures deserve more than a bare mention. One was the strangest of all men to find in such surroundings—the Rev. John Newton, best known as the friend of the gentle Cowper, as a leader of the evangelical revival, and as the author of 'How sweet the Name of Jesus

sounds,' 'Come my soul thy suit prepare,' and many other favourite hymns. Newton was born of respectable parents, and early in life entered the navy as a midshipman. He was flogged and degraded for bad conduct, deserted, and spent some years in disreputable adventures in all arts of the world, being at one time reduced to such misery that he was practically a slave on one of the Bahamas. Escaping at length, and repenting of his evil courses, he found his way to Liverpool, got employment as mate of a slaving ship which belonged to a friend of his father, rose to be captain, and turned over a new leaf. He was now genuinely converted; and during the six years (1748-1754) which he spent in this employment, he gave a remarkable demonstration of the fact that a sincerely religious man might carry on this trade without a qualm of conscience. His ship obtained a reputation for saintliness. No spirits were allowed on board. The slaves were well fed and seldom whipped; and daily the captain prayed and sang hymns with them, earning from them a touching gratitude. In 1754 Newton left the sea, not because he doubted the righteousness of his profession, but because he desired to take holy orders. In this ambition he found, not unnaturally, considerable difficulty; the Archbishop of York was hard to persuade that the ex-captain of a Liverpool slave-ship would prove a suitable minister of religion. Yet Newton became one of the most powerful religious forces of his time; a moving



HUGH CROW, SLAVE-TRADER

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preacher, a writer of hymns that have ever since been dear to the whole Christian community, and one of the apostles of a new school of religious thought, among whose followers were later to be found the men—Wilberforce, Clarkson, Sharp, and Macaulay—whose unflagging zeal ultimately brought about the destruction of the slave trade.

A very different, and a much more normal, type is represented by Hugh Crow. A Manx boy of humble origin, he spent his youth on the sea, undergoing a series of perils and adventures which might furnish forth a score of boys' story books, and enduring such hardships that it is amazing any man could survive them. In 1790 he made his first voyage to Africa, and the rest of his seafaring life was spent in the slave trade. He was captain of the last slave ship that made the voyage from Liverpool. Buoyant, shrewd, kind-hearted, utterly fearless, indifferent to hardship and intolerant of 'cant,' he had no patience with the opponents of the slave trade. For him the three cardinal virtues of a seaman were resourcefulness, straightforwardness and utter loyalty to his employers: the open eye and the single eye. He treated his negroes well, with a bluff, contemptuous kindliness, for after all they were only 'niggers'; and they adored him —old 'passengers' of his would grin from ear to ear and rush to welcome him when he visited their new home. The valour of the man may be illustrated by one episode of his later career.

Returning from Africa, he met one night two large vessels, which he took to be French privateers known to be haunting those waters. They required him to stop; but disdaining to strike his flag, he fought a running battle with them all through the night, and only discovered in the morning that they were British warships. In his later years Crow's ruddy face and bluff, portly figure was one of the sights of Liverpool, as he stumped up Lord Street, spy-glass under arm, to view the shipping, or told tales of his youth round the fire in the Lyceum newsroom. The tales were so stirring that his friends persuaded him to write them out; the result is the *Autobiography of Hugh Crow*, a most engaging little book, swift, simple and direct, which conveys a vivid picture of the conditions of seafaring life a century ago.

It will have been noted that the slave trade consisted in the transportation of negroes from Africa to America, not in the importation of them to England; and the legend which pictures rows of negroes chained to staples in the Goree Piazzas, exposed for sale, is a curious instance of popular superstition. After 1772, indeed (and the slave trade was at its height after that date), no slaves can have been brought to Liverpool; for in the Somerset case, tried in that year, it was laid down by the judges that under the common law slavery did not exist in England and that every slave became free so soon as his foot touched English soil. Before 1772 a few

slaves were brought to Liverpool, but they were exceptions; there was never any systematic importation. The largest number of slaves known to have been offered for sale at one time in Liverpool was eleven; but though the newspapers contain advertisements of slaves for sale, 'warranted sound,' and though auctions of negroes occasionally took place in the shops or coffee-houses or on the steps of the old Custom-house, these cases were exceptional, and do not deserve the prominence they have obtained in most histories of Liverpool.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century public opinion in England at large underwent a remarkable change in regard to the slave trade. Adam Smith the economist, Paley the philosopher, and Wesley the preacher had all condemned it; but in 1787 mere criticism passed into a definite campaign, and the Society for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade was founded in London. Naturally Liverpool regarded this movement with hostility and anxiety. The corporation voted £100 to the Rev. Raymund Harris, a Spanish Jesuit, to show its approval of his pamphlet in defence of the trade, in which, with nauseous unction, he argued 'its conformity with the principles of natural and revealed religion delineated in the sacred writings of the Word of God.' When Thomas Clarkson visited Liverpool to collect information for an exposure of the iniquities of the slave-trade, he spent his time in danger of his life. The belief was universal that the abolition of this

trade would be the ruin of Liverpool, and that if ever the faddists had their way, grass would soon be growing in Castle Street.

Yet there was a sort of restless discomfort blended with the fierceness of the opposition. Honourable men's consciences were beginning to be touched; all men were uncomfortable in the feeling that they were the objects of general public reprobation. 'The discussion,' said Dr. Currie, 'has produced much unhappiness in Liverpool. Men are awaking to their situation, and the struggle between interest and humanity has made great havoc in the happiness of many families.' When George Cooke, the actor, was hissed for appearing drunk on the boards of the theatre, he pulled himself together, and said venomously over the footlights that he had not come to be insulted by a pack of men every brick in whose detestable town was cemented by the blood of a negro; and it speaks strongly, not only for the magnanimity of his audience, but also for the change that was coming over their opinions, that he should have been cheered for his bitter defiance.

With most of the townsmen violence of language concealed uneasiness of conscience. Yet even in Liverpool itself there was found a little group of men who dared not only to feel, but to express, their opinions. Such an one was Edward Rushton, the blind poet, who had himself been a sailor in a slave ship, and knew what he wrote about. His *West Indian Eclogues* are not great poetry, but they breathe the hatred of oppression

and the love of liberty. Such again was William Rathbone, second of that name, and grandfather of the revered philanthropist whom the city lost not long ago. He spared no pains to aid and protect Clarkson when he visited the town; and he showed the genuineness of his own convictions by refusing on any terms to allow the timber in which he dealt to be sold to any builder of slave ships. Such again was James Currie, a young Scotch doctor building up a practice in the town, who did not hesitate to risk his prospects by writing against the trade by which the wealthiest men in the town made their wealth. Such, above all, was William Roscoe, greatest of Liverpool citizens. Long before the abolition movement commenced, when he was a struggling lad of nineteen, trying to make a livelihood out of the law, he had dared to express his views in verse; now, at the opening of the agitation, he lent an already honoured name to it by publishing a long poem on the *Wrongs of Africa*, and by taking up the cudgels against Harris in a vigorous 'Scriptural Refutation.' Throughout his life he lost no chance of raising his voice against the iniquity which defiled his native town, while at the same time he defended those who conducted the traffic from the imputation of being the ruthless mercenary tyrants which they had come to be in the popular imagination.

By an extraordinary freak of fortune, a miracle of poetic justice, Roscoe was returned to parliament in 1806 as a representative for his native

town, which, though it hated his politics, was proud, as it well might be, of his world-wide fame. He sat for only a few months. But he had the pleasure of being able to speak and vote for the act which abolished the slave trade. On his return Roscoe was welcomed by a mob with staves and brickbats; he never again sat at Westminster. But it was one of his greatest sources of pride that he, as a member for Liverpool, had been enabled to cast his vote for the ending of a trade which had brought into the town a flood of wealth, but brought upon it also the responsibility for an ocean of suffering and tears.

The slave trade ended on May 1st, 1807. The last ship to sail from Liverpool on a slaver's errand was the *Mary*, Captain Hugh Crow; its cargo of 400 negroes was the last shipment of human souls sold by English merchants to labour in the plantations of the New World.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Age of Wars and Privateering
1756-1815

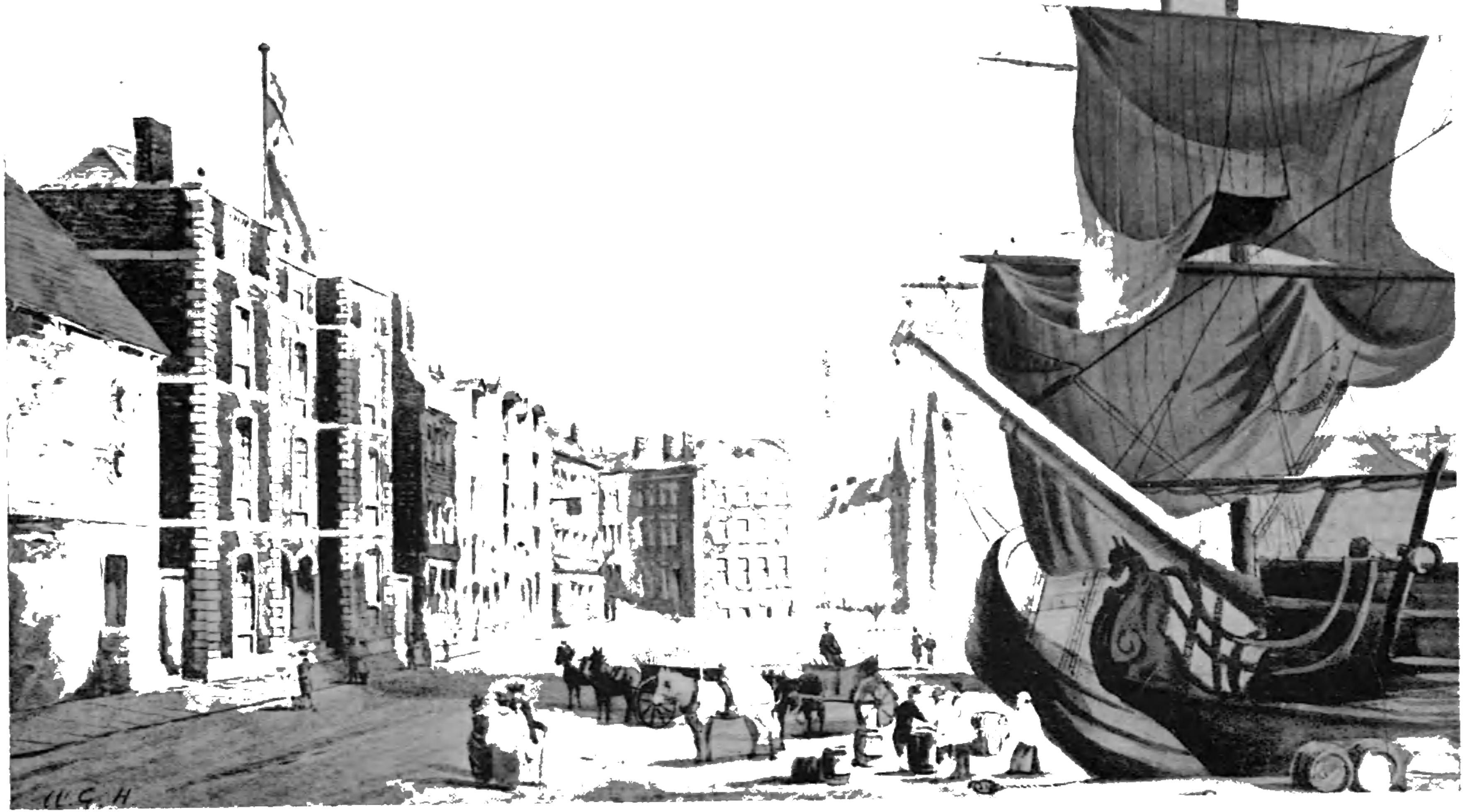
THE period from 1756 to 1815 is a period of almost continuous wars—wars the most gigantic ever waged in the history of England, perhaps in the history of the world. For they set every part of the globe aflame, Europe, America, Africa, India; and, above all, every sea echoed to the guns of battleships or privateers, and the unarmed trader was never safe except in great convoys. Portentous in the magnitude of their range, these wars were still more portentous in the immensity of their results. During their course the elder empire of Britain reached the pinnacle of its pride under the inspiration of the great Pitt. During their course that empire fell in ruins again with the loss of the American colonies. During their course the world was upheaved by the volcano of the French Revolution, and in the midst of the chaos arose a new empire of Britain. This is the epical age of English history.

On no part of England did these events make themselves more directly and profoundly felt than on Liverpool, now the second port of Britain, with a merchant fleet that ranged every part of the Atlantic. The wars of a maritime power are

bound to be most deeply felt, for good or ill, by the people of the port towns. They bring divers benefits, but they bring also many hardships. It is the vessels of the port towns that are exposed to the ravages of the enemy's privateers, and their captured sailors that must pine in the enemy's prisons.

From the ports too, must be drawn the supply of men for the manning of the national fleet. The drain upon Liverpool for this purpose was very heavy during this period. In 1795, for example, Liverpool was suddenly required to provide over 1,700 sailors for the navy; and as a government will take no denial in moments of national peril, no ships were permitted to leave the port till the quota was made up. Such immense and sudden demands were not often made; nevertheless the drain was unceasing, and formed a serious handicap to commerce. The corporation tried to stimulate voluntary enlistment for the navy by offering bounties—a guinea for every sailor, half-a-guinea for a landsman; then two guineas and a guinea; then, in desperation, ten guineas and five guineas. But even with these inducements voluntary enlistment was never sufficient to supply the demand. Forced service had to be resorted to, and the greatest of the hardships which Liverpool had to endure during this age of war was the constant presence of the press-gang, with all its violence and injustice.

The length to which naval officers could go in this age when their crews were incomplete may be



W. G. Herdman, delt.

THE OLD DOCK AND CUSTOM HOUSE

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illustrated by a single episode. In 1759 H.M.S. *Vengeance* arrived short-handed in the Mersey, and lay in wait. Presently there entered the river a whaling ship just home from the long Greenland voyage. The cutters of the *Vengeance* boarded her, and a lieutenant in command calmly ordered the whole crew to go straight on board the warship to serve His Majesty. The whalers, in sight of their homes after a long voyage, angrily refused, and with long blubber knives and harpoons drove the man-o'-war's men back to their cutters, and sailed on. The *Vengeance* pursued them with cannon balls, several of which fell in various parts of the town, fortunately without doing damage. Immediately on landing, the whalers hastened to the Custom House to get papers of protection, but the *Vengeance* men followed them and stormed the Custom House, firing pistols in defiance of the protest of a magistrate who was present. Most of their intended victims scrambled through the windows and escaped, but the captain and five others were seized and enrolled as foremast hands. But still the warship was not content. Another vessel came into the river—a slave-ship, just returned from the round trip to West Africa and Jamaica. The *Vengeance* ordered her to heave to; she tried to escape, but was stopped; and the whole of her crew and officers, except the captain and first mate, were impressed. When they came aboard, the first action of the captain of the *Vengeance* was to order them all to be stripped, tied up to gratings,

and flogged. This was in sight of their homes. Thus brought into a cheerful and patriotic frame of mind, they sailed off for a two or three years' cruise. This was an extreme case, but throughout this period the fear of the press-gang was ever present, and its activity was unceasing.

A second dread which continually haunted the mind of the Liverpool sailor in this age of war was the dread of finding himself in a French prison. How many Liverpool men suffered this fate during the course of these wars it is impossible to say; the number must certainly have run into the thousands. The hardships which the prisoners had to endure were always great, often shameful. We hear of their being plundered of the very clothes upon their backs, 'put down in a dungeon forty feet underground and not permitted fire or candle,' made to pay for the straw they lay upon, herded with felons, ill-fed, forbidden to have any dealings with the inhabitants, even to purchase food; and though these descriptions doubtless represent the worst cases, the lot of the prisoner of war, whether in France or England, was always a hard one. Some of these captives achieved the most surprising escapes from prisons in the heart of France; and the stories of the escaped sailors are no whit less thrilling than Captain Marryat's tale of Peter Simple's escape from his French prison.

But though war brought such hardships, it called forth the most spirited gallantry among these rude and turbulent seamen of old Liverpool.

The first of the series of great wars (known as the Seven Years' War, 1756-1763) put the town upon its mettle. For three successive years, at the beginning of the war, England reaped nothing but disaster. In earlier wars, as Liverpool had found to her advantage, the Irish Sea at least had been safe from the enemy. But now the daring Thurot of Brest ventured into these inviolate waters. He appeared off the Isle of Man in 1758, lying in wait for vessels to or from Liverpool, and scarcely a ship dare venture out. He came and went mysteriously, no one knew when or where; now in the Irish Sea, now ravaging the isles of Scotland. Even in the *annus mirabilis* of 1759, when England was triumphant in every quarter of the globe, her most private waters were insecure; and it was not till February of 1760 that the gallant Frenchman was finally disposed of, after doing immense damage. While Thurot was hovering about, Liverpool had to be on guard. She raised volunteers, and mounted a battery of fourteen guns in the churchyard of St. Nicholas. The boldest of her privateers, Captain Hutchinson, volunteered to lead a squadron of merchant vessels against him in 1758, but somehow men were slow to come forward, and before things were ready, Thurot had vanished again.

During these years of disaster Liverpool trade suffered terribly, not only from Thurot, but from French warships and privateers further afield. The voyage across the Atlantic had become very

dangerous; and West Indian and African waters were especially unsafe. But with the utmost spirit Liverpool men threw themselves into the business of privateering, that is to say, into waging private war against the enemy for the profits to be made out of plunder. There is no record of the number of mercantile warships which sallied out from Liverpool during the Seven Years' War, but it was in this war that the sailors of Liverpool gained the reputation of being the boldest privateers in England. They brought many noble prizes into the port; they performed many feats of high courage which we have not space to record.

A brief narrative of a couple of cruises of the most gallant of Liverpool privateers, Captain William Hutchinson, must suffice as an example of these adventurous enterprises. Hutchinson knew his business well, for he had served in the previous war as mate to Fortunatus Wright, a hero whom he adored. In June 1757, when England seemed whelmed in disaster, he sailed from the Mersey in the privateer *Liverpool*, a fine quick-sailing vessel of twenty-two guns and two hundred men. A week later he came upon a bigger French ship, which, after a sharp fight, he captured and took home to Liverpool with her crew on board as prisoners. In July he recaptured an English vessel under the very guns of the French fort at Ushant, and sent her home; then chased a French privateer on to the rocks, and sunk a fishing schooner, taking her crew

prisoners. Joining company with another English privateer, he next devised an impudent stratagem for sailing into the very harbour of Bordeaux and cutting out its richest vessels; but before this spirited plan could be executed, the allies met three French ships, all of which they captured. The second privateer was sent off with these vessels to Kinsale, while the *Liverpool* gave chase to three other vessels which had hove in sight. All three were captured, and though one was lost near Milford on the way home, the other two reached Liverpool safely, escorted by their captor, now ready for a winter's rest.

Next year Hutchinson sallied out again, and this time invaded the Mediterranean. Liverpool's first news of him was that three captured French vessels had been sent in by him to be sold at Leghorn. Next came the rumour that the gallant privateer had himself been captured by a French fleet. But before long this story was contradicted by the tidings that a French privateer worth 20,000 dollars had been sold by the *Liverpool* at Cagliari in Sardinia. Then two Dutch vessels, laden with West Indian commodities, arrived in Liverpool as Hutchinson's prizes; and finally, before the end of August, Hutchinson himself arrived bringing with him a handsome French privateer of about the same size as his own vessel. Hutchinson was, perhaps, the ablest and boldest of the Liverpool privateers. After retiring from the sea he published a curiously detailed series of instructions as to the best mode

of fitting out merchant vessels for these warlike purposes, which were of great use in later wars.

Few obtained such uniform success as Hutchinson; though some found greater single prizes, and some performed more dashing single exploits. But it is obvious that Liverpool found a real compensation for the woes caused by the dislocation of her normal trade in the gains made from these exciting raids. The game of privateering became immensely popular in the town. There was never any difficulty in finding crews for privateer ships, for one-third of the profits was divided among the seamen, and in this way a foremast hand might suddenly become master of a little fortune such as all the labour of a lifetime could scarcely have won for him.

In the later stages of this war the most dazzling success attended the English arms. French and Spanish ships almost vanished from the seas; French and Spanish lands fell into English hands. For a time England was mistress of the West Indies, and the trade of Liverpool leaped up accordingly. Even when, at the peace of 1763, many of these conquests were restored, the advantage which commerce had obtained was not lost; England was established as beyond rivalry the principal purveyor of tropical produce to Europe; and beyond rivalry Liverpool had the lion's share in this development. The first war had brought, in the end, nothing but intoxicating success.

The interval of twelve years' peace between

the triumphs of the Seven Years' War and the disasters of the American War is chiefly remarkable first for the expansion of Liverpool's trade, at a swifter pace than in any previous period; and, secondly, for the rise of acute political differences, which were to continue throughout this age.

Hitherto Liverpool had been loyally and almost unanimously Whig. But the great Whig nobles, who for half a century had controlled the government of England, had lost popular sympathy. All England believed that it was their incompetence which had inflicted upon the country the humiliations of the early years of the war; for all England had seen how swiftly those humiliations were replaced by the most dazzling triumphs from the moment when Pitt, despite the Whigs' hostility, forced his way into power. Now the new and popular young king, George III, saw his opportunity to overthrow for ever the dominance of the Whig nobles in English politics. He would have had most Englishmen on his side if he had not shown a disposition to establish an overweening power for himself. The struggle raged round the case of John Wilkes, which is no concern of ours, except that it formed a rallying cry for a new grouping of parties, and caused a general shifting of political allegiances.

