SOME OLD BOOKS ON SOUTHPORT

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Read 1st April 1909

THE town of Southport, as distinct from the village of Churchtown, North Meols, which is now incorporated in the modern borough, dates only from the year 1792, when William Sutton erected the first portion of the Original Hotel at a spot now marked by a memorial lamp, at the junction of Lord-street and Duke-street. The term "old," therefore, at the head of this paper must be taken in a relative sense, and is used roughly to cover the first half of the nineteenth century.

From time to time articles appear in local newspapers dealing with the early history of Southport, and from time to time also new guide-books are published in which some reference to this early history of the town has to be made. In nearly all instances recourse is had, consciously or unconsciously, to the information contained in a number of early books on Southport, which themselves are very little known. Glazebrook, the first historian of the town, is often referred to and very largely quoted; but the extent of the quotation is not usually indicated, and it is sometimes very difficult in such articles to determine what is new matter and what is old. Glazebrook, again, has not always been quoted correctly, and errors once made have been perpetuated by later writers who reproduce the incorrect quotations, and so mistakes grow.

These early Southport books are of no little interest, and the object of this paper is to draw attention to them, not so much for the information they contain as for the way in which it is given.

There are at least eight separate works on Southport which deserve attention published before 1867, the year in which the reign of the Commissioners came to an end, and the government of the town was taken over by a Mayor and Corporation. That is the central date in Southport's history, before which everything is "old," and after which everything is modern. These eight works are :—

Glazebrook's *Guide*, 1809 and 1826; Whittle's *Marina*, 1831; Alsop's *Concise History*, 1832; Cocker's *Compendious History*, 1839; Robinson's *Descriptive History*, 1848; J. S.'s *Guide*, 1849; Dr. Barron's *Handbook*, 1858; and Dr. M'Nicoll's *Handbook*, 1859 and 1861.

Two of these, it will be seen, reached second editions, and Dr. M'Nicoll's work was reissued again at the time of the first meeting of the British Association at Southport in 1883.

Glazebrook's "Guide."

The first edition of Glazebrook's work was issued exactly a hundred years ago, so that the *annus mirabilis* which began by giving birth to Edgar Allan Poe and ended with the birth in Liverpool of William Ewart Gladstone, also gave to the world the first printed book about Southport. The title-page reads as follows :—

A Guide | to | South-Port | North Meoles | in the county of | Lancaster: | with a brief account of the places | in its immediate | neighbourhood. [*Five lines from Ovid.*] *Warrington: | Printed and Sold by J. Haddock: | Sold also by Cadell and Davies, London: | Mr. Hargreaves, South-Port; | and by the Booksellers in Ormskirk, Wigan, | Liverpool, | Stockport and Manchester* | 1809.

The dedication is in these terms: "To Peter Patten, Esq., M.P. for the Borough of Lancaster; this trifle, descriptive of the principall part of North Meoles: is, with his permission, respectfully dedicated, by his much obliged and obedient humble servant, T. K. Glazebrook." The trifle consists of 79 pages, only thirteen of which, however, deal directly with "South-Port." There is, first of all, a preface dated, "Warrington, July 21, 1809." Then follow descriptions of Ormskirk and its Church, and Lathom House, including observations on Martin Mere. After he has disposed of South-Port the author goes on to describe "Church Town," which is "about three miles from South-Port," and gives a detailed account of St. Cuthbert's Church, from which subsequent writers on the same theme have all more or less borrowed. After Churchtown follows a dissertation of more than ten pages on "The Sea"—not the sea at Southport in particular, but the sea in general, in the sense of "the mighty ocean," "that vast body of water which encompasses the earth." Eight pages of natural history follow, with, I am afraid, not very complete lists of the birds, animals, and plants to be found in the district. A note near the end of the book gives some account of a bituminous earth found in the neighbourhood of Formby, which when dried and cut into pieces could be "used as candles." A "Conclusion" and a rhyming "Satire," both without any bearing whatsoever on the subject of Southport and its surroundings, conclude this quaint volume.

Thomas Kirkland Glazebrook was born in 1780 at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and lived at Warrington from his infancy until 1835. In that year he removed to Southport, where he died 17th January 1855. When at Warrington he was engaged in the manufacture of flint glass, and in 1803 was a captain in the local volunteer force. He was the author of

A Chronological List of Trades; Lissa: a Poem; and a poetical translation of the first eclogue of Virgil.[1] The guide to Southport, which he wrote at the age of twenty-nine, is couched in the quaint phraseology usual in such writings during the first half of the last century. Meditations on Life and Eternity, on the Sea, and the Great First Cause find place side by side with descriptions of the new watering-place and the historic surroundings of its immediate neighbourhood. In the first edition South-Port is always spelled as a compound word, and North Meols is written North Meoles. In the second edition the spelling is altered to Southport and North Meols.

In his preface the author states that his book is the result of "a few observations collected during a visit of sixteen days, and written under all the disadvantages which attend this species of composition," and he expresses the hope that the *Guide* will not be severely criticised. Its interest to us now is mainly historic, as being the first book devoted wholly to the town. Nevertheless the descriptions of Ormskirk and Churchtown Churches, with the transcription of the epitaphs and the English versions of the Latin inscriptions, are still useful and interesting.

The chapter on Southport proper opens thus:—

"The appearance of this place is truly romantic, and fully compensates for the labour of traversing through the deep sand. Placed at irregular distances, and disposed according to the taste of the owners, the white cottages exhibit a pleasing inland picture, whilst the view of the sea from the sandhills adds a degree of grandeur to the scene. . . . The breaking of the surf over the beach," he says further on, "when the tide flows with a high westerly wind, is awfully grand. Rising higher as they approach the shore, the waves dash their impetuous head against the sandhills, placed most providentially as preservatives against inundation."

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[1] Fishwick, *The Lancashire Library*, p. 176.

The fear of the sea inundating Southport is something which is quite unknown to the inhabitants of the town a century later.

Glazebrook tells how Southport came by its name in words often since quoted; but as they are often either mutilated or embellished, perhaps it will not be out of place to give them once more:—

"The original name of this place was South-Hawes, and it received its present appellation from Mr. Sutton of Church Town, to whom the public are certainly indebted for laying the foundation of the *first Hotel* about seventeen years ago. . . . The alteration of the name arose from its formerly possessing (according to tradition) a fine bay of eleven fathom water, within half a mile from shore, where vessels occasionally lay securely at anchor, consequently it was a *Port* to them in every sense of the word. This circumstance induced the founder to call the hotel he erected South-Port Hotel, and it has had this name ever since."

There is nothing of particular interest in the description of the town, such kind of writing giving the author no opportunity for the grand style that he so much affected; but when the mere catalogue of attractions is done, he gives expression to his feelings:—

"*Such is* SOUTH-PORT," he exclaims. "True, it does not possess 'o'er-hanging woods' or 'shady groves,' but, there is a sublimity in the wildness of its scenery capable of exciting the strongest emotions. Nor can I forget those I experienced on witnessing the effect communicated by the setting Sun. The glowing orb majestically descending to its watery bed infused a warmth and splendour all round. Old ocean caught the resplendent beams, and reflected them in an undulating golden line to our feet. All above exhibited an amazing concave tinged with richly gold and crimson colouring, whilst shadowy discs fancifully danced in the expanded hemisphere. At length, the mildly glittering luminary, retiring by degrees from our sight, left us full of admiration."

