

**WILLIAM
AXON**

ECHOES OF
OLD

LANCASHIRE

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Echoes of old Lancashire

Preface

This volume is intended for those who find it pleasant, at times, to wander in the byways of topography and local literature. The development of Lancashire, especially in its relation to modern industrial life, has been told by more than one able historian, and all that is here attempted is to glean in the ample harvest fields. The bygone customs, forgotten worthies, outworn superstitions, historical episodes and travellers' tales here recorded, will, it is hoped, not be without interest. If some of the articles seem more modern than the title would strictly justify, it must be remembered that the changes in the condition of the County Palatine have been so rapid that many things have become obsolete in the life time of the existing generation.

To several friends, and especially to the Rev. Dr. Casartelli and Mr. C. W. Sutton, thanks are due for various suggestions.

William E. A. Axon.

Moss Side, Manchester.

The “Lancashire Plot.”

The town of Manchester was in a state of indignant and feverish excitement on the 17th of October, 1694, being the sixth year of the reign of William the Deliverer. Everywhere groups of townspeople were discussing the all-absorbing topic of the “Lancashire Plot,” for on that day there came to the town four of their Majesties’ judges, with every circumstance of pomp and parade, to try for their lives gentlemen of the best blood of Lancashire and Cheshire; unfortunate prisoners who were accused of having conspired against the Deliverer, of having been guilty of the treason of remaining faithful to the old King, whom the rest of the nation had cast off. The prisoners were brought into town strongly guarded, amidst the sympathetic demonstrations of their neighbours, who were equally liberal of groans and hisses for the wretched informers who were about to do their endeavour to bring them to the scaffold.

Lancashire, which in the civil war struck some hearty blows for the Parliament, was now a hotbed of disaffection. The old cavalier families, in spite of bitter experience of Stuart ingratitude, remained faithful in spirit to the exile of St. Germain; and the common people would have no love for King William, who was a foreigner, nor for Queen Mary, who sat upon the throne of her royal father, whilst he wandered a weary exile in a foreign land. The accused would have been pretty certain of sympathy had the public mind been convinced of the reality of the supposed conspiracy. How much more so, then, when it was shrewdly suspected that the charge had been trumped up by a gang of villains eager for blood-money, and supported by greater rogues anxious for a share of the estates which would be forfeited upon the conviction of their victims? Nor was the suspicion altogether groundless; covetous eyes were fixed longingly on these fine Lancashire acres, and the Roman Catholic gentry ran great danger of being defrauded of their inheritances.

In 1693, a commission sat at Warrington to inquire into certain lands and property alleged to have been given to “superstitious uses,” *i. e.*, to ascertain whether the Roman Catholic gentry had applied any portion of their estates or income to the promotion of their faith, or the sustenance of its ministers, and if they could be convicted of this heinous crime the property was confiscated, and one-third portion was to be the reward of the undertakers. So confident were these persons of their prey, that the plunder was prospectively allotted. As the result of this commission, where the defendants were not heard, the matter was carried into the Exchequer Chamber. Here it was pretended that at a meeting at the papal nuncio’s house, Lord Molyneux, William Standish, Thomas Eccleston, William Dicconson, Sir Nicholas Sherborne, Sir W. Gerard, and Thomas Gerard, had all promised money or lands for Popish uses. But the accusers had been very clumsy, for the falsehood of each separate item of the accusation was so abundantly proved, that the Government was forced to abandon all further proceedings.

When, therefore, in the next year, it was bruited about that a plot had been discovered to bring back King James and murder King William of Orange; that men had been enlisted, commissions received from St. Germain, arms bought and concealed in the old halls of Lancashire and Cheshire, and that those who had by the Warrington inquiry been in danger of losing their broad acres, were now also likely to lose their lives; men said, not unnaturally, that it was a base and horrible conspiracy against the Lancashire gentlemen; that this was the next move in the iniquitous game began at Warrington. If broken tapsters and branded rogues were to be encouraged in devoting to the traitor’s block gentlemen of rank and estate, whose life was safe?

Such was the state of feeling amongst the crowds which surrounded the Sessions House, opposite to where our present Exchange is erected. It was not until the 20th that the trial before a jury began. On that Saturday, Sir Roland Stanley, Sir Thomas Clifton, William Dicconson, Philip Langton, Esquires, and William Blundell, Gent., were placed at the bar and, in long verbose sentences, accused both in Latin and English generally of being false traitors to our Sovereign Lord and Lady,

and specifically of having accepted commissions for the raising of an army from James II., late King of England. After the case had been opened, Sir William Williams, their Majesties' counsel, called, as first witness, John Lunt, who was asked if he knew all the five men at the bar. Lunt, with front of brass, answered that he did know them all. Here Sir Roland Stanley cried out, "Which is Sir Roland Stanley?" Whereupon, to testify how intimately the informer was acquainted with them, he pointed out Sir Thomas Clifton! Great was the outcry in the court, which did not lessen when the judge bid Lunt take one of the officers' white staves, and lay it on the head of Sir Roland Stanley, and he again indicated the wrong man. Being asked which was Sir Thomas Clifton, he unhesitatingly pointed out Sir Roland Stanley. Having thus shown his accuracy, he was allowed to proceed with his narrative of the plot. His evidence asserted that in 1689 one Dr. Bromfield, a Quaker, was sent by the Lancashire gentry to the court at St. Germain, to request King James to send them commissions, that they might enlist men for his service. Bromfield, being known as a Jacobite agent, it was determined to employ some one less known, and Lunt was pitched upon for the purpose. So, in company with Mr. Threlfall, of Goosnargh, he came over in a vessel which landed at Cockerham, that famous village where the devil dare not come. At the residence of Mr. Tildesley they separated, Threlfall went into Yorkshire to distribute commissions, and Lunt was summoned to attend a midnight meeting of the Lancashire Jacobites, held at the seat of Lord Molyneux, at Croxteth. Here the persons now accused were present, and many others, none of whom Lunt had ever seen before. The commissions were delivered, the health drunk of their Majesties over the water, and some little additional treason talked. At this point in the evidence Sir Roland Stanley remarked how improbable it was that he should accept a commission which might endanger his life and estate from an utter stranger. "But," cries Lunt, "I brought you with your commission Dr. Bromfield's letter." Then the judge said to Sir Roland, "You are answered – that was his credentials;" but did not think fit to say that Lunt had made no mention in his depositions of this circumstance, which was evidently invented on the spur of the moment to confound Sir Roland Stanley. The judge also observed there was no great matter in Lunt not being able to point out the prisoners correctly. Lunt, thus encouraged by Sir Giles Eyre, proceeded with his veracious narrative – swore that the Lancashire gentlemen had given him money to enlist men and buy arms; that he beat up sixty men in London, who were quartered in different parts of the County Palatine; and particularised some persons to whom arms had been sent. In 1691 (about July or August), he was sent to France, to acquaint the Pretender with what his friends had been doing, and to inquire when they might expect him in England. The spring following was named as the happy time when the Stuarts were to be re-established on the English throne. He also named a meeting at Dukenhall, when some more commissions were distributed by Mr. Walmsley, one of the accused. Mr. Dicconson now asked Lunt why he had not disclosed the existence of this terrible plot, or why he had revealed it at all. Lunt was evidently prepared for this inquiry, and his retort was prompt and crushing. Some proposals had been made to which he could not assent. Being pressed by the Court to be less reticent, and explain his meaning, he said there was a design to murder King William; that the Earl of Melfort (the Pretender's friend and minister) had asked him to aid in the assassination; he had consented to do so, but a Carthusian friar, to whom he had revealed it under confession, told him it would be wilful murder if King William were killed, except in open battle, and he had revealed the plot lest his old colleagues should carry out their wicked project.