In Liverpool the Town Council strongly took the king's side, and sent up in 1769 a loyal address, in which it reprobated the supporters of Wilkes (who included all the greatest English statesmen)

as a 'faction of licentiousness under the mask of liberty.' From this time the Town Council of Liverpool may be regarded as being Tory in politics, Toryism meaning the support of the claims of the crown to larger powers. But not all Liverpool was converted from its traditional Whiggism, though the process of conversion had begun. There was still at this period a Whig majority among the freemen, as is shown by the fact that Sir William Meredith, one of the most active of the Whigs in the House of Commons, sat for Liverpool until 1780. And when a petition was sent up with 1,000 Liverpool signatures demanding the dissolution of the obsequious parliament which had been the king's instrument against Wilkes, only 450 names could be found for a counter-petition.

In the midst of the excitement about 'Wilkes and Liberty,' England at large was strangely inattentive to another vast issue which was arising on the horizon—the question of the taxation of America, involving the whole problem of colonial administration. Not even Liverpool, closely as her commerce bound her to the American colonies, seems to have taken much interest in the earlier stages of the quarrel. The Liverpool merchants were a little alarmed when, on the passage of the Stamp Act, the Americans began to abstain from buying English goods, and clamoured for the repeal of the act. But they were as tardy as almost all other Englishmen in seeing the real gravity of the situation



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created by the second attempt at taxation which followed the repeal of the Stamp Act. It was only in 1773, when the quarrel was already almost irreconcilable, that they began to be seriously perturbed, and then only because their commerce was being damaged by the obstinacy of the colonists on the one hand, and the haughty insistence of the king and his ministers on the other.

But, in spite of the tardy protests of the mercantile community, things grew worse and worse, until in the end England found herself drawn into a miserable and fratricidal war, out of which no advantage could be gained, but by which endless misery was inflicted. 'All commerce with America is at an end,' moans a writer in *Gore's Advertiser* in 1775, shortly after the commencement of the war; even 'our once extensive trade to Africa is at a stand'; and the docks are a mournful sight, full of 'gallant ships laid up and useless.' When this lament was written a British army was locked up in Boston, and an American force was invading Canada; while a swarm of American privateers were haunting the West Indies, and inflicting immense damage on Liverpool commerce. The petitions which were now sent up, though strongly worded, came too late to be of any use. And even now the Town Council remained firmly loyal—even when the town was thus heavily suffering from the king's folly, it still sent up addresses reprobating the wicked conduct of the Americans and expressing

its 'abhorrence and detestation of all traitorous and rebellious disturbers of your majesty's peace.'

The war thus entered upon formed the most disastrous epoch in the history of modern Liverpool and in the history of modern England. During the seven years for which it lasted the population of the town actually decreased; every branch of foreign trade declined, and the tonnage of the port diminished from 84,792 to 79,450 tons.

The distress which was thus caused led, among the turbulent and disorderly population who were trained by slaving and privateering, to disgraceful riots. The first of these, which broke out in 1775, was probably the most serious mob tumult of the eighteenth century, with the exception of the Gordon riots in London—also, it may be noted, a product of this period. There are said to have been 3,000 idle sailors in the port; and the African merchants, whose trade was suffering, sure that there would be no difficulty in getting men, decided to reduce wages from 30s. to 20s. *per mensem*. Upon this the sailors of a slaver in the river mutinied, cut the rigging to pieces, and roused the crews of other ships to mutiny also. Nine of the mutineers were arrested and imprisoned in the Tower. Thereupon a mob of 2,000 armed sailors proceeded to relieve them. The Riot Act was read in vain; and the authorities thought it safer to release eight of their prisoners. But the rage of the mob only rose the higher. They stormed the

Tower and released the ninth prisoner. Then, joined by all the unemployed and discontented ruffians in the town, they roamed through the streets, levying contributions from the trembling townsmen. When the terms which they offered to the authorities were refused, they proceeded to violence, sacking shops, bursting their way into public-houses, and tearing down the houses of unpopular townsmen. So high did their daring rise that they laid siege to the Town Hall, which they swore to burn to the ground; and to show that these were not idle threats, they brought up cannon from the ships, and, planting them in Castle Street, began to bombard the Town Hall. A small garrison resisted valiantly, but probably it was only the drunkenness of the mob that saved the building from destruction, and, perhaps, averted a massacre. One of the windows of the Town Hall is said to bear the marks of the firing to-day. In the end it was only after the mob had held the town for over a week that they were reduced to obedience by troops sent from Manchester.

This episode was an alarming proof of the dangers that might accrue from the turbulent character of the Liverpool populace and the ineffective policing of the town. It probably had much to do with the initiation of attempts to improve the morals and manners of the poor which began a few years later. But the restless and disorderly temper shown in this riot continued through the war: in 1777 the Council found it

necessary to appoint a police committee, which sat daily, and advised all respectable persons, if they wished to avoid arrest, not to leave their houses at night; in 1779 the Yorkshire militia, then on garrison duty in Liverpool, had to be scattered in detachments through the town to maintain order.

Grave enough during the early years of the war, the military situation became desperate when in 1778 France declared war, and in 1779 Spain and Holland. England now stood alone against the world; and on all the seas where the Liverpool traders plied a treble horde of privateers and hostile warships lay in wait. For the first time the English navy absolutely lost command of the seas, and dare scarcely venture out from the Southern ports, while French fleets flaunted it in the Channel. The traders of Liverpool were now left to their own resources. And the peril came very intimately home when the redoubtable American sailor, Paul Jones, appeared in British waters, and, with a daring greater than that of Thurot, swooped down in succession upon one point after another on the coast. When, in September, 1779, he descended on Whitehaven and destroyed its shipping, the danger was indeed near.

The one redeeming feature of these depressing years was the vigour, courage, and patriotism with which Liverpool threw herself into the struggle, especially after the French war had been added to the American. A large round fort was raised on the north shore, where the

Prince's dock now is, with barracks for a force of four or five hundred troops. In addition, batteries were raised at the dock mouths. The Corporation undertook in 1778 two-thirds of the cost of raising and fitting out a regiment of regular troops, to be called the Liverpool Blues, and when the muster was called the regiment numbered 1,100 men. Its senior officers were borrowed from the regular army, but the subalterns were all young Liverpool men. Among them was Banastre Tarleton, who later in the war gained a high reputation as a dashing cavalry leader in America. The regiment was sent out to garrison Jamaica. So terribly did it suffer from the climate, that in 1784 only eighty-four men returned alive to hang the colours in the Town Hall. But this did not exhaust the patriotism of Liverpool; when things were at their blackest in 1782, and a French invasion in force seemed likely, the town also raised and equipped at its own expense a corps of volunteers, officered entirely by local merchants.

But it was above all in privateering that Liverpool found its consolation for all these ills. During the first or purely American period of the war no privateers were sent out, probably because American commerce was too small to promise much plunder. But when the old foe, France, came into the arena, at once there was a fever of preparation. In six months no less than 120 vessels were equipped, and we are informed that prizes to the value of £100,000

were brought into the port within the first five weeks of the campaign. Privateering, whose intoxicating adventures and sometimes dazzling profits formed the one gleam of brightness in the murky sky, became a craze, a passion. It was like gambling: there was always the chance of a discovery like that which was made on the French East Indiaman *Carnatic*, brought into Liverpool in October, 1778, in which was found a box of diamonds worth £135,000 'to the no small satisfaction of the captors.' The whole town flung itself into the enterprise. Everybody took shares in ships; fathers invested on behalf of their children, and Mr. James Stonehouse, in his old age, recorded how he was taken down as a child to be shown over the fighting ship of which he was part proprietor.

There were losses as well as gains, and heavy ones; but on the whole the privateers did well. Certainly they conducted themselves heroically. Hear the opinion of the American privateer, Captain Darling, who crawled into Martinique to refit in March, 1778, after being battered about for half the night by an English vessel. They told him that his enemy was the *Isabella* of Liverpool, a boat of half his size, with a crew of fifty against his 135. 'He expressed great surprise . . . .; acknowledged he was obliged to sheer off, and that it was the second drubbing he had got from Liverpool men, and wished not to meet with any more armed vessels from that port.' The West Indian newspaper which reports the story

goes on to say that he was quite right, for 'the merchants of Liverpool have entered more into the spirit of arming ships than any others in England.' The little *Isabella*, which had taught such a lesson to Captain Darling, had received 132 shots in the hull and masts; yet, being attacked next day by two more American ships, one considerably larger than herself, 'We got our stern chaces to bear on them, and began to fire away, our people still in good spirits; the third shot we carried away the brig's cross-jackyard, sent several shots into her bows and rigging, and beat them both off.'

Liverpool might well be proud of such men, even if they limped home with wounded rigging and without prizes: still more when they brought with them such honour as the little *Ellen*. This vessel, with sixty-four men aboard, many of them passengers, fought a sloop-of-war of the Spanish royal navy, manned by over 100 men, and forced him to haul down his colours and come trailing as a captive into Kingston harbour. It is said that over 3,000 sailors were employed on the Liverpool privateers during this war. If to that number we add the 1,100 of the regiment, the sailors supplied to the royal navy, and the volunteers ashore, Liverpool's contribution to the defence of the country in these dark years was no mean one.

But for all the glory and profit of privateering, the townsmen of Liverpool were profoundly thankful when peace returned, and ordinary commerce could be resumed. They were almost

as relieved as the French captives who had been locked up for a longer or shorter time either in the Tower or in the old powder magazine on Brownlow Hill, just where Russell Street is to-day. Three of these prisoners had somehow managed to escape from the Tower, letting themselves down from a window over Prison Weint, and then vanishing into the night. Now all might follow their adventurous fellows; and the numerous Liverpool men in French prisons might come home; and the ships might again ply the Atlantic securely. Trade leaped into prosperity once more, and the population and shipping of the port began again to advance.

The interval of ten years' peace which separated this war from the war of the French Revolution is marked by several events of importance in the history of the town. And first, it was an age of hard-fought and stirring parliamentary elections. The election of 1780, in which both of the Whig members were thrown out, had shown that, in spite of the town's sufferings, it had become Tory, and had no support to give to the Whigs who opposed the war. The election of 1784 showed that this temper still continued. For though Colonel Tarleton, a popular hero who had been wounded in the American war, and whose breezy manner endeared him to the mob, was a candidate in the Whig interest, he failed to secure his election: Bamber Gascoyne of Childwall, a dull rich nonentity, who is of interest to this generation chiefly because Lord Salisbury's Liverpool estates

came by inheritance from him, was preferred before the local hero, disgraced as he was by the friendship of Charles James Fox and the Whig Prince of Wales. This election was disfigured by riots, which showed that the turbulence of the mob had not ended with the war. Mr. James Gildart, a merchant who had made himself somehow unpopular, had his house 'broke to pieces; all the windows, shutters, and even iron bars are broke; and they cut the window curtains with cutlasses all to bits, tore up and destroyed the palisades and wall before the house.' Here is the rough side of the privateering heroes.

Before long the shadow of the French Revolution began to disturb Liverpool, as it disturbed all Europe. At first most people regarded the rise of liberty in France with delight; and the earliest result was that the Whigs of Liverpool were reinvigorated, and Colonel Tarleton carried the election of 1790. The little group of cultivated Whigs who formed, in this period, the pleasantest feature of Liverpool society, and among whom William Roscoe, Dr. Currie and William Rathbone were the chief, watched the progress of reform in France with enthusiasm. For a banquet held in 1791 to celebrate the second anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, Roscoe wrote perhaps the best of his verses, the song which begins :—

'O'er the vine-covered hills and gay valleys of France
See the Day-star of Liberty rise!'

and there was an atmosphere of enthusiasm and

hope among all the reformers, who saw many things to amend in the state of England and of Liverpool, and hoped for much from the example of France.

But others besides the orthodox Whigs were moved by this great event, and it is to the influence of the French Revolution that we must attribute a new and systematic attack which was directed, in 1791, against the monopoly of power by the self-elected Town Council. The mayor, on the requisition of many of the principal merchants of the town, Whigs and Tories alike, called an Assembly of Burgesses in the ancient manner, so long disused. By-laws were passed, members were elected to vacant places in the Council, the treasurer was summoned to submit his accounts to a public audit, and, on refusing, fined £5, which he declined to pay. He was prosecuted for the fine, and on this small issue the great question came into the courts of law. It was fought out with the greatest gravity and learning; the most eminent lawyers of the day were engaged on both sides; and all the archives and records of the early history of the town, ransacked by the industry of Henry Brown, a learned old antiquarian lawyer, were laid before the court. The verdict went in favour of the reformers; but the Town Council got a fresh trial. Three times over was the case tried, the ancient records sifted and tested; on each occasion the Council was defeated, on each occasion it obtained a fresh trial on technical

grounds. But by this time the first enthusiasm for reform which the French Revolution had produced had been turned into alarm by the excesses of the revolutionary leaders in France. The reforming party lost heart and gave up the fight, and the Town Council was left in possession of absolute power, which it retained undisturbed until 1835.

This episode supplies a striking demonstration of the rapidity with which opinion about the revolution was changing. In 1790 everybody had regarded it, if not with enthusiasm, at any rate without alarm. But in 1792 the Town Council, in one of its loyal addresses, told the king that it 'observed with concern the prevalence of wild and delusive theories tending to weaken the sentiments of obedience to the laws.' Next year the great war had begun, and henceforward all Whigs and reformers were under a cloud. Roscoe and Currie protested in speech and in writing against the war, which they believed to be unnecessary and unjust. But their words had no influence over the majority of the people of Liverpool. Like the majority of people elsewhere, they had fallen into a panic. They were convinced that anyone who desired reform was capable of executing the king. They were ready to suspect anyone of plots and conspiracies to overthrow 'our glorious constitution.' They even welcomed the extraordinary series of enactments for the repression of all public discussion, which the government had persuaded itself to be

necessary. They were convinced that civilisation would be destroyed unless the French monsters were annihilated. Roscoe and Currie and their friends might protest in vain; they were swept off their feet by the frenzy of popular enthusiasm for war, and popular fear of conspirators and reformers. So great was the panic that a little society which these gentlemen had formed for the discussion of Italian literature had to be given up, owing to the popular distrust of 'secret societies.' So Liverpool settled down to a new war in a temper widely different from that in which she had entered upon any previous war, and with an amazing intolerance for all difference of view. It is true that Colonel Tarleton was still able to keep his seat in 1796; but it was only his personal popularity that saved him, and the election was marked by an acrimony and a virulence hitherto unknown. The great earthquake had begun.

The first effect of the opening of the war in Liverpool, as elsewhere, was the outbreak of a commercial panic. One of the three banks in the town had to close its doors, and the others might have followed but for the prompt action of the principal merchants, who calmed the panic by announcing their perfect confidence in the surviving banks, and their readiness to accept in payment of all bills the private notes which provincial banks were at that time permitted to issue. The corporation, too, helped to tide over the difficulty by obtaining parliamentary powers

to issue notes of its own up to the value of £300,000, on the security of the corporate estate. It was never necessary to use these powers to their full extent, and after a short time the private negotiable notes of the corporation of Liverpool were called in, having fully served their purpose of calming the commercial stress which had resulted from sudden panic.

In spite of these troubles, however, Liverpool made vigorous preparations to take her part in this, as in the preceding wars. On the invitation of the government, a deputation of merchants went up to London to consult with Mr. Pitt as to the means to be taken for the protection of the port and its trade; and once more privateering became active. Within five months of the declaration of war, sixty-seven Liverpool privateers were either at sea or ready to start, and the number was greatly increased later. At first they reaped a rich harvest, and a large number of French prizes and prisoners were brought into the port. But after a while, for the most satisfactory reasons, privateering declined. French commerce had been practically annihilated, and there was no profit to be got from privateering. Throughout this war the Liverpool privateers were never so industrious, nor was their business so profitable, as during the American War. For privateering is essentially the desperate resource of the weaker power, and is only effective against a state whose merchant vessels are able to hold the sea. Consequently

it was now the French who were most busy in this way; French privateers, swift, well-armed, and crammed with fierce and reckless men, haunted the highways of commerce, and the task of hunting them down gave employment to a large part of the British fleet. But the Liverpool vessels, though they for the most part abandoned the adventurous game of privateering and devoted themselves to ordinary trade, still had frequent opportunities of excitement and adventure, for they had to be ready at all times to deal with armed French vessels.

Of the innumerable stories of battle and heroism which the trading annals of Liverpool for these years contain, a couple of examples must suffice to illustrate the dangers which the trader had to expect to encounter. One of these stories relates the surprising adventure of the packet boat *Windsor Castle*, a tale so astounding that it is difficult to believe it. This vessel was in 1807 bound from Liverpool to the West Indies under the temporary command of a young Captain Rogers, when it was attacked by the French privateer *Le Jeune Richard*. The Frenchman had a crew of 109, the *Windsor Castle* only twenty-seven men and boys. By the first broadside the English ship lost ten men killed and wounded; but after a desperate struggle the remaining seventeen captured *Le Jeune Richard*, killing twenty-six men and taking sixty prisoners, half of whom were wounded. In the last half-hour of the fight Rogers was left with ten

unwounded men, and the final scene saw him board the privateer and charge triumphantly down its decks at the head of four men. Less dazzling than this extraordinary fight, but more credible, and perhaps equally creditable, was the adventure of the snow *Shaw* in 1808. The captain of this vessel, one Hymers, reported to his owners that he had been attacked by a French privateer much larger than the *Shaw*, and crammed with men. After a desperate fight, Captain Hymers came to the end of his ammunition; but he and all his men pulled off their stockings, and filling them with nails, scraps of iron and carpenters' tools, fired off a final volley which fortunately drove off the enemy.

Such men were well able to take care of themselves. Yet many Liverpool sailors, as in previous wars, pined in French prisons. But they were probably less numerous than the French prisoners in Liverpool. In previous wars the old Tower and the powder magazine on Brownlow Hill had been sufficient to contain all who were brought captive into the town. But in 1793 the government found it necessary to hire from the corporation the new Borough Gaol which had been built in Great Howard Street in 1786, but had not yet been used. Even this, however, was insufficient to accommodate the prisoners, who in 1799 numbered no less than 4,009. These French prisoners were indeed a feature of Liverpool during the war. Cheerful and resourceful, they acted little plays which the townsmen

went to see, and added to their comforts by the manufacture and sale of ingenious and pretty toys. One prisoner, who was released at the brief peace of Amiens in 1802, was said to have made no less than three hundred guineas by this means.

Though privateering was decaying, the press-gang was more active during this war than ever before. The *Princess*, a permanent guardship for pressed men and volunteers, lay in the river opposite the George's Dock, and the press-gang, selected from among the most fierce and unscrupulous sailors in the navy, had recognised *rendezvous* in two or three places of the town. Sailors lived, indeed, in perpetual terror for their liberty during these years: on sea their ships, if they escaped the privateers, were liable to be stopped and robbed of their crews by British warships, and when they came ashore the press-gang awaited them. Their favourite haunts, the inns in Pool Lane or South Castle Street, were dangerous, not only because of the presence of the press-gang, but because their hostesses, willing to hide the men while their money lasted, were often ready to sell them when their purses were empty. Often the sailors of incoming vessels would leap into the river as they entered the Mersey, and swim to the Cheshire shore. Here a celebrated innkeeper, romantically named Mother Redcap, whose house lay on the Liscard shore, was famous as the friend of the hunted sailor-men, and strange scenes must often have

been witnessed in her sanded kitchen, dense with smoke, and crowded with rough and fierce men. Mother Redcap had subterranean hiding-places for them, and credulous people believed that the caves in the Red Noses at New Brighton ran underground as far as her inn.

It was in the raising of troops and the organisation of volunteers that the patriotism of Liverpool especially exhibited itself during this war. In the first years of the war, when France stood alone against the world and her navy was helpless, the danger of invasion seemed remote and little was done to prepare for it. But when, in 1796, the naval forces of Holland and Spain were joined to those of France, and the main strength of the confederacy was turned against England, the danger became serious. How serious was shown in February 1797, when news reached Liverpool that a French army had landed at Fishguard, in South Wales. At once volunteers were called for, and in four days 1,000 men were enrolled and armed. Fifty guns were mounted on the fort, which still stood on the shore, near where the Prince's Dock now is; batteries were erected at the mouths of the docks and at points along the coast; vessels, mounted with guns, were moored at the mouth of the river to serve as floating batteries, and pilot boats were sent to reconnoitre for the enemy. The alarm turned out to be needless; the small force which had been landed was quickly forced to surrender.

But the impetus to the military spirit of the town was not lost. In the spring of the same year seven companies of Liverpool yeomanry were raised. In the next year, when a rebellion was threatened in Ireland, and there was reason to expect an invasion by a French army of 35,000 men, convoyed by the combined fleets of France, Spain and Holland, 2,000 volunteers were raised in Liverpool; they remained under arms until after the Peace of Amiens in 1802. Their disbandment then was short sighted, for in the next year war was recommenced on a more gigantic scale than ever: and, realising that the whole might of Napoleon was now to be turned upon England, the entire country became one vast camp of volunteers. In Liverpool volunteer forces were now raised on a larger scale than ever; at a review held in 1804 no less than 180 officers and 3686 men paraded, including a regiment of artillery from among the boatmen on the river. Not content with this, Mr. John Bolton, one of the wealthiest and most spirited of Liverpool merchants, raised and equipped at his own sole expense a regiment of 800 regulars, enlisted in the town; and the whole male population between the ages of sixteen and sixty was registered to be called out in case of need. To command all these forces Prince William, afterwards Duke of Gloucester, was sent to Liverpool and took up his quarters at St. Domingo House, Everton, where for three years Liverpool society had the unwonted luxury of a court.