Truly this sounds little like the habitual language of a flint glass manufacturer and captain of volunteers!

A period of seventeen years separates the two

editions of Glazebrook's *Guide.* Between 1809 and 1826 the growth of Southport had been rapid:—

"This place," says the author, "is so completely altered since 1809 that it is recognised with difficulty by those who knew the village seventeen years ago. At that time there were only about thirty-eight dwellings with a population scarcely amounting to *one hundred* individuals. Now there are at least 215 houses, and the *resident* population is upwards of *six hundred.*"

In accordance with the growth of the town is the growth of the *Guide.* It now consists of 176 pages instead of 79. Its size is the same, 8½ inches by 5½ inches, and it appears in plain boards, with blue back and white label. The price was 5s. 6d. The book has now four illustrations, besides two plates of arms at the end of the volume. The title-page now bears the author's name, and is as follows:—

"*A* | *Guide* | *to* | *Southport,* | *North Meols,* | *in the county* | *of* | *Lancaster:* | *with an account of the places* | *in its immediate* | *neighbourhood.* | *By* | *Thomas Kirkland Glazebrook, F.L.S.* | *etc.* | *Second Edition.* | *Revised, corrected, and considerably enlarged* | [*Five lines from Ovid as before*]. *London:* | *Printed for C. & J. Rivington; Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green;* | *Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh;* | *H. Mozley, Derby;* | *Mr. Whitely, Repository: Mrs. Barlow, Union Hotel;* | *Mr. Mawdsley, Hesketh Arms, and Mrs. Hargreaves, Southport;* | *Also the Booksellers in Ormskirk, Wigan, Bolton,* | *Liverpool and Manchester:* | *By J. & J. Haddock, Market-Gate, Warrington.* | 1826."

The dedication is to the lords of the manor Henry Bold Hoghton, Esquire, and Peter Hesketh, Esquire. The revisions, corrections, and enlargements are considerable, beginning with the account of Ormskirk Church and "the road to the Meols." A "History of the Siege of Lathom House" is added, and also a list of vessels wrecked off Southport between the years 1786 and 1826. The chapter on "The Sea" is retained, and a good many fresh paragraphs about the town are added under such headings as "Benevolent Institutions," "Southport National School," "Accommodation,"

"Letters," "Population," "Sandhills," "Schools." Under "Accommodation" we are informed that at the hotels and lodging-houses the terms are five shillings a day, "exclusive of wine and liquors," and the "beds form a separate expense in all instances." There is a Directory of the town, and a long description of Halsall Church and its monuments is added at the end of the book, with short notices of Lydiate and Formby. The illustrations comprise Christ's Church (frontispiece), Ormskirk Church, Lydiate "Abbey," and Formby Hall. The plates of arms and crests at the end include those of (Plate I.) Stanley and Blackburne, and (Plate II.) Hoghton, Hesketh, Lathom, Bootle, Wilbraham, Lydiate, Blackburne, Ireland, Anderton, Blundell, Fleetwood, Eccleston, Scarisbrick, Bold, &c.

Mr Glazebrook notices a marked improvement in Sunday observance since 1809.

"In 1809," he writes, "Sunday was anything but a day of rest. The Shore was crowded with bathers, and company, from all the neighbouring villages. Many were seen drinking, on benches. The Inns were full. Riot and confusion reigned,—and a foreigner would have considered it the celebration of a fair, rather than the close of a Christian sabbath."[1]

But in 1826, "the observance of the day is strictly adhered to."

In his account of the naming of Southport, Glazebrook now introduces the name of Dr. Barton, not mentioned in the former edition.

Whittle, who based his work on that of Glazebrook, wrote of the latter: "It appears that the late Mr. Hargreaves, of Southport (who died in the month of June 1814), gave Mr. Glazebrook considerable information respecting Southport, as well as many other gentlemen equally respectable have given the like assistance. A well-merited eulogium of Mr. Glazebrook's Southport *Guide*

[1] The punctuation is Glazebrook's own.

appeared in the Liverpool *Courier*, stating that the book in question was a work of research and highly creditable to the talents of the author, in pointing out history and the advantages of a place in the neighbourhood of North Meols, which is every day becoming of more importance and usefulness, and thus science has been embellished and her resources enriched, more especially in the walks of the animal and vegetable kingdom. This panegyric was signed by nine very respectable gentlemen, part residents and the rest visitors."

WHITTLE'S "MARINA."

Whittle's *Marina* bears the date 1831, and consists of three parts, each with separate title-page and pagination. These parts deal respectively with Southport, Lytham, and Blackpool, and were apparently also sold separately. The title-page of the full work reads as follows :—

Marina ; | or, | an historical and descriptive account | of | Southport, Lytham, and Blackpool, | situate on the western coast of Lancashire. | By P. Whittle, F.S.A.—R. | Author of the "Topographical and Statistical History of Preston," etc. | dedicated to those who visit the saline shores of the | abovesaid watering-places. | Embellished with a Map of Southport, and Prospects of Lytham and Blackpool ; | done in Lithography expressly for this Work. | . . . Preston : Printed and Published by Peter and Henry Whittle, | Fishergate, and sold by all the principal | booksellers in Lancashire | MDCCCXXXI.

The space denotes two poetical quotations, one of which tells us that "Books of this sort, which virtue helped, were titled not amiss, The 'Medicine of the Mind.'" The book is the same format as Glazebrook's, and was published at half a guinea.

The Southport portion of *Marina* consists of 160 pages, and is placed first in order, Lytham follows with 88 pages, and Blackpool with 72. The separate title-page for the Southport section is very

exhaustive in its terms, recalling almost a seventeenth-century treatise. It reads as follows :—

History | of | Southport | situate in | North Meols | in the County Palatine of Lancester; | much frequented | by the Nobility and Gentry as a Watering-place. | Southport is beautified with Cottages Ornées, situate amid sandhills, holden | together by the Sea Matweed. The Beach is firm: the Sea is only | to be approached at the flux; after which it retires from | the Strand at least half a mile | "And oft | conducted by Historic truth, | We tread the long extent of backward time." | Dedicated to those who visit the saline shores of Southport. | The following Authorities have been used: Ptolemy, Tanner, Cambden, | O'Connor, Carlisle, Aston, Whitaker, Baines, Leigh, Aikin, Crosby, Holt, | Gregson, Shuttleworth, Nathantiquarii, and others.

