

LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE IN
ENGLISH LITERATURE UP TO
ABOUT 1700

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THIS essay aims at representing in some degree (1) literature not primarily historical, antiquarian, or topographical, which treats of Lancashire and Cheshire; (2) works in which the scene lies in these counties, and the manners may in some respects be regarded as representative of them. The plan consequently excludes books like Camden's *Britannia*, and does not imply anything like a complete survey within its own limits.

In the fourteenth century, a revival of English national feeling was greatly encouraged by the French victories of Edward III. The English tongue rapidly drove out its French rival, and in the west of England there was a notable return to the old English form of verse, the alliterative unrhymed line of the Anglo-Saxon. Its triumph is the *Piers Plowman* of Langland, but it had already been very fruitful in Lancashire. The north-west, so comparatively long under British rule, was a centre of Arthurian tradition, partly imported, partly no doubt of home growth. The nearest to ourselves is, I suppose, that which assigns one of Arthur's great battles to the banks of the river Douglas, near Wigan. These traditions became the subject of the new alliterative poetry; which, though it therefore treated romantic themes unrelated to the old national existence, yet

caught something of the old spirit, and very much of the old language and method, besides the material form in which that spirit was originally manifested.

Lancashire claims the best of the resulting poems, on the score of dialect; and first and foremost among them is the well-known Arthurian romance, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*. Philology defeats attempts to claim it (and consequently other admirable poems by the same author) for Scotland, and the fact that the author pitches his scene this side the border assists philology. There is some slight evidence to encourage the theory that he was the celebrated logician Ralph Strode, "the philosophical Strode," to whom, jointly with Gower, Chaucer dedicated his *Troilus and Criseyde*. From his works what we learn of him is, that he was well acquainted with the life of his time in great castles and halls, the minutiae of hunting and of all that appertained to knightly arms and exercises; that with his love of this life, and a remarkable love of nature, he combined deep religious feeling and hatred of all vice; that he had married unhappily, and had lost his only daughter Margaret, whom he celebrates in the famous poem which has been called *The Pearl*.

Without entering into the story of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, it suffices to say that a certain adventure which he had undertaken caused Sir Gawayne to set forth from Camelot, in Somersetshire, on the 2nd November, in search of a place vaguely called the Green Chapel, where it behoved him to be on New Year's Day. To my mind, it is some evidence of his local origin that the author defines no place on this journey till he reaches North Wales, and begins his inquiries at Wirral. He leaves, he says, the "iles of Anglesay" on the left, and fares over the fords by the forelands

“over at the Holy Hede” till he regained the bank in the “wyldrenesse of Wyrle.” Possibly he meant that he kept along the coast and crossed near Flint, like some later travellers I shall have to speak of. It seems very unlikely that he was a Cheshire man, as his first observation is :

“wonde ther bot lyte
that auther God other gome wyth goud hert lovied”

—in our phrase : “few dwelt there that truly loved either God or man.” No one had heard of the Green Chapel, in Wirral, and he proceeds on his way. It is curious that the author gives us no further names of places ; one can only infer with probability that as the language suits Lancashire in names of natural objects as well as grammar, and the scenery is like that of its north parts, the knight pursued his journey northward, and did not strike east. If this assumption is correct, his final scene may be in Lancashire or Yorkshire, or farther north in the Lake Country ; but as the author mentions no lakes either as passed on the journey or after, he probably fell short of Lakeland. One wonders if there is any place still locally bearing the name of the Green Chapel, which turns out to be, in the poet’s truly Lancashire phrase, “nobot an old cave.”