The enthusiasm of the new levies was soon tested. On the night of January 2, 1804, firing was heard in the river from the guardship *Princess*. The town very promptly took the alarm—the bugles sounded, the various corps mustered in haste at the appointed *rendezvous*; the streets echoed to the clatter of half-awakened cavalry and the rattle of artillery: in short, the scenes described by Scott in a famous chapter of the *Antiquary* were enacted in full. When morning dawned it was found that the guns had only been signals for aid from the guardship, which had drifted from her moorings, but the episode had served to prove the readiness of the citizen-soldiers.

These preparations turned out to be greater than the occasion demanded; and when Trafalgar removed for ever the danger of invasion, the greater part of the forces was disbanded. From that date the fear of the landing of hostile forces ceased to haunt men. In the last ten years of the war the English navy was left in absolute command of all the seas; oversea traffic went on almost unmolested, and at first throve greatly because of the destruction of all rivalry.

But before long the diabolical ingenuity of Napoleon invented a new form of war, which inflicted greater damage upon the trade of the port than anything that had gone before. Unable to overcome English naval supremacy, Napoleon resolved to use his vast power to exclude all

English vessels from continental ports and so cut away the roots of his enemy's strength by annihilating her commerce. England replied by declaring the whole continent in a state of blockade, and by forbidding the ships of neutral powers to trade with Napoleon's subjects or allies on pain of confiscation, unless they first called at a British port, in which case they would be exposed, equally with their British rivals, to the vengeance of the great dictator.

The results of this tremendous duel were immediate and immense. English trade was not, and could not be, destroyed, for the commodities of which Liverpool was now the principal purveyor —the textiles of Manchester and the sugar and tobacco of the West Indies—had become necessities. The trade continued by means of smuggling on an immense scale. But of course its volume was much diminished; and the risks were so great that while a successful venture brought a fortune to the merchant who engaged in it, many were ruined by the seizure of their goods when the smuggling adventure was unsuccessful. The result in Liverpool was, of course, a serious sudden shrinkage in trade. In the year 1807 the trade of the port declined by one-fourth. From this came terrible distress to the poorer classes in the town, many hundreds of whom were left without employment while the prices of necessities of life rose daily. Already, in 1800, it had been necessary to raise by subscription a fund of £10,000 for the purchase of potatoes,

and of £20,000 for the purchase of other provisions for the relief of the destitute poor in Liverpool. Now the distress became so great that we find a series of recommendations being issued to all householders urging the disuse of all pastry, and the most rigid economy in potatoes and in fodder for horses, in order that the poor might be supplied.

What aggravated the evil was that the shipping of neutral powers could not be utilised. But for the action of the English government, our trade would have been diverted rather than diminished; for the products of America and the West Indies, and of the looms of Lancashire, would have been carried to neutral ports, and thence shipped to European ports. For this reason many of the leading merchants of Liverpool protested with unvarying earnestness against the British Orders in Council, though the town council still remained unflinchingly loyal. In the end these protests were successful. The Orders in Council were withdrawn, but not before they had brought on a needless and disastrous war with the United States, which did more harm to the trade of Liverpool than the navies and privateers of France had ever inflicted.

America, finding her trade crushed out of existence between the upper and the nether millstone of Napoleon's mastery on land and English supremacy by sea, after vain protests against the injustice of a system whereby her

ships were liable to seizure if they entered any European port, declared war. The immediate result to the trade of Liverpool was disastrous. The number of ships entering the port sank from 6,729 in 1810, to 4,599 in 1812. What was worse, America, precluded from peaceful trade, and unable to face the British navy in a direct struggle, threw all her strength into privateering, and displayed in this enterprise quite amazing daring and skill. Large and heavily armed American privateers haunted the West Indies, the African coasts, and even the British home waters. The *True-blooded Yankee*, one of the most daring and successful of these vessels, made the Irish Sea its beat during two years; and the scale on which its depredations were conducted may be illustrated by the fact that in one cruise of thirty-seven days it captured no less than twenty-seven vessels.

The miserable American war, out of which neither profit nor honour were to be acquired, caused more distress and aroused more exasperation in Liverpool than any preceding war. Nevertheless, the steady loyalty of the town to the party in power was strikingly exhibited in the great parliamentary election of 1812, the most exciting ever fought in Liverpool. The candidates on the Whig side were Brougham and Creevey the diarist, who was a Liverpool man; on the Tory side Canning and the old sitting member General Gascoyne; but praetically the election was a duel between Brougham

and Canning, the two most brilliant orators and most dazzling political figures of their age.

' Seldom can any electorate, in any constituency, have been the auditors of oratory of such quality as these two great men poured forth daily on the hustings, and nightly from the windows of their respective hosts' houses—Brougham in Clayton Square, Canning at the house of Sir John Gladstone in Rodney Street, where a small child, then three years old, William Ewart Gladstone, began to acquire that veneration for the golden-tongued statesman which was the governing factor of his early political life. Brougham had in his favour the fact that he had been for more than four years the pertinacious opponent of the obnoxious Orders in Council, which, thanks to his efforts, had just been repealed. The wide spread distress, not unreasonably attributed to the action of government, was his ally. He had the whole hearted support of one who had by this time become the most deeply respected man in Liverpool, William Roscoe. But the Toryism of Liverpool was so deep-rooted that Canning was returned to power by a large majority, and honoured the town (never accustomed to much distinction in its representatives) by retaining his seat until 1823.

But for all its fervent loyalty and patriotism, Liverpool longed for peace; and when peace came, after the most gigantic war history has ever seen, a war that had lasted for twenty-two years, the rejoicings were commensurate with the delight

of the townsmen. All the bells in the town rang; the streets were decorated; the ships in the river saluted; every house was illuminated, so that the glare in the sky could be seen as far as Chester; balls and dinners and displays of fireworks prolonged the festivities for nearly a week.

Liverpool might well rejoice; for not only was the French war over, but the town was at the opening of a century of almost unbroken peace. Remote struggles like the Crimean war, or the innumerable frontier campaigns which never cease in the British Empire, could have no serious influence on the amazing development of trade which presently began. The days when the seas were insecure were over; the sixty years during which every Liverpool trading vessel must be ready to fight at all times, during which war seemed almost the normal and natural state of things, had come at last to an end. The fierce privateersman, who gave such an unruly if romantic character to eighteenth century Liverpool, must now vanish, like his brother the slaver, who had gone a few years before. A new era had begun, in which these picturesque figures were soon forgotten. In the very year of the peace the first steamboat appeared in the Mersey, the harbinger of a total revolution in the sea-going trade of the port.

Yet for all the suffering it had caused, for all the violence and brutality which it had brought into the crowded streets of the town, this age of



J. T. Serres, delt.

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war had brought to Liverpool many great gains. These long and desperate fights had left England supreme on the seas, the only European power with vast interests beyond the seas, possessed of a mercantile marine so immeasurably superior to those of all the other powers that she might almost be called the single maritime power of the world, the monopolist of sea-going trade. In that practical monopoly Liverpool had an immense, and was to have a still greater, share. It was something that she had herself borne her full part in the fightings and the labours by which these gains were acquired.

CHAPTER XIV

Inventions and Commercial Advance
1760-1835

'I HAD before and often been at the principal seaports in this island, and believing that, having seen Bristol and those other towns that justly pass for great ones, I had seen everything in this great nation of navigators on which a subject should pride himself, I own I was astonished and astounded when, after passing a distant ferry and ascending a hill, I was told by my guide "All you see spread out beneath you—that immense place which stands like another Venice on the waters—which is intersected by those numerous docks—which glitters with those cheerful habitations of well-protected men—which is the busy seat of trade, and the gay scene of elegant amusements growing out of its prosperity —where there is the cheerful face of industry— where there are riches overflowing and everything which can delight a man who wishes to see the prosperity of a great community and a great empire; all this has been executed by the industry and well-disciplined management of a small number of men since you were a boy."

I must have been a stock or a stone not to be affected by such a picture.'

Such was the impression made upon the mind of the eloquent Erskine by the Liverpool of 1792. The wealth and greatness of a port 'fit to be a proud capital for any empire in the world' had 'started up like an enchanted palace, even in the memory of living men.' So dazzling, in the eyes of contemporaries, seemed the progress of the town in the second half of the eighteenth century. Yet the progress of the next generation was more rapid still, and the next generation after that surpassed its predecessors. When Erskine spoke in 1792 the population of the town was about 60,000, having more than doubled since 1760. In 1831 the population of the borough, within the old limits, had risen to 165,000; but these limits were being overflowed, and in the populous suburbs which were growing up in Everton, West Derby and Toxteth there dwelt already over 40,000 more. At the northern end of Toxteth Park the glades of the one-time forest had given place to a dense mass of mean streets, planned by Lord Sefton in 1775, as a means of obtaining a share in the prosperity of the thriving town, but not in any way under the control or oversight of the borough authorities.

The population had thus trebled itself in about thirty years, and this growth represents an inrush of population from the rural districts of a kind hitherto unknown in England. The

newcomers who came to inhabit the mean, dirty and crowded streets represented every part of the British Isles, and a writer of 1795 especially remarks 'the great influx of Irish and Welsh, of whom the majority of the inhabitants at present consists.' It was, however, after the miseries of the rebellion of 1798 that the immigration of poor Irishmen began on a large scale, continuing without cessation until it was relieved by the beginning of wholesale emigration to America. Scotsmen were not so numerous as either Irishmen or Welshmen, and it was not until 1793 that the first 'Scotch Church' (that in Oldham Street) was opened in a town that is now said to be the most Presbyterian, and therefore the most Scottish, south of the Border. Yet a surprisingly large number of Scottish names are to be found among the principal trading houses, and John Gladstone, who came to Liverpool in 1787, and had risen by the end of the century to be one of the outstanding merchant princes of the town, may be taken as an example of many Scottish youths for whom the ever-inviting southern road led to Liverpool and fortune. Many also of the most successful captains of packet-boats, privateers and slavers were Scots-men, coming especially from Galloway and the south-west of Scotland, a district which then and for long after looked to Liverpool rather than to Glasgow as its principal market.

The progress of the period is still more strikingly shown in the figures for the growth of shipping.

In 1751 Liverpool owned 220 ships of 19,175 tons, worked by 3,319 men. In 1801 the number of ships was 821 and the number of men 12,315, each having multiplied nearly fourfold; while the tonnage, 129,470, was over six times as large as fifty years before. The magnitude of the increase is yet more evident if we take the total of inward and outward tonnage, not merely that belonging to Liverpool; this is a fairer test of the progress of a port, especially in time of war. In 1751 the total tonnage of the British and foreign vessels that entered or left the port during the year amounted to 65,406; in 1791, (just before the French war) to 539,676; in 1835 to 1,768,426. The same story is told by every other set of figures. In 1780 the customs collector is reported to have exclaimed, 'How happy I should be if the customs of Liverpool amounted to over £100,000!' In that year they were worth about £80,000. But in 1823, just before the substantial reductions in duties made by Huskisson, they brought in £1,808,402.

One necessary and immediate result of this immense growth was a steady expansion of the dock system, which, until 1825, continued to be owned and directed by the Town Council. In 1760 the only docks existing were the Old Dock (on the site of the present day Custom-house) with its neighbouring tidal basin, and the Salthouse Dock, opened in 1753. The total area of these two docks amounted to not much more than eight acres. But during the age of war—the sixty

years from 1756 to 1815—four new docks were opened, with an area (excluding tidal basins) of over twenty-one acres. When peace came, progress was still more rapid, and the twenty years from 1815 to 1835 saw the opening of eight new docks, with an area of over forty-five acres. Thus, in the period covered by this chapter, the dock area of the port had multiplied nine times, rising from eight acres to seventy-two acres, in spite of the fact that the first of the series, the Old Dock, was closed in 1826.

This is an extraordinary development to have been achieved largely during the strain of almost unceasing and world-wide wars. As we have seen in the last chapter, these wars aided rather than retarded the growth of Liverpool's commerce by destroying foreign rivalry and giving to the traders of Liverpool a securer hold on the trade of all lands beyond the Atlantic. But the wars in themselves are wholly inadequate to explain this expansion.

Nor did the industries of Liverpool itself bear any appreciable part in it. Some of them, indeed, underwent a serious decline during these years. The great pottery business was steadily decaying, most of the Liverpool workmen in the finer kinds of china having migrated to Staffordshire, whence they were brought in large numbers on coaches to vote at parliamentary elections. In 1796, indeed, the large Herculaneum pottery works were opened in Toxteth Park, on the site of the dock to which they bequeath their name. But the enterprise was never

very successful. Shipbuilding was at its height during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and the yards to north and south of the docks, famous for the slaving clippers which they turned out, were employed between 1778 and 1811 for the building of no less than twenty-one vessels of various types for the royal navy.* But from that time the shipbuilding industry, for undiscoverable reasons, slowly decayed. This period also saw the rise and fall of a special industry—the whale fishery and the oil refineries based upon it. It was in 1764 that the Greenland whale fishery began, with three vessels. It reached its height in 1788, when twenty-one ships of 6,485 tons left Liverpool for Greenland; but between 1810 and 1816 there were only two whalers belonging to the port, and in 1823 the last survivor made its last voyage. While it continued, this fishery gave employment to a large oil refining factory at the bottom of Greenland Street, beside the Queen's Dock. The herring fishery also gave a good deal of employment; several curing houses existed in the town, at work for the export trade to the Mediterranean. But this branch of industry had been at its height about the year 1770; it gradually deserted the port, to be concentrated at the east coast ports, and had entirely vanished by 1835. There were two or three iron-foundries, but they could not stand the competition of the coal-field towns

* During this period every tree on Lord Sefton's estates was felled.

when coal began to be used for smelting. Two or three cotton mills also were started during these years, but they failed, as for some unknown reason the same industry has always failed here. Sugar-baking and rope-making, the earliest of Liverpool industries, were still prosperous, but apart from these perhaps the only really thriving industry of Liverpool was watchmaking, which employed nearly 2,000 hands about the year 1800, and had so high a reputation that there was a considerable export of watch movements to America and even to Geneva. At that date Liverpool produced on the average 150 watches every week.

But these minor industries, most of them ephemeral and unsuccessful, do not help to explain the immense advance of the port. The real cause was that this age, besides being the age of titanic wars, was the great age of engineering triumphs and mechanical inventions. It was the age of the triumph of mechanism, of coal, and of steam, which, between them, were to transform the face of England. The great wars tended, perhaps, to retard the portentous results of the revolution which these new forces were bringing about, and the wars certainly accentuated the bitterness of distress which was the inevitable result of a sudden transformation in the economic organisation of society. But the wars also had the effect of giving to England almost a complete monopoly of their advantages. She alone enjoyed domestic peace, she alone

was secure from the devastations of invading armies; and thus encouraged, she established that industrial ascendancy which even a century has not overthrown. No town in all England profited more directly from this vast revolution than Liverpool, for Liverpool was the natural exporting centre for the wide district which it most immediately affected.

It is no part of our concern in this narrative to repeat in any detail the often-told story of the series of great inventions which distinguished this period. But its principal aspects must be briefly noted, because they supply the explanation of Liverpool's amazing progress. The most important of these inventions were those by which machinery was applied to the processes of textile manufacture. Hitherto the rough woollens of Yorkshire, or the mixed woollen, linen and cotton fabrics of Lancashire, had been spun by the labour of women on the pre-historic wheel, and woven on the hand-looms of cottagers. But the hand-labour of the woman at the spinning wheel could not produce from the fragile staple of cotton a yarn fine enough to form the weft of cloth, so that a linen weft always had to be combined with a cotton warp; while it was impossible for the spinner to produce yarn fast enough to keep the weaver employed. Between 1767 and 1780 the successive inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright and Crompton completely changed all this. Yarn could be spun by their machines so fine that linen yarn need no longer be used;

so cheaply that the demand for it multiplied amazingly; and so abundantly that the weaver could no longer keep pace with the supply of yarn. Then Cartwright invented the power loom, which enabled one man to weave as much as ten, and centred the industry where water power could be got. And finally Watt's supreme invention, the application of steam to machinery, brought the culmination of the change. Factories rose like mushrooms wherever coal could be cheaply got, especially on the Lancashire coalfield whose moist climate was favourable for spinning.

The woollen industry profited from these inventions almost equally with the cotton industry, and Yorkshire, possessing coal, swiftly leaped ahead of its old rivals in the south. A little earlier, the long-sought mode of smelting iron by means of coal instead of wood was discovered by Smeaton; the British iron trade, which was decaying because wood was becoming scanty, became suddenly a hundred-fold more active, and the Western Midlands, like Lancashire, became busy and populous. To this period, also, belong those great improvements in the manufacture of pottery and glass which brought sudden wealth to Staffordshire and South Lancashire.

In every industry the last forty years of the eighteenth century formed the beginning of a new era. In every industry easy access to coal became supremely important. It is the beginning of the Age of Coal, and all those districts beneath whose soil coal lay hidden festered into hideous

and swarming towns. In a single generation the balance of wealth and population passed from the south of England to the north and the western midlands, which had hitherto formed much the less important half of the country. The products of these regions henceforth constitute the principal sources of English wealth, and for the greater part of them Liverpool was the exporting centre and the market for raw materials. Nearly the whole area within which these astounding activities were being established lay within a hundred miles of her harbour; and there was no port which could seriously rival her in handling their products. Thus, while the great wars were driving the foreign rivals of Liverpool from the seas, the great inventions were turning her into the chief distributing centre of a new Industrial England.

But there were other developments, going on side by side with these, which forwarded and aided them, and which had an almost equally profound influence on the progress of Liverpool. The first of these was the beginning of the growth of the United States of America, destined soon to replace Africa and the West Indies as the principal foreign markets for English commodities, and the principal sources of supply for raw materials. The development of America came in time to compensate Liverpool for the loss of the African slave trade, abolished in 1807. It was only in the last years of the eighteenth century that companies of emigrants from New England and

the Southern States began to pour through the hitherto seldom penetrated gorges of the Alleghanies, and to settle on the prairies of Kentucky and Tennessee, and in the rich cornlands of Ohio and western New York.

A still more remarkable expansion was the direct outcome of the Napoleonic wars. In the year 1803 Napoleon, desirous of making a friend of the young western nation and at the same time striking a blow at the colonial ambitions of England, sold to the United States the French colony of Louisiana, then regarded as including the greater part of the uninhabited Mississippi valley. The Louisiana purchase, whose centenary was celebrated only the other day by the great exposition of St. Louis, threw open to the rising energy of the Americans the vast and fertile lands which have since become the greatest cotton-producing area in the world. Thus, just at the time when mechanical inventions were producing in England an unparalleled demand for raw cotton, an immense new field of supply was thrown open, which quickly displaced all the earlier fields.

To take advantage of these opportunities a great tide of emigration began to pour over the Atlantic, chiefly from England, driven forth by the suffering caused by the combination of a tremendous war with the distresses and disturbances of the industrial revolution. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century emigration to America had been on a comparatively small scale; now

there began to pour into the Land of Promise that flood of the poor and distressed of the Old World which has continued in ever increasing volume from that day to this. These emigrants provided in abundance the labour which was necessary to develope the resources disclosed by the settlement or purchase of the Middle West.

And soon an enlightened public enterprise provided a new and easy road from these lands to the shores of the Atlantic. In 1825 the great Erie canal was opened. This canal joined the majestic waters of the Hudson to the line of the great lakes, and brought down to the harbour of New York the larger share of the vast products of the central plain. Hitherto New York had been a port of secondary importance; as late as 1752 only one Liverpool ship regularly plied to it. But, before the end of our period, the greatest highway of the world's commerce had come to be the track that a constant succession of vessels followed between Liverpool and New York. In other words, the principal feature of the trade of modern Liverpool, its intimate connexion with New York, was the creation of the period under review.

This period witnessed also the opening to Liverpool merchants of markets hitherto closed to them by legislative enactment. Of these the greatest was the trade of the Far East. Before 1813 no Liverpool vessel had ventured round the Cape of Good Hope, because ever since 1600 English trade with the East had been a strictly

protected monopoly of the East India Company, whose headquarters were in London. But the great age of war had seen that company transformed from a mere trading organisation into the controlling power of the most populous empire ever ruled by a European people: the conquest of India began with Clive in 1757, and by the close of the governorship of Wellesley in 1804, less than fifty years later, the East India Company had become the supreme power of India. Under these circumstances the maintenance of a trade monopoly in the hands of the ruling company had become dangerous and impossible. The trade to India was therefore thrown open to all English merchants in 1813; and though the company still retained for a while the monopoly of Chinese trade, that too was thrown open in 1833. Liverpool merchants were prompt to take advantage of the new opening, which afforded an unrivalled market for the cotton goods of Lancashire, as well as a new source of supply for raw cotton. In March 1814 Mr. John Gladstone sent out the *Kingsmill*, the first Liverpool vessel to trade with India; but so great a host of ships followed it that by the close of our period India was already becoming the next most important field for Liverpool trade after the United States.