After such a display of authorities it is rather disappointing to find that Whittle is only Glazebrook amplified and amended. Whittle's book is entirely based on Glazebrook, whose language is used unsparingly. Whittle frankly tells us that, acting on the former writer's "generous hint," that "some one else may be induced to amend what he has compiled," he has proceeded to put together this "more ample history." What Mr. Glazebrook thought on thus being taken at his word is not recorded, but it is safe to say that he hardly intended the "some one else" to issue what is practically a third edition of his book. There is scarcely more difference between Glazebrook's second edition and Whittle's *Marina* than between the second and third editions of Dr. M'Nicoll's *Handbook*.

This is the kind of amendment Whittle makes. Glazebrook writes: "In 1810 the late Mr. Hargreaves erected the house at which his respectable widow now resides for the purpose of receiving guests, and called it 'The Mansion House.'" Whittle changes this to: "The late Mr. Hargreaves built the house (at which his respected widow now

resides) in the year 1810, for the purpose of genteel lodgers, and called it the Mansion House."

The map of Southport which "embellishes" the book as a frontispiece represents the town in 1830, and was "surveyed and drawn under the superintendence of E. H. Walker." This Mr. Walker kept a well-known boys' school, or "academy," in Row Lane, at which mechanical drawing and surveying were taught. The plan bears the arms of Hoghton and Hesketh, lords of the manor.

The arrangement of the book follows exactly on the lines of Glazebrook, his headings being all adopted, but a few extra paragraphs are thrown in. We have even a version of "The Sea," which chapter, however, is now dignified by the title "Hydrography." An account of a "melancholy catastrophe," in which Colonel Gerard, Father Crathorne, and others were drowned in 1822, is a new feature in Whittle's volume, and an elegy on this event is also given.

Of greater interest, however, is the "Walk through Southport," by a Scholar and a Gentleman, describing a walk from Liverpool through Maghull, Lydiate, and Halsall to the "rising marine village of Southport." People seem to have been very fond of the word "marine" in the early days of Southport's history. If they go for a row it is a "marine excursion," or if they walk on the sands it is a "marine peregrination."

Whittle's book contains a quantity of very miscellaneous matter, under such headings as "Notitiæ," "Eclectic Marine Pieces," "Essays," "Notices," &c., which latter consist of short tales, traditions, verses, or indeed anything which could be made to have any bearing on Southport. If Southport is deficient in anything, such as sylvan or mountain scenery, then you can indulge in fine language on trees and mountains in order to indicate to visitors

what they are *not* to expect in the marine village. Such would appear often to have been the method of these early writers and compilers. They were apparently troubled with a desire to indulge in noble sentiments, and must find room for their expression somehow.

Whittle, however, can be prosaic enough, and devotes a good deal of his space to the flora and fauna of the district. There are two pages of a "List of Plants by which such Soils as are common in the Parish of North Meols are generally distinguished," and further on there are six more pages giving "A Catalogue of Plants found in the Vicinity of Southport." Following these are sections devoted to grasses, agarics or mushrooms, birds, ichthyology and conchology. Lastly, we have a Directory for Southport and its vicinity, consisting of three and a half pages in double columns.

The "Walk through Southport" gives some interesting pictures of the Southport of eighty-five years ago. The Scholar and Gentleman calls himself "Nathantiquari," and his descriptive account appeared originally in the Liverpool *Kaleidoscope* in 1823.

"The place itself," says the writer, "at first glance does not afford any very pleasant sensation, destitute as it is of all natural advantages, for which art has made but little compensation. It consists principally of one long straggling street, so wide that the intermediate space is occupied by gardens, or rather small areas. The general aspect possesses too much regularity to be consistent with beauty; and yet the only beauties it can boast of is in its individual irregularity. When viewed from a distance, the sides of the street present one long, equal, monotonous line, with scarcely one house projecting beyond another; but, when more nearly approached, each cottage, or at least each set of cottages, exhibits its own peculiar features and distinctive character, and affords an agreeable variety, which, from its minuteness, is lost in the distance."

He goes to Christ Church, and is not edified by the service.

"As for the music," he exclaims, "'twas a villainous compound of bad sounds; 'twas no music of the spheres; no choir of cherubim; but the discordant harmony of mortal melody: the shrill tones of the flageolet, played by the not unpretending hand of village minstrelsy, were overpowered by the acute notes of female vocalism; and the loud bass of rustic capability of lungs overpowered the dull monotony of the hoarse bassoon: there was no sympathy of intonation—no combination of melodious sounds; but all was the struggling of discordant rivalry."

A description of the Southport hinterland displays a lofty and noble imagination, sadly lacking in poor Nathaniel Hawthorne when he looked on the same scene thirty years later!

"The inland view is the work of nature in her mildest and most sober mood; and, if it partake not of the wild energy and indefinite beauty of her sublime combinations, gratifies us by the very contrast and inspires feelings of calmer happiness, and breathes the very essence of comfort, content, and opulence. Yet, has she not acted with an impartial hand? for there she has lavished the exuberance of her beauty—and here, in a wayward humour, denied to her offspring the very elements of its nature, and left to art, in the ebullition of rival superiority, to supply her vacancies and compensate for her neglect; for the immediate vicinity of Southport is mere worthless sand, but the wonderful perseverance of human industry has brought from a distance the soil which has rendered vegetation so perfect and so fertile, and, despite of nature, has reared up an Eden in a barren wilderness."

Thus we see how a place, which at first glance does not afford any pleasant sensation, can end by becoming Eden itself—thanks to an exuberant imagination and the gift of words.

The words, however, are not those of Mr. Peter Whittle, F.S.A.R., though it is through him that they have been presented to us. Mr. Whittle, who goes to Ptolemy and Cambden (always spelt with a "b") for his authorities, gives us more prosaic information. "Bathing," he tells us, "is the act of immersing the body, or part of it, into water, or any other fluid."

There is a second edition of Whittle's *Marina*, with a new general title-page, in which the words "Second Edition" take the place of the quotation, but it is undated. There is also another issue of the book, without date, with a new title-page and three fresh frontispieces to the different sections. This was published by Whittaker & Co. of London. The name *Marina* is dropped, the new title-page, which is a single sheet inserted, reading :—

An | Historical and Descriptive | Account | of | Blackpool, Lytham | and | Southport. | By a popular writer | Embellished with three beautiful engravings | London | Whittaker & Co.

In this issue the order of the three parts is reversed, Southport coming last, otherwise the book is the same. The plan of Southport, however, is replaced by a good engraving of the sea-front showing the lodge at the end of Coronation Walk, and the new sea-wall or promenade, which presumably fixes the date of the picture, and, therefore, this re-issue of the book, at about the years 1836 or 1837.

Alsop's "History."