To proceed : he takes “strange *gates*” by many a rugged bank, climbs many cliffs, and passes many warthes or fords, fights with worms, and wolves, and wild men that “woned in the knarres” (dwelt in the rocks), and giants who came down from the high fells ; and, worse than all, was nearly frozen among the naked crags :

“there as claterande fro the crest the colde borne rennez
And henged hege over his hede in hard isse-ikkles”—

(where the cold burn ran noisily from the hill and hard icicles depended from the rocks above him).

words, for this reason, that when writers of these early religious plays drew manners, and especially their comic side, they drew, without disguise, from their own surroundings. In these plays—probably as old as the fourteenth or fifteenth century, but existing only in a MS. of the sixteenth—the Hebrew shepherds and bibulous women are Cheshire rustics and Chester gossips. For instance, in the Nativity play, just before the appearance of the star in the east, the shepherds—Hancken, who is drinking, Harvye, who is darning his stocking with a crow's feather, and Tudde, who is scouring an old tin pan—are certainly not Semitic in any respect, much less the eatables on which they sup in the fields—to wit, Lancashire oat-cakes, *pig's foot*, *black puddings*, and the like; or the wrestling match which follows the contemptuous rejection of their leavings by a fourth lad called Trowle, who throws them all. Such profane graftings on the gospel story provide valuable pictures of contemporary life.

Coming to the Elizabethan age, we strike a period in which the chief literary development concerns the drama. The extant historical drama, however, scarcely touches our locality; romantic comedy is mostly placed in Italy; the comedy of manners naturally centres in London and the vicinity, and we did not, like Yorkshire, afford a murder so notorious as to be dramatised according to the custom of the time. It remained for the Lancashire witches to attract the attention of the dramatists later on.

But this is spoken generally, and no doubt this part of the country received attention more or less. There is, for instance, a play acted about 1590, called *Faire Em, the Miller's Daughter of Manchester*, which has been absurdly attributed to

Shakespeare. It was written for the company which was under the protection of Lord Strange, the eldest son of the Earl of Derby, and possibly for production in Lancashire. It is based on an old ballad, not, I think, now extant, in combination with some imaginary love adventures of William the Conqueror in Denmark, and contains some local allusions. The miller, in explaining to the audience that he is really a knight in disguise, says :

“ Why should I not content me with this state,
As good Sir Edmund Trafford did the flail ? ”

The Trafford of the time was Sir Edmund, and the reference is to the tradition associated with the arms of his family, which the antiquary Hearne gives thus in his *Curious Discoveries* (i. 262, 8vo, 1771): “ The ancientest [arms] I know, or have read, is that of Trafords, or Trafard, in Lancashire, whose arms are a labouring man with a flail in his hand threshing, and this written motto, *Now thus*, which they say came by this occasion : that he and other gentlemen opposing themselves against some Normans who came to invade them, this Traford did them much hurt, and kept the passages against them ; but that at length the Normans, having passed the river, came suddenly upon him, and then he, disguising himself, went into his barn, and was threshing when they entered ; yet being known by some of them, and demanded why he so abased himself, answered *Now thus*.” The scene of the play is placed near *Manchester*, and King William, on his return from Denmark, is made to land at *Lerpoole*. One of *Faire Em's* lovers is a Manchester man, and is afterwards affianced to the daughter of a citizen of Chester. To put off two noble courtiers whose attentions excite the jealousy

of her Manchester swain, Em pretends to one to be deaf, and to the other to be blind. She fails to deceive them, but deceives her lover, and his desertion of her on account of her supposed afflictions leads to her rejection of him, when he is undeceived. This part of the plot I detail, as probably based on some local story commemorated in the ballad.

There can be little doubt that the company of Lord Strange travelled north, and included subjects of local interest in their repertoire: it may be of no significance whatever, but is at least worth noting, that whether the play was written for them or no, they frequently performed Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, of which the hero is Lacy, Earl of Lincoln. His connection with Cheshire and Halton Castle is, however, not referred to. Mr. J. Payne Collier suggested that they possibly left in these parts a curious drama found by Sir Frederick Madden among the papers of the Mostyn family, and edited by Collier for the Shakespeare Society in 1851. The MS., unfortunately rather dilapidated, is signed by the well-known playwright Anthony Munday, and dated December 1595, in another hand: it contains a merry play, of which the scene fluctuates between West Chester and the road to St. Winifred's Well. Its title, *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, is derived, like that of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, from the rival skill of two magicians employed on behalf of rival lovers. The superior art of John a Kent, who is identified with a wizard traditional at Kentchurch, near Hereford, finally disappoints the suitors preferred to Sidanen, daughter of Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, and Marian, daughter of Ranulph, Earl of Chester, by their respective fathers, and the maids are united to the men of their choice at Chester Abbey. In Act I., the Earl had appointed St. John's, before

the need of precautions made him vainly choose the Abbey, with its strong gates :

“ My house at Plessye is for you ¹ preparte,
Thence to the Castell shall you walk along,
And at St. John's shall be solemnized
The nuptialles of your honors and these virgens ;
For to that Churche, Edgar, once England's King,
Was by eight kinges, conquerd by him in warres,
Rowed roy[a]lly on St. John Baptist day.
In memory of which pompe, the earles, our auncestours,
Have to that Churche beene noble benefactours.”