Another vast market, hitherto artificially restricted, was also thrown open in these years, in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies of Central and South America. So long as Portugal

remained effectively mistress of Brazil, and Spain of the rest of these lands, English trade was almost completely excluded by the deliberate policy of the home governments. But the wars of the French Revolution put an end to this. When Napoleon made himself master of Spain and Portugal, the Portuguese royal house exiled itself to Brazil, and threw open its markets to its loyal English allies; while the Spanish colonies refused to acknowledge the new government of Spain, and, left to their own devices, abandoned those restrictions on foreign trade which had never been popular in the colonies themselves. On the overthrow of Napoleon and the re-establishment of the legitimate line, the colonies, having tasted the sweets of independence, refused to return to their allegiance. Beyond doubt their chief motive was a sense of the advantage they had derived from an open trade.

Liverpool naturally took a deep interest in the long struggle between Spain and her revolted colonies. In spite of her Toryism, which led her to be generally unsympathetic with revolting peoples, all her sympathies were on the side of the rebels, because her interests were engaged with them. The merchants and even the Town Council sent up addresses to government urging that England should recognise the independence of the South American States, and it is more than a mere coincidence that the statesman who finally took that step in 1825 was Canning, who had so long been member for Liverpool, and knew better

than most of his colleagues how deeply English commercial interests were involved. From that date English commerce with South America advanced with great rapidity; and, from the first, Liverpool was pre-eminently the centre for the South American trade.

Expanding manufactures at home and expanding markets abroad are not the only causes of the growth of Liverpool in this age; for it was in this age that the engineer came to the aid of the merchant, and brought him into easy communication with the industrial districts from which he derived his goods for export.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century Liverpool had been seriously hampered by the difficulties of communication between her remote and isolated harbour and the seats of the principal English manufactures. Her anxiety to overcome these natural obstacles to commerce had been exhibited in the numerous projects for deepening the various short and shallow streams near the Mersey estuary which have been already described; but these cuts, though they were of great service in their time, were quite inadequate for the gigantic needs of the new age, for none of them extended for more than thirty miles from the Mersey. Even in the last quarter of the eighteenth century goods were carried to and from Manchester largely on horseback. The seventy packhorses which in 1788 daily started for Manchester from a single inn in Dale Street must have been picturesque enough as a spectacle, but

exceedingly unsatisfactory as well as expensive as a means of transport. The final conquest of these difficulties by the establishment of cheap and effective communications with all parts of the country is not the least important aspect of the progress of these years.

The first stage in the process was marked by the creation of canals, which was pushed forward with immense activity during the second half of the eighteenth century. The possibilities of canal transport had already been disclosed by the last and boldest of the river-deepening projects, that of the Sankey brook from Wigan to the Mersey, which was opened in 1755. It was the success with which Brindley had carried out this bold scheme which encouraged the Duke of Bridgewater to provide that brilliant engineer with the means for carrying out a still more daring enterprise, that of the first great English canal, from Liverpool to Manchester. The Bridgewater canal, commenced in 1758, was opened in 1776, and afforded a startling demonstration of the superiority of the new means of transport. It had cost 40s. a ton to transport goods from Liverpool to Manchester by land, and 12s. by the deepened channel of the Irwell. By the new canal it cost only 6s. a ton.

The immediate result was an immense outburst of energy in the creation of canals, and before the end of our period 2,600 miles of navigable canals had been constructed in England, opening up every part of the country. In no

district was the work more actively pursued than in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, whose merchants provided much of the funds for many of these enterprises. The principal canals which more immediately affected the prosperity of Liverpool were the Grand Trunk or Trent and Mersey canal, begun in 1765; the Mersey and Calder canal, first projected in 1766, which gave direct water-communication between Liverpool and Hull; the Leeds and Liverpool canal, begun in 1767; the Mersey and Severn canal, begun in 1792; and the Grand Junction canal, which linked up the whole northern canal system with the southern system and the Thames, giving through communication between Liverpool and London. But these are only the chief of a whole series of schemes carried out in these years. In them all Liverpool was profoundly interested, as is shown by the fact that the Town Council, as each new proposal came forward, gave it the most hearty support. For the Trent and Mersey scheme, in 1765, the Council wrote to ask every member of parliament in Lancashire and Cheshire for his vote and interest, and in addition granted £200 for the preliminary parliamentary expenses. Similar grants were several times repeated, notably for the Leeds and Liverpool canal. The Town Council might well give encouragement and aid to enterprises which brought into Liverpool a continual stream of commodities for export, and turned her into the great distributing centre for the new manufacturing districts of England.

But the creation of canals, important as it was, (and perhaps no single generation had seen so much done for the improvement of communications since the Romans drove their great roads through the forests and marshes of Britain), nevertheless sinks into comparative unimportance in contrast with another development which began just before the close of the period. In 1830 the first railway in the world was opened, and it was quite in accord with the new importance of these centres, and with the energy which both of them had displayed in removing the natural obstacles to the growth of their trade, that the two towns which this railway linked were Liverpool and Manchester. No elaboration is necessary to show how immense an influence was exercised by the development thus commenced upon the growth of the trade of Liverpool. While England scoffed, Liverpool took up the dream of Stephenson with enthusiasm; and the last step was thus taken in the conquest of the natural obstacles which had so long prevented the port from tapping the trade of the greater part of England.

Even before the railway, the steamboat had made its appearance in the harbour soon to be known as the peculiar home of racing leviathans. It was in 1815 that the first steamboats—already known on the Hudson and on the Clyde—made their appearance in the Mersey. They were at first used for river traffic between Liverpool and Runcorn. In 1819 the first steamboat to cross the Atlantic reached Liverpool on its way from

New York to St. Petersburg, where it was to be offered as a present to the Emperor of Russia. The early steps in the application of steam to navigation were slow; but in 1835, at the close of the period covered by this chapter, its enormous future consequences were already clear.

Even before steam had been used to any considerable extent for sea-going traffic, there was one use to which it was turned which brought home its value very intimately to Liverpool shipowners. Mr. Gladstone, in his reminiscences of his boyhood, has recalled, as the most picturesque sight which Liverpool had to offer, the swarm of white-winged vessels which raised their sails simultaneously to the winds in a harbour clearance, after a period of steady north-west winds. Picturesque the sight must have been, but the delays which made it possible must have been costly and exasperating to the shipowner. There is a story of two vessels, before the days of steam, which started simultaneously from the Mersey to the West Indies. One got out of the river, but before her consort could follow, the wind veered round to the north-west, penning her in; and continued steadily for so long that the first vessel, returning home from her distant cruise, found her consort still waiting for a favourable wind. Even before the application of steam to sea-going vessels, the humble tug-boat had put an end to all such exasperations.

It is, then, in a confluence of great movements that we find the explanation of the stupendous

development of Liverpool during the period from 1760 to 1835. The invention of machinery for the textile industries; the use of coal for the smelting of iron; the application of steam to machines; the concentration of most of the great English industries within a radius of a hundred miles from the Mersey; the opening of the markets of India and Spanish America; the vast and rapid growth of America; the concentration of its principal trade in the great port of New York; the opening up of the whole of England, as never before, by means first of roads and canals, and later of railways: these are the secrets of the majestic progress of Liverpool. Watching her growth, we seem to feel the pulse of England as she passed through the greatest social and economic transformation of which her history has any record.

It is out of the question to attempt any analysis of the effect of these changes upon the various branches of Liverpool's trade, for these were now so numerous that henceforth any detailed treatment of them must be impossible. But on one branch of this vast commerce—a branch which then became, and has ever since remained, the premier trade of Liverpool—something ought to be said.

The cotton trade is of much more recent origin than is generally supposed. Manchester did not begin to make cotton goods until late in the seventeenth century; and the raw material then came to her from the East, particularly from Smyrna, and was shipped by way of London. Liverpool probably began to bring cotton from the West

Indies as soon as she got effective control of that line of trade in the early eighteenth century, but the amount of her imports can have been but small, since the first consignment of which any record remains is one of twenty-five bags from Jamaica in 1758. But the import expanded steadily, and in 1770, 5,521 bags were imported from the West Indies. The American states had not then begun seriously to produce cotton for export, for in the same year the total American import to Liverpool was three bales from New York, four bags from Virginia, and three barrels from South Carolina. So slowly did the trade develope that in 1784 a custom house officer is said to have seized eight bags of cotton brought by an American ship, in the belief that cotton was not grown in America, and that its importation was a breach of the Navigation Acts, which only allowed foreign vessels to import the commodities of the country from which they came.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, America had begun to throw herself with vigour into the production of cotton, to meet the increased demand of Lancashire; by 1812 it had become the principal source of supply, so that the interruption of the supply was one of the principal causes of the unpopularity of the American war which broke out in that year. By 1835 the produce of the American cotton fields had completely dwarfed that of all the other cotton-producing countries, though the yield of Brazil and of India had greatly increased. The West Indies were

beaten out of the field, and the Liverpool cotton market had already assumed something like its modern form.

A trade so vast and so rapidly growing as that of Liverpool now was, found itself seriously hampered by being placed under a system of regulation and control which descended from the Middle Ages. The ancient charters of the borough gave almost unlimited powers of trade regulation into the hands of the freemen ; but the freemen had now come to be a small privileged minority of the inhabitants of the town, a minority from which most of the principal merchants were excluded. And for some centuries all the powers of the freemen had been exercised by the close self-electing Town Council of forty-one members, which was often out of touch with the sentiments of its subjects.

The Town Council administered the corporate estate, now immensely valuable, and collected the ancient traditional town dues which were payable on all merchandise brought into the port by others than freemen. The Town Council was the sole authority for regulating the facilities for trade, and in that capacity it not only organised the markets, but was responsible for the erection of all the earlier docks, and the dock-dues formed, during the eighteenth century, a regular part of its revenue.

As the dock estate grew in importance (dock-dues rose from £23,380 in 1800 to nearly £200,000 in 1835) the administration of its affairs was placed

in the hands of a special dock committee of the Town Council, which had a separate budget; but the Council reserved the power of over-riding the proceedings of this committee, or of spending its income; thus we find the Council voting £2,000 from its own income and £1,000 from the dock funds towards the fortification of the town during the great war. This system, however, was eminently unsatisfactory to the merchants using the docks, who asserted that the council was quite incompetent to administer an estate which required special and expert knowledge. In 1825, therefore, a compromise was made, and an act of parliament was obtained constituting a new docks committee, to consist of thirteen members of the Council and eight merchant ratepayers, elected by those who used the docks. The Council thus retained a clear working majority, and it reserved also the power of confirming or referring back the proceedings of the dock committee.

The result of this arrangement was unceasing friction. The merchant members of the committee generally formed a solid minority in opposition. They resented their position profoundly, and probably greatly exaggerated the evil results of the system. But, at any rate, the mercantile community was brought into a state of revolt against the powers exercised by the Town Council; and when, after the Reform Bill of 1832, a commission was sent to enquire into the working of the close corporations all over the

country, the mercantile community of Liverpool appeared among the most vigorous impugners of the old system, and the maladministration of the dock estate constituted the principal ground of their attack.

Another ancient usage which aroused deep resentment was that of charging town dues on non-freemen, and exempting freemen from them. In 1830 a number of the principal merchants of the town decided to bring this question to an issue, and declined to pay their dues. The question was tried in the law courts. But though the trial was prolonged, the award ultimately went in favour of the Council, for there could be no doubt that legally and historically freemen were exempt, and all others were bound to pay.

This was an example of the survival of traditional rights and usages into an age for which they were not suited. The resentment which the whole system caused was the principal reason why, for a time, Liverpool ceased to be Tory, and elected to parliament members who were pledged to vote for reform. The two members for this most Tory of towns voted for the Reform Bill of 1832, which threw open the parliamentary franchise to all qualified residents as well as to freemen, and for this purpose included within the limits of the borough the outlying suburbs which had grown up in Everton, Kirkdale, Toxteth and the part of West Derby nearest to Liverpool.

This was the first serious invasion of the privileges of the freemen. But its inevitable result was a

further and more important attack. In the next year a Royal Commission set to work to investigate the constitution and proceedings of the close corporations which ruled nearly every borough of England. Even where, as in Liverpool, no direct evidence of corruption was found, it was abundantly clear that the system was anomalous and unsatisfactory, and that (especially in prosperous and growing towns) the majority of the leading inhabitants resented the arbitrary and irresponsible power which the Town Councils exercised. In Liverpool the feeling was so strong that the Town Council itself recognised the inevitability of a change, and declined to take part in any opposition to the bill which the Whig government introduced for the reform of municipal corporations.

The Municipal Reform Act, passed in 1835, abolished the close corporation which had existed since 1580, replaced it by an elected Council, enlarged the boundaries of the borough, and destroyed nearly all the special privileges of the ancient body of freemen. The change came none too soon, and it marks the beginning of a new era. Trade had been seriously hampered by the old system, and the town had suffered in many ways, as we shall see in the next chapter, from the fact that its ruling body was out of touch with its subjects, took a curiously narrow view of its responsibilities, and had made no attempt to cope with the terrible problems which a sudden rush of wealth and of population had brought.

Nevertheless, in fairness to the old Council, it ought to be recognised that, though it left undone much that a modern view regards as included among the primary duties of such a body, it performed with exemplary fidelity, and on the whole with conspicuous success, the functions which it did undertake. Elsewhere close corporations were a byword for corruption; here no shadow of suspicion ever rested upon the Council of having used their control of vast resources for improper purposes or for private advantage. Elsewhere members of Town Councils unblushingly divided among themselves the spoil of the town; here the most serious charge which could be brought by the enemies of the Council at the great enquiry of 1833 was that money had been improperly spent in providing a portrait of one of the members of the Council who had sat for sixty years, or on a statue of Canning, the greatest man who has ever honoured Liverpool by representing it in parliament. Streets had been widened, public buildings and churches erected, and a whole system of docks created without the imposition of a penny of rates upon the inhabitants of the town.

This had been made possible by the immense increase during the previous century in the value of the estate administered by the corporation, and the funds for public improvements had been obtained by loans raised on the security of that estate. More than half of the area of the original township and parish of Liverpool was the property

of the corporation, thanks to the obscure annexations of the burgesses of the middle ages. The Council made some mistakes in the administration of these lands; it sold large blocks which ought to have been retained, when it might, by judicious purchases, have gradually brought the soil on which the city is built completely into the city's ownership. On the whole, however, the corporation estate was well administered; and if the reformed Council, which came into office in 1835, was faced by many grave problems of city government which had largely arisen through the neglect of its predecessor to perform the primary functions of administration, at least it was aided in its task by the possession of an estate of such magnitude that it yields to-day no less than £106,000 per annum—far more than the corporate estate of any other English provincial borough.

CHAPTER XV

Civilisation in Liverpool, 1760-1835

WE have traced the course of Liverpool's strenuous public activity and analysed the causes of her astonishing progress, during these years when her greatness was established. It remains to enquire how these developments had affected the life of the community; how far the growing town had succeeded in turning itself into a place in which, apart from money-making, it was good for a man to dwell; how far she had cherished and stimulated among her citizens those higher interests and aspirations, towards which money-making is only a means.

On this side it must be confessed that the investigator finds little fuel for enthusiasm. When Erskine, in the exuberance of his rhetoric, spoke of Liverpool as 'fit to be the proud capital of any empire,' he can have been thinking only of her size, her wealth and the energy of her merchants. In all other requirements of a capital city she was lacking, and she would have been a very dangerous model and guide for a whole nation to look up to.

For the vast commerce which had so suddenly come to the town had not brought civilisation in its train. Great wealth had come; but only to the few, and these it intoxicated and engrossed. The getting of money seemed to be the only interest of the town: *cives, cives, quaerenda pecunia primum est: virtus post nummos* was the Horatian motto which the caustic describer of Liverpool in 1795 thought appropriate for his title page. But the great majority of the inhabitants had little share of this golden shower. They dwelt in conditions of sordid and degrading misery, stunted and brutalised. All the new towns of the north which had been created by the industrial revolution were hideous enough; but it is hard to believe that any of them can have been more dreadful than Liverpool. The indifference of most of the wealthy to the condition of the degraded wretches who helped to earn their wealth was perhaps the worst feature of the town, worse even than the general indifference to everything but money-making. Yet this age saw the birth of new ideals, and was illuminated by the labours of many noble and aspiring men.

Even the external aspect of the town was singularly unprepossessing. When Samuel Curwen, an American loyalist exile, visited Liverpool in 1780, he found the 'streets long, narrow, crooked and dirty. . . . We scarcely saw a well-dressed person. . . . The whole complexion of the place was nautical, and so infinitely below all our expectations that naught but the

thoughts of the few hours we had to pass here rendered it tolerable.' The principal streets, before 1786, were not more than six yards wide, and the paving was exceedingly rough, 'the remark of all strangers.'

In the earlier part of the period the houses which faced upon the old streets were of infinite variety of size and form, for rich and poor lived together, and the wealthiest merchants did not disdain to live above their cellar warehouses, the yawning openings to which formed a serious danger to foot passengers. Houses of this type may still be seen in Duke Street and Hanover Street, but in the eighteenth century merchants dwelt also in Water Street, Oldhall Street, and Lord Street. Towards the end of the century, however, they began to desert the old houses, and to betake themselves to residences further afield. Rodney Street was well built up by the end of the eighteenth century, Mr. John Gladstone being established in his fine house before 1798; St. Anne Street contained many good houses; and in 1801 the Mosslake fields began to be laid out, with Bedford Street, Chatham Street, Abercromby and Falkner Squares. The country mansions of merchant princes were to be found dotting the country side, scattered over Everton Hill, frequent in the southern part of Toxteth Park, and even as far afield as Childwall and Allerton.

At the same time new districts rose with mushroom rapidity for the accommodation of the poorer

inhabitants. No regulations existed to ensure that these houses should be healthy and substantial. They were erected back to back, with no proper provision for air and light, and no adequate sanitation; and they were often so shoddily built that in 1823 a violent wind blew many of them down, and for the first time awoke the council to the necessity of taking precautions. Thus arose those terrible slum areas to the north and south of the town, with which the municipal government has been striving ever since.

In the old quarter of the town the houses deserted by the merchants or thriving tradesmen came to be crowded by a swarming multitude of poor people. The cellars once used as warehouses became the homes of whole families. Even the cellars of houses inhabited by well-to-do tradesmen were commonly let out as dwellings. In 1790 a careful survey of the town showed that there were 8,148 inhabited houses, of which 1,728 had inhabited cellars. In these appalling abodes no less than 6,780 persons dwelt, being almost four persons to every cellar, and considerably more than one-ninth of the total population of the town. Imagination quails before the picture of squalid misery suggested by these figures. And inevitably a population living in such conditions was unclean and unhealthy. In 1823 no less than 31,500 cases were treated in the dispensaries and the infirmary, that is to say almost one in four of the population; and this leaves out of account all who consulted private

medical men, and all the residents in the work-house.

The misery of this wretched population was perpetuated and increased by the extraordinary number of licensed houses which the slackness of the magistrates had allowed to grow up. In 1795 a cynical observer, who has left us an invaluable picture of the Liverpool of his day, calculated that every seventh house in the town was open for the sale of liquor: 'the devotion of the lower order of people,' he goes on, 'to their Bacchanalian orgies is such as to give employment to thirty-seven large and extensive ale breweries,' while rum was brought very cheaply and in large quantities from the West Indies. So serious was the licensing problem that even the Town Council, not usually a reforming body, thought it necessary in 1772 to pass a resolution urging the magistrates to reduce the number of public houses, especially round the docks, and pointing out 'the wickedness and licentiousness' which were due to them.

A population so degraded and so drink-sodden, reinforced by the rough and desperate privateersmen and slavers, was inevitably turbulent and unruly. The streets of Liverpool were constantly the scenes of riots and open fights, especially in the days of the press-gang; at night they were very unsafe. For there was no adequate police. In the day time there was none at all; at night a few old and feeble watchmen paraded the streets crying the hours as they passed, or dozed in their

sentry boxes, which it was a favourite prank to overturn with the watchman inside. In 1811 the Town Council resolved to reorganise the police. It did so by dividing the borough into seven districts, to each of which one head constable at 25s. a week, and two assistants at 21s. a week, were allotted: being a total force of twenty-one police for a population of nearly 100,000. Outside of the area of the borough, in the populous suburbs of Everton and Toxteth, the state of things was still worse. There was in these districts practically no controlling authority at all, and the inhabitants refused to submit to a rate for providing themselves with a police force. Though the wealthy residents in the southern parts of Toxteth Park subscribed a few guineas per annum to maintain a patrol, the crowded streets at the north end of Toxteth Park were unsafe to traverse, and the most surprising outrages passed entirely unpunished.

The turbulence of Liverpool was perhaps most strikingly exhibited at the parliamentary elections, which were positive orgies of anarchy. And, as a majority of the freemen in this period belonged to the poorer class, whose poverty made bribery hard to resist, Liverpool became notorious for its corruption. The estimated value of each vote early in the nineteenth century was £20, and the most honest of the freemen regarded this payment as their right. Besides these payments in money, strong drink flowed like water during a contest, and the candidates were expected to

provide mammoth feasts for their supporters, at which misrule reigned supreme. The Liverpool election of 1830 was perhaps the most flagrantly corrupt, on both sides, that had ever been fought in English politics. Even the Reform Act of 1832 did not put an end to the evil; at the next election the corruption was so bad that it was proposed to disfranchise all the freemen, who had been allowed to retain their votes whether they had the property qualification laid down by the bill or not. Though the proposal was not carried, it shows that it was from among the freemen that the corruption proceeded.

With so large a population living on the verge of penury, and in conditions which encouraged thriftlessness, it is to be expected that the number of paupers would be great, and the workhouse always full. In 1794, before the distresses of the French war were very seriously felt, and when Liverpool's prosperity was advancing swiftly, one out of every forty inhabitants of the town was in the workhouse, and at some later dates the proportion was still higher.