Immediately after the publication of Whittle's *Marina*, Mr. William Alsop would appear to have been troubled by the want of a "cheap and abridged" history of Southport, and accordingly he proceeded to do exactly the reverse of what Mr. Whittle had done, and compressed Glazebrook where the other had amplified him. The result was the publication of a *Concise History of Southport* in the year 1832. This little book, which is 5½ inches by 3⅔ inches, is covered in green boards, and the title-page reads as follows :—

A Concise | History of Southport, | a fashionable watering-place | situate in | North Meols, | in the county palatine of Lancashire,

| *Together with a* | *Tide Table and Directory* . . . [1] | *Southport:* | *printed and sold by William Alsop* | 5, *Gore's Terrace.*[2]

On the cover the title is "A Concise History and Description of Southport," and curiously enough Alsop's name does not appear. Instead we have the names of several booksellers, thus: "Manchester: | sold by T. Sowler, St. Ann's Square; C. H. Lewis, | 6, Market-street, and C. Ambery, 91, Market-street. | Christopher Malley, Warrington; Ducker, Prescot; Hilton, Wigan; and by other | Booksellers."

The book consists of 118 pages, the preface dated March 1832, and is dedicated to Peter Hesketh Fleetwood, Esq., M.P. As a frontispiece there is an engraving of the "Southport Assembly and News Room."

Alsop's book is, however, something more than a compressed Glazebrook. Referring to both Glazebrook and Whittle, Alsop says:—

"The author's object has been neither to supplant the one nor to supersede the other; but merely to compress into a cheap form every necessary information likely to amuse and interest the general reader."

He skilfully borrows from both, and from the combination, by omitting the critical and uncomplimentary, produces a new and very creditable result. In the following passage the grafting of the pleasant part of the Scholar and Gentleman's Walk on to the first admiring remarks of Mr. Glazebrook will be noticed—

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[1] The space represents a poetical quotation:—

"What scenes!
What varied views unnumber'd spread around,
And here and there, behind the rugged hills,
The broad flat sea."

[2] Gore's-terrace was a row of houses on the south side of Lord-street, next to the Prince of Wales Hotel, now pulled down.

"Southport on first glance is calculated to fill the mind with admiration, especially the minds of those who delight in rural retreats from the noise and turmoil of a bathing town. It consists of one principal street, nearly a mile in length and upwards of ninety yards in width, composed of handsome houses on each side adorned with gardens in front, most tastefully laid out. When viewed from a distance it appears to be a long line of uniformly arranged buildings, with scarcely one house projecting beyond another, but upon a nearer approach thereto each cottage, or at least each group of cottages, exhibits its own peculiar feature and distinct character, and presents an agreeable variety, which from the extreme length of prospect is lost or unobserved in the distance."

This is a good sample of Alsop's method. His book he divides into three chapters, the first dealing with the origin of the town, climate, character of the inhabitants, visitors, &c. Chapter II. treats of places of worship, public buildings, benevolent institutions, accommodation, &c.; and Chapter III. of the sea, the tides, the shore, advantages of sea bathing, &c. The third chapter is Glazebrook's "The Sea" compressed, but including the list of wrecks. A description of the arms of Fleetwood and Hoghton, with illustrations, is appended, following which is a list of indigenous plants "furnished by some few experienced friends expressly for the present work." This takes up fifteen pages, and eight more pages are occupied with a tide-table for the summer months. Following this comes a Southport Directory, and notices of inns, coaches, carriers and schools, the whole concluding with an index.

Communication with Southport from Manchester and other Lancashire towns was in those days chiefly by means of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal to Scarisbrick Bridge, and indeed continued to be so for many years after. But the opening of the railway between Manchester and Liverpool put an alternative route at the disposal of the Manchester people :—

"Since the opening of that stupendous effort of human genius, the Liverpool and Manchester Railway," writes Alsop, "and the

consequent facility afforded by that quick and pleasant mode of travelling, many of the Manchester visitors embrace it in preference. Parties may leave Manchester at one or two o'clock in the afternoon, and arrive in Southport between six and seven in the evening."

The number of coaches from Liverpool to Southport was increased, and a scheme was talked of to construct a branch line from Warrington direct to Southport, *viâ* St. Helens. "Lying as it does in a most obscure and out-of-the-way part of the country," says the author of the *Concise History*, "nothing can be more valuable to the interest of this celebrated watering-place than to adopt every means for the conveyance of passengers and luggage."

Alsop notes an improvement in Sunday observance. "At one time sin and iniquity appeared to be stalking forth in frightful array, embracing in its ruthless grasp as it proceeded the unwary youth of this neighbourhood." Since then, however, "a great moral and religious reformation had taken place." This "reformation" seems to have effected other things beside Sunday observance, for in Alsop's book we have a set of bathing rules and regulations given in full, one of which states that there shall be a vacant space of 100 yards between the bathing ground appointed for ladies and that for gentlemen.

In another edition of Alsop's book, the terms of the title-page of which are slightly different,[1] the place of the tide-table is taken by some "Lines on Southport," which occupy six pages, and are described as a "lengthy *jeu d'esprit*" reprinted from the Liverpool *Kaleidoscope*. This issue has only 104 pages, and concludes with a couple of pages of

[1] It reads: "*A concise* | *history of Southport,* | *a fashionable watering place* | *situate in North Meols* | *in the county of Lancaster.* | '*A lovely spot* | *For all that life can ask,* | *Salubrious, mild*' | *Southport* | *Printed and sold by William Alsop, Bookseller.*"

Notitiæ, being notices of two local characters, "Old Cockle Dick" (Richard Haughton, who died in 1824, aged ninety-nine), and "Old Fiddler Harry" (Harry Rimmer, who died in 1828, aged eighty-six), with some more lines on Southport. Whether this issue preceded that with the tide-table or followed it, I have been unable to ascertain.

The lines on Southport, which are stated to be "not totally destitute of merit," describe a journey to Scarisbrick Bridge in a canal boat, the approach to the town, and a stay there of some days. Here is a sample of the style. Having arrived safely at Scarisbrick, the journey is continued by conveyance :—

> "The sweet approach, say how shall we report
> To this 'most fashionable gay resort'?
> Uneven pavement shaking out one's breath,
> Dismal and rough as Bunyan's Vale of Death,
> And strangers for a time express surprise
> When only sandhills meet their wond'ring eyes."

But a sojourn in the "gay resort" makes the poet enthusiastic, and he bids farewell to Southport in these terms :—

> "Farewell, farewell! ye healthy sea-girt lands,
> Of star-hills, sea-gulls, sea-shells, shrimps, and sands.
> Thanks for our renovated health we pour,
> May mussels, cockles, crowd upon the shore;
> Turbot and cod and periwinkle be
> Procured in plenty from the Irish Sea."

On the back of the green cover of Alsop's *History* is announced as "lately published, price 3d., printed upon tinted paper, with gilt edges, A Sketch of Southport in verse, to which is added a brief description of the place." I have not seen this gilt-edge threepenny booklet, but what appears to be a cheaper edition, price one penny, was also published. This is a tiny pamphlet, 3¾ inches by 2½ inches,

in a pink paper cover, consisting of twelve pages. The title-page reads :—

Southport | *a noted watering place on the coast* | *of Lancashire* | "*A lovely spot*, | *For all that life can ask*" | *Southport* | *printed and sold by Wm. Alsop* | *bookseller and stationer.*

The cover is lettered "A Sketch | of | Southport | Southport | Printed and Sold by William Alsop | Price One Penny."