The Stationers' Registers record a ballad of Sidanen, and Earl Ranulph is apparently the famous Ranulph Blundevile, who died in 1232, and was celebrated in songs current enough to be coupled with those about Robin Hood :

“ I can nouht perfity my pater-noster, as the prest it syngeth,
But I can rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolf erle of Chestre,
Ac neither of owre lorde ne of owre lady the leste that eure
was made.” ²

A famous academic play, *The Returne from Parnassus*, performed in St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1601, was in 1886 united with similar and preceding plays by the same author, *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus*, and the first part of *The Return*, by their discovery in MS. in the Bodleian Library. Its outside contained an owner's name, “Edmunde Rishton, Lancastrensis,” a person who has not been identified. A MS. of the third play came from a northern library, and the prologue to the second connects the author with Cheshire :

“ Hee never since durst name a peece of cheese,
Thoughe Chessire seems to privilege his name.”

The dialect of these plays has also traces of the north in such words as griggy (heathery), jagg

¹ You, i.e. the bridegrooms elect.

² *Piers the Plowman*, ed. Skeat, 1886, pp. 166, 167.

(a load), losel (wretched creature), mips (nymphs), seely (simple), sen (say), sooping (sweeping), teen (grief), whott (hot), wonn (will). A rustic son and "aire" thanks the sexton in these terms: "Marrie, I thanke youe, and you shall have my carte to carrie home a jagg of haye when you wonn. I pray let the grave be readie quicklie: it's time my father were taking his reste."

I shall now partly disregard chronology to conclude what I have to say about the drama. The trial of fifteen supposed witches (of whom twelve were executed) of the Pendle Forest district in 1612 attracted much attention, but not nearly so much as the trial of twenty years later. Heywood, who dramatised the later events in 1634, does not even mention a witch of Lancashire in the witch section of his *Nine Books of Various History concerning Women*, 1624. The first trial, however, provoked a few allusions; for instance, Ben Jonson, in *The Devil is an Ass*, acted in 1616, puts a contemptuous reference to the comparative simplicity of Lancashire in the matter of iniquity into the mouth of Satan, to whom Pug, the lesser devil, is applying for a commission to proceed to earth to work mischief. Satan says:

"You are too dull a devil to be trusted
Forth in these parts, Pug, upon any affair
That may concern our name on earth. It is not
Every one's work. The state of hell must care
Whom it employs, in point of reputation,
Here about London. You would make, I think,
An agent to be sent for *Lancashire*,
Proper enough; or some parts of Northumberland,
So you had good instructions, Pug."

But the trial of 1633 was promptly laid hold of by Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome—the former a Lincoln man and most prolific playwright, the latter formerly the servant of Ben Jonson—

and their play produced while yet the result was undecided.

The depositions of 1612 are extremely dull reading: the confessing witches and their accusers had little imagination. Yet one circumstance connected with the old trial *did* probably affect Heywood and Brome's drama. Among the accused and condemned witches was a lady of position, Alice Nutter, and it is most likely she whom the dramatists introduce among the later witches as "Mrs. Generous," the wife of an amiable and high-souled country gentleman. Otherwise, they follow the 1633 deposition of the boy Robinson very closely, for there was much more picturesque matter here; greyhounds which refused to course a hare, and when beaten turned into an old woman and a boy; which boy, being bridled, became a white horse, and carried the old woman and the deponent to a great meeting of witches, and much feasting, but food in which the deponent could detect no flavour. At the feast, ropes fastened to the top of the barn were pulled, and down them came tumbling hot meat, butter, and milk. Heywood and Brome cleverly make the pulled meat disappear from a wedding banquet, at which many other strange pranks are played by the witches. One very interesting feature of the play is, that the peasant-servants whose marriage-feast is thus interrupted are apparently realistic sketches, possibly partly studied from the actual people who were brought to London in 1634. They speak a broad dialect, which Mr. James Crossley, in his introduction to Pott's *Discovery of Witches*, reprinted from the original edition of 1613 for the Chetham Society, describes as the Lancashire dialect by no means unfaithfully given. Local colour is also obtained by the introduction of Lancashire customs: a general hornpipe is danced by young and old to