Such, in brief, was the evidence of Lunt, deviating often from the tenour of his previous depositions, which had been made before he had been under the moulding influences of Aaron Smith, that unscrupulous Jacobite hunter, whose duty it was to manage these little matters, to procure witnesses and favourable juries. Favourable judges were supplied by his betters. And to fully understand the gravity of the prisoners' position it should be recollected that they could not have the assistance of counsel; their witnesses could not be compelled to attend; they were ignorant of the witnesses to be produced against them; and, until they stood in the dock, had not heard the indictment against them. Every circumstance was in favour of the crown. Lunt's evidence was corroborated

by Womball, a carrier, and one Wilson, who had been branded for roguery, as to the delivery of commissions and arms. *Colonel* Uriah Brereton (a saddler's apprentice and common sharper) testified that he had received money from Sir Roland Stanley for the service of King James. This worthy Captain Bobadil being asked if he was not poor and necessitous when he received these gifts, cried out, in true ruffler style, "Poor! That is a question to degrade a gentleman." The remaining evidence we need not go into, save that of John Knowles, who, having been sworn, declared "by fair yea and nay, he knew nout on't."

Then, after short speeches by Stanley and Dicconson, the witnesses for the defence were examined. The first half-dozen made some damaging attacks upon the character of John Lunt, representing him as a mean scoundrel, a bigamist, and a notorious highwayman. Then Lawrence Parsons, his brother-in-law, testified that he had been invited by Lunt to aid him in denouncing the Lancashire gentlemen, but had refused the offer of 20s. per week and £150 at the end, rather than "swear against his countrymen that he knew nothing against." Mr. Legh Bankes, a gentleman of Gray's Inn, told how Taafe, an intimate friend of Lunt's, and who was expected to be a witness for the crown, had been to the wife of Mr. Dicconson, and revealed to her the whole design of Lunt, offering to introduce some friend of the prisoner's to Lunt, as persons likely to be serviceable in any swearing that might be needed to hang the prisoners. Mr. Bankes was suspicious of this being a trap; but having been introduced to Lunt, that worthy, over a glass of ale, very frankly said that he wanted gentlemen of reputation to back his own evidence, and if Bankes would join he should be well provided for. He produced his "narrative of the plot," and Taafe read aloud this manuscript, which named several hundreds besides the prisoners. "Why were these not taken up also?" inquired Bankes. Lunt's answer was, "We will do these people's business first, and when that hath given us credit, we will run through the body of the nation." When the next witness arose, Lunt and Aaron Smith must surely have trembled, for it was their old friend Taafe, who, after adding his testimony to Lunt's villainous character, gave a brief account of that worthy gentleman's career as a discoverer of plots. How the first one he discovered (it was in Kent) came to nothing, as he had failed to find corroborative evidence; and how he was near failing again from the same cause; how Aaron Smith had edited and improved his original narrative. Lunt wanted Taafe as a witness, complained that the men he had hired to swear were blockish, and of such low caste as to carry little weight. Could Taafe introduce him to some gentleman – (God save the mark!) – willing to perjure his soul, consign innocent men to the scaffold, and receive blood-money from Aaron Smith? Taafe, from some motive not clear, determined to balk the villany of his fellow-informer, hence the circumstances narrated by Mr. Legh Bankes, whose suspicions of treachery had prevented a full discovery. Taafe had partially opened his mind to the Rev. Mr. Allenson, who had also distrusted him in a similar manner. In Roger Dicconson, brother of the prisoner, he found a bolder and more adventurous spirit. The evidence of Mr. Allenson need not be analysed. He was followed by Mr. Roger Dicconson, who told how he was introduced at a coffee-house in Fetter Lane, by Taafe to Lunt, as a proper person to aid in the plan. Dicconson called himself Howard, a member of the Church of England, willing to join in the plot for a valuable consideration. Lunt said they had gold in for £100,000 a year, and that the informants were to have a third of the forfeited estates. He asked Lunt if he knew Dicconson's brother, and Lunt, all unconscious that he was sitting face to face with him, replied, "Yes, very well; for he had delivered commissions to Hugh and Roger Dicconson about Christmas!"

Many more witnesses were examined, some of whom established that certain of the prisoners were not in the neighbourhood of Croxteth and Dukenhalth at the time of the alleged Jacobite meetings at those places; whilst others gave most damaging evidence as to the utter rascality of Lunt and his chief witnesses – Womball, Wilson, and Brereton. The judge, in his summing up, contented himself with saying that the matter deserved great consideration, in which opinion the jury did not agree, for, after a short consultation, and without leaving court, they returned for each prisoner a verdict of Not Guilty. Mr. Justice Eyres then discharged them, with an eulogy upon the merciful and

easy Government under which they lived, and advised them to beware of ever entering into plots and conspiracies against it. Lord Molyneux, Sir William Gerard, and Bartholomew Walmsley, Esq., were then put to the bar, but, no witnesses appearing, they were also declared Not Guilty, which gave Mr. Justice Eyres an opportunity for another cynical speech, concluding with these words: "Let me therefore say to you, go and sin no more, lest a worse thing befall you." As they had just been pronounced innocent, the meaning and fitness of his remarks are somewhat questionable. But if his bias prejudiced him against the prisoners, they would have compensation in the popular satisfaction at their acquittal. Manchester went mad with joy. Lunt and his merry men were pelted out of the town, and only escaped lynching by the intervention of the prisoners' friends; and all concerned in the prosecution came in for a share of popular hatred. The peril which the Lancashire gentlemen thus strangely escaped was a very great one, but the peril which the country escaped was greater still, for had there been wanting the disaffection of Taafe to his brother rascal Lunt, the courage and address of Roger Dicconson, and the honesty of the Manchester jury, England might have seen a repetition of the atrocities of Titus Oates and William Bedloe; might have seen a bigamist highwayman going from shire to shire and fattening on the blood and ruin of the best of her nobles and gentlemen.

Such will be the impression left on most minds by a candid examination of the proceedings at this remarkable trial as recorded in the volume edited by the Rt. Rev. Alexander Goss, D.D., for the Chetham Society in 1864. It is only fair to add that those who believe in the reality of the "plot" may cite the resolution of the House of Commons (many witnesses on the subject were examined some months after this trial), that there had been a dangerous plot, and that the special assize at Manchester was justifiable. That resolution strikes one as being more political than judicial. A prosecution for perjury against Lunt was abandoned, because it was understood that persistence in it would bring on the prosecutors the weight of the harsh penal laws.

De Quincey's Highwayman

“It was, in fact, the skeleton of an eminent robber, or perhaps of a murderer... It is singular enough that these earlier grounds of suspicion against X. were not viewed as such by anybody until they came to be combined with another and final ground. Then the presumptions seemed conclusive. But by that time X. himself had been executed for a robbery, and had been manufactured into a skeleton by the famous surgeon Cruikshank, assisted by Mr. White and other pupils.” – Thomas de Quincey's “Autobiographical Sketches,” chap. xiv.