The brief description is contained in two pages, and the rest consists of the "Lines on Southport," already noticed, together with the arms of Fleetwood and Hoghton, a table of distances from Southport, and the further verses on Southport which concluded the larger book.

Cocker's "History."

Seven years after Alsop's *Concise History* there appeared Cocker's *Compendious History*. The full title-page reads :—

A | *Compendious* | *History* | *of* | *Southport* | *a* | *favourite and fashionable* | *Watering place*, | *in the* | *parish of North Meols, Lancashire.* | *Wigan :* | *R. Cocker, Market Place*, | *and* | *A. Cocker, bookseller, Neville-street, Southport.* | 1839.

Cocker's *History* is a 12mo ($5\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches) book of 38 pages, printed at Wigan, with a stiff green paper cover lettered in the same manner as the title-page, except for the omission of the words "the parish of." It is divided into two chapters, dealing respectively with the rise and progress of Southport, and a general description of the town. It is, of course, based on former publications, and many of the old features appear. The preface, which is dated June 28, 1839, states that

"The object of the compiler has been to condense and give to the public, in a cheap form, what has been before published on the subject, with such additional information as to render the book a history of Southport up to the period of its publication."

To some extent the little book is an adaptation of Glazebrook, but some new authorities are drawn on, notably Sir George Head, who wrote an interesting description of Southport in his *Home Tour through the Manufacturing Districts of England* (1835).

A long description of the new baths building[1] is given, with the rules and terms of admission. The old Victoria Baths provided a news-room, refreshment-room, and observatory, as well as the means to "immerse the body in water," and Rule 10 reads as follows:—

"For the gratification of persons desirous of seeing the fountains, &c., in full operation, the baths will be open for exhibition to the public every Wednesday afternoon, from two to six o'clock (during which time no bathing can be allowed), on the payment of 6d. for each person; and a select band will be in attendance. Visitors, by taking a bath, are entitled to admission to the conservatory and engine room, where they may take a glass of filtered sea-water free of charge."

The "observatory" in connection with the baths seems to have been a very select place indeed, for the regulations inform us that "chairs to sit on the promenade may be had at the pay-office for one penny each; and for sitting in the observatory during high water, or at any other time, at one shilling each."

In each new book on Southport we hear of improvements which have taken place in the town subsequent to the issue of the last guide, and by this means the shortcomings of the place are made known to us.

"The walking in the village," says Cocker, "has been much improved of late, and still further improvements are in progress. . . . In the sandhills the wayfarer usually sinks up to his ankles, except immediately after a smart shower of rain, in which single

[1] Pulled down to make way for the present building, which was erected in 1870-71.

instance the sand binds simultaneously, concedes free leave and licence to range over the tops of these mimic mountains to visit spots which only half-an-hour before were apparently all but inaccessible. It is really with extreme pleasure that treading upon a hardened surface one then explores recesses where nothing but the sky is to be seen, and which seems as wild and solitary as an Arabian desert."

Robinson's "History."

After Cocker's *Compendious History* there seems to have been an interval of nine years before another book on Southport made its appearance. Those nine years were, however, marked at their middle period by the birth of the *Southport Visiter*, which was founded in 1844. It is true that in 1846 George Wilkinson put forth his *Chronicles of Southport* (pieces reprinted from the *Visiter*), but this is not in any way a guide-book to or history of the town, and does not call for notice here.

In 1848 appeared Robinson's *Descriptive History*, a small octavo volume bound in red cloth, "printed by R. Johnson, Visiter Office, Lord's-street, Southport." The full title-page reads as follows :—

A | *Descriptive History* | *of the* | *popular watering-place* | *of* | *Southport,* | *in the* | *parish of North Meols,* | *on the* | *western coast of Lancashire.* | *By Frank Robinson.* | *London :* | *Arthur Hall & Co., Paternoster-Row* | 1848.

The preface is dated May 1848. The dedication reads: "To the Commissioners under the Southport Improvement Act, whose exertions for the perfection of Southport entitle them to the highest praise, this history of the scene of their labours is respectfully inscribed by the Author." The book consists of 124 pages, is divided into eight chapters, and contains nine plates.

There is more original matter in Robinson than in the last two books referred to. Yet the influence of Glazebrook is felt. Robinson's style is inclined

to the grand and heroic in places, though, as a rule, the writer keeps himself well in hand. His method of treatment follows the old lines. A description of the town, taking all the public buildings one by one, recreations and amusements, facilities for travelling, and an account of some places of interest in the neighbourhood, such as Halsall, Lydiate, Ormskirk, Lathom House, Burscough Priory, &c. A list of "resident officials" and a Directory are given in an appendix, and there is a list of plants supplied by Henry Aughton of Churchtown, which occupies thirteen pages.

The plates are (1) the Victoria Baths, (2) a south-west view of the beach, (3) north view of the beach, (4) Christ's Church, (5) Southport from the east, (6) baths and marine promenade from the sea, (7) St. Marie's Catholic Chapel, (8) Visiter Office, Lord-street, (9) the Lodge from high water.

Southport had made rapid progress since the days of Whittle and Alsop. The *cottages ornées* were giving place to more substantial dwellings.

"The ordinary cottage houses," says Robinson, "where the most respectable families in the county were content to reside are now totally eclipsed by houses and mansions fit for the reception of Majesty itself."

The progress of the town, he further tells us, had been "in a wholesale manner—by streets and not by single dwellings."

"Coronation-walk, Nevill-street, Eastbank-street, London-street, Seabank-road, Hill-street, Union-street, Bold-street, Chapel-street, Hoghton-street, Fleetwood-street,[1] and the Victoria Promenade and Manchester-road are not only formed, but many of them are completely built up; and other streets, crescents, and squares are either planned or suggested."

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[1] The eastern end of Hoghton-street between Union-street and Manchester-road was then so called. It also extended a short distance beyond Manchester-road, the beginning of what is now Queen's-road.

Among the new buildings when Mr. Robinson wrote were the Victoria Hotel, which he describes as a "massive and superb building," and St. Marie's Church in Seabank-road. The Victoria Hotel of those days consisted, of course, only of the square block at the corner of Nevill-street. It was built in 1842. The original church of St. Marie, opened in 1840, and designed by Augustus Welby Pugin, was a very different building from that which we see to-day. The illustration shows a small building without aisles, with a west door, and a porch on the south side. There is also a lych gate to Seabank-road, and beyond the church are the sandhills and the sea.

Throughout Robinson's book the name of the main street is written Lords'-street, although the modern spelling is found in earlier writers. It would be interesting to know when the possessive plural was finally abandoned. The street is described even then as "one of the most splendid thoroughfares in the kingdom."

"The sea," says Mr. Robinson, "flows so far inland that it is of little consequence whether visitors arrive at spring or ebb tide."

And he repeats the story of the threatened inundation in these words:—

"The encroachments of the tide . . . and the drifting sand rendered it necessary to build a stone wall and form a slope to protect the town, which almost seemed threatened with inundation."