the Lancashire bagpipe, when the fiddles were bewitched, the said bagpipe being thought to be out of the power of witchcraft, and able to charm the devil. The boy Robinson is promised a statue in brass at the market cross at Lancaster: the whole circumstance of a Skymington is introduced.

The play leaves the punishment of the witches undecided, for a wise judge had refused to ratify the jury's condemnation of seventeen persons, and reported the matter to the King in Council. Some of the accused were brought to London, examined by the King's physician, and subsequently by Charles himself, who on that occasion is said to have gracefully given the present sense to the words "Lancashire witches." At any rate he dismissed the seventeen intended victims, and the boy Robinson afterwards confessed that he had been suborned to give evidence, an appalling revelation of the cold-blooded treachery once harboured in some Lancashire breasts.

Nearly fifty years later, 1682, another play called *The Lancashire Witches* appeared, written by the Whig rival of Dryden, Thomas Shadwell, the *Mac-flecknoe* of Dryden's famous satire. Like the former, it is based on the old occurrences of 1612 and 1633, and has its scene in "Lancashire, near Pendle-Hills"; but, unlike it, it interweaves the conventional love story, and intensifies the asperities of the period in which it was written, by introducing two caricatures, the one of a base-minded chaplain in English orders, with hankerings after the sacerdotal authority exercised by the Roman priesthood, and the other of an Irish priest, Teague O'Divelly, who gives the play its second title, and is at once an example of the stage Irishman, a recent introduction of Sir Robert Howard's, and a peg for all the ideas of corruption, trickery, and casuistry that the very Protestant author associated with his kind. Quite

possibly, it is because Lancashire was a suitable locality for him, that a Lancashire subject was chosen. The lovers in this play had met at a "Yorkshire Spaw," and the men follow the women to Lancashire on pretence of hunting, sending on their dogs before them to Whalley. Again, much care is taken to give local colour by means of dialect and references, as to Whalley and Rochdale. One of the peasant characters is called Thomas o Georges. The Lancashire form for *she* is this time carefully observed, but, as before, dialect is, with one exception, confined to the peasants, excluding the witches, curiously enough. The exception referred to is very interesting, as it regards the delineation of a younger brother, showing up the pitiful position of the man who remained at home in the house in which he had been brought up, a pensioner on the bounty of the more fortunate first-born. His nephew, whom he has affronted by omitting his purchased title, calling him cousin instead of Sir Timothy, describes him thus: "Yes, my Father's younger Brother. What a murrain do we keep you for, but to have an Eye over our Dogs and Hawks, to drink Ale with the Tenants (when they come with Rent or Presents) in Black Jacks, at the upper End of a brown Shuffle-board Table in the Hall? to sit at the lower End o' th' Board at Meals, rise, make a Leg, and take away your Plate at second Course? and you to be thus familiar!"—*Act I.*, ed. 1720, p. 232. Otherwise he is drawn as an honest sort of fellow, a good sportsman, and a merry companion.

I turn now to the famous poem in which Michael Drayton, the contemporary and fellow-countryman of Shakespeare, sought to celebrate the British Isles. The *Polyolbion*, *i.e.* England many times happy, appeared in two parts, the first eighteen songs in 1612, with annotations by Selden, the

remaining twelve songs in 1622, without annotations, and with the author's bitter expression of his disappointment at the small encouragement given to so patriotic a work. He completed his review of Wales and England, beginning with the former, whence it comes that Cheshire, which occupies the eleventh book, is the first English shire celebrated; but in dealing with Cheshire, history has rather crowded out the other detail which he usually gives in poetical form—legend, manners, and customs, as well as topography. These points are interesting. He speaks of a proverb, "Cheshire, chiefe of men," in allusion to the long descent of her gentry (a point he had from Camden); of the pre-eminent service of her yeomen in war—"the mightiest men of boane in her full bosome bred"—yeomen who were men of substance, on which they could fall back when they returned maimed by wounds; and landlords who fostered their tenantry, and whose

"hospitable gate
The richer and the poore stood open to receaue,
They of old England most to ancient customes cleave."