In “The House on the Marsh,” a novel that has had a wide popularity in recent years, the authoress, Miss Florence Warden, has chosen for “hero” a highwayman, or rather burglar, who lives in the style of a country squire, and, having access to the “best houses,” manages to make his position in society contributory to success in the “profession” he has selected. There is a curious parallel to the theme of this story in the life-history of a man who was at one time an inhabitant of Manchester, and whose strange career has already furnished material to Thomas de Quincey and Mrs. Gaskell. More than a century ago there stood – and still stands – at Knutsford a house on the heathside known as the Cann Office. The tenant appeared to be a man of independent fortune, kept horses, joined in the hunting sports of the district, and obtained access to the houses and tables of the neighbouring squires. According to the tradition, he had one night noticed the diamonds of Lady Warburton, and followed her carriage on horse-back, but on coming up with it was disconcerted to hear her say, “Good-night, Mr. Higgins; why did you leave the ball so early?” On another occasion he is said to have noticed in Chester a ladder left accidentally against the wall of a house in one of whose bedrooms he noticed a light. Ascending, he saw a girl in her ball dress take off her jewels, and place them on the dressing-table. As soon as the maid withdrew and the young lady was in bed, Higgins opened the window, and, getting into the room, secured the valuable plunder. A slight noise partially awoke the sleeper, who said, “Oh, Mary, you know how tired I am; can't you put the things straight in the morning?” and then fell asleep again. If she had awakened and seen him he would certainly have murdered her. Some suspicion that Higgins was not altogether the plain country squire he wished to be supposed may very well have been excited by his occasional absences. It is traditionally stated that his horse's feet were cased in woollen stockings for his nocturnal expeditions. The murder of Mrs. Ruscombe, an old gentlewoman, at Bristol, caused some noise. The murderer was Higgins. Before the murder was known at Knutsford, in his anxiety to establish an *alibi*, he put in an appearance at an inn, and made an incautious allusion to it which piqued one of the company, a confirmed newsmonger, who prided himself on having the first intelligence of every event of interest. Suspicion was thus cast upon Higgins. He was arrested at his own residence, but managed to elude the constables, and vanished from the neighbourhood of Knutsford. He played the same *rôle* of country squire a few months later at French Hay, near Bristol. Thence he removed into Wales, “where he broke open Lady Maud's house at West Mead.” For this he was tried at Carmarthen, and, notwithstanding that he managed to have a forged respite sent to the Sheriff, he was hanged at Carmarthen on Saturday, 7th November, 1767. He died, we are told, in a very sullen humour, but before he was “turned off” delivered to the officials a letter to the High Sheriff. From this document and the contemporary accounts it appears that the High Sheriff was acquainted with the birth and parentage of Edward Higgins, about which no details are given. His first exploit was that of eloping from the house of his mother with a neighbour's wife. This was the beginning of “all kinds of wickedness.” He was tried at Worcester, 14th May, 1754, for housebreaking, and was sentenced to transportation. “The day before the transports were sent off from Worcester, his sister came to him early in the morning, and desired to speak with him in a private room; this was refused. She then requested that he might have permission to show her the

dungeon; thither they went, and stayed some time in close conference. She had not left the gaol more than half an hour when a farmer who lived near Worcester came in to enquire whether his sister had not been there, 'for,' says he, 'I have been robbed of £14, and I have reason to suspect her, and that she has given the money to her brother.' The turnkey told him what had passed. Higgins was searched, but nothing was then found. He was brought down to Bristol, put on board the *Frisby* for Maryland, and delivered, with the other convicts, at Annapolis. The farmer who lost the £14 (as above) came with him from Worcester to Bristol, and when Higgins was stripped on board the transport the farmer's money was found concealed in the lining of Higgins' hat; but as it could not be taken from him, the farmer was obliged to *be contented with the loss of it.*"

By breaking open a shop in Boston he obtained a considerable sum of money, and escaped by a ship sailing for England, to which he thus returned within three months of his transportation. He settled first in Manchester, and afterwards at Knutsford, where he married at the parish church, by special licence, Katherine Birtles, 21st April, 1757. In the licence he is styled yeoman, but in the entries of the baptism of his children he is called Edward Higgins, of Nether Knutsford, gentleman. His fifth child was baptised 11th June, 1764. His letter to the Sheriff concludes with these words: – "As I die an unworthy member of the Church of England, I do not desire your prayers, as you will not receive this till after my death; yet beg for God's sake (as you are a gentleman of benevolence) you will have some compassion on my poor disconsolate widow and fatherless infants, and as undoubtedly you will often hear my widow upbraided with my past misconduct, I also beg you will vindicate her to all such as not being guilty or knowing of my villany." His wife remained with him until the end. Higgins was dissected, and his skeleton formed part of the museum of Dr. Charles White, F.R.S., of Manchester. In his collection it was seen by De Quincey, who has left a characteristic account of the visit in his "Autobiographical Sketches."

In De Quincey's famous essay on "Murder as One of the Fine Arts," the professor of homicide tells this grim story about Higgins. "At the time of his execution for highway robbery I was studying under Cruikshank; and the man's figure was so uncommonly fine that no money or exertion was spared to get into possession of him with the least possible delay. By the connivance of the Under Sheriff he was cut down within the legal time, and instantly put into a chaise-and-four, so that when he reached Cruikshank's, he was positively not dead. Mr. —, a young student at that time, had the honour of giving him the *coup de grace* and finishing the sentence of the law."

Mrs. Gaskell wrote a sketch – "The Squire's Tale" – based on the career of Higgins, which appeared in *Household Words*, and is reprinted in her collected writings. When the Rev. Henry Green was preparing his history of Knutsford he carefully collected all the information that could be found respecting the gentleman highwayman. Edward Higgins deserves some remembrance not only for the strangeness of his career, but for his posthumous influence upon English literature.

Some Lancashire Centenarians

According to the census of 1891 there were 146 persons enumerated who were returned as being more than 100 years of age. Eleven of these were resident in Lancashire. It may be interesting to compare this with the statements in some of the preceding census reports. Arranged in tabular form, the following results are seen: —

Centenarians returned at each successive census.

	England and Wales.	Lancashire.
1841	249	20
1851	215	18
1861	201	25
1871	160	11
1881	141	9
1891	146	11

In Lancashire, it will be noticed, there has been a marked tendency towards the diminution of reputed centenarians. The general consent of mankind seems to have fixed upon a hundred years as almost the outside limit for the duration of human life. The Hebrews and the Chinese are agreed in this. The Celestials have a quaint way of dividing a life into cycles. From birth to 10 years of age is the opening degree; at 20, youth expired; 30, strength and marriage; 40, officially apt; 50, error knowing; 60, cycle closing; 70, rare bird of age; 80, rusty visage; 90, delayed; 100, age's extremity. Far more claims to great longevity are made than can be sustained by reasonable evidence, and it should not be forgotten that the burden of proof belongs to those who make these statements. The bulk of mankind do not exceed, and many of them never attain, the Psalmist's term of three score years and ten, and it is only reasonable that those who claim for themselves or *protégés* an existence of five or six score should be required to produce adequate evidence in support of their allegations. Curiously enough until the second half of the present century statements of extreme old age appear to have been accepted without doubt or inquiry. In the census report of 1851 a sceptical note was struck, and since then the late Sir G. C. Lewis and Mr. W. J. Thoms – especially the latter – have done useful service by a persistent demand for evidence. Under investigation some cases have proved to be impostures, and others mistakes and self-deceptions.

The historian of the county of Lancaster claims for Ormskirk parish the prevalence of an unusual degree of longevity. In the churchyard there are gravestones over four venerable parishioners, which record that the first of them died at the advanced age of 94, the second at the age of 102, the third at the age of 104, and the fourth at the age of 106 years. Many centenarians, real or supposed, have been connected with Lancashire, and it is more than probable that a rigid investigation at the time would greatly have reduced the number. They are here presented in chronological order, and have been derived from a variety of sources: —

1668. – Dr. Martin Lister, writing to the Royal Society, says that John Sagar, of Burnley, died about the year 1668, “and was of the age (as is reported) of 112.”

1700. – “Here resteth the bodie of James Cockerell, the elder, of Bolton, who departed this lyfe in the one hundredth and sixthe yeare of his age, and was interred here the seventh day of March, 1700” (Whittle's “Bolton,” p. 429).

1727. – In the diary of William Blundell, of Crosby, under date 21st January, 1727, there is this entry: – “I went to Leverp: and made Major Broadnax a visit, he told me that in March next he will be 108 years of Aige, he has his memory perfectly well, and talks extreamly strongly and heartally without any seeming decay of his spirrits.” This, according to the Rev. T. E. Gibson, was “Colonel

Robert Broadneux, at one time gentleman of the Bedchamber to Oliver Cromwell, and afterwards Lieut. – Col. in the Army of King William, died the following January, and was buried in St. Nicholas' churchyard, Liverpool, where his memorial stone may still be seen. He is there credited with 109 years, which, according to the diarist's account, is one too many."

1731. – Timothy Coward, of Kendal, 114.

1735. – James Wilson, of Kendal, 100.

1736. – Roger Friers, of Kendal, 103.