The sea, however, did retire to some distance at low water, for at this time Robinson tells us:—

"A project has been advertised for erecting a railway pier to extend to low water, where vessels might discharge passengers or goods, to be from them conveyed to the manufacturing districts. Whether this is practicable or not we do not pretend to say," continues our author, "but it is scarcely desirable. If a pier is erected as an additional promenade for the inhabitants and

visitors, and for their convenience when embarking on pleasure voyages, it will be warmly welcomed, and will, without doubt, prove profitable to those who undertake its construction."

A dozen years, however, were to elapse before a pier became a reality.

Those of us who remember the *Flying Dutchman* on the sands within comparatively recent years will be somewhat surprised to learn that this particular form of amusement was spoken of as a thing of the past in 1848.

"Various projects," writes Mr. Robinson, "have been announced, and some have been attempted, for converting the shore to some profitable account. A few years ago[1] a joint-stock company, principally boatmen of the town, had a kind of landboat built, which would carry a dozen persons at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and was intended to ply for hire; it was called *The Ariel*, in allusion to the high rate of speed obtained, and was so successful in every respect that a rival boat was built by another company, and called the *Flying Dutchman*. It was a wonder to many that these novel vehicles, which were in great demand, and would doubtless have proved profitable to the shareholders, were discontinued almost as soon as the experiment had been tried; but a collision with a bathing-machine having occurred, attended with some slight damage, it caused a verification of the old proverb, 'For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost.' For similar reasons the *Flying Dutchman* was discontinued, and the consequence was that the 'strange crafts' were allowed to become 'wrecks ashore.'"

The sport of sand-yachting was revived in 1852, and was very popular till the 'eighties, though it did not long survive the creation of the marine lakes and park.

Mr. Robinson tells also of a projected railway along the sands to Liverpool.

"A short time ago," he writes, "a private individual took some trouble and incurred some expense in testing the capabilities of the shore for the transit of locomotive engines and carriages between Southport and Liverpool: the consent of the

[1] In 1842; *vide* Bland's *Annals of Southport.*

landowners was obtained: a survey was made, which was extremely favourable; and, notwithstanding there appeared to be all the elements of success, the project failed for want of support."[1]

The communication with Lytham was in those days more constant than now. During the season, says Robinson, "a number of boats leave Southport daily for Lytham," while the trip to Blackpool appears to have been only occasional. "At every tide, even at midnight, the boats take passengers for a sail within a mile or two of the shore."

When Mr. Robinson gets beyond the streets of the town and the influence of his fellow-beings, his soul begins to soar, and Nature prompts him to follow the example of his predecessors in his description of her works.

"The sandhills," he exclaims, "are the most kaleidoscope-like fantastic things that can be well imagined, assuming the majesty of mountains one day and on the next dwindling to mole-hills: they are like 'the mountains that skipped like rams, and the hills like lambs of the flock' mentioned in Holy Writ."

And he speaks of Flora decking the fields and hills round Southport with the most beautiful of her acceptable gifts.

Finally, when he has come to an end of his description of the town, he turns upon the reader and exclaims:—

"Reader, have you ever been to Southport? Perhaps not; and if so you have missed a treat. If you are charmed with viewing the wild and majestic—if you would see Nature in her rudest, and also her finest, forms—if you would retire from the bustle and turmoil of town life—visit Southport, and if you are possessed of a competency stay and dwell thereat."

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[1] The line between Southport and Waterloo, however, was opened in this very year (1848). The first sod was cut on March 24, and trains began to run on July 31. The extension to Liverpool was made in 1850.

J. S.'s "Guide."

The year after the publication of Robinson's *Descriptive History* there appeared J. S.'s *Guide.* The title-page reads :—

A | Guide to Southport | and the | surrounding neighbourhood and parish; | together with | a sketch of its origin, rise, progress, and present | improvements: | including many original anecdotes and traits of | character, circumstances, and scenery, never | before published. | By J. S., formerly of Southport. | Liverpool: | Printed and Published by G. J. Poore, 42, *Castle Street, | and sold by all booksellers.*

The book is 6⅔ inches by 4¼ inches, and consists of 54 pages, in a cloth cover and paper label lettered "Southport, 1849." As a frontispiece there is a folding plan of the town on thin paper. The dedication, dated "Liverpool, June 1st, 1849," is, like that of Robinson, to the Commissioners, and the work is divided into seven chapters and a directory. A description of the town and its approaches takes up the first four chapters, and then follows a sketch of the "Origin, Rise, Progress, and present Improvements of Southport."

J. S. tells us that, "thinking it more creditable to be a tolerable original than a good copyist," he has "eschewed reading any other guide to, or history of Southport, for fifteen years," and has therefore "depended upon his own practical resources and observations for producing a cheap and useful 'guide to Southport.'"

This gives the key-note of the book. It is more original than those we have just been discussing, being neither a compression nor an amplification of previous writings. He even goes so far as to omit certain too-well-known stories, such as the naming of Southport by Dr. Barton, as they can be read elsewhere and are universally known. In his dedication he tells the Commissioners that,

"Having, for several years, contemplated the Publication of a book of this description, I have seized upon the epoch of your Railway prosperity for its issue. . . . Fondly attached, in heart and feeling, to your charming Town, as well as to the inhabitants of the whole Parish, I have endeavoured to depict its merits and scenery in as simple and heartfelt a style as my humble ability was capable of performing."

Having thus told us what to expect, he begins his book in the following simple and heartfelt fashion:—

"In the dawning forth of Southport—its bathing days, when it was barely swathed by the fragile, wreck-material built edifice of accommodation, then styled 'the Duke's Folly'; when its chief frequenters, o'er the rugged stony road to Ormskirk, thence by the half-sloughy, half-sandy narrow lanes through Scarisbrick, came mainly from the emporium of 'Black Diamonds' known by the comparatively undeserved name of 'Sooty Wigan,' in gig, or heavy coach, or cart, with unwieldy packages and trunks of provisions and prepared viands, raised pies and pasties, and cold meat,—little did the original frequenters, or their cramply-circumstanced host of that day, or the aboriginal fishermen who gave up their humble pallet and table for the line of the eager panting bathers who then intuitively placed a true value upon saline ablutions—ever imagine that, in less than sixty years from that period of progressing cleanliness and health, the present beautiful vista of more than a mile in length, abounding with tasteful villas, lofty mansions, elegant and spacious Hotels, extensive and variedly compact public Baths, and innumerable houses for accommodation of every class and number of frequenters, would now stand forth in all the elegance of architectural display, verdant and fragrant scenery, and every possible attraction. . . ."

We hold our breath and ask when is there to be a full stop. But it is not yet. The sentence goes on for nine more lines, but we will leave it as it stands, and confess that we never read "heartfelt and simple" language such as this before.

His language, however, utterly fails him when he tries to sum up the attractions of Southport, and instead of a gorgeous peroration such as Glazebrook indulged in, he can only conclude with—

"Southport . . . must be seen to be duly and fully appreciated; language is inadequate to that task; at least, any we are at present in possession of."