The same proverb, "Cheshire, chiefe of men," is alluded to in an old ballad, *The Honour of a London Prentice*, given in Ritson's *Ancient Songs and Ballads*:

"He was born and bred in Cheshire,
The chief of men was he,
From thence brought up to London,
A Prentice for to be.
A merchant on the bridge
Did like his service so,
That for three years, his factor
To Turkey he did go."

This young man breaks the neck of the young prince of the Turks with a box on the ear, and is given to the lions by the incensed parent. He,

however, plucks their hearts out, which is, I suppose, an Elizabethan improvement on the story of Daniel. A later reference to Cheshire men, in John Grubb's poem, *The British Heroes*, 1688, and given by Percy in his *Reliques*, is less complimentary :

“Pendragon, like his father Jove,
Was fed with milk of goat,
And like him made a noble shield
Of she-goat's shaggy coat ;
On top of burnisht helmet he
Did wear a crest of leeks
And onion's heads whose dreadful nod
Drew tears down hostile cheeks.

This Briton never tergivers'd,
But was for adverse drubbing ;
And never turn'd his back to aught
But to a post for scrubbing.
His sword would serve for battle, or
For dinner, if you please ;
When it had slain a *Cheshire man*,
"Twould toast a *Cheshire cheese*.”

Lancashire, which is reached in the seven and twentieth song, loses nothing by its lateness in the poem. The poet is as full and as poetical as when he set out, and has more to my purpose than in the case of Cheshire. After making the Irwell trace her own course till :

“Then chiefe of *Mersey's* traine, away with her I runne,
When in her prosperous course shee watreth *Warrington*,
And her faire silver load, in *Lerpoole* downe doth lay,
A road none more renowned in the *Vergivian* Sea,”

he puts this adjuration into her mouth :

“Yee lustie Lasses then in *Lancashire* that dwell,
For Beautie that are sayd to beare away the Bell,
Your Countrie's Horn-pipe, yee so mingsingly that tread,
As ye the Eg-pye loue, and Apple Cherry-red ;
In all your mirthfull Songs, and merry meetings tell,
That *Erwell* every way doth *Ribble* farre excell.”

Drayton annotates in the margin : " He that wil fish for a *Lancashire* man, at any time or Tide, Must bait his hooke with a good Eg-pie, or an Apple with a red side," without saying whether this is a current proverbial verse, or his own comment. More than once is the hornpipe and egg-pie returned to ; and again the beauty of the Lancashire women, " the goodliest of this isle." Three things the shire is first for—faire women, cattle, hounds :

" Besides in all this Isle there no such Cattell be,
 In largueness, Horne, and Haire, as those of *Lancashire* ;
 So that from every part of *England* farre or neere,
 Men haunt her Marts for Store, as from her race to breed,
 And for the third wherein she doth all Shires exceed,
 Be those great race of Hounds, the deepest mouth'd of all,
 The other of this kind, which we our Hunters call ;
 Which from their bellowing throats upon a sent so roare,
 That you would surely thinke that the firme earth they tore
 With their wide yawning chaps, or rent the Clouds in sunder,
 As though by their loud crie they meant to mocke the
 thunder."

The topographical detail is of course extremely interesting : he speaks of the moors and mosses near the Alt, where those who cut turf find fish living in the earth, contrary to their kind ; of the " Swart Dulas comming in from Wiggin" ; of " Martin's Mosse and Meere," distinguishing thus the similarly named meres north and south of Ribble. Lancashire customs appealed to him :

" So blyth and bonny now the Lads and Lasses are,
 That ever as anon the Bag-pipe up doth blow,
 Cast in a gallant Round about the Harth they goe,
 And at each pause they kisse, was never seene such rule
 In any place but heere, at Boon-fire, or at Yeule ;
 And every village smokes at Wakes with lusty cheere,
 Then Hey they cry for Lun, and Hey for Lancashire."