1743. – Mr. Norman, of Manchester, 102.

1753. – Thomas Coward, of Kendal, 114. The following is an inscription on a tombstone in Disley Church: —

“Here Lyeth Interred the
Body of Joseph Watson, Buried
June the third, 1753,
Aged 104 years. He was
Park Keeper at Lyme more
than 64 years, and was ye first
that Perfected the Art of Driving
ye Stags. Here also Lyeth
the Body of Elizabeth his
wife Aged 94 years, to whom
He had been married 73 years.
Reader, take notice, the Longest
Life is Short.”

This Joseph Watson was born at Mossley Common, Leigh, Lancashire, in 1649. Watson was park-keeper to Mr. Peter Legh, of Lyme. About 1710, in consequence of a wager between his employer and Sir Roger Moston, Mr. Watson drove twelve brace of red deer from Lyme Park to Windsor Forest as a present for Queen Anne. He was a man of low stature, fresh complexion, and pleasant countenance. “He believed he had drunk a gallon of malt liquor a day, one day with another, for sixty years; he drank plentifully the latter part of his life, but no more than was agreeable to his constitution and a comfort to himself.” In his 103rd year he killed a buck in the hunting field. He was the father of the Rev. Joseph Watson, D.D., rector of St. Stephens, Wallbrook, London.

1755. – Mr. Edward Stanley, of Preston, was buried in that town 4th January, 1755, at the reputed age of 103. He was one of the Stanleys of Bickerstaffe – the branch of the family that eventually succeeded to the Earldom of Derby. His father was Henry Stanley, the second son of Sir Edward Stanley, of Bickerstaffe.

1757. – James Wilson, of Kendal, 100.

1760. – Elizabeth Hilton, widow, of Liverpool, 121.

1761. – Isaac Duberdo, of Clitheroe, 108. Elizabeth Wilcock, of Lancaster, 104. John Williamson, of Pennybridge, 101. William Marsh, of Liverpool, 111, pavior.

1762. – Elizabeth Percy, of Elell, 104. Elizabeth Storey, of Garstang, 103.

1763. – Mr. Wickstead, of Wigan, 108, farmer. Thomas Jackson, of Pennybridge, 104. Mrs. Blakesley, of Prescot, 108. Mr. Osbaldeston, near Whaley, 115.

1764. – James Roberts, of Pennybridge, 113.

1765. – Mr. Glover, of Tarbuck, 104.

1767. – George Wilford, of Pennybridge, 100. William Rogers, of Pennybridge, 105. Thomas Johnson, of Newbiggin, 105.

1770. – Ellin Brandwood, Leigh, 102.

1771. – Nathaniel Wickfield, of Ladrige, 103. Mr. Fleming, of Liverpool, factor, 128. He left a son and a daughter each upwards of a hundred.

1772. – Mr. Jaspar Jenkins, whose death at Enfield in the 106th year of his age is recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1772, was formerly a merchant of Liverpool.

1778. – John Watson, Limehouse Park (of which he was keeper), 130. Mr. Husan, of Wigan, 109.

1779. – Susan Eveson, Simmondsone, near Burnley, 108.

1780. – William Ellis, of Liverpool, shoemaker, 131. He was seaman in the reign of Queen Anne, and a soldier in the reign of George I. Thomas Keggan, of Liverpool, 107.

1781. – Peter Linford, of Maghall, Liverpool, 107.

1782. – Henry Lord, of Carr, in the Forest of Rossendale, 106. He was a soldier in the service of Queen Anne. Martha Ramscar, of Stockport, 106.

1783. – Thomas Poxton, of Preston, 108. He was formerly a quack doctor. He attended Ormskirk market, twenty miles distant, constantly till within a few years of his death; was healthy and vigorous to the last, and was generally known by the name of Mad Roger. William Briscoe, Park Gate, 101. Mrs. Holmes, Liverpool, 114. She was married at 48 years of age, and had six children.

1784. – George Harding, Manchester, 111. He served as a private soldier in the reigns of Queen Anne, George I., and George II. Matthew Jackson, of Hawkshead, 100. He was married about eighteen months before his death.

1786. – Elizabeth Curril, 100, Liverpool. Jonathan Ridgeway, of Manchester, 100.

1787. – Mrs. Bailey, of Liverpool, 105. She retained her senses to the last, was never bled or took medicine in her life, and read without spectacles. Her mother lived to the age of 116.

1790. – Jane Monks, Leigh, 104. She retained all her faculties till within a few hours of her death, and except for the last five years earned her living by winding yarn. James Swarberick, Nateby, 102. Sarah Sherdley, Maghull, 105. She was an idiot from her birth.

1791. – Jane Gosnal, 104, Liverpool. Frances Crossley, 109, Rochdale, widow.

1793. – Mrs. Boardman, 103, Manchester, widow.

1794. – William Clayton, Livesey, Blackburn, 100. The summer before his death he was able to join in the harvest work, about which time he had a visit from a man of the same age who then lived about ten miles distant, and who said he had walked the whole way. Elizabeth Hayes, Park Lane, Liverpool, 110. Mrs. Seal, 101, an inmate of an almshouse in Bury. In the earlier part of her life she was remarkable for her industry, but had been many years bedridden, and supported principally by parish relief.

1795. – Mrs. Hunter, 115, Liverpool. Roger Pye, 102, Liverpool. Christian Marshall died at Overton, near Lancaster, aged 101.

1796. – Anne Bickersteth, 103, Barton-in-Kendal, widow of Mr. Bickersteth, surgeon of that place. She retained her bodily and mental faculties till her death, and walked downstairs from her bedroom to her parlour the day she died. William Windness, 110, Garstang. Anne Prigg, 104, Bury.

1797. – Jane Stephenson, 117, Poulton-in-the-Fylde.

1798. – Richard Hamer, Hunt Fold, Lancaster, 102.

1799. – Mrs. Owen, 107, Liverpool. John M'Kee, 100, Liverpool, joiner. Mary Jones, 105, Liverpool, workhouse. Margaret Macaulay, of Manchester, aged 101. She was a well-known beggar.

1807. – Mrs. Alice Longworth, Blackburn, aged 109. She retained the use of her faculties till her last illness, and never wore spectacles. Her youngest daughter is upwards of 60. – (*Athenæum*, September, 1807).

1808. – Mary Ralphson, died at Liverpool, 27th June, 1808, aged 110. She was born January 1st, 1698, O.S., at Lochaber, in Scotland. Her husband, Ralph Ralphson, was a private in the Duke of Cumberland's army. Following the troops, she attended her husband in several engagements in England and Scotland. At the battle of Dettingen she equipped herself in the uniform and

accoutrements of a wounded dragoon who fell by her side, and, mounting his charger, regained the retreating army, in which she found her husband, and returned with him to England. In his after campaigns she closely followed him like another “Mother Ross,” though perhaps with less courage, and more discretion. In her late years she was supported by some benevolent ladies of Liverpool. A print of her was published in April, 1807, when she was resident in Kent Street, Liverpool.

1808. – There is a print without date of “David Stewart Salmon, aged 105, the legal Father of two Indian Princes of the Wabee Tribe in America. A resident of Cable Street, Liverpool. After serving his King and Country upwards, of sixty years six months and five days of which time was spent without ever leaving his Majesty’s Service, is now allowed 2s. 6d. per week from the Parish of Liverpool. He is the last survivor of the Crew of the *Centurion* when commanded by Commodore Anson, with whom he sail’d round the World.”