J. S., like Robinson, always writes Lords'-street, though in the plan accompanying the volume the name is printed Lord-street.

Dr. Barron's "Handbook."

One might almost say that J. S.'s *Guide* brings to an end the catalogue of "old" books on Southport. With the name of Dr. Barron we seem to step at once into our own time. Yet Dr. Barron's book was published but nine years after J. S.'s. The ten years, however, between 1845 and 1858 made a period in Southport's history as well as in that of England and Europe. The middle of the century is passed; the world is modernised. And so in Dr. Barron's volume all those little conceits and grandiloquent mannerisms of language that make these early books on Southport so amusing are entirely absent. Dr. Barron wrote, as he lived and moved, in a quiet and dignified manner. His book is the work of a medical man, and as such cannot be criticised by an outsider. Whether, however, all the writer's opinions on Southport as a residence in health and disease still hold good is another matter. The vast increase of vegetation in the town and the continual presence of a sheet of water on the foreshore can scarcely but have had some influence on the atmosphere. Dr. Barron says:—

> "The writer remembers a gentleman once remarking to him that it was well for Southport there were no trees or luxuriant vegetation, as they would militate against its purity of atmosphere. In this the writer fully concurs."

Forty years have seen a great change in this respect, and it would be interesting to have the opinion of an unprejudiced medical man as to whether the Southport atmosphere has been materially affected.

The title-page of Dr. Barron's book reads:—

Southport | as a | Residence in Health and Disease. | By G. B. Barron, surgeon. | Surgeon to the Southport Hospital, North Meols Local | Dispensary, etc., author of a monograph on the | external use of chloroform in neuralgia | and tic-douloureux; observations | on cholera, etc., etc., etc. | Southport: | printed and published by Robert Johnson, Visiter office, Lord-St. | London: Arthur Hall & Co. | Manchester: Kelly, Market-St. Liverpool: Walmsley, Lord-St. | 1858.

It is an octavo volume (8 inches by 5 inches) of vii + 178 pages, and comprises four chapters and a set of weather tables. The preface is dated "Southport, September 1858." The first chapter deals with the history and description of the town. Chapter II. treats of the atmosphere and its effects on the body. Chapter III. considers the climate of Southport, and Chapter IV. treats of Southport as a residence in disease.

"The object the writer has in view," says Dr. Barron, "is to refer to the peculiar character of the atmosphere or climate of Southport in its bearing or influence in health and disease."

Dr. Barron's description of the town is purposely short and free from detail. That this is so was to some extent due to the writer's knowledge of the forthcoming work of Dr. M'Nicoll. He states that he is aware "that a work is already in the press, ably treating of, and entering minutely into, all the details connected with the history, rise, and progress of the place."

He gives, however, an account of the origin of the name Southport which is new, and it is difficult to conceive how he ever came to entertain it.

"A party of congenial spirits," he writes, "at a gentleman's house (about the first built) making merry over their cups, and rendered facetious by the generous wine they were imbibing, determining to perpetuate their appreciation of the delightful atmosphere after a manner suitable to their conviviality, proceeded to name the place by dashing a bottle of port wine on the spot, decreeing then, from that time forth and for evermore, the place should be named 'South Port.' Why or how the term 'South' was added to that of 'Port' there appears to be no sufficiently clear evidence."

If this means anything, it means that the second syllable in the name of the town is derived from a bottle of port wine. But what evidence is there for Dr. Barron's extraordinary derivation of the name? It is not necessary to retell the tale of the *port* or the mouth of the little river Nile which was *south* of Churchtown, yet Dr. Barron's version sometimes gets copied and repeated.

Dr. M'Nicoll's "Handbook."

Although Dr. M'Nicoll's Handbook was not published till 1859 the greater portion of it, as he tells us in his preface, had been in print two years. "It was written," he says, "as my contribution to a general guide to the place, which the publisher had intended to issue, in anticipation of the increased demand for information which the great gathering at Manchester in 1857[1] was expected to produce. The rebuilding of his premises led to the postponement of his scheme for a year, and the sheets already printed were put aside till the confusion and bustle of building had passed away."

The title-page of Dr. M'Nicoll's book reads as follows :—

"*Handbook for Southport,* | *Medical and General,* | *with* | *copious notices of the natural history of the district.* | *By David H. M'Nicoll, M.D., Fellow of the Ethnological Society; Physician to the Southport* | *Sea-Bathing Infirmary.* | [*Block of Lord-street*] *London:* | *Arthur Hall and Co.;* | *Liverpool; Edward Howell;* | *Southport: R. Johnson.* | 1859."

The book is an octavo volume (7 inches by 4½ inches) of vi and 176 pages, bound in cloth gilt. It has three coloured plates, representing respectively the flowering plants, birds, and reptiles of Southport. The preface is dated, "South Lawn, Southport,

[1] The Art Treasures' Exhibition.

June 21, 1859," and the book is printed by R. Johnson, Visiter Office, Lord-street.

Dr. M'Nicoll's Handbook is pretty well known, owing to its having passed through three editions. Copies of the third (1883) edition are not difficult to obtain, but the first edition is comparatively scarce, as, indeed, is the second. There are some points of difference between the first and second editions, while between the second and third there are very many. The third edition is, in fact, almost a new work; but as its date is so late it does not concern us very much in discussing old books on Southport.

Dr. M'Nicoll's book falls into four unequal divisions. Of his twelve chapters one is devoted to a history of the origin and growth of Southport, four to climate and health, six to natural history, and one to the country round Southport.

It is hardly necessary to quote from Dr. M'Nicoll's book. I shall be content to point out the differences between the first and second editions, remarking only that the writer is hardly more exhaustive in his account of the origin and growth of Southport than Dr. Barron himself. He certainly does not enter minutely into details. As to the name of the town, he merely states that it was

> "given by Mr. Barton, a retired surgeon from Ormskirk, and one of the earliest admirers of the place, at the entertainment given by Mr. Sutton on occasion of the opening of his house."

The second edition of the Handbook was published in 1861. The title-page is slightly different from that of 1859. The view of Lord-street has disappeared. The author's qualifications are now given as "Member of the Royal College of Physicians, Physician to the Southport Sea-Bathing Infirmary." The name of John Churchill, 11 New Burlington Street, London, alone appears

as publisher, though the volume is printed by Johnson & Green, Visiter Office, and "Handbook for Southport" becomes "A Handbook for Southport."[1] The coloured plates of birds and reptiles do not appear in the second edition, the only illustration being the coloured frontispiece depicting four of the flowering plants of the district. The colouring being by hand naturally varies a little, but a careful examination of the two frontispieces discloses other differences. The numbers attached to the plants are differently placed, and the lettering at the bottom is not exactly the same.

The second edition shows a good many additions to the text, and a couple of paragraphs dealing with the geographical position of Southport, and the meaning of the word "Meols," are prefixed to the first chapter. Paragraphs dealing with the new pier and the lifeboat are also introduced.

Throughout the book additional poetical quotations find place, though why the lines beginning "There is a tongue in every leaf" should be tacked on at the end of the chapter on reptiles I have not been able to comprehend.