This sort of thing he did not get from Camden, though he would find in him his topography, and the information about the fishes ; for the rest that

I have quoted Camden only yields a general statement that one may judge of the goodness of the soil by the "constitution and complexion of the Inhabitants, who are to see to, passing faire and beautiful, and in part, if you please, by the Cattaile, which have goodly heads and faire spread horns, and are in body well proportionate withall." Drayton may himself have visited Lancashire, but has not been traced farther west than Buxton.

The next group I have to deal with are three poetical itineraries: Braithwaite's *Drunken Barnabie's Journall*, Richard James's *Iter Lancastrense*, and Charles Cotton's *Burlesque Voyage to Ireland*.

Braithwaite was a country gentleman who lived near Kendal, an inveterate scribbler for the press. The word scribbler is in one sense harsh, for he had very considerable abilities. One of his works, an anonymous production, was *Barnabæ Itinerarium*, a series of poetical dialogues in very clever, bright, Latin rhymed verse, of which he also gave an inferior English verse translation. In these dialogues Barnaby relates his various journeys between London and the north, a record mostly of continuous ale-drinkings and misfortunes thereon ensuing. The book was printed in 1638, when Braithwaite was about fifty years old, but had doubtless been written in whole or part long before.

The second part contains a journey south, beginning at Lancaster:

"A seat antiently renowned,
But with store of Beggars drowned."

Rather ingenuously the author tells us that the *jailor* was the ripest and mellowest in the world. At Garstang, he is tossed by a heifer in the Beast-market: at Preston he caroused for seven days with another worthy called Banister: "Oft I supt

but never dined," he pithily says. At *Wiggin*, his hostess is a buxom slut and none too sober, but at *Newton-in-the-Willows* he plays cards

"with a girle,
Rose by name, a dainty pearle."

"Thence to *Warrington*, banks o'erflowed:
Travellers to the Town were rowed,
Where supposing it much better
To be drown'd on land than water,
Sweetly, neatly I sojourned
Till that deluge thence returned."

He begins his journey through Cheshire inauspiciously. At the *Cock* at *Budworth* the strong brown ale fairly put him to bed; at *Holme Chappell*, to which he was attracted by the wish to visit his honest host, *Tom Gandy*,

"Maid and Hostesse both were prety."

"But," says he,

"to drink took I affection,
I forgot soone their complexion."

Newcastle-under-Lyme—after leaving Cheshire—he finds entirely inhabited by the godly, on whose morals, however, he makes serious aspersions.

In the fourth part, most of these places reappear in his farewells, but are merely named; almost the sole exception being *Holme Chappell*, where the memory of the maids' complexion had vanquished the *Lethean draughts* of ale after all:

"Farewell precious Stone, and Chappell,
Where *Stella* shines more fresh than th' apple."

Braithwaite has an interesting poem addressed to the *Cottoneers* or makers of cotton goods, who, however, are apparently only of *Yorkshire* and

Kendal, and a poem, "Two Lancashire Lovers," based on a true story. This last I have not seen.

So much for Braithwaite. Richard James was librarian to the famous antiquary Sir Robert Cotton: he hailed from the Isle of Wight, was an Oxford man, a profound scholar, and a great traveller. Wales he had traversed, and Scotland even to the Shetlands. He had been to Russia and Greenland. His mighty Latin work, written to prove that Becket was not an "*Arch-Saint, but an Arch-rebell,*" remains in MS. at the Bodleian, whence his *Iter Lancastrense* was extricated by Mr. Corser, and published for the Chetham Society in 1845. It appeared again in his "poems," privately printed by Dr. Grosart in 1880 (whence I have it), with notes supplementing those of Mr. Corser, by Mr. Abram, the historian of Blackburn, and by Dr. Grosart himself.

The *Iter* is a poem of 390 lines of somewhat compressed verse, enriched with marginal notes by the author, and records what he

"sawe and thought in Lancashire,
At Heywood hall, to trading Rachdale near."