1808. – Mr. Joe Rudd, writing from Wigan, June 10th, 1808, forwards the following contribution to Mr. Urban (*Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. lxxviii., pt. ii., 576): – “I request you to record the following narrative of the longevity of one family in the town of Wigan, Lancashire, where Old Anne Glave died in The Scholes a few years since at the advanced age of 105. She was a woman well skilled in herbs, and obtained her livelihood by gathering them in their proper seasons. She retained her faculties till the last, and followed her trade of herb-gathering within a short time of her death. Anne was the daughter of Barnard Hartley, who lived 103 years, and lies buried in Wigan churchyard. Anne had several children, four of whom are now living at Wigan in good health, viz., Anne, aged 91; Catherine, aged 82; Sarah, 75; and Elizabeth, 72. Old Anne Glave buried her husband, Robert, at the age of 84. He was a fisherman, and famous for making rhymes.” Jemina Wilkinson, Blackpool, aged 106. She retained her senses, and was able to walk without assistance within a few hours of her death. – (*Athenæum*, October, 1808).

1809. – Mrs. Mary Leatherbarrow, of Hulme, died at the age of 106.

1817. – Catharine Prescott, who died in George Leigh Street, June 2nd, at the reputed age of 108, was a notable character in her day. It was said of her that she learned to read – and that without spectacles – partly at the Lancasterian School and partly at Bennet Street School after she had passed her hundredth year.

1818. – Mary Harrison, who, in 1818, was living at Bacup, was said to be 108 years old.

1826. – Mrs. Sarah Richardson, a widow, who resided at the Mount, Dickenson Street, died at the reputed age of 101. She was a native of Warrington, and her descendants numbered 153.

1841. – John Pollitt, aged 52, and George Pollitt, brothers, were interred at Rusholme Road Cemetery, November 16th. They were followed to the grave by their father, William Pollitt, of Dyche Street, who had attained the age of 104, accompanied by his great-great-grandson aged 21 years.

1848. – An old woman living in Burn Street, Chorlton-upon-Medlock, 110 years old, and in the possession of all her faculties. She perfectly recollected the coronation of George III., which took place when she was 24 years old.

1859. – Betty Roberts was said to be living in Liverpool in 1859, and her birth was asserted to have taken place at Northrop, in Flintshire, in 1749. Her son, aged 80, was living with her.

1877. – In 1877 there appeared a notice of John Hutton, who was born at Glasgow 18th August, 1777, and was apprenticed at Carlisle in 1793 as a handloom weaver, but came to Manchester in 1796, where he served the remainder of his apprenticeship, and was married in December, 1797, by Parson Brookes. He became an employé of the firm of Thomas Hoyle and Son, of Mayfield, and by his skill in mixing became of considerable importance. In particular, he had a secret for the preparation of China blue, which was entrusted to his son, who died at a good age, without having left a successor to the secret. Messrs. Hoyle’s chemist, it is said, who knew all about the theory of the dye, failed to get the exact tint that was requisite, and a joking suggestion was made to the old man that his services were still in demand. He took the observation seriously, proceeded to the dyehouse, where under his directions the brew was a conspicuous success. He was of medium size, cheerful

temperament, and habits of great regularity. He took little interest in any matters outside the narrow limits of his household and the works. He was not a teetotaller, but was exceedingly sober and steady. He completed his hundredth year 18th August, 1877. His senses were somewhat dulled, and the *arcus senilis* was well marked. On his centenary he was photographed in a group with his daughter, grandson, great-grandson, and great-great-grandson. His fellows of the Mayfield Works entertained him at Worsley, and in a bath-chair he was enabled to enjoy the gardens.

1879. – Sarah Warburton, who died at Accrington in 1879, was reputed to have been born February 2nd, 1779. At the old folks' tea-party during the Christmas before her death she received the prize of a new dress-piece for singing a song of her juvenile days!

1881. – The case of the “Crumpsall Centenarian” excited some interest in 1881. She died October 8th, 1881, and was reported to be in the 108th year of her age. Jane Pinkerton, whose maiden name was Fleming, according to the testimony of the entry in a family Bible, in which the names of her brothers and sisters were also entered, was born 16th June, 1774, within a few miles of Paisley, in Scotland. When she was a girl her father took his family to Ireland. She married James Pinkerton, a schoolmaster in the neighbourhood of Belfast, and at his death she came to reside with a married daughter at Lower Crumpsall. She is buried in the Wesleyan Cemetery, Cheetham Hill.

This list is not a complete one, and doubtless many additions, some in quite recent years, might be made to it. The reader will notice that with few exceptions, amongst which is the remarkable case of John Hutton – there is for the most part an entire absence of evidence. The ages stated have evidently been taken down from the statements of the old men and women, with little or no attempt to verify their correctness. It may be useful to cite two cases that were adequately investigated. The case of Miss Mary Billinge, of Liverpool, is instructive as showing the possibilities of error. She was said to have been 112 years old at the time of her death, 20th December, 1863, and a certificate of baptism was obtained which stated the birth of Mary Billinge, daughter of William Billinge and Lydia his wife, on the 24th May, 1751. It was known that she had a brother named William and a sister named Anne, who are buried at Everton. A reference to the registers showed that these were entered as the children of Charles and Margaret Billinge, and a further search revealed the name of Mary, born 6th November, 1772, and therefore only a little over 91 at the time of her death. The certificate relied upon to prove her centenarian age was that of an earlier Mary Billinge.

The other instance is that of Mrs. Martha Gardner, who died at 85, Grove Street, Liverpool, March 10th, 1881, at the age of 104. This will be best given in the words of Mr. W. J. Thoms, who, after the date of her death, says: – “Some two or three years ago Dr. Diamond kindly forwarded to me a photograph, taken shortly after the completion of her hundredth year, by Mr. Ferranti, of Liverpool. I afterwards received from two different sources evidences as to the birth of this very aged lady, whose father, a very eminent Liverpool merchant, has duly recorded in the family Bible the names, dates of birth, and names of godfathers and godmothers of his fourteen children, who were all baptised at home, but whose baptisms are duly entered in the register of baptisms of the Church of St. Peter, Liverpool. Mrs. Gardner having a great objection to being made the subject of newspaper notices or comments, I advisedly refrained from bringing her very exceptional age under the notice of your readers during her lifetime. I may add that she was a cousin of an early and valued contributor to *Notes and Queries*, the Rev. John Wilson, formerly president of Trinity College, Oxford, and on his death on July 10th, 1873, Mrs. Gardner took out letters of administration to his estate, and her correspondence, she being then in her 97th year, rather astonished the legal gentleman with whom she had to confer on that business.”

What was the First Book Printed in Manchester?

The answer to this question is not so obvious as might at first be expected. There were in the Lancashire of Elizabeth's days two secret presses. From one there issued a number of Roman Catholic books. This was probably located at Lostock, the seat of the Andertons. The other was the wandering printing-press, which gave birth to the attacks of Martin Marprelate upon the Anglican Episcopate. This was seized by the Earl of Derby in Newton Lane, near Manchester. The printers thus apprehended were examined at Lambeth, 15th February, 1588, when Hodgkins and his assistants, Symms and Tomlyn, confessed that they had printed part of a book entitled, "More Work for the Cooper." "They had printed thereof about six a quire of one side before they were apprehended." The chief controller of the press, Waldegrave, escaped. In these poor persecuted printers we must recognise the proto-typographers of Manchester. No trace remains of "More Work for the Cooper." The sheets that fell into the hands of the authorities do not appear to have been preserved. Putting aside the claims of this anti-prelatical treatise, we have to pass from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Many tracts and books by local men, and relating to local affairs, were printed before 1719, but that appears to be the date of the first book printed in Manchester. The title page is here reproduced: – "Mathematical Lectures; being the first and second that were read to the Mathematical Society at Manchester. By the late ingenious Mathematician John Jackson. 'Who can number the sands of the Sea, the drops of Rain, and the days of Eternity?' – Eccles. i., 2. 'He that telleth the number of the Stars and calleth them all by their Names.' – Psalm cxlvii., 4. Manchester; printed by Roger Adams in the Parsonage, and sold by William Clayton, Bookseller, at the Conduit, 1719." (Octavo.)