Yet on the whole the Poor Law was well administered during this period, perhaps better administered in Liverpool than anywhere else in England. As in other places, the supreme control of Poor Law administration was vested in the whole body of ratepayers. At the annual Easter vestry meeting, held in St. Nicholas' church, the ratepayers elected annually the

churchwardens and overseers, who were, in the eyes of the law, solely responsible for the administration of the poor rates. But so large a body was little competent to direct difficult and complicated business, or to maintain a proper oversight over the conduct of their officials. In many towns, as in Manchester, the result was hopeless confusion and corruption; the vestry meetings were packed with riotous supporters of the overseers, who were annually re-elected, and made large profits out of their unchecked control of the public funds. In Liverpool these evils were avoided by the development of a select committee which controlled the overseers and annually presented full reports to the vestry. During the troublous period of the French war the work of this admirable committee was largely inspired by Dr. Currie, the friend of Roscoe; and under his guidance Liverpool earned the reputation of being the model urban parish.

Unfortunately, however, the powers exercised by the committee were extra-legal. The overseers could disregard them if they liked, and in 1819 and the following years a Mr. Denison, being elected overseer, boldly overrode the committee, launched upon reckless expenditure, gave splendid dinners out of the rates, and generally threw things into confusion. On the whole, however, the administration of the Poor Law, which in Liverpool presented complexities greater than existed in most other places, was the one bright spot in the direction of local public affairs.

But if the workhouse was well managed, this was far from being the case with the prisons, which presented perhaps the most terrible spectaeles then to be seen even in barbarous Liverpool. With a population such as we have described, it was inevitable that the prisons should always have been well filled. There were three prisons in the town, all of which have been described in detail by the prison reformers, John Howard and Joseph Neild. The principal prison was the old Tower at the bottom of Water Street, where felons were indiscriminately kept along with the miserable debtors, whom the law in that age condemned to a confinement that deprived them of all chance of clearing themselves. The Tower contained seven small underground dungeons, each about six feet square, lighted and ventilated only by holes in the doors. In each of these three prisoners were lodged. A larger and better room contained, in 1803, twelve prisoners, men and women, who were locked in together. Debtors were lodged in one of the towers, and generously provided with straw, and permitted to hang out a bag for the alms of passers by; if they could afford it, they might sleep two in a bed, for one shilling a week apiece. A courtyard, once Lord Derby's garden, served for exercise for all the prisoners.

Besides the Tower, there was a bridewell, a small brick building on the north side of the George's Dock. It is described as 'damp and offensive,' 'totally dark and unventilated.' It was

replaced in 1804 by a new bridewell in Chapel Street. Lastly, there was a House of Correction for vagrants and disorderly persons in Brownlow Hill, beside the workhouse. It was the practice in this place to hold all the women prisoners under a pump in the courtyard once a week in the presence of the men. All these noisome places of confinement had vanished before the end of the period, being replaced in 1811 by a new model prison in Great Howard Street, which had been built in 1786, but employed for the confinement of French prisoners.

The Tower being now empty, it was demolished in 1819 to permit the widening of Water Street. Thus vanished the last remaining relic of mediaeval Liverpool; for the old church of St. Nicholas had been rebuilt in the eighteenth century, and in 1810 even the eighteenth-century spire had fallen and been replaced.

Though the Town Council made no attempt to alleviate or remove the conditions of sordid misery in which so many of the inhabitants of the town dwelt, they paid a good deal of attention during this period to the beautifying of the central streets and public buildings. The Town Hall, gutted by a fire on the 18th of January, 1795, was enlarged and very successfully reconstructed. Behind it the huddled and unsavoury alleys which occupied the site of the modern exchange, were demolished; and in the open space thus created there was erected a splendid monument to Lord Nelson, the result of a subscription that followed

Trafalgar, and the first public monument erected in Liverpool. Round it there rose a spacious quadrangular exchange, which was opened in 1808, but served the needs of the town's commerce only for fifty years, being replaced in 1858 by the modern exchange.

At the other end of Castle Street, the Old Dock, after more than a century's service, was filled in in 1826, and on its site was erected a fine pillared and domed Custom-house, from the designs of Mr. John Foster, the town surveyor; the site, and a substantial part of the cost, being provided by the Council, while the remainder was contributed by government.

The narrow and tortuous streets began to be systematically improved. The first Improvement Act for Liverpool was obtained in 1785, and its immediate result was the widening of Castle Street, Dale Street and Water Street. To Castle Street, always Liverpool's premier thoroughfare, special attention was given, and builders were required to conform to an uniform design in erecting houses on the west side. This is almost the only case in which the Town Council made any attempt to enforce dignity of design upon private builders. These changes made Castle Street, we are told, as 'elegant a street as there is in any town in England,' but the same observer continues that no care had been taken to secure a good vista either here or elsewhere: 'a general prospect of cabbages and potatoes' (in the market at the top of James Street) was, according to this caustic

critic, the end of the view from the Town Hall. With these reforms began 'a rage of improvement and a rapid increase of streets, squares, and erections of useful and ornamental buildings.' In 1825 further powers were obtained by a new Improvement Act, under which many more streets were widened.

But neither in 1785 nor in 1825, nor at any later date, did the Town Council make any attempt to control the character or direction of the new streets which were being created with such rapidity during this age of growth, so as to make the town healthy or beautiful. A glorious opportunity was thus lost. For Liverpool, throned on her long range of hill, and looking over a magnificent estuary to the distant hills of Wales, might easily have been made one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, if due care had been taken to ensure that the streets running down the hill should command uninterrupted vistas. The fact that in modern Liverpool these fine possible prospects do not anywhere refresh the vision of the treader of pavements must be attributed above all to the lack of foresight of the governors of the town in the age when it was so rapidly extended. And it cannot be said that the Town Council were left altogether without guidance. In 1816, for example, a memorial was sent up by a number of leading townsmen suggesting that a 'spacious handsome public road with wide footpaths planted on each side with two rows of trees' should be laid out, to run round the whole boundary



W. G. Herdman, delt.

LORD STREET, SOUTH SIDE

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of the old township. Such a scheme could have been carried out at very little expense at that time; and how vastly it would have improved the aspect of the modern city! But the Council only curtly replied that 'the memorial cannot be entertained.'

The same memorialists, with as little success, asked that 'open pieces of land in the outskirts of the town (now covered with mean streets) should be appropriated to the amusements of the working classes.' This is the first proposal to institute parks or playgrounds; but the need for such luxuries had not yet been felt. Indeed, one of the most striking features of the Liverpool of this date was the absence of any pleasant green places of public resort. There had been two Ladies' Walks, bordered with trees, where hooped and furbelowed dames paced, attended by their squires. One of these ran from Oldhall Street to the river, the other between Bold Street and Duke Street. Both had vanished before 1795, the one to make way for the Leeds and Liverpool canal, while the other was built upon. Our caustic critic in that year says there are 'no walks—commerce alone appears to engage the attention of the inhabitants.' The only places of public resort of this kind in the early nineteenth century were the little gardens on St. James' Mount, and a short parade on the sea-ward side of the George's Dock, much frequented by ladies.

The amusements of a people are often an excellent indication of the degree of their tastes

and culture. Those of Liverpool were still of a comparatively primitive order, though this period witnessed a considerable improvement. It was the pleasures of the table that provided the chief relaxation of eighteenth century Liverpool from the exacting labours of commerce; for (as our anonymous critic tells us, in somewhat shaky French) 'almost every man in Liverpool is a *scavoir vivre* (*sic*) and he who cannot drink claret will drink ale.' Dinners at the Town Hall swallowed up a substantial part of the borough revenue. The fashionable hour, about 1775, was one o'clock; it gradually advanced to three at the end of the century, and a dinner at three had the advantage that it left plenty of time for the gentlemen's wine and cards to follow; by 1835 the hour of dining had climbed up to five.

After dinner an adjournment might be made to one of the two bowling greens in Mount Pleasant, or to the Ranelagh Gardens, on the site of the Adelphi Hotel, which were, from 1765 to the end of the century, a favourite place of resort: in the gardens were benches, on which one could sit to gaze at displays of fireworks, and listen to a small orchestra: the performance usually began at 6 p.m. More vigorous sport was provided by the archery ground in Cazneau Street, which was, however, closed in 1798; or in following the Liverpool harriers, whose kennels lay, in 1775, near the bottom of Richmond Row.

The poorer people, with some of their richer neighbours, refreshed themselves by watching

dog-fights, or cock-fights, or bull-baitings; and in 1775 a number of drunken sailors distinguished themselves by dragging a terrified baited bull into the heat and light of the theatre, where its appearance in a box caused no small consternation among the ladies. Only one theatre existed in the town during this period—the Theatre Royal, in Williamson Square, now a cold storage warehouse. It was opened in 1772 and enlarged in 1803, and its stage witnessed the performances of all the best actors of the period. Just at the end of the eighteenth century this single house of amusement was supplemented by the erection of a circus in Christian Street, but it was never very successful.

Of music we hear scarcely anything until 1784, when the first of a series of triennial musical festivals was held. All the leaders of fashion flocked to listen to Handel's oratorios, and afterwards to a banquet and a fancy ball in the Town Hall. As the tickets for five performances cost a guinea and a half, this can scarcely be said to have done very much for the diffusion of musical taste in the town.

Nor, with one exception, were the fine arts much more seriously cultivated in the town. The exception was domestic architecture: it was this period which gave us those simple and beautiful doorways and interiors which distinguish many of the houses in Rodney Street, Hanover Street and Duke Street, and which a later age has never been able to excel.

But though good taste governed the builders of

most of the rich men's houses, the sister arts of painting and sculpture received little encouragement in the Philistinism of eighteenth century Liverpool. A society for the encouragement of the Arts of Painting and Design was started in 1773, but it soon died because there was nobody sufficiently enthusiastic to take the trouble of managing it. Revived in 1783, largely through the activity of William Roscoe, it held a few exhibitions and tried to provide instruction in the arts, but once again died through lack of encouragement. In 1810 Mr. Henry Blundell of Ince Blundell, a well-known *virtuoso*, offered £1,000 for the erection of a permanent Academy of Art, but the town was not ripe for such a scheme, and it fell to the ground. In the last few years of our period exhibitions of paintings and sculpture were held with a modest degree of success, receiving from the Town Council such encouragement as was implied in the award of prizes for the best pictures of local artists.

But these attempts at culture, designed for the well-to-do, and very ill supported even by them, did little for the real amelioration of the barbarism of the town. For the beginning of this we must find the source in that general awakening of humanitarian feeling which is so striking a feature of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Perhaps its most impressive result was the movement for the abolition of the slave trade; but on a hundred other sides the new birth of compassion and indignation led to great

fruits in this age. Associated intimately with a religious movement, its source is doubtless to be found in the general stirring of the waters that followed the preaching of Wesley. In his unceasing pilgrimage Wesley several times visited Liverpool, and perhaps his visits may have stimulated the zeal for reform here, as they certainly inspired his Methodist followers, here and elsewhere, with a noble zeal for social improvement.

But the new humanity was by no means confined to one denomination. The Church of England was stirred by the evangelical revival, and Mr. Gladstone has recorded how deep was its influence on his father and his Liverpool circle. The nonconformist denominations awoke to a new vigour; the Roman Catholic church, too, was stirred by a parallel wave of emotion. The period from 1780 onwards was a period of extraordinary activity in the building of new churches of all denominations; their number was so large that no mention can be made of them individually. But one feature of the age is that private wealth began to be lavishly expended on the provision of religious opportunities. Thus Sir John Gladstone built no less than three churches at his own expense, the 'Scotch Church' in Oldham Street in his early Presbyterian days; then St. Andrew's in Rodney Street; finally, when he built his country mansion at Seaforth, a church there also.

The same enthusiasm which produced this many-sided religious activity produced also a remarkable expansion in the charitable organi-

sations of the town. Of these also no account can be given; but perhaps space ought to be found to record the foundation, in 1791, of the first school instituted in England for the training of the blind in various industries.

The most profitable form which this charitable zeal assumed was the institution of schools for the poor. Before the year 1784 the town did not contain any schools for the education of the children of the poor, except the Blue-coat charity school for orphans, and the old grammar school, which had now fallen on evil days. Had the grammar school been permitted to enjoy the full income of its original endowment, it would have been a vigorous and thriving school like that of Manchester. But it was now housed in a wing of the charity school; it had been set apart for the free instruction of the sons of those freemen who chose to claim the privilege; and its staff consisted of a master, on an extremely exiguous salary, together with one usher and a writing master. The Town Council several times discussed proposals for reconstituting it, but nothing was done, and when Mr. Baines, the last master, died in 1802, the school was quietly suppressed. In 1826, visited by tardy compunctions, the Council founded in its place two free elementary schools, one for the north and the other for the south end of the town. They are those which are still known as the North and South Corporation Schools. Thus ended an endowment which should have been of the utmost value to the town.

In 1784 the religious revival led to a combined movement for the establishment of Sunday schools, and a scheme was launched at a town's meeting whereby a whole group of such schools was to be started. The children were to go to school at one o'clock every Sunday, and to be kept 'till evening comes on.' They were to be taught to read and write, and as soon as they could read were to be taken to church. Somewhat modified, the scheme was carried out on a large scale, and it formed the first beginning of popular education in Liverpool. Five years later a day school, with fees of 1d. per week, was founded in connexion with the parish church. It received 200 boys and 120 girls, and the modest expenses (£236) were met by subscriptions. This school is the same which is still at work in Moorfields. In the years which followed this beginning a whole series of schools was founded. Some of them were wholly or partly endowed by individuals; most were supported by one religious denomination or another; and all the denominations strove in honourable rivalry to fill this glaring need. By 1835, when the state was awaking to the importance of encouraging and aiding these schools, Liverpool was, on the whole, tolerably well supplied, according to the standards of England at that date.

For the supply of adequately equipped higher schools—schools to teach more than the barest rudiments—the town had to wait still longer. But the foundation of the Royal Institution in

1817 brought about the institution of one such school, of excellent quality, now defunct; the establishment of the Mechanics' Institution in 1825, led after some years to the development of a second; and, later still, the Liverpool Collegiate Institution gave birth to a whole group of valuable schools. So that Liverpool entered upon the next era in her history not badly equipped, though at a great disadvantage as compared with Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham, where sixteenth century grammar schools, like that which old John Crosse founded in Liverpool, had been allowed to survive and to enjoy the income of their original endowments.

If this period saw the beginning of a new educational system in Liverpool, it was still more distinguished by the work of a considerable group of vigorous and intelligent men, who promised to lend a new atmosphere to the Philistine town.

The study of practical seamanship and of seientific shipbuilding and the knowledge of the tides received a great impetus from the work of William Hutchinson, an honest and religious privateersman of whose warlike exploits something has already been said, and who spent the last part of his life in useful labours and studies as harbour master in his native town.

The parliamentary elections, from 1790 onwards, were illuminated by a remarkable succession of witty squibs and verses, sometimes attaining a high degree of excellence, and testifying to the birth of a novel intellectual alertness. Both parties contributed to



From a plaque by Gibson

WILLIAM ROSCOE

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this humorous paper warfare. On the Tory side Silvester Richmond, collector of the customs, and on the Whig side the Rev. William Shepherd, Unitarian minister of Gateacre, and the friend of Roscoe, were the principal writers, and some of their verses were witty enough to retain even to-day something of their original salt.

On another side intellectual studies were stimulated by the succession of great law-cases in which the corporation was involved, and which, as they turned largely upon ancient rights and privileges, led to a ransacking of the records of the borough. Thanks to these disputes, the eccentric old attorney, Henry Brown, who fought the case of 1791 for the corporation, became one of the first authorities in England on the legal antiquities of borough government; while Charles Okill, clerk of committees to the corporation, got together a wonderful collection of transcripts and documents bearing upon the history of the town, which still remains in the municipal archives, and has been the principal source from which later historians have derived their materials. Another distinguished antiquary of this period was Matthew Gregson, ancestor of a family which has done good service to Liverpool. He issued in 1817 a miscellaneous *Portfolio of Fragments relative to the History of the Duchy of Lancaster.* The period also saw the issue of no less than five histories of Liverpool, of which some account will be given in an appendix. Valueless as historical works, except for the period in which

they were written, these books are, nevertheless, important as evidence of the rise of that sense of civic pride in the town, which demands to learn something of its origins, and is stimulated and developed by that knowledge. The fact that so many books on local history, printed and published in the town, should have found a sale, is in itself evidence that Liverpool was beginning to awaken intellectually.

There were, indeed, many cultivated households which formed bright spots in the provincial barbarism of early nineteenth century Liverpool, and those who have read the narrative of the boyhood of William Ewart Gladstone, or of the late William Rathbone, must feel that the sheer materialism of the mid-eighteenth century was, so far as the upper classes of the town were concerned, beginning to be dissipated.

But the glory of Liverpool in this period was to be found in a group of friends who were not content to cultivate their own minds, but strove to diffuse throughout the money-grubbing community in which they found themselves something of their own delight in the civilising power of letters and the arts. These men were Whigs, holding unpopular politics, and very dubiously regarded by their fellow-citizens, as we have already seen. They were the enemies of the slave trade, and the strenuous advocates of political and social reforms which few of them lived to see realised. Some of them deserve to be named. William Rathbone, second of the name, was not

himself an intellectual force, but, like all of his name, he was a believer in whatsoever things are good, pure and beautiful. Dr. Currie, the biographer of Burns, and the writer of several political pamphlets which obtained a wide circulation, was also an enthusiastic practical reformer, and found a useful sphere in the administration of the Poor Law. Another medical man, Dr. Traill, was one of the prime movers in the foundation of the Royal Institution. He also stimulated the scientific interests of the members of his own profession by helping to organise for them discussions of medical problems, and for a number of years he issued from Liverpool a scholarly medical journal. It was largely the scientific enthusiasm with which he had inspired his colleagues at the Royal Infirmary that led in 1834 to the foundation of the Royal Infirmary School of Medicine, the ancestor of the Medical Faculty in the modern university.

But among this group of warm-hearted and large-minded friends, one stands out pre-eminent —William Roscoe, a man who, while immersed in the cares of extensive businesses, yet contrived to win for himself the highest historical reputation of his age; and, while opening his mind to every public interest, and finding time for the strenuous and constant advocacy of political and social reform, yet threw himself with avidity into the study and practice of the arts, made himself respected in the science of botany and in scientific agriculture, and acquired the friendship of many of the most distinguished men of his age. Born

in 1753, the son of an innkeeper in Mount Pleasant, Roscoe's formal education lasted only till the age of twelve, when he returned to work in his father's market garden, and, later, to earn his livelihood in the arid atmosphere of a lawyer's office. Yet by the time he was twenty he had acquired a reading knowledge of Latin, French and Italian, was revelling in the history and literature of fifteenth century Italy, had taught himself to etch, and was studying with eagerness the history of the fine arts. Already he had been captivated by that enthusiasm for Florence and its great citizen-prince, Lorenzo de Medici, which subsequently led him to write the life of his hero, and to win the applause of Europe.

Roscoe's historical writings have not stood the test of time; but one aspect of them retains an inspiring interest. In this writer the historian and the citizen are never dissociated. What drew him to Florence and Lorenzo was that in Florence he saw a great commercial city, as great in its own age as Liverpool in this, but a city which was inspired by the love of beauty, which was the nurse of poets and scholars and artists; a city in which it was an inspiration to live, whose very atmosphere stimulated and inspired the finest aspirations of its citizens; a city which for that reason, and not at all because of the magnitude of its commerce, has earned an imperishable fame. Poignant as was the contrast between Florence and Liverpool, it gave a zest at once to Roscoe's historical studies and to his political activities. He

found in Florence at once refreshment from the brutal materialism of his native town, and inspiration for the attempt to breathe into it a new spirit.

Of Roscoe's manifold political interests and work, this is no place to tell. But something must be said of the group of new institutions for the creation of an intellectual life in Liverpool which were carried out by him and his group of friends, and for which his historical studies provided much of the inspiration. The various attempts to found an organisation for the promotion of the fine arts always had Roscoe for their principal supporter. He and his friends were the creators of the Athenaeum, a library for scholars, opened in 1799. The Botanic Gardens, at first established at the top of Mount Pleasant, owed their existence to him; they were the first institution for the encouragement of scientific studies established in Liverpool. Above all, the year 1817 saw the opening of the Royal Institution in Colquitt Street, an organisation which, though it never fulfilled the hopes of its founders, was nevertheless the outcome of a noble dream; an attempt to institute in the midst of a great trading city a place which should be a perpetual focus for every intellectual interest, a perpetual radiator of sane and lofty views of life, a perpetual reminder of the higher needs and aspirations of men in the midst of the fierce roar of commercial competition, and the clangorous appeal of these surroundings to the vulgar lust of money.

Roscoe and his group redeem to some extent the sordidness of Liverpool at the opening of the nineteenth century. Their spirit, and the spirit which had scattered over the city in a score of years schools, charities and churches, were a fortunate augury for the new age; since they seemed to promise that gentle pities and noble dreams were not to be wholly crushed under foot in the fierce triumphal march of the city towards commercial supremacy.