The chief difference, however, in the editions of 1859 and 1861 lies in the increased space in the latter devoted to natural history. The second edition consists of 220 pages as against 176 in the first. The chapters dealing with climate and health remain the same, but the difference in the disposition of the natural history section will be seen at a glance from the following tables :—

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[1] The new title-page reads :—

"*A* | *Handbook for Southport*, | *Medical and General*, | *with* | *copious notices of the natural history of the District*, | *By David H. M'Nicoll, M.D.*, | *Member of the Royal College of Physicians; Physician to the Southport Sea-Bathing Infirmary* | *Second Edition.* | *London:* | *John Churchill*, 11 *New Burlington Street* | *MDCCCLXI.*

1st Edition.		*2nd Edition.*	
CHAP.		CHAP.	
VI.	Mammalia.	VI.	Mammalia.
VII.	Birds.	VII.	Birds.
VIII.	Plants.	VIII.	Reptiles and Amphibia.
IX.	Reptiles.	IX.	Arachnida and Crustacea.
X.	Shells.	X.	Mollusca.
XI.	Zoophytes (with a List of Foraminifera).	XI.	Zoophytes.
		XII.	Foraminifera.
		XIII.	Flowering Plants.
		XV.	Cryptogamic Plants.

A printer's error is apparently responsible for there being no Chapter XIV. in the later edition, and on page 109 of the first edition an error occurs in the title at the top of the page, "Birds" being printed instead of "Plants." It is rather disconcerting on opening the book at this page to find under the heading "Birds of Southport" that the sea milkwort and the whorled knotgrass are included.

The last chapter, which is entitled "Suggestions for Excursions," and was the work of Mr. J. A. Robinson, is the same in both editions. It seems curious to us nowadays to find Fleetwood suggested as a place of excursion for visitors from Southport.

Two years divided the first and second edition of Dr. M'Nicoll's book. Twenty-two years separate the second from the third. Dr. M'Nicoll himself had died in 1868, and it is probable that the work would not have been reissued at all but for the visit of the British Association to Southport in 1883. This third edition is edited by Dr. Edward Day M'Nicoll, and bears his name only on the title-page. It contains no coloured plates, but as a frontispiece there is a pen and ink drawing of the Municipal Buildings by Mr. T. Greenhalgh. In his preface Dr. E. D. M'Nicoll says:—

"That no work dealing with the same subject has equalled my father's in scope and completeness has been freely admitted. To obtain a copy—although frequent attempts to do so have been made by the public—has for many years been impossible. . . .

Although the form of the work remains the same it is hoped that in substance it may lay some claim to be considered much improved. The remarkable, almost unexampled, progress and development of Southport during the last twenty years has called for a total recasting and rewriting of much that the former editions contained."

But the third edition of the *Handbook for Southport* is not yet an old book, and we can, therefore, take leave of it without an examination of its contents.

Wilkinson's "Chronicles," and "Lights Along the Line."

Two other books remain for our notice, neither of them warranting, however, a detailed description, if indeed more than a passing mention. Wilkinson's *Chronicles of Southport* is meant to be a humorous publication, but it is the kind of fun which ought never to be preserved between the covers of a book. It is poor stuff at best, and is of interest only as it has bearing on Southport—the Southport of more than half a century ago. Another facetious little production is called *Lights Along the Line*, the line in question being that between Liverpool and Southport.

The title-page of Wilkinson's book explains the contents:—

Chronicles | *of* | *Southport* | *in* 1845, | *with a variety of other* | *miscellaneous pieces*, | *written expressly for* | "*The Southport Visiter*" | *by George Wilkinson.* | *Southport:* | *printed and published at the Visiter Office* | 1846.

The book consists of 164 pages, and is bound in cloth. Its contents include "Poetical Essays," "Memorials of Medicals," "The Ladies' Club," "Mushroom Cottage: A Village Tale," and an "Epitome of the Village News." This last is a series of eleven letters between July and September

1845. The whole point of the book seems to be to make fun of an erection styled the "Ionic Pillar," that apparently then stood at the junction of Nevill-street and Lord-street. But it is difficult for us at this length of time to appreciate the jokes with which Mr. Wilkinson regaled his readers.

The copies of *Lights Along the Line* to which I have had access are styled "a new and enlarged edition," and are dated 1855. Whether the book appeared originally before that year I do not know. It is a small (6 inches by 4 inches) publication, the price of which was one shilling, consisting of 60 pages, covered with stiff paper boards, and illustrated. The character of the book will be seen from its title-page :—

Lights along the Line | *a Geographical and Topographical Description* | *of the Salubrious* | *City of Southport*, | *its Literature and its Art:* | *with* | *geological, historical, and metaphorical* | *Pencillings* | *by the Way.* | *A new and enlarged edition* | *with Illustrations by* | *M. P. G.* | *By Yrneh Koorbezarg*, | *Hon. Mem. A.S.S.M.E.* *Liverpool:* | *Edward Howell, publisher, Church Street* | 1855.

On the cover the title is "Lights Along the Line, by Yrneh Koorbezarg. With eleven humorous illustrations." The illustrations are poor enough drawings of Southport belles, Southport swells, and other supposed local characters.

The author would appear to be Henry Grazebrook, if we adopt the simple device of spelling his name backwards, and here is a specimen of his humour :—

"The City is appropriately called Southport from its being situated in the north-west of England. . . . It is also a seaport; flat-bottomed vessels of two tons burden and under may approach the City at high water: frigates and ships of war cannot venture within miles of the beach, which circumstance is of vast importance—this great port being impregnable by sea."

Fun like this, when prolonged, becomes wearisome, and to read through *Lights Along the Line* at a sitting is a somewhat tedious business.

With these rather feeble jest books our catalogue of old Southport books is brought to an end. To turn over their pages has not been altogether a profitless or unpleasurable pastime. Ofttimes it has caused merriment, but this when merriment was least intended; and in putting these old volumes back upon the shelf we may ask ourselves whether the reputed wisdom of one age is not often the sport of the next, and whether the laughter of a day, when preserved for another generation, is not, like much study, a weariness to the flesh.[1]

[1] Since 1867 many guide-books to Southport have been published, a list of which would prove more lengthy than interesting. Two books of more permanent value, however, belong to this later period—Mr. E. Bland's *Annals of Southport* (1887) and the British Association *Handbook* of 1903. The former, described as a "chronological history of North Meols, A.D. 1086 to 1886," is a very useful work, the title of which explains itself. A second edition, revised and extended down to the end of 1902, was issued in 1903. The British Association *Handbook* was prepared for the second meeting of the Association in Southport, the contributions in the various sections of Natural History being obtained through the agency of the Southport Society of Natural Science, the editors being Dr. G. W. Chaster, Harold Brodrick, M.A., G. E. Johnson, M.A., and F. H. Cheetham. On the principle that the greater includes the less, Mr. Farrer's *History of the Parish of North Meols* (1903) should also be mentioned, though very slight reference is made in it to the modern town of Southport.