The claims of Jackson's "Lectures" were stated by the present writer in *Notes and Queries* (see fourth series, iii., 97, and vii., 64), and in his "Handbook to the Public Libraries of Manchester and Salford." Some further correspondence appeared in *Local Gleanings* (vol. i., p. 54), and an extract was given from one of William Ford's catalogues, which, if accurate, would show that there was a local press at work in 1664. Ford has catalogued a book in this fashion: – "A Guide to Heaven from the Word; Good Counsel how to close savingly with Christ; Serious Questions for Morning and Evening; Rules for the due observance of the Lord's Day. Manchester, printed at Smithy Door, 1664. 32mo."

Apparently nothing could be clearer or less open to doubt. After a careful look out for the book, a copy has been secured, and is now in the Manchester Free Library. The title reads: – "A Guide to Heaven from the Word. Good counsel how to close savingly with Christ. Serious Questions for Morning and Evening; and rules for the due observation of the Lord's Day. John 5, 39. Search the Scriptures. Manchester: Printed by T. Harper, Smithy Door." (32 mo, pp. 100.) There is no date, but the name of Thomas Harper, printer, Smithy Door, may be read in the "Manchester Directory" for 1788, and the slightest examination of the "Guide to Heaven" will show that its typography belongs to that period. From whence, then, did Ford get the date of 1664? If we turn to the fly-leaf the mystery is explained, for on it we read, "Imprimatur, J. Hall, R.P.D. Lond. a Sac. Domest. April 14 1664." The book, in fact, was first printed in London in 1664, and Thomas Harper, when issuing it afresh, reprinted the original imprimatur, which Ford then misconstrued into the date of the Manchester edition. The book is entered as Bamfield's "Guide to Heaven" in Clavell's "Catalogue," and the publisher is there stated to be H. Brome. Either Francis or Thomas Bamfield may have been the author, but the former seems the more likely. Thomas Bamfield – so the name is usually spelled – was Speaker of Richard Cromwell's Parliament of 1658, and he was a member of the Convention Parliament of 1660, and was the author of some treatises in the Sabbatarian controversy. Francis was a brother of Thomas, and also of Sir John Bamfield, and was educated at Wadham College, Oxford, where he graduated M.A. in 1638. He was ordained, but was ejected from the Church in 1662, and died minister of the Sabbatarian Church in Pinner's Hall. He wrote in favour of the observation of the

Saturday as the seventh day, and therefore real Sabbath, and whilst preaching to his congregation was arrested and imprisoned at Newgate, where he died 16th February, 1683-4. His earliest acknowledged writing was published in 1672, and relates to the Sabbath question.

The first book printed in Manchester, so far as the present evidence goes, was Jackson's "Mathematical Lectures," but it was the fruit of the second printing-press at work in the town.

Thomas Lurting: a Liverpool Worthy

Quakerism has a very extensive literature, and is especially rich in books of biography; which are not only of interest from a theological point, but are valuable for the incidental and sometimes unexpected light which they throw upon the history and customs of the past. One of the early Quaker autobiographies is that of Thomas Lurting, a Liverpool worthy, who has not hitherto been included by local writers in the list of Lancashire notables.

Thomas Lurting was born in 1629, and, in all probability, at Liverpool. The name is by no means a common one, but it is a well-known Liverpool name, and many references to its members will be found in Sir James Picton's "Memorials and Records."¹ From 1580 to the close of the seventeenth century they appear to have been conspicuous citizens. John Lurting was a councillor and "Merchant 'Praiser" in 1580. A John Lurting was bailiff of the town in 1653; but three years earlier had so little reverence for civic dignity as to style one of the aldermen "a cheating rogue."

From his own narrative we learn that in 1646, at the age of fourteen, Thomas Lurting was "impressed," and served in the wars against the Irish, Dutch, and Spaniards. He gives a graphic account of the sea-fight at Santa Cruz in 1657, by our great English admiral Blake, in which the Spaniards came off second-best. At the time of his conversion he was boatswain's mate on the *Bristol* frigate. There were two young men on board, who had some conversation with a soldier who had been present at a Quaker's meeting in Scotland. The soldier soon after left the ship; but what he had said came back to the minds of the young men, and presently they refused to listen to the chaplain, or to take their hats off to the captain, who added to his seafaring functions the quality of a Baptist preacher. The chaplain complimented Lurting as "an honest man and a good Christian," so long as, in his capacity of boatswain's mate, he persecuted the two youthful Quakers. Great was the amazement when Lurting joined himself to those despised children of light. The chaplain and the captain in vain tried to convince him of the errors of his new theological associates. The Quakers increased, until instead of two there were fourteen in the ship. There was an epidemic of sickness, and the Quakers were known by the care they took of each other and their brotherly sympathy. When he got well the captain allowed Lurting to have his old cabin – which had the reputation of being haunted – both for a sleeping room and for a meeting-place.

At this time the Quaker mariners did not object to take their share of fighting, but when going into an engagement at Barcelona, it came into Lurting's mind that it was unlawful to slay. The Quakers having decided to "bear their testimony" against war, had an unpleasant time. Off Leghorn, in 1655, the preacher-captain drew his sword to run one of them through.

Thomas Lurting was several times impressed after the Restoration of Charles II., but he refused either to do the King's work or eat the King's victual. On one of these occasions, after five days' fasting, he was put ashore.

But the most remarkable incident in Lurting's life was one which occurred when, after he had become a "harmless Christian," he was mate of a ship that was captured by an Algerine pirate. The English sailors, following Lurting's instructions, managed to turn the tables and make the Turks their prisoners; but, instead of selling the pirates for slaves, as they had the opportunity to do, they put them

¹ We append a few short notices of this family, in chronological order. 1333-1345. In the time of Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham, W. Lurtyng, of Chester, is mentioned. See 31st Report of Record Office, p. 82. The following are extracts from the "Liverpool Municipal Records": —1581. On the 21st August, John Lyrting, residing in Juggler Street, Liverpool, was assessed for a "Taxation or Levy at the sum of xviiid." – the highest charge in the street being 2s. 6d., and the lowest 4d. – ii., 218.1617. Thomas Lurting, Juggler Street. – ii., 827.1628, 7th October. "Item, wee present Thomas Lurtinge for switchinge Nicholas Rydinge wth a stick." – iii., 63.1636/7. Nich Lurting first in jury. – iii., 177.1644. John Lurting, "saler," burgess of Liverpool. – iii., 359.1644 and 1649. Peter Lurting and Thomas Lurting, freemen (iii., 361). Also John Lurting, Smith, Wm. Lurting de Cestr, Wm. Lurting, Smith, and Robert Lurting. 1651. "Tho. Lurting, for a Tussle upon Thos. Hoskins, iiis. iiiid." – iii., 506.1663-4. Peter Lurting, Mayor. 1672. Peter Lurting, tenant of Godscroft, 1s. rent; Rich. Lurting, of a smithy at Water Side, 5s.; Rich. Lurting, Castle Hill, 13s. for 13 yards front.

on shore not far from an Algerine town. The pirates marvelled greatly at this unexpected treatment, and the captives and ex-captives took an affectionate farewell of each other. Lurting's account of this remarkable transaction was written at Liverpool in 1680, and was printed in George Fox's "To the Great Turk and his King, at Algiers." Of this tract there is a copy in the Midgley Library, at Manchester (Vol. 16, Tract 7), and it is reprinted in the "Doctrinal Books of George Fox" (London, 1706, p. 778). Lurting's letter to the founder of the Society of Friends is sufficiently curious to be worth quoting in full: —