Sometimes disappointing, as when, for instance, he skips all account of a journey from Heywood Hall by way of Bury, Bolton, and Wigan, till he gets to Ormskirk and the Meols, and even then merely mentions "Ormes Church," he is nevertheless too full of interest for the little space I can give him here. He records a local tradition of Sir Robert Fulchis or Foulsehurst of Crewe, that he refused a horse to secure his flight in battle, determined that

"Goodwives of Nantwiche and their daughters shall
Nere houles aboute me for their kindreds fall."

He visited Ashton of Middleton (afterwards the

civil war commander), and under his guidance inspected "a Roman waye, High cast yet standing, as perchance it laye From Yorck to Chester." He says:

"Our wayes are gulphs of durte and mire, which none
Scarse ever passe in Summer without moane,
Whilst theirs through all the world were no lesse free,
Of passage than the *race of Wallisee*."

He gives a curious description of the painted window (still, apparently, in part existing, and represented in Mr. Corser's edition) in the church at Middleton, containing figures of Sir Richard and Lady Assheton, 1524, and of those who followed the former to war. His journey to "Ormeschurch and the Meales" (he rhymes with *wheels*) not only faithfully pictures our sandy coast, but a genuine inhabitant:

"Lett us varie sportes
Whoe are at leasure, and seeke niew resortes
For recreation. Ormeschurch and y^e Meales
Are our next jorney; we direct no weales
Of state, to hinder our delight. Y^e guize
Of those chaffe sands, which doe in mountaines rize,
On shore is pleasure to behould, which Hoes
Are calld in Worold: windie tempest blowes
Them up in heapes; tis past intelligence
With me how seas doe reverence
Vnto y^e sands; but sands and beach and peobles are
Cast up by rowling of y^e waves a ware¹
To make against their deluge, since y^e larke
And sheepe within feede lower than y^e marke
Of each high flood. Heere through y^e washie sholes
We spye an owld man wading for y^e soles
And flukes and rayes, which y^e last morning tide
Had stayd in nets, or did att anchor ride
Yppon his hooks; him we felcht vp, and then
To our goodmorrowe, 'Welcomme gentlemen,'
He sayd, and more, 'you gentlemen at ease,
Whoe monye haue, and goe where ere you please,
Are never quiett; weary of y^e daye,
You now comme hether to drive time away:

¹ *I.e.*, a wear.

Must time be driven? longest day with vs
Shutts in to soone, as never tedious
Vnto our buisnesse; making, mending nett,
Preparing hooks and baits, wherewith to gett
Cod, whiting, place, vppon y^e sandie shelvs,
Where with to feede y^e markt and our selvs.
Happie ould blade, whoe in his youth had binne
Roving at sea when Essex Cales did winne,
So now he liues."

He visits Holywell, and records its legend: Chester, where he saw large and square bricks from the Roman hypocausts, in "knowing Whitbye's house preserved," said Whitbye being Edward Whitby, Recorder and M.P. for the city. But when he goes on to say:

"Theis drie baths were in antique times y^e cure
Which doe in many cuntryes still endure,
And from my owne experience, to be plaine,
I thinke no waters are so soveraigne,"

it is surely clear that this traveller had used such baths in other countries. Dr. Grosart's deduction that they were flourishing in Chester in 1636 is unjustified.

The date of James's MS. is soon after the witch trials of 1633, and he visits Pendle:

"I long to climbe up Pendle; Pendle stands,
Rownd cop, survaiying all the wilde moore lands,
And Malkins toure, a little cottage, where
Repute makes caitive witches meete to sweare
The homage to the devill, and contrive
The deaths of men and beasts."

He is above the foolish superstition of his time, but makes this reflection, at once acute and descriptive of Lancashire wilds:

"Yet I doe confesse,
Needs must strainge phansies poore ould wifes possesse,
Whoe in those desert mystie moores doe live
Hungrie and colde, and scarce see priest to give
Them ghostlye counsell."

Incidentally he tells us that John Butterworth,

curate of Haslingden, keeps a wife and children on four pounds income, and the right of begging corn.