CHAPTER XVI

The Nineteenth Century, 1835-1907

IN 1835 the principal causes which produced the greatness of Liverpool were already manifest, and the lines of her future commercial development were already laid down. The following seventy years have been marked mainly by the increasing utilisation of the openings already made, and it will not be necessary to describe in any detail the growth of trade during this age. It would be interesting to analyse the principal factors which have contributed to determine the character of the commerce of modern Liverpool: the progressive opening up of new markets by conquest, settlement or exploration; the wonderful improvements in means of communication; and the changes in the fiscal systems of England herself and of the countries with which Liverpool has principally traded. But these topics are at once too great and too complex to be treated adequately without a far greater expenditure of space than the plan of this book allows.

The period covered by this chapter falls into two parts, roughly of equal length. During the first England maintained that supremacy, amounting

almost to monopoly, which she had obtained as a result of the Napoleonic wars, both in the principal processes of manufacture and in over-sea trade. Until about 1870, Europe was so much perplexed by political troubles, the heritage of the French Revolution, that the governments of European states made comparatively little systematic endeavour to foster and stimulate manufactures, commerce and colonisation; while in the same period the United States were still mainly engrossed by the development of the immense lands of the West, and, in the sixties, by that gigantic Civil War in which the unity of the American commonwealth was secured. During the first half of this period of seventy years, therefore, England was left as the supreme industrial, commercial and colonial power of the world; the world's workshop and market; and Liverpool, as the distributing centre for the great English industrial district, profited accordingly. She especially profited when, by the establishment of the system of free trade, all artificial restrictions on the movement of commerce were brought to an end; for in the middle of the nineteenth century England was like a vast whirlpool which sucked all trade in towards itself, and the removal of barriers to the current magnified her prosperity amazingly.

But it was inconceivable that this state of things could continue indefinitely, or that other states could permit their trade to be permanently dominated and controlled by English merchants,

and their peoples to be reduced (as it was picturesquely phrased) to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for the industrial empire-state. So the second half of the period saw a change. When Europe had settled down politically, and when the United States had fully realised, after the Civil War, the magnitude of their own resources, there began an era of fierce competition. Now commenced that eager rush to obtain control of the unoccupied parts and the undeveloped markets of the earth, which has been the source of almost every international political difficulty for the last twenty years. Now, also, foreign governments began to encourage the rise of native industries in the only way in which that seemed possible—by protecting them by high tariffs against the overwhelming ascendancy of England. Soon, too, other nations began to be eager for a larger share in over-sea commerce, and English shipowners found themselves faced by a competition that was often backed by the resources of whole nations.

This reaction against the industrial and mercantile supremacy of England was quite inevitable. The only surprising thing about it was that English trade was not merely able to survive, but actually went on progressing during these years, so that the second half of our period shows an advance as striking as the first. The tonnage of Liverpool shipping, 1,768,426 in 1835, had risen to 5,728,504 in 1870: that is to say, it had multiplied three and one-half times during the period of the unquestioned ascendancy of English trade.

But in 1905 it had risen to 15,996,387. This, it is true, is less than three times as great as in 1870, so that the rate of increase had fallen off. But rate of increase is a very fallacious test, because no port can expect its shipping to go on for ever increasing in geometrical progression. The important point is that the actual addition to the tonnage of Liverpool made during the period of competition was more than twice as great as the actual addition made during the period of unquestioned ascendancy.

The result is, that at the end of her seventh century as a chartered borough, Liverpool finds herself amongst the three or four greatest ports of the world. She conducts one-third of the export trade, and one-fourth of the import trade, of the United Kingdom. She owns one-third of the total shipping of the kingdom, and one-seventh of the total registered shipping of the world. Liverpool ships are, on the average, of larger size than those of any other British port. But even taking that into account, these facts mean that of every ten ships that go to and fro on all the seas of all the world, one hails from Liverpool. In the midst of a fiercer competition than she has hitherto known, the port proclaims her confidence in the future by erecting for the new century a huge domed dock office at the gateway of the town, and a stately pillared cotton exchange near by; two such palaces of trade as fifty years ago could scarcely have been dreamed of.

It is no part of our business here to analyse

the causes or the details of this surprising development of commerce. The changed conditions of the new age have produced many changes in the character and methods of Liverpool trade, but these are matters for a very special study. One outstanding fact alone may be noted; this period has witnessed the triumph of the steamship, which, being no longer dependent upon the winds, can run to a time-table with a degree of accuracy never before possible. The coming of the 'liner,' the aristocrat of the seas, belongs to this period. The first of Liverpool 'liners,' in a strict sense, was the *Britannia*, with which, in 1840, the Cunard Company inaugurated a regular fortnightly service to New York. Since then Liverpool has become in a peculiar sense the home of 'liners,' sailing to all parts of the globe, and the method of fixed and regular sailings has been largely applied to cargo as well as to passengers.

Though the trade of the port is far less dependent on the 'liners' than is commonly supposed, yet they have had a far-reaching effect upon the economic conditions of the port. Ships have increased marvellously in size and complexity. The average size of vessels owned in Liverpool is five times as great as it was in 1835; and even this does not fully represent the extent of the change, since the numerous fishing boats, colliers and other coasting craft, which pull down the average, remain much the same in size and form as they were at the beginning of the period. The modern 'liner' is a vast floating town, representing

an enormous investment of capital. Owing to the keenness of competition, and the perpetual development of new inventions, it has but a short life; and, as it is designed for one peculiar line of service, it often cannot be used for other purposes when its day of service is over. Consequently it must be made to earn with the greatest swiftness possible; there must be the utmost despatch in the handling of its cargo, and in refitting and supplying it; every convenience must be easily and immediately available.

These requirements have had very striking results upon the conditions of labour in Liverpool, of which something more will be said later. They have also led to the most remarkable practical achievement of Liverpool during this period, the enlargement and perfecting of the dock system until it has no rival anywhere in the world. After several experiments the management of this great enterprise has been, since 1857, entrusted to a board directly elected by the commercial interests most immediately concerned, and on the whole the system has worked very well. It has come to be an honour, competed for among the principal merchants of the port, to be allowed to give their time and labour to the direction of these vast interests. The Dock Board has also enlisted in its service a succession of permanent officials of commanding ability, men of whom no individual mention may here be made, but to whom the city owes much good work.

At the end of two centuries from the creation

of the first humble dock, the port possesses dock space to the extent of 570 acres on both sides of the river. The massive granite walls by which these docks are surrounded give a lineal quayage of over thirty-five miles, and the creation of new docks still continues. For seven miles and a quarter, on the Lancashire side of the river alone, the monumental granite, quarried from the Board's own quarries in Scotland, fronts the river in a vast sea wall as solid and enduring as the Pyramids, the most stupendous work of its kind that the will and power of man have ever created. Nor is this all. Immense ugly hoppers, with groanings and clankings, are perpetually at labour scooping out the channel of the estuary so as to save Liverpool from the fate of Chester, and to permit vessels of all sizes to have a clear passage at all tides. Huge warehouses of every type, designed for the storage of every kind of commodity, front the docks, and giant-armed cranes and other appliances make disembarkation swift and easy. To a traveller with any imagination few spectacles present a more entrancing interest than that of these busy docks, crowded with the shipping of every nation, echoing to every tongue that is spoken on the seas, their wharves littered with strange commodities brought from all the shores of all the oceans. It is here, beside the docks, that the citizen of Liverpool can best feel the opulent romance of his city, and the miracle of transformation which has been wrought since the not distant days when, where the docks

now stand, the untainted tides of the Mersey raced past a cluster of mud hovels amid fields and untilled pastures.

This swift growth of commerce has brought with it a steady and growing inrush of population, even more varied in character than the previous age had welcomed. Census returns scarcely indicate the nature or extent of this growth of population, because the census returns only relate to the population within the municipal boundary, which, until 1895, remained fixed at the limits laid down in 1835, when Everton, Kirkdale and the populous parts of West Derby and Toxteth were added to the original township. It was not until 1895 that the townships of Walton and Wavertree, the remnant of Toxteth, and another section of West Derby were incorporated in the city. Five years later the township of Garston (once a sister 'berewick' of Liverpool, and like it dependent on the manor of West Derby) was also included. The population of this enlarged city, at the census of 1901, was 716,000. But this was far from representing the extent of the population economically dependent upon Liverpool. The period with which we are dealing saw the town of Bootle, on the northern boundary of the city, develope from a rural township into an incorporated borough with a population in 1901 of 58,000. Beyond Bootle, to the north, it saw a group of populous suburbs of some 40,000 inhabitants spring up in Seaforth, Litherland, Waterloo and Crosby. On the other

side of the river the same period saw Birkenhead rise out of nothing with such rapidity that it began to hope to surpass its mother city. Birkenhead had, in 1901, a population of 110,000; and outside of its limits the district of Wallasey could claim 53,000 inhabitants, and the more remote district of Hoylake and West Kirby 10,000 more. All these, as well as others of less importance, are merely expansions of Liverpool, disgorging every morning, by boat and train, their thousands to take their parts in the labours of docks, offices, factories and warehouses. Thus the population economically dependent upon Liverpool largely exceeds 1,000,000, and has multiplied fivefold in the course of the last seventy years.

To accommodate this immense aggregation of human beings, the tide of brick and mortar has spread far afield on both sides of the river; and the observer who takes his stand upon one of the busy ferry-boats, sees nothing all round him, for eight miles on either shore, but a continuous dense mass of houses, over which there hangs for ever a low and broad pall of dun-coloured smoke, visible on clear days from many miles' distance. All the old landmarks have been obliterated; the ridge of heathery hill which backed the small mediaeval town has been covered, and into the open country behind long tentacles of streets spread in every direction, further and further every year.

All this was inevitable. But two aspects of this physical expansion of the town during the

nineteenth century deserve comment. One is that no attempt has been made to direct the course that building should take, or to ensure that the streets (since streets must replace green fields) should be spacious and orderly, or that the houses should be dignified or pleasant to look at. The building of the period has been on the whole indescribably mean and ugly, far inferior to much of the building of the previous period; nor can anything be imagined much more depressing than the miles of dull, monotonous and ugly streets in which not only the poor but the middle classes of the town are condemned to live. Another feature of the growth of this period, in Liverpool as elsewhere, is that special quarters have developed themselves for the rich, the people of middling fortune, and the poor. That too, perhaps, was inevitable; yet it forms a physical barrier to the growth of the social spirit.

The people who inhabit this vast congeries of streets are of an extraordinary diversity of races; few towns in the world are more cosmopolitan. And these various races (except in so far as they belong to the wealthier class) tend to hive together in distinct quarters. The most numerous are the Irish, who have their principal quarter in the northern part of the old town, and who supply a large proportion of the unskilled labour required at the docks. Always numerous in Liverpool (there were Irish names among the burgesses as early as 1378), the Irish became especially numerous after the great potato famine

of 1845-6. Over 90,000 of them entered Liverpool in the first three months of 1846, and nearly 300,000 in the twelve months following July 1847. In that year the presence of so enormous a number of penniless and hunger-driven wretches led to such turbulence that 20,000 townsmen had to be sworn in as special constables, and 2,000 regular troops camped at Everton. The majority of them emigrated to America; but enough remained to aggravate seriously the problem of poverty in Liverpool, to add gravely to the overcrowding and misery of the lower quarters of the town, and to create a distinct Irish-town within the city. Welsh immigrants have never come in such droves, and therefore have never clustered together in quite the same way, but there are almost as many Welshmen as Irishmen in the city. Space fails to enumerate all the foreign nationalities which are represented in Liverpool by distinct little quarters wherein, to some extent, the customs and ways of life of the old country are reproduced in unfamiliar surroundings and amid sordid conditions. There is no city in the world, not even London itself, in which so many foreign governments find it necessary to maintain consular offices for the safeguarding of the interests of their exiled subjects. It should, however, be noted that this amazingly polyglot and cosmopolitan population, consisting to a considerable extent of races which are backward in many ways, and maintaining itself largely by unskilled labour, vastly increases

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the difficulty of securing and maintaining the decencies of life.

The very nature and magnitude of the progress of the port also tends to accentuate these social difficulties. There is probably no city of anything like equal size in which so small a proportion of the population is maintained by permanent and stable industrial work. There are, of course, a number of minor industries carried on in the town, but even of these, some (such as match-making) depend upon low-paid and comparatively unskilled labour. And the principal occupation of the city, the foundation of its prosperity, is the handling of goods between ship, warehouse and railway; a function which is mainly performed by unskilled labour. And as this work comes largely in sudden rushes, and has to be done at high pressure, in order to save interest on costly ships and costly dock space and warehouse space, it has come about that a large proportion of the men employed have no permanent work, but must submit to periods of idleness alternating with periods of sudden heavy labour, extending over long hours, and inevitably followed by fatigue, reaction, and the ever-easy consolation of alcohol. Thus the great development of steamships and docks has brought it about that the city's prosperity largely depends upon casual labour, the most degrading as well as the most insecure form of employment; and that Liverpool has to deal with a social problem perhaps more acute than that which faces any other city.

On another numerous and important class of the community these developments have had a similarly depressing effect. The sailors who man the innumerable ships of Liverpool may be less riotous and unruly than their predecessors, but it is clear that their quality must have been impaired by the change from sails to steam. Their employment no longer calls for the same vigour, capacity or alertness as it once did. They are chiefly engaged in menial labours, the real work of driving the ship being done by a small band of skilled engineers. Hence this employment is less attractive to good men. The seafaring crowd, *ναυτικὸς ὄχλος*, has always been difficult to govern well; but it must be obvious that a sea-going population in the age of steam and mechanism, if less turbulent, is still more difficult than its predecessors to keep in healthy and happy conditions.

Putting aside the large class employed by the many trades which are called into being by the needs of the actual population of the town, and which are conducted in much the same way as in other towns, there remains a third large distinctive class of the Liverpool population—the class of clerks, who are more numerous here than elsewhere in proportion to the total. Now the conditions of the clerk's life usually render him conventional, respectable, timid and unadventurous. His work does not encourage, but rather represses, individuality and openness of mind. For that reason it is ill-paid, yet convention requires him to live

in a way that perpetually strains his income. This class, though it includes many capable and clear-headed men, is also largely recruited from among the half-hearted, the listless, the unimaginative and the dull; and so in any period of stress or depression many of them will drift helplessly, especially if once their moorings of respectability are cut.

Such are the most prominent elements of which the community of Liverpool is formed; they are not elements out of which it seems easy to make a virile, coloured and happy society. But the city is to some extent compensated by the character which belongs to the small directing class in a commercial community. Great merchants and shipowners, whose interests range over the whole world, or at any rate far overpass their own immediate surroundings, are rendered by the character of their work—and must be, if they are to succeed in it—alert, open-minded, hospitable to big ideas, accustomed to and tolerant of the widest divergencies of view. For this reason it is that great trading centres have so often been, like Athens, Florence, Venice, Amsterdam, also centres of vigorous intellectual life. One of the greatest interests in the study of the history of Liverpool during the nineteenth century, must be to see how far this principle holds good here, under new conditions; how far the first beginnings of higher interests which marked the preceding period were carried forward by its successor; and how far the vigour and

enlightenment of the directing classes in the great seaport community have been able to counteract the depressing tendencies, in other directions, of the remarkable material progress of this period, and to turn their city into a human and habitable place in which it is a privilege to dwell. The mere increment of material wealth, the mere brute growth of trade, is of course in itself no cause for satisfaction. However brilliantly it may have been aided or directed, it is of no permanent advantage unless it is made the means for a heightening of the possibilities of genuine human happiness, a real development of real civilisation.

Beyond all comparison, therefore, the most important change which Liverpool experienced during this period, was the change which came over the attitude and spirit of the Town Council after the Municipal Reform Act of 1835. Before that date, as we have seen, the Council had not regarded itself as being in any way charged with securing the welfare of the whole body of inhabitants, but had looked upon itself merely as the trustee for the small privileged body of freemen. So great was the reaction against the old Council's view, that in the elections to the first reformed Council the reforming or Whig party had things all their own way, and for a brief period of six years absolutely controlled the government of the town, with an overwhelming majority in the Council.

Upon the task of reconstructing the whole system of borough government they set to work

with enthusiasm. They began by getting rid of most of the old officers, though some of them were very competent men, and cutting down salaries unsparingly. They took over the functions of the old separate Watching, Lighting and Cleansing Board, and proceeded at once to reorganise the police of the borough. Several committees were appointed to suggest schemes of reform in various departments of administration. One of these presented a long and dreadful report in 1836, on the moral condition of the town and the ineffectiveness of the existing police system. This report pointed out that a vast number of thieves were known to be at work, no less than 1,200 juvenile thieves being known, under the age of fifteen; while the streets were rendered disgusting by 3,600 known prostitutes, who had recognised centres. The result was that the police force was at once doubled in number, and reconstructed. Hitherto its function had been almost confined to the arrest of criminals; now the principle began to be laid down that it was the duty of the police not merely to punish, but to prevent vice and crime; and thus a beginning was made of the efficient and admirable police force of to-day.

Another committee reported on the unhealthy and unsafe character of a large proportion of the buildings of the town. The Council thereupon obtained power to appoint a building surveyor, and also to demolish dangerous houses at the owner's cost. But this was not enough. Many

hundreds of houses, which were not actually dangerous in the sense of being likely to collapse, were far more dangerous by reason of their insanitary condition, and the appalling state in which their inhabitants had to live. In order that they might attempt to remedy this, the Council applied for power to impose certain building regulations on all new buildings erected in the town, to close existing houses which were not merely dangerous but filthy or unwholesome, and to appoint a Health Committee to regulate the sanitary condition of the town. The great Building Act of 1842 which resulted from these proposals, and which was the pioneer act of its kind in England and the model for other towns, did not come into operation until the Whigs had fallen from power, but they deserve the credit of initiating it.

Another very fruitful development of this period was the initiation of public wash-houses, in which Liverpool took the lead of all England. The origination of this valuable scheme must be credited to a lady in very modest circumstances, a Mrs. Martin, who, perceiving how impossible it was for the wives of dwellers in the mean streets of Liverpool to cleanse their families' clothes, threw open her own kitchen freely to them. Mr. William Rathbone (third of the name) hearing of this enterprise, persuaded the Town Council to establish public wash-houses at a small charge; and in 1842 the first of an invaluable series was opened.

But perhaps the subject on which the enthusiasm of the first reformed Council was most warmly aroused was that of education; in which many of them saw the only permanent means of bringing about an amelioration of the condition of the town. Two schools the Council already controlled: those two which had been founded in 1826 to replace the old grammar school. These schools were now reorganised. Religious teaching according to the doctrines of the Established Church had hitherto been given in them. The Whigs held that this was an improper use of public money, the more so as the schools were planted in the midst of an Irish Catholic population who were thus prevented from using them. They therefore substituted a form of religious instruction which they hoped might be equally acceptable to Catholic and Protestant. But the immediate result of this change was an outburst of Protestant feeling, led by that fiery orator the Rev. Hugh McNeile. While the Whigs contended for that strangely familiar doctrine, the inalienable right of the parent to have his children preserved to his own faith, all the popular feeling of non-Irish Liverpool was aroused to defend the cause of Protestantism against the insidious attacks of Popery; and in the end the Whigs were so discredited that in election after election they were hopelessly defeated, and finally left in a very small minority. Except for a very brief period they never recovered power throughout the century, and Liverpool passed under



E. Beattie, delt.

SHAW'S BROW AND ST. GEORGE'S HALL, 1849

To face p. 313

Conservative rule. The Whigs had entered upon their task with high ideals; but they were too doctrinaire, and though they had made a good beginning, they had actually achieved little.

One enterprise of these years, not begun by the Council but warmly supported by it, and at a later date taken over by it, must not pass without mention. This was the proposal to erect a worthy public hall for the city, to be called St. George's Hall. A subscription of £25,000 was raised, and the council voted the old site of the Royal Infirmary, which had recently moved up to Pembroke Place. Here began, above the rather slovenly but not unpicturesque houses which then occupied both sides of Shaw's Brow (now William Brown Street), that noble building, one of the noblest in the modern world, which is to-day the supreme architectural boast of the city. That it should have been so amply planned was evidence that a new spirit of civic pride was rising in the city. Its architect, Harvey Lonsdale Elmes, was a mere boy when his design was chosen, and he died before it was completed in 1854. But the choice of him is a remarkable proof of that good taste in architecture which Liverpool had long possessed, and of that good fortune in her public buildings which has never deserted the city.

The change from Whig to Tory did not involve any slackening in the work of amending the state of the town, though it led to some change in the methods in which the work was undertaken. Education fell into the background, but the

improvement of sanitation and housing was pushed forward as vigorously as ever. In 1843 Dr. Duncan, then a lecturer in the Royal Infirmary School of Medicine (the predecessor of the Medical Faculty of the University), published a pamphlet which gave a remarkable impetus to this cause. Duncan, whose name deserves to be remembered by all social reformers, had himself spent years in the study of the condition of the poorer quarters of the town, and had given terrible evidence on the subject before the Municipal Commission of 1833. Now he laid forth facts which in their naked simplicity sufficed to arouse a passion of public protest. He showed that half of the working class population of the town dwelt in narrow closed courts, devoid of all sanitary provisions, or in dank and loathsome underground cellars. He showed that for the most part only the streets in which the well-to-do lived were provided with sewers. He gave an appalling account of the lodging-houses in which many of the poorer population lived, crowded together in reeking cellars covered with dirty straw. He showed that the people of Liverpool were packed together at the rate of 100,000 to the square mile, and this calculation included the spacious and airy quarters where the wealthy lived. No town in England was so densely peopled, and as a consequence no town in England was so unhealthy. The mortality was unparalleled; one in every twenty-five of the people were stricken by fever every year. In short he drew such a picture of

squalor, disease, misery and vice as no city could endure to appropriate to itself. The conscience of Liverpool had already been touched on this question; now it was so genuinely aroused that the Town Council was driven to take action more vigorous than had yet been attempted, because more vigorous than had yet been felt to be needed, in any other English city.