“Of George Pattison's taking the Turks about the 8th Month, 1663

Dear Friend,

Thine I have received: In Answer to thy request, I have given thee an Account as well and as near as I can; but as to the exact time I cannot, for I have not my Books. I was George Pattison's Mate, and coming from Venice, being near a Spanish Island called May-York,² we were Chased by a Turkish Ship or Patah, as sometimes before we had been, and thinking by our Vessels well Sailing, might escape: But Providence Ordered it So, That by carrying over-much Sail, some of our Materials gave way, by which means the said Turk came up with us, and commanded the Master on Board, who accordingly went with four Men more, leaving me and three Men, and a Boy on Board our Ship; and so soon as our Men came on Board the Turk, they took them all out of the Boat, and came about 14 Turks in our Boat. All which time I was under a very great Exercise in Spirit, not so much for my self, because I had a secret Hope of Relief; but a great Stress lay upon me, for the Men in this very Juncture of time; for all Hope of outward Appearance being then gone; the Master being on board of the Turk, and four more, and the Turks just coming on Board, I being as one, even as if I were or were not, only desiring of the Lord for Patience in such an Exercise, and going to the Vessel-side, to see the Turks come in, the Word of Life, run through me, Be not afraid, for all this thou shalt not go to Algier. And I having formerly good Experience of the Lords doing upon several such like Occasions, as in times of War, I believed what the Lord did say in me: At this all kind of Fear was taken from me, and I received them as a Man might his Friend; and they were as Civil, so shewing them all parts of the Vessel, and what she was laden withal, then I said to them that were our Men; Be not afraid, for I believe for all this we shall not go to Algier, but let me desire you, as you have been willing to obey me, so be as willing to obey the Turks. For by our so doing I saw we got over them, for when they saw our great Diligence, it made them careless of us, I mean, in securing of us; So when they had taken some small Matter of what we were laden withal, some went on Board their own Ship again, and some staid with us, which were about Eight. Then began I to think of the Master and the other Four, which were in the Turks ship; for as for my self and the other with me, I had no fear at all; Nay, I was far from it, That I said to one then, Were but the Master on Board, and the rest, if there were twice so many Turks, I should not fear them; So my earnest Desire was to the Lord, That he would put it into their Hearts, to send him on Board with the rest, and good was the Lord in answering, for it was a Seal, to what he before spoke through me. As soon as the Master was on Board with the rest, all manner of Fear was off me, as to my going to Algier, and some said to me, I was a strange Man, I was afraid

² Majorca.

before I was taken, but now I was taken, I was not; my answer was, I now believe I shall not go to Algier, and if you will be ruled by me, I will act for your Delivery, as well as my own. But as yet I saw no way made, for they were all Arm'd, and we without Arms. Now we being altogether, except the Master, I began to reason with them, What if we should overcome the Turks, and go to May-York? At which they very much rejoiced; and one said, I will Kill One or Two, another said, I will cut as many of their Throats, as you will have me; this was our Mens Answer. At which I was much troubled, and said unto them, If I knew any of them that offered to touch a Turk, I would tell the Turks my self. But said to them; If you will be rul'd, I will act for you, if not, I will be still; to which they agreed to do, what I would have them. Then said I, if the Turks bid you do any thing, do it without grumbling, and with as much Diligence and Quickness as you can, for I see that pleases them, and that will cause them to let us be together: To which they agreed.

Then I went to the Master, who was a Man of a very bold Spirit, and told him our Intent; whose answer to me was, If we offered to rise, and they overcame us, we had as good be burnt alive, the which I knew very well. But I could get him no way to adhere to me, in that he being fearful of Blood-shed; for that was his Reason: Insomuch, that at last I told him we were resolved, and I question'd not to do it without one Drop of Blood spilt, and I believ'd that the Lord would prosper it, by Reason, I could rather go to Algier, than to kill a Turk: So at last he agreed to this, to let me do what I would, provided we killed none: At that time there being still two Turks lying in the Cabin with him: So that he was to lie in the Cabin, that by his being there they should mistrust nothing, which accordingly he did. And having bad weather, and lost the Company of the Man of War; the Turks seeing our Diligence, made them careless of us.

So the second Night, after the Captain was gone to sleep, I perswaded one to lie in my Cabin, and so one in another, till at last it raining very much, I perswaded them all down to sleep; and when asleep, got their Arms in Possession. Then said I to the Men of our Vessel: Now have we the Turks at our Command; no Man shall hurt any of them, for if you do, I will be against you: But this we will do, now they are under, we will keep them so, and go to May-York. So when I had ordered some to keep the Doors, if any should come out, straightly charging the Spilling of no Blood; and so altered our Course for May-York the which in the Morning we were fair by: So my Order was to our Men, if any offer'd to come out, not to let out above one at a time. And in the Morning one came out, expecting to have seen their own Country, but on the contrary, it was May-York. Now, said I to our Men, be careful of the Door, for when he goes in, we shall see what they will do. And as soon as he told them we were going towards May-York, they instead of Rising, fell all to crying, for their Hearts were taken from them. So they desired they might not be Sold; the which I promised they should not. So soon as I had pacified them, then I went in to the Master, he not yet knowing what was done, and so he told their Captain what we had done, how that we had over-come his Men, and that we were going for May-York. At which unexpected News he Wept, and desired the Master not to Sell him; the which he promised he would not. Then we told the Captain we would make a Place to hide them in, where the Spaniards should not find them; at which they were very glad, and we did accordingly. So when we came in, the Master went on Shoar, with Four more, and left me on Board with the Turks, which were Ten. And when he had done his Business, not taking Product, lest the Spaniards should come and see the Turks. But at Night an English Master came on Board, being an Acquaintance;

and after some Discourse, we told him if he would not betray us, we would tell him what we had done; but we would not have the Spaniards to know it, lest they should take them from us; The which he promis'd, but broke it; and would fain have had Two or Three of them, to have brought them for England; but we saw his end; And when he saw he could not prevail, he said they were worth Two or Three Hundred Pieces of Eight a Piece; Whereat, both the Master and I told him, if they would give many Thousands they should not have One, for we hoped to send them home again. So he look'd upon us as Fools, because we would not Sell them; the which I would not have done for the whole Island. But contrary to our Expectations, he told the Spaniards, who threatned to take them from us: But so soon as we heard thereof, we called out all the Turks, and told them they must help us, or the Spaniards would take them from us. So they resolvedly helped us, and we made all haste to run from the Spaniards, the which pleased the Turks very well. So we put our selves to the Hazard of the Turks, and being taken again, to save them.

So we continued about six or seven days, not being willing to put into any Port of Spain, for fear of losing the Turks. We let them have all their liberty for four days, till they made an attempt to rise, the which I foresaw, and prevented without any harm. I was very Courteous to them, at the which some of our men grumbled, saying, I had more care of the Turks than them; My Answer was, They are Strangers, I must treat them well. At last, I told the Master it might do well to go to the Turks Coast, for there it was more likely to miss their Men of War than where we were; and also it might fall out so, that we might have an Opportunity to put the Turks on Shoar: To which the Master agreed. And in two days we were near the Turks Shoar, at a place called Cape Hone, about Fifty Miles from Algier, as the Turks told us. So when we came about six Miles from the Shore it fell calm, and I had very much working in my mind, about getting them ashore.

At last I went to the Master, and told him, I had a great desire to put the Turks on Shore, but how I knew not; for to give them the Boat, they might go and get Men and Arms, and so take us again; and to put half on Shoar, they would raise the Country and surprize us when we came with the rest. But if he would let me go, and if three more would go with me, I would venture to put them on Shoar; to which he consented.

So then I spoke to the men, and there were two more, and my self and a Boy took in the ten Turks all loose, and went about six miles and put them on Shore in their own Country, within about four miles of Two Towns which they knew. Withal, we gave them about fifty Padas of Bread and other Necessaries to Travel with. They would fain have enticed us to go to the Towns, telling us we should have Wines, and many other things: As to their parts, I could have ventured with them. They all embraced me very kindly in their Arms when they went ashore. They made one Rising in the Boat when going ashore, the which I prevented; and we parted with a great deal of love.

When we came home to England, the King came to the Vessels side, and enquired an Account, the which the Master gave him. So this is as near as I can certifie thee; I have writ thee more at large to give thee the whole as it was; but thou mayst take what is the most material, and so I rest thine in that which can do good for evil, which ought to be the practice of all true men.

Liverpoole, the 30th of the fifth Month, 1680.

Thomas Lurting.”

After a stormy manhood Thomas Lurting had a peaceful old age. Part of his well-earned leisure was devoted to the preparation of an autobiography, which appeared in 1710, with the following quaint title: – “The Fighting Sailor turned peaceable Christian; manifested in the convincement and conversion of Thomas Lurting. With a short relation of many great Dangers, and wonderful Deliverances, he met withal. First written for private satisfaction, and now published for general service.” This tract, sometimes in an abridged form, has been several times reprinted, and there were editions in 1711, 1720, no date, 1766, 1801 (Leeds), 1811, 1813, 1820, and 1842.

Thomas Lurting died 30th First Month, 1713. His corpse was taken to the Friends’ Meeting House at Horsleydown, Southwark, where a funeral sermon was preached on the occasion. The body was then interred at the Friends’ Burial-ground, Long Lane, Bermondsey. He had been a widower for some years previously, his wife, Eleanor, who was of Rotherhithe, having died 13th of First Month, 1708-9, aged 65 years.

However much faith may vary and forms of belief change, men will always respect those who listen to the voice of conscience, and obey that inward monitor when its behests bring scorn and persecution. The Quakers had the true martyr-spirit, and would not abate a single iota of their testimony either for the fear or the favour of man. In Lurting’s narrative we see the plain, straightforward character of the man. There is no evidence of self-consciousness to mar the picturesque force of the essentially heroic quality of his deeds. Liverpool can boast of some great names, but let her cherish the name of her Quaker hero, “the Fighting Sailor turned peaceable Christian.”

Kufic Coins found in Lancashire

In the great find of coins at Cuerdale in North Lancashire, besides a single Byzantine piece there were several Kufic coins, along with some of North Italy, about a thousand French and two thousand eight hundred Anglo-Saxon pieces. In these coins, and in those found over the whole of Northumbria are to be seen the evidences of the active commercial intercourse that even in the pre-historic ages prevailed between the Eastern world and the people of the North of Europe, and especially those dwelling on the shores of the Baltic. This has been abundantly proved by the numerous archaeological discoveries made from time to time.³

Whilst Scandinavia was still in the Stone and Bronze stages of the development of civilisation, merchants came to the Baltic for furs, tin, and the yellow amber so highly prized as an ornament by the oriental women. Indeed Oppert has shown that ten centuries before the Christian era the Assyrians had at least indirect communication with the Baltic shores, the only locality known to the ancient world where the yellow amber could be procured. The references to amber in Homer and Hesiod have not passed without dispute, but the discoveries of Greek coins in various parts leave little or no doubt as to the existence of commercial routes, which went from the Black Sea, by the Dnieper, the Bug and the Dniester, to gain the basin of the Niemen and of the Vistula, and thence spread to the Baltic. The amber commerce in the hands of the Milesians and the Greeks found various routes. The Roman women were as passionately partial to amber ornaments as their sisters of the East, and there is sufficient testimony as to the commercial intercourse of Rome with the barbarians of the North.

The Arabs, although in the Middle Ages they had the monopoly of the trade, were not its originators, but merely continued an intercourse that had existed from remote antiquity. The mediæval geographers had very little precise knowledge; but in the *Mappa Mundi* of the tenth century, in the British Museum, the parts of northern Europe indicated with the fewest misconceptions are the countries of the amber trade. The rapid conquest of western Asia by the Arabs was followed by those internal dissensions which led to the formation of independent kingdoms. The Samanides, who reigned in Persia and dominated the shores of the Caspian Sea, were the principal cultivators of the North trade. The Arabs, if they had little taste for maritime commerce, were admirably adapted to be the leaders of great caravans, by which the riches of the East were spread into far lands. From Egypt they went across the Sahara to Nigritia, from whence they brought gold, ivory, and slaves. Passing through Persia and Cashmere they worked in the direction of India. Crossing the immense steppes of Tartary, they entered China by the province of Shen-si. Their caravans to Europe passed by Armenia on the south, and by Bokhara and Khorassan on the east. There were great fairs at Samarcand, Teheran, Bagdad, and other places. The merchants directed their course to the Caspian, and halted at Derbend before ascending the Volga. The itinerary of these pilgrims of commerce can be reconstructed from the Kufic coins and accompanying ornaments that have been found at Kazan, Perm, Tula, Moscow, Smolensk, Novgorod, St. Petersburg, and other localities. The finds of Arabic moneys in the Russian Empire have occurred almost exclusively in the country watered by the Volga, which was the line of communication for the Arabs with the Slavs and Scandinavians of the Middle Ages. The shores of Germany, Lithuania, and Sweden were visited. The most northerly discoveries of Kufic coins have been by the river Angermann, which empties itself in the Gulf of Bothnia. The islands of Gothland, Oland, and Bornholm appear to have been the centre of this commercial activity. Lithuania, Denmark, and Poland, especially the latter, have also yielded to the antiquarian investigator

³ For further details on the commerce of the Arabs, and especially as to the extended currency of Kufic coins, J. J. A. Worsaae's "Danes in England," 1852; Ernest Babelon's "Du Commerce des Arabes," 1882; Le Bon's "La Civilisation des Arabes," 1884; may be consulted.

many evidences of intercourse with the Arabs. On the coasts of Pomerania and along the course of the Oder Kufic coins have been found, the southern limit being apparently in Silesia.

Worsaae in speaking of some silver ornaments with a triangular pattern of three or four points, also found at Cuerdale, says “that the discovery of so many coins of this class in Russia, from the Caspian and the Black Sea up to the shores of the Baltic, sufficiently proves that from the eighth until the eleventh century there existed a very lively intercourse by trade between the East and the northern parts of Europe.”⁴

The Vikings, who are usually regarded as simply pirates, had their share in this commerce. From the East came rich fabrics, ornaments and vases, and their bearers carried back in return ermines, furs, slaves, and, above all, amber, which whilst valued as an ornament was also credited with wonderful powers of preserving the health of the wearer. This commerce did not have so much social or political result as might have been expected from four centuries of activity. The grave events alike in Asia and Europe which followed the fall of the Samanides interrupted its peaceful course, and before it could fall again into the old tracks there came the tempestuous interlude of the first Crusade.

From this it will be seen that the occurrence of Kufic coins in the north of England is one of the evidences of the activity of the Danes, and of their commercial intercourse with the nations of the East.

⁴ “Remarks on the Antiquities found at Cuerdale,” p. 2.

Newspapers in 1738-39

It may not be uninteresting to describe some of the oldest surviving fragments of Lancashire newspapers which were formerly in the collection of Sir Thomas Baker, and are now, with many others, in the Manchester Free Library. After a fragment of one leaf we have "*The Lancashire Journal: with the history of the Holy Bible.*" Monday, October 16th, 1738. Num. xvi. The printer and publishers are thus set forth: – "Manchester: printed and sold by John Berry at the Dial near the Cross, and Sold by Mr. Ozly at the White-Lyon in Warrington, Mr. Sears at the White-Lyon in Liverpool, Mr. Gough at the Spread Eagle in Chester, Mr. Maddock, Bookseller in Namptwich, Mr. Kirkpatrick in Middlewich, Mr. Davis, Bookseller in Preston, Mr. Sidebottom at the Sun and Griffin in Stockport, Mrs. Lord in Rochdale, Mr. Hodgson, Bookseller in Halifax, Mr. Rockett, Bookseller in Bradford, Mr. Bradley, Peruke-maker in Wakefield; at which places also are taken in all sorts of advertisements to be inserted in this Paper at Two Shillings and Sixpence Each." There is, after the fashion of the time, very little local news, the object of these early journals being to tell the people what was going on at a distance. We hear (October 16th) of the offence given by the "French strollers" in attempting to perform a play in their own language at the Haymarket. The "patriots" were so riotous in their resentment that "the encouragers of these French Vagabonds, durst not in any Coffee-House or Place where the most Polite resort, either Publicly avow their Sentiments, or declare their Resentment." From Bristol there is news of rioting by the colliers of Kingswood, as a practical objection to a reduction of wages, from sixteen to twelve pence per day.

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