The powers conferred by the Building Act of 1842 were much extended by a new act obtained in 1846. Among other provisions this act empowered the Council to take over all the functions of the special board which had hitherto been responsible for sewering the town, and compelled it to provide proper sewerage for all streets; it gave also powers to carry out a regular inspection and supervision of lodging-houses, and to force factories to consume their own smoke; it empowered the Council to take into its own hands the provision of an adequate water supply; and it authorised, for the first time, the appointment of an expert medical officer to be responsible for the general health of the town. Appropriately enough Dr. Duncan was appointed the first medical officer, and under his stimulus the next year, 1847, saw the beginning of a great campaign against insanitary dwellings. 14,085 inhabited cellars were measured and registered, in 5,841 of which pools of muddy and stagnant water were found in the floors. During the year over 5,000 cellars were absolutely condemned as human habitations and cleared of their inhabitants. But this was

only a temporary and partial solution of the difficulty, and by the Sanitary Amendment Act of 1864, the Town Council obtained power for the medical officer to 'report' any court or alley for condemnation to the grand jury, and power to the Council itself to alter or demolish all dwellings thus condemned, after purchasing them or paying compensation to the owners. The powers thus obtained far surpassed any possessed by other local authorities in England, and even to-day the local and special powers possessed by Liverpool are in some respects more useful than those given by the national Housing Acts. In short, the group of private acts from 1842 to 1864, supplemented by the by-laws which they empowered the Town Council to make, rendered Liverpool the pioneer in housing reform; and though some of the provisions in these local acts were afterwards imitated in general national acts, in several respects the building regulations of Liverpool are still to-day ahead of those of other towns. Liverpool had acted with greater vigour because her need was greater; but thanks to the policy which had now been adopted, she was in a fair way to shake off the hitherto deserved nickname of the 'black spot on the Mersey.'

Equally important with the rooting out of the worst slum quarters was the introduction of an abundant supply of good water, which was undertaken in these same years. Until this date water had been supplied by two rival companies, one of

which derived its supply from wells in Bootle, the other principally from wells in Toxteth Park. The water thus obtained was of good quality, but it was quite inadequate in quantity. A continuous supply, which now seems a necessary of life, was then unknown. Often the water was only turned on for a quarter of an hour or half an hour on alternate days, and sometimes it was turned on for this brief period at extremely inconvenient times—eleven o'clock at night, or six o'clock in the morning. Under these circumstances even personal cleanliness was almost impossible for the majority of the inhabitants. In the poorer quarters whole courts had to draw their supply from a single standpipe; and the inhabitants must 'squabble for their turns to fill the jugs and buckets in which the supply had to be kept, often, of course, missing their chance altogether. Clothes could not be washed with such a supply; the same water had to be used over and over again until it was positively offensive; and in a large number of the poorer houses the floors had never known the luxury of a scrubbing since they were built.

To remedy this appalling state of things—which formed a more fruitful source of disease and misery than even bad houses and overcrowding—the Town Council, in 1848, first bought out the two companies, and then looked about for a source of further supply. After two years of discussion it was decided to form reservoirs below the moorlands of Rivington, north of Bolton. This

great work was commenced in 1852, and in 1857 Liverpool received for the first time in her history the unspeakable boon of a continuous and abundant supply of pure water: perhaps the greatest social reform that the century saw.

This boon was so much more largely used than anybody had anticipated that from the first the old wells had to be employed to the full in addition to the Rivington supply; and even then, as population increased, the supply became very narrow, a long drought in 1864 and 1865 reproducing for a time almost the old conditions. After many discussions therefore, it was resolved in 1879 to launch upon a still more ambitious scheme, and in 1880, under Parliamentary powers, the bold and magnificent project was begun of creating in the heart of the mountains of Wales a huge and beautiful lake of pure water, connected with Liverpool by vast pipe-lines. The making of Lake Vyrnwy is an achievement almost as great as the making of the docks, but in some ways it is a still nobler one.

Another aspect of the work of the Town Council begun early in this period deserves also to rank high among the pioneering activities of the Liverpool municipality; the more interesting because it shows that the new spirit which was increasingly mastering the Council was not content with providing merely for the physical and material needs of the community. This was the foundation, in 1852, of the Liverpool Public Library, one of the earliest of such institutions in

the country, and the organisation, in close association with it, of the Public Museum. The provision of free public libraries was first suggested as a proper object of public expenditure by a Liverpool man, William Ewart, who, in 1850, succeeded in passing through Parliament the Public Libraries Act. But the need of such an institution had already been urged in Liverpool before that act was passed, and a subscription had been raised for the purpose and transferred to the Council, which, in 1852, opened a temporary library in Duke Street. In 1851 the thirteenth Earl of Derby bequeathed to the city his fine collection of natural history specimens. Stimulated by this gift the Council obtained a special act empowering them to establish not merely a library, but a 'Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery'; thus from the first the three kindred institutions were closely linked together. The generosity of Sir William Brown provided funds for the erection of a fine library and museum building in Shaw's Brow, now appropriately re-named William Brown Street, and to these beginnings new additions were quickly made. In 1857 Mr. Joseph Mayer presented to the city his great collection of objects of historic and archaeological interest, which formed an invaluable supplement to the Derby collections. Later, a large new circular reading room was added by the Town Council, and named in honour of Sir James Picton, who had done good service to the cause of learning in the city. In 1873 Mr. A. B. Walker

completed the group of institutions by presenting to the city a spacious gallery of art, thus fulfilling an ambition which many earlier dreamers like William Roscoe had striven after in vain.

All these buildings, which, when completed, filled up the whole north side of William Brown Street, and looked across to the noble St. George's Hall and St. John's Churchyard below, were from the first of worthy design, built in that classic style which has been so well carried out in all the public buildings of Liverpool; and they helped to form a great public place which (if its other sides were of at all equal attractiveness) would have few rivals in Europe for dignity and beauty. They formed therefore not only an exceedingly valuable series of public institutions, but an immense addition to the beauties of the city, and their site, looking down from rising ground to the clustered irregular roofs of the old town, was one of exceptional value, and commanded a prospect such as is to be obtained nowhere else in our ill-planned city.

For, with all their enthusiasm for improvement, the Town Council had been singularly regardless of the human craving for beauty, singularly blind to the educational value and even to the physical advantages of abundant air and space and greenery. The most outstanding defect of the work of the Council was its slowness to take in hand the provision of parks and open spaces; and every postponement of this need made its satisfaction more difficult and more costly. In 1835 it would

have been easy for the Town Council at comparatively small expense to surround the town, as it then was, with a continuous ring of parks. The Town Council was too much engrossed with other questions, and too eager for economy. The first fifteen years of the reformed Council were very fully occupied with urgent reforms: it was these years which produced the great building acts, the first clearance of the slums, the initiation of the new water supply, and the origination of the public library, and amid all these activities it is perhaps not surprising that parks were forgotten. In 1848, indeed, the Newsham estate was purchased with a view to turning it into a public park, but nothing was done. The truth is that in the middle years of the century a distinct slackening is noticeable in the zeal for public improvement. The town was flourishing; everybody was engrossed in the building up of fortunes; and as there was no considerable body of opinion to which these things were of secondary interest, the Council was loth to undertake new and costly enterprises.

But in 1868 the spirit of improvement revived again, and the first question taken in hand was the provision of parks. In that year parliamentary powers were obtained for the creation of no less than three great public pleasure-grounds—Sefton, Newsham and Stanley Parks, costing in all £670,000. From that time onwards no good opportunity of obtaining fresh breathing-spaces has been neglected, the latest and most beautiful

of these acquisitions being that of Calderstones Park. Private munificence has come to the aid of public funds, both in the provision of land (as in the case of the princely gift of Wavertree Playground in 1895, or of Bowring Park in 1906) or in the equipment of the parks with palm-houses and aviaries. Over forty churchyards and small greens have been laid out in various parts of the city, and the total area of parks and playgrounds now provided by the city for the health and amusement of its citizens amounts to over 1,000 acres.

We must not, however, confine ourselves merely to the provision made by the Town Council for the amenity of the city and the improvement of the conditions of life of the citizens. Other public bodies also have been at work. Space permits only of the barest mention of the work done by the Liverpool School Board between 1870 and 1902 in erecting in all parts of the town magnificent school buildings, and thus supplementing the work already done by voluntary agencies, and rendering possible the giving of some rudiments of education to every child. A single sentence must suffice to commemorate the service of Mr. Christopher Bushell and Mr. S. G. Rathbone in saving this great work from being the prey of those sectarian animosities which have often raged so bitterly in Liverpool. The last few years have seen this function also transferred to the City Council, and a beginning made in the creation of a complete, reasoned and logical system of education. A single sentence must also suffice to note the invaluable quiet

service performed during many years by the Liverpool Council of Education, which, by means of a system of scholarships from the elementary schools, provided an educational ladder for boys and girls of promise such as, until the last few years, few, if any, English cities could show. The last thirty years have, indeed, witnessed an amazing activity in the provision of educational facilities; schools have been founded; trade-classes and science-classes of many types have been established by private and public enterprise in every quarter of the city; colleges for the training of artists and of teachers and of sailors and of housewives have been instituted. All these varied forms of educational work are now placed under the co-ordinating and directing control of the City Council; and though much remains to be done, it begins to be possible to foresee the day when no available brain power in the city will any longer be allowed to run to waste.

Another field of social activity of great importance has also lain mainly outside of the sphere of the Town Council's activities: the supervision, namely, and the restriction within reasonable limits, of the facilities for obtaining strong drink, out of which so much misery arises. The history of the treatment in Liverpool of the vexed and difficult question of licensing is too large a theme to be fairly or adequately dealt with in a few lines of such a book as this, but it must not be left untouched. Ever since the eighteenth century, and perhaps earlier, the disproportionate

number of public houses existing in Liverpool has been a subject of comment by every observer of the town's social condition. During the first part of the period covered by this chapter little attempt was made to deal with this question, and between 1831 and 1841 the number of licensed houses rose from 1,752 to 2,274. From 1861 to 1863 the licensing bench entered upon a deliberate experiment of a curious kind, that of granting licenses freely to all who applied, without considering the number already in existence in any given locality. On the sacred principles of free trade, it was held, there should be no distinction drawn between beer-shops and bread-shops, and open competition would rectify all evils. There might have been something to say for this view if the appetite for beer had been, like the appetite for bread, a natural appetite, with natural limits. As it was, the only result of the policy of free licenses (possibly, it may be urged, because it never had a fair trial) was to increase drunkenness, crime and mortality. In 1874 conditions were so bad that the *Times* commented on the dreadful moral condition of Liverpool and its unparalleled death-rate, and concluded by the trenchant, if not wholly just, assertion that 'the criminal statistics and the health statistics of Liverpool point to the same conclusion: Liverpool is a town whose leading inhabitants are negligent of their duties as citizens.'

This condemnation was not wholly just, because it failed to take account of the exceptionally

difficult circumstances which Liverpool presented, or of the very real advances which had already been made. Yet it came as a not altogether undeserved rebuke to that tendency towards lethargy, that slackness in continuing the work of improvement, which, as we have noted, marked the middle part of our period. And it helped to stimulate the public conscience into a new activity and to initiate a new reform movement which, aimed first at the reform of licensing, presently extended to other spheres, and led to that general reforming activity which has never since wholly died down, and in which all parties have shared, each in its own way.

The year 1874 saw the foundation of a Vigilance Committee of leading citizens, for the purpose of pressing on reform and in particular opposing the renewal of unnecessary licenses. The men who constituted this committee were inevitably the butts of many jeers, and some of them may have deserved the imputation of 'unco-guidness' which was aimed against them. But they did invaluable work; and before long the licensing bench frankly accepted the policy of definitely endeavouring to reduce the number of public houses, especially in those poorer quarters where they clustered in largest numbers; a policy which has been consistently followed so far as justice to the licensees permitted, ever since. And after a while the Vigilance Committee ceased to be necessary, because the Watch Committee and the police came to be persuaded that it was their duty

not merely to arrest and prosecute drunken and disorderly persons, but to keep a watch upon those publicans who permitted or encouraged drunkenness. The same change of attitude took place in the same years on the question of sexual vice. The police gradually undertook (amid much criticism) the function of driving open vice from the streets, with the result that in a few years the streets of Liverpool, once notorious even beyond the streets of West London, became remarkable for their comparative cleanness. It was quite truly urged against this new policy that vice was not suppressed, but only driven underground; but at least it was a gain that the horror no longer flaunted and beckoned in every thoroughfare.

It was a great change that was thus brought about, a change which was not accomplished without much honest questioning and doubt, as well as much that was dishonest and impure. For it involved a complete departure from the principles of even the most ardent reformers in the mid-century. Then it was regarded as being the sole function of a governing body to maintain order, to protect the just rights of every citizen, and to punish actual wrong deeds after they were done; anything beyond that seemed, in the mid-Victorian age, an improper interference with liberty, sure to be mischievous in the long run. But now the city was embarked upon a much wider and much more difficult task: no less than that of preventing rather than punishing wrong doing; of removing undue temptations and invitations

to vice out of the way of the citizen. And that is an end so vast, so difficult of achievement, so manifold in its possible implications, that the acceptance of it involved a quite indefinite enlargement of the sphere of city government.

One result of the new spirit which this reform movement in various ways stimulated was that the Town Council began seriously to take in hand the problem of not merely demolishing insanitary property under the powers obtained by the various local acts already enumerated, but of replacing them by healthy and well-designed houses suitable for the displaced tenants. Though many houses had been demolished, only one block of cottages had hitherto been erected to replace them, and this was as late as 1869. The new policy really began when in 1885 the large group of dwellings known as Victoria Square was erected, and by 1900 accommodation had been provided for over 700 families. But at the opening of the new century the city entered upon a far more vigorous campaign, both of demolition and of reconstruction, with the result that over 2,000 corporation dwellings are now (in February, 1907) in occupation, and some 200 more are nearly completed. The total outlay involved has been over £1,000,000, the interest on which is practically met by the rents paid by the tenants. And the fact that the bulk of these dwellings have been opened since 1904 shows that we are only at the beginning of a very remarkable extension of municipal activity. The principle has now been definitely laid down that

it is the duty of the city to provide new homes for at least fifty *per cent.* of those who are displaced by every clearance of the slums. That this boon of clean and healthy houses is appreciated, is shown by the fact that in an average week of February, 1907, only three *per cent.* of the tenements were vacant. In this remarkable enterprise the city government is acting in a 'paternal' way which would have startled the most eager reformers of fifty years ago; and it is carrying out its new policy with more vigour than any other local government in England. The problem of housing for the mass of our citizens cannot, of course, yet be said to have been solved; insanitary houses are still many; and even the Council houses, excellent as they are, are necessarily erected on the sites of the houses which they displace, that is to say, amid surroundings which are often dreary and depressing. Perhaps a still greater step towards the solution of the difficulty was taken when, in 1897, the marvellous system of cheap and swift transit by means of electric trams was initiated by the Town Council, and rendered possible the transportation of thousands of poor folk to healthier surroundings on the outskirts of the city. No account can here be given of the course or results of this great enterprise; enough, perhaps, to say that we have scarcely yet begun to realise the magnitude of the results that may flow from it.

Thus on all sides, and in many further modes of which no account has here been given, the city government has, during the last thirty years

especially, undertaken a responsibility for the health and happiness of its citizens unlike anything that its whole previous history has shown. And if any full account were to be given of what the city as a whole now endeavours to do for its citizens, much ought also to be said of the extraordinarily active works of charity and religion which have been carried on during these years; but this vast theme must be left almost untouched. Of the manifold activities of the churches of all denominations it is impossible to give any adequate account; they have been the centres for the greater part of the voluntary social activities of most of the citizens.

The increasing magnitude of the city, and the vastness of the field which it presents for religious work, have led to its becoming an independent unit of ecclesiastical organisation. The creation of the separate diocese of Liverpool in 1880 gave to the city a new dignity, and provided her with a new official leader, never slack to encourage the labours of social progress. The step had become necessary for the adequate organisation and extension of the work of the national church; while the provision of the necessary funds afforded proof of the vitality and strength of religious feeling in the city. And now, to crown the so recent ecclesiastical reorganisation, comes the magnificent and daring proposal to erect, in the midst of a busy modern trading city, a vast cathedral like those of the Middle Ages, whose tall towers and soaring roofs, raised on the hill above the river, shall stand

forth above the roar of the traffic as a perpetual reminder that 'man does not live by bread alone.' The national church in Liverpool has been active, and has been aided and led by noble men, throughout this period, but it has never been more active or more earnest in good works than it is at the opening of the city's eighth century. The Roman Catholic Church, more populous in Liverpool than anywhere else in England, and finding its especial sphere of work among the poor quarters of the north, has achieved wonders in the provision of schools, and in the conduct of multiform labours of charity. It too has made Liverpool the seat of an episcopal see. Nor have other denominations lagged behind. Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Unitarians, Baptists, Greeks, Jews and others have vied in honourable rivalry, both in the erection of churches and in the maintenance of works of charity. Yet, for all this labour, Liverpool is, at the opening of the twentieth century, not a very religious place. Numerous as the churches are, they could not possibly contain more than a small proportion of the population, and many of them are half-empty. The majority of the inhabitants of Liverpool seem to be outside of the direct influence of the churches.

Of the multitudinous charities which this age has fostered, a few sentences must suffice to tell, though they represent not only the expenditure of vast sums of money, but the continuous, untiring and unselfish devotion of thousands of good

citizens. Hospitals of every type give tender nursing and the best attainable skill without fee to the poor and distressed, and sometimes also to those who should be ashamed not to pay for such services. Homes of rest provide refuge for aged sailors, and widows, and the distressed and afflicted of many kinds. Clubs and places of recreation for men, women and young people try to open windows of hope into the dreary conditions of city life. Other agencies feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and send the consolation of good women to nurse the sick in their own homes.

Of all these charities, none performs more lasting service than those which aim at protecting, helping or rescuing child-life; the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (which here anticipated by some years the foundation of the National Society); the Police-aided Clothing Society, which clothes the ragged urchins of the streets, and calls in the aid of the police to prevent drunken parents from pawning the clothes; or, above all, those agencies which are associated with the names of Nugent, Major Lester, Garrett, Berry and Birt, which strive to pluck children out of the horrors and iniquities of the slums, and give them a fair chance and a new start in happier surroundings. A volume would scarcely suffice to describe all the manifold labours of charity that are unweariedly pursued in the city, and to enumerate in the baldest catalogue the lives that have been spent to bring relief to poverty and pain. Benevolence seems almost inexhaustible, and the

record of the sums which Liverpool annually devotes to these high aims surpasses belief or imagination, and makes the observer think more warmly of his kind. And yet, when one thinks of all these noble labours, it is not altogether a feeling of satisfaction that is uppermost. That there should be so many men and women willing to give life and (what matters less) money, is a great thing: but that all their labours, so generously supported and so continuously exercised, should yet leave so vast a mass of misery unrelieved, is the most terrible indictment that could be framed upon the conditions of life which render them necessary.

There is one great enterprise of this period of which nothing has yet been said. Many citizens feel that no undertaking of the century has been more ambitious, or more pregnant of great results, than the foundation of the University, whose twenty-fifth anniversary coincides with the seven hundredth anniversary of the city.

The dream of planting in the midst of the shops and warehouses of a great city a university of a new type was one which could scarcely have been entertained until the years when the boldest schemes, and the highest ideals of what was possible and desirable for Liverpool, had begun to be entertained. When, after the Education Act of 1870, England began to be dotted with timid institutions then called University Colleges, a few enlightened men began to urge that Liverpool also should take the same

course. A handful of doctors, struggling to maintain the School of Medicine which had existed since 1834, one or two scholars, like Charles Beard, who had drifted into the not very congenial surroundings of a great commercial centre, and a few enthusiasts for scientific training as an equipment for practical life—these were the pioneers of the movement. But they found themselves faced by many obstacles. When they tried to arouse interest among the great merchants of the town, they found, as one of them has testified, that most of them were interested only in two things—money-making and good living; while others, forming their ideas of a university upon the lawns and ancient buildings of Oxford, laughed at the idea of turning a trading town into the seat of a university. Some, who might otherwise have thrown themselves into the movement, were diverted from it by the synchronous movement for the establishment of the bishopric. Yet gradually the idea gained ground, helped forward not a little by the inspiring dream of what such a civic university might be, which was put forward by the great scholar, Bishop Lightfoot, himself once a Liverpool boy; and helped still more by the whole hearted enthusiasm with which that noble philanthropist, William Rathbone, threw himself into the work of collecting funds. So at length the scheme was formally launched at a town's meeting in 1879; the corporation began its munificent support by granting a site; £50,000 were raised by subscription; and in January,

1882, the University College was opened, in a disused lunatic asylum, in the midst of a slum district.

It is not possible, in these pages, to attempt any detailed narrative of the growth of this institution in the twenty-five years which have passed since its opening. Beginning almost last of all English cities in the provision of higher education, Liverpool has, in twenty-five years, surpassed all but the oldest of her compeers, and even to Manchester she is rapidly creeping up. Two things have rendered this amazing progress possible. The first is the steady and lavish support of a number of pious founders, whose generosity has rivalled that of any mediaeval patrons of learning, and whose gifts have only increased in volume as the years have passed. The second has been the cordial and friendly support of the city government, which has not only co-operated with the university in the creation of a whole series of special advanced schools, and provided numerous scholarships, but has given direct grants of money, culminating in a noble subsidy of £10,000 *per annum*. And two features have especially marked the work which this new civic university has set itself to do. The first is the determination that all knowledge is to be its province, and that its function is not to be confined to the communication of already established knowledge, but is to include the continual investigation of unexplored fields; it is to be a factory as well as a market of learning. The second feature is that it has set

itself to provide efficient training for all the professions that call for scientific attainments; it will not confine itself to the professions of the old world, but will give an equipment for the innumerable new professions which have been called into being by the changed conditions of modern life.

As this new conception of a university has dawned upon the community, it has attracted to itself a marvellous flow of generosity. Thirty-two endowed professorships have been established, together with a host of lectureships, representing amongst them almost the whole range of human knowledge. A remarkable group of big buildings, equipped for the most advanced work, has been planted on the summit of Brownlow Hill, where the old Mosslake once sent out its streamlet to turn the ancient mill. Students have multiplied, till now they number nearly 1,000, and come from all quarters of the earth. Finally, progress became so rapid that the name and status of a 'University College' no longer represented the facts; and in its twenty-first year, thanks to the cordial support of the city, the college obtained from the Crown its charter as a fully-organised and independent university, and worthily took rank among the great seats of learning of the world. It has much yet to add before it can stand comparison with the vast universities of other countries. Yet the trading town, which not long ago took no interest in such matters, may well pride itself upon what it has already achieved, and, in its own seven hundredth anniversary, rejoice also

in the twenty-fifth anniversary of its youngest and greatest institution.

Such an institution is a proud adornment to the city, but it is still more useful than decorative. The mere presence in the midst of a commercial community of a solid body of men of ability, whose interests are not commercial and whose notions of success in life are not to be expressed in terms of money, has meant something. In addition to that, the establishment of the university has meant *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, and that is the only sound principle upon which a healthy and prosperous community can be organised. The schools of all types are being supplied with intelligent and cultivated teachers. All those professions which increasingly depend upon trained brain-power are receiving a stream of recruits. The problems that face the trade, the health and the social life of a vast community are being scientifically investigated. Above all, a thousand intellectual interests are stimulated; life is widened and enriched; and in the midst of a community necessarily engrossed in the pursuit of gain, a fastness has been erected for the support and maintenance of the disinterested love of knowledge and of pure thought.

This is perhaps the crown of the achievements of a wonderful period: a period which has witnessed a transformation in the character of the town, and in the spirit in which civic obligations are regarded, still more remarkable than the growth of its wealth and population. The new



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dignity to which the town had thus attained received a recognition which it had fully earned when, by the first charter of Queen Victoria in 1880, it was granted that Liverpool should no longer be denominated merely a 'borough,' but had earned the higher appellation of a 'city.' Thirteen years later, in 1893, the Queen's second charter gave a new dignity to the chief magistrate who is annually elected to preside over all these honourable activities: the plain Mayor of Liverpool became, in full-blown sounding phrase, the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of the City of Liverpool.

It is indeed a remarkable and a very heartening contrast that presents itself if we compare the borough of 1835 with the city of 1907. In 1835 the borough did little for its inhabitants; it was a place where they dwelt as they best might until they should have made enough money to be able to leave it. But now, what does the city not do for its citizens? It is no longer content merely to guard their lives and property, though it does this better than ever. It takes care of them from the cradle to the grave. It offers to see that the child is brought safely into the world. It provides him in infancy with suitable food. It gives him playgrounds to amuse himself in, and baths to swim in. It takes him to school, and offers him chances of passing from elementary to higher schools, and thence to the university, and thence to any position in the world for which he is fit; or it trains him for his future trade. It

sees that the citizen's house is properly built, and sometimes even builds it for him. It brings into his rooms an unfailing supply of pure water from the remote hills. It guards his food, and tries to secure that it is not dangerously adulterated. It sweeps the streets for him, and disposes of the refuse of his house. It carries him swiftly to and from his work. It gives him books to read, pictures to look at, music to listen to, and lectures to stimulate his thought. If he is sick, it nurses him; if he is penniless, it houses him; and when he dies, if none other will, it buries him. Every year its services grow greater, and though there are still too many who are whelmed in such sodden and sordid poverty that they have no ground for gratitude to the world—no ground for anything but bitterness—yet to most inhabitants the services which the city renders are so great, that it begins at last to have a real claim on their reverence. Dimly one begins to foresee a time when the strange Virgilian motto of the city may be pronounced without a smile: *Deus nobis haec otia fecit*, ours is a God-given peace.

Conclusion

THE life-story of our community is a long one; if it has been rightly told, it is a thrilling one too, full of strange contrasts and marvellous changes of fortune and ideas. It has not been rightly told if, at the end of it, the reader feels any disposition to glory in the colossal heaping up of wealth and the colossal increase of population. Trade may go as swiftly as it has come; the great docks may lie empty, with grass-grown wharves; the miles of cheap houses may drop to pieces in vague heaps where dockans and nettles will flourish. If that fate should come, what will be the judgment of the world upon the character and the work of the dead city? Will travellers come to Liverpool in the spirit in which we may go to Carthage, to view the inexpressive relics of a people that pursued gain with remorseless energy, and then were blotted out? Or will they come in the spirit in which we still visit Athens or Florence, to see a real city, a city whose very atmosphere enriched the lives of all its citizens, a city which, for that reason, the world can never allow itself to forget?

Such questions it is no part of a historian's duty to answer; but they cannot fail to present themselves at the close of a long survey such as we have taken. In the Liverpool of yesterday there was

not much to promise a very inspiring memory; but the Liverpool of to-day challenges a nobler verdict. The city which, at the opening of a new age, is simultaneously engaged in erecting a great cathedral and a great university, is surely no mean city. It is building for itself twin citadels of the ideal, a citadel of faith and a citadel of knowledge; and from the hill which once looked down on an obscure hamlet, and which later saw ships begin to crowd the river, and streets to spread over the fields, their towers will look across the ship-thronged estuary, monuments of a new and more generous aspiration.

Appendix

Note on Authorities

The following note is intended not as an exhaustive catalogue, but as a description of the principal groups of materials for the history of Liverpool, especially those which I have myself employed.

I. **Charters and Leases.** The originals of the twenty charters granted to the borough between 1207 and 1893 are, with one exception (the Charter of Charles II), all in the possession of the Corporation, and are housed in the Municipal Offices. Contemporary copies of the missing charter, and of all but one of the others, are preserved in the Public Record Office in London. The originals of the grants of the fee farm lease of the town (which tell us far more than the charters about its development) are in some cases in the Municipal Offices, in other cases among the muniments of Lord Sefton at Croxteth. Several of the leases, however, are missing; and although in some cases these omissions can be supplied from copies in the Record Office, there are still a number of gaps. The most important of the charters were printed, with translations, in the *Appendix to the Report of the Commission on Municipal Corporations* (1883). They have also been printed in abstract, with much useful annotation, by Sir James Picton, Mr. T. N. Morton and Mr. E. M. Hance in the *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, xxxvi, 53 ff (1884). The only full collection of the surviving leases, (together with a complete set of the charters, and much kindred and illustrative matter) is that which has been printed by Miss E. M. Platt in the *History of Municipal Government in Liverpool* (1906). These documents form the principal material for the early study of the town.

II. **Private Local Charters.** Much additional light, especially upon the social and economic aspects of early Liverpool, can be derived from the very numerous deeds, chiefly relating to transfers of land in the township of Liverpool, which survive. It is from these deeds, for example. that the list of early mayors, the location of the streets and walls, the system of agriculture, etc., can alone be worked out. There are three principal groups of these deeds. (i) The Moore deeds, preserved by the ancient Liverpool family of the Old *H*all and Bank *H*all, are now in the City Library, to the number of about 1400. I have used the abstracts made by members of the School of Local *H*istory. (ii) A considerable number of deeds in the possession of descendants of the Crosse family of Crosse *H*all, have been edited by Mr. R. D. Radcliffe, M.A., F.S.A. (iii) A large number of transcripts of deeds formerly in the possession of the Crosse family were made by Christopher Towneley, a Lancashire antiquary of the seventeenth century. Some of these are among the Additional Manuscripts in the British Museum; others in the possession of Mr. W. Farrer. Besides these deeds there are a large number at Croxteth and in other private collections. A great service to local history would be rendered by the publication of a calendar of all available deeds of this class in chronological order, down to the sixteenth century.

III. **National Records.** Much information is to be obtained from the archives in the Public Record Office relating to the interferences of the central government—financial, administrative or judicial—in local affairs. These are, for the Middle Ages, mainly included in the Rolls known (according to the different classes of matter with which they deal) as Pipe Rolls, Patent Rolls, Close Rolls, Assize Rolls, Subsidy Rolls, Rolls of Parliament, etc. Many of them have been published, in full or in abstract, by the Record Commission, and the *Calendars of Patent and Close Rolls* (so far as published) have in particular yielded a good deal of material bearing upon Liverpool. In *Lancashire Pipe Rolls*, Mr. W. Farrer has made the Pipe Roll entries relating to Lancashire the thread upon which he has strung much useful material and acute criticism. The Records of the Duchy of Lancaster, now also preserved at the Public Record Office, are naturally still more rich in local material than

the national records. A large amount both of the national and of the Duchy records has been available for the use of scholars by the invaluable publications of the Chetham Society and of the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire. Of the former series I may name especially vols. xxii, xlix, xcv and cxiii ; of the latter vol. xlviii (*Lancashire Inquisitions*) and vol. xli (*Lancashire Court Rolls*, which includes the only court roll of mediaeval Liverpool). For the later period (from the sixteenth century downwards) the published volumes of *Acts of the Privy Council* and *Calendars of State Papers* (*Domestic*) contain much useful material; while there is a vast amount of material as yet unedited (regimental lists, assessment returns, etc.) and a good deal which has been published by the Record Society and elsewhere.

A large manuscript collection of copies of documents from these sources bearing on the history of Liverpool was made by CHARLES OKILL, Clerk of Committees to the Corporation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This collection is preserved in the Municipal Offices. It formed the principal source from which THOMAS BAINES and SIR JAMES PICTON drew their materials for the early history of Liverpool. A good many documents of value were included by MATTHEW GREGSON in his *Portfolio of Fragments* (1817). Mr. W. FARRER has had very many previously unknown documents transcribed, and I have had the inestimable advantage of being permitted to use many of his transcripts. But there is still a great deal of work to be done before this source of information can be said to have been exhausted.

IV. Local Official Records. The above three classes of documents practically exhaust the material for the history of mediaeval Liverpool. But in the middle of the sixteenth century the local official records begin, and are thenceforward the principal source of information: the historian suddenly passes from darkness to light.

(*a*) *The Municipal Records* preserved in the Municipal Offices, include proceedings at Portmoots, proceedings of Assemblies and Town Council, and a good deal of miscellaneous matter. There are gaps, but on the whole the records are extremely rich

from 1551, and it is possible to gain a very intimate view of the condition of the town. These records ought to be printed (so far as they relate to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) almost as they stand, only formal matter being abbreviated. They should be equipped with full indices; and it would be a great aid to scholars if to each section of them a careful introduction were prefixed, gathering up clearly what they have to tell on various aspects of municipal life. Substantial excerpts from them were made by Mr. T. N. Morton, a devoted scholar, long archivist to the Corporation. Sir James Picton published many of Mr. Morton's excerpts under the title of *Liverpool Municipal Records* (2 vols., 1883 and 1886). Unfortunately his arrangement is rather bewildering, and his index is almost useless. From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards the Municipal Records become more formal, the most important business being increasingly transacted in Committees. The later records should therefore be treated in a different way from the earlier records.

(*b*) *The Vestry Minutes*, or records of the administration of parochial business and of the Poor Law, are preserved in the Parish Offices, Brownlow *H*ill. They begin in 1682. Until the middle of the eighteenth century they are very summary; but thereafter they are full and instructive. As Liverpool was remarkable for having worked out perhaps the model system of parochial administration in England in that period, the publication of a series of judicious abstracts from these records would be (as Mr. Sidney Webb has urged) a real service to historical scholarship.

(*c*) *The Records of the* Dock *Board* I have not been able to use at all. But the story of the growth and government of the greatest dock estate in the world is clearly of sufficient importance to make it desirable that abstracts of the more important of these documents should be published.

(*d*) Of other groups of records I may mention the *Trade Unions' Minutes*, of which many survive. I have not been able to use them, but they should be exceedingly valuable for the social history of the nineteenth century. The records of the Blue-coat School and of other charities also deserve investigation.

V. **Family Papers.** A very large amount of material relating to Liverpool is to be found among the papers of old families connected with the town, and even of some families very indirectly connected with it. Many collections of such papers have been calendared by the *Historical MSS. Commission*. But the Commission has not dealt with the collections most directly important for Liverpool—those of the Earls of Derby, Sefton, and Lathom, the Duke of Atholl, the Blundells, the Halsalls and other Lancashire families. The Sefton papers at Croxteth are especially rich, the ancestors of Lord Sefton having long been lords of the manor of Liverpool. Some fragments of the Derby papers have been published by the Chetham Society (vols. xxix, xxxi and n.s. xix). Of those collections which the *H*istorical MSS. Commission has dealt with I have found useful material in the *Cecil*, *Rutland*, *Kenyon*, *Cowper*, *Portland*, *Harley*, *Somerset*, *Denbigh*, *Le Fleming*, *Puleston and* Dartmouth papers, as well as various helpful references in other collections. The most important, however, of these collections for our purpose is the *Stewart MSS.*, which include many papers of the Moore family, especially letters from and to Col. John Moore relating to the sieges of Liverpool. The *H*istorical MSS. Commission has also published abstracts of the MSS. of the *City of Chester*, which naturally contain many references to Liverpool, and of the *House of Lords MSS.*, which are also rich. Contributions to this class of Family Papers have also been made from other sources. Of quite unparalleled value is the *Moore Rental*, being an account of the lands of the Moore family in Liverpool, written by Sir Edward Moore in 1668. This was printed by the Chetham Society (vol. xii); it has since been admirably edited by Mr. W. Fergusson Irvine, with a wealth of elucidation, under the title of *Liverpool in the reign of King Charles II* (1899). An almost equally valuable illustration of Liverpool at the close of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth is afforded by the *Norris Papers*, published by the Chetham Society (vol. ix). The same Society has also published other family papers which contain stray references, useful in their degree. The information to be obtained from family papers is as yet far from being exhausted.

VI. Biographies, Diaries, Reminiscences, etc. From the eighteenth century onward this source of material is exceptionally rich, and no exhaustive enumeration is possible. The lives of eminent men connected with Liverpool, such as several of the *Earls of* Derby, *Jeremiah Horrox*, *John Newton*, *George Canning* and *W. E. Gladstone* yield much. More still comes from the biographies of men who have spent the principal part of their lives in Liverpool, such as *William Roscoe*, *James Currie*, *William Rathbone*, etc. Some local reminiscences are of great value, like *Liverpool a few Years Since* by an Old Stager [Rev. J. Aspinall] (1852), and *Recollections of Old Liverpool* by a Nonagenarian [James Stonehouse] (1863). To this class belongs *The Autobiography of Hugh Crow*, which provides a very vivid picture of seafaring life in the eighteenth century; and *Prison Scenes* by Seacome Ellison (1838) which records the adventures of a Liverpool sailor in French military prisons. Descriptions by strangers who visited the town often supply touches which are lacking in the local records. The principal early accounts of this type are those of Leland (*Itinerary*, written c. 1540, printed 1710), Camden (*Britannia*, 1586), Adam Martindale (*Diary*, Chet. Soc., vol. iv), Blome (*Britannia*, 1673), Defoe (*Tour through Great Britain*, 1704), Samuel Derrick (*Letters from Leverpoole, etc.*, 1767). After the middle of the eighteenth century such visitors became so numerous that no catalogue of them can be attempted.

VII. Reports of Trials and Royal Commissions form an exceedingly important source of information. Among these may be named the voluminous Report of Proceedings at the great trials on the powers of the Town Council in 1791 and following years (published in 1796); the brief report of the trial on Town Dues in 1833 (published in 1835); the report of the Poor Law Commission in 1832, of the Municipal Corporation Commission in 1833, and of the Special Commission on the Administration of the Dock Estate in 1853. These are for the most part very voluminous, but they cannot be neglected. The material they supply, however, (except in so far as it is drawn from sources already described) relates principally to the nineteenth century.

VIII. **Pamphlets.** The first important group of pamphlets consist of those relating to the Civil War, of which a useful collection was made by Geo. Ormerod for the Chetham Society (vol. ii), under the title of *Lancashire Civil War Tracts*. Pamphlets of local origin begin with *A letter from Mr. Joseph Clegg* and *A correct Translation of the Charter of Liverpool with remarks by Philodemus* (both N.D., but C. 1750), and others bearing upon the vexed questions of municipal government. In the later years of the eighteenth century pamphlets become so numerous that any catalogue would be out of place, and during the nineteenth century they are like the pebbles on a beach. From 1846 the Annual Reports of the Medical Officers of Health form an invaluable source of information. Under this head may conveniently come the *Poll-books and Collections of Squibs* for the parliamentary elections of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These supply much vivid colour. S. Richmond and the Rev. W. Shepherd, the authors of the best of these squibs, have been already commemorated.

IX. **Newspapers and Directories.** No attempt can be made to give a bibliography of Liverpool newspapers, which have been numerous ever since the early years of the reign of George III, and fortunately such an attempt will soon be rendered unnecessary, as a very full bibliography is now being prepared by the City Library. As to Directories, an exhaustive account and complete list will be found in vol. lviii of the *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, from the pen of Mr. Geo. T. Shaw.

X. **Guide Books, etc.** Some of the early guide books contain useful information. The chief are *Moss's Liverpool Guide* (1794, and several later editions), Kaye's *Stranger in Liverpool* (1810 and several later editions), Taylor's *Picture of Liverpool* (1834), *Liverpool as it is* (1840), *The Stranger's Vade Mecum* (N.D.). In this category may be included Stonehouse's *Streets of Liverpool* (N.D., but C. 1870), an excellent collection of detail and anecdote. Into a category by itself should fall Herdman's *Pictorial Relics of Ancient Liverpool* (first series, 1843; second series, 1856). Most of these valuable drawings are reconstructions based upon old sketches; others are views of buildings, etc., then surviving, but now demolished.

XI. **Histories of Liverpool.** The set histories of Liverpool fall into two distinct groups: those which were written before OKILL'S collections of material were available, and those which have been written since. In the first group there are four books: ENFIELD'S *Essay towards the History of Leverpool* (1773), based upon material collected by GEORGE PERRY; an anonymous *General and Descriptive Account of the Ancient and Present state of the Town of Liverpool* (1795)—a vigorous piece of work, valuable on social conditions and on the slave trade; *The History of Liverpool* (1810), anonymous, but issued by THOMAS TROUGHTON, a bookseller in Ranelagh Street; and *Liverpool, Its Commerce, etc.*, by *HENRY* SMITHERS (1825), a rambling book containing some useful statistics. These four books are all worthless for early history, but cast useful lights upon the period in which they were written. The second group includes two books: *The History of the Commerce and Town of Liverpool* by THOMAS BAINES (1852) is an elaborate and conscientious work, in which much use was made of OKILL'S transcripts. BAINES' book was the first real attempt to investigate seriously the history of the town. It is distinguished by a conscientious endeavour to relate the growth of the town to the general growth of English commerce. And although the author scarcely knew how to interpret his documents in the early period, and was driven into chaos by the superabundant material for the later period, his book is still the best general history of Liverpool. In 1873 Mr. (afterwards Sir) JAMES A. PICTON published his *Memorials of Liverpool* in two volumes, the first being historical, the second topographical. The topographical volume is full and interesting.

A number of books have dealt with special periods or aspects of Liverpool history. R. BROOKE'S *Liverpool during the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century* (1853) is a useful collection of fragments and documents, together with much material derived from the reminiscences of the author's father. GOMER WILLIAMS' *History of the Liverpool Privateers and Slave-trade* (1897) is an invaluable collection, in chronological order, of materials drawn from newspapers, the private papers of various firms, etc., and it sheds much new light upon its subject. J. HUGHES' *Liverpool Banks and Bankers* (1905) forms the first attempt to deal systematically with its subject.

Perhaps I may also mention the *Introduction to the History of Municipal Government in Liverpool* (1906), the first attempt to explain the purport and effect of the various charters of the borough, and the gradual development of the form of borough government. To this group may also be added the invaluable *Handbook to the Congress of the Royal Institutes of Public Health* (1903), in which Dr. *H*ope has gathered together a most interesting collection of articles by experts on the development of various spheres of municipal activity. Among books on more general subjects which have sections relating to Liverpool, mention should be made of BENNETT and ELTON's *History of Corn Milling*, in vol. iv of which (1904) Mr. JOHN ELTON has put together with infinite patience the materials for the history of the Liverpool mills; S. and B. WEBB's *History of Local Government* (1907), in which there is an illuminating section on the parochial administration of Liverpool in the eighteenth century; and Mrs. J. R. GREEN's *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century* (1894), in which there is a chapter on Liverpool.

XII. **Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire.**—So much of the most valuable material and the most acute criticism of the history of Liverpool is scattered through the fifty-eight volumes of this society (which has included all the principal local antiquaries for the last sixty years) that they deserve to stand in a class by themselves. The contributions which they contain are so numerous that no catalogue is possible, and to single out a few examples would be invidious.

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