He next describes a submerged forest, "at a place called the Stocks in Worold," presumably the well-known stumps on the shore at Meols in Wirral; and thence jumps to Norton Priory, where he saw St. Christopher "Twice as big as life . . . one giant stone," and Hale chappell, which then contained St. Christopher and St. George painted in the east window. The end of the poem contains names of local interest to us: "ye young heyre of Speke," "Rigby of y^e Hut," Ireland of Hale, and others.

My last verse-itinerant is *Charles Cotton*, of Beresford Hall, Dovedale, the friend and coadjutor of Izaak Walton. Like Braithwaite, he was a man of great literary activity. His poetic faculty was far greater, but in my present subject, *A Voyage to Ireland in Burlesque*, he is of course purposely merely jocose in doggerel verse. Cotton was born in 1630, and the "Voyage" was published in 1673. As he gives us, incidentally, his age as forty at the time of setting out, his journey must have been in 1670 or one of the next two years. The time was May, and the hour "about some 2½ hours after noon," which enabled him to reach *Congerton* betimes in the evening. His inn was "The King," and there the Mayor visited him, with the result of deep potations. It is a curious fact that Mayors always have these attentive and convivial natures in the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Next morning he stopped at Holme Chappell, three miles on, according to his short reckoning, and received as deep impressions there as Barnaby before him. The ale (or Cheshire Hum) was six-

pence a bottle, but justified the landlord's boast that "'twas the best in England," for Cotton never drank better; the hostess, in waistcoat of silk, was "as clean as a milkmaid and white as her milk." The effect of four shillings' worth of ale, eight large bottles, probably for himself, host, and his man, was a rapid gallop through Delamere and early arrival at Chester, at two in the afternoon, on a Saturday. Here he fared well at the hands of his hostess: "Go thy ways, Mistress Anderton," he says,

"for a good woman,
Thy guests shall by thee ne'er be turned to a Common."

He slept seven hours, being waked by a terrific jangling of church bells; was bled, "which cooled [his] Devotion as well as [his] blood," and prevented him from going to the Cathedral till vespers. There, to his disappointment, the music was none of the best; but the Mayor, seeing so well dressed a person in the rear of his train after the service, made him a low congey, and had him dogged home and invited to supper by his servant. He declined, as having no stomach for suppers, promising to kiss his worship's hands afterwards, but the potentate sent once more:

"Go, sirrah, quoth he, get you to him again,
And will and require in his Majestie's Name
That he come; and tell him, obey he were best, or
I'll teach him to know that he's now at *West-Chester*."

Accordingly he went, found the stairs very bad, but all else to be highly commended:

"Besides such a Supper as well did convince,
A May'r in his province to be a great Prince:
As he sate in his Chair, he did not much vary,
In state, nor in face, from our Eighth English Harry;
But whether his face was swell'd up with fat,
Or puff'd up with Glory, I cannot tell that."

I suppose it might be possible to identify this

worthy. It seems to have struck Cotton as curious that at table the Mayoress sate in state at the other end of the board in just such another chair as the Mayor's ; he comments :

“ But perhaps 'tis a Rule there, and one that would mind it,
Amongst the Town-statutes is likely to find it.”

A slight brush arose between her and her husband. The soup was at fault because the Mayor had waited for his guest. It is as a picture of Chester manners that I give it :

“ But now into th' Pottage, each deep his Spoon claps,
As in truth one might safely for burning his chaps,
When straight, with the look and the tone of a Scold,
Mistress May'ress complained that the Pottage was cold.
And all long of *your* fiddle-faddle, quoth she ;
Why, what then, Goody two-shoes, what if it be ?
Hold you, if you can, your tittle-tattle, quoth he.
I was glad she was snapp'd thus, and guess'd by th'
discourse,
The May'r, not the gray Mare, was the better Horse,
And yet for all that, there is reason to fear
She submitted but out of respect to his year,” &c.

Over canary and pipes after supper, the Mayor's curiosity as to his guest's position, business, &c., was fully satisfied, and they parted at 1 A.M. well pleased with one another.

It only remains to tell that Cotton's guide for the mountains of Wales cost him 20s. and charges, which he thought dear ; that they rode hard across the sands and reached Flint, not without some fear of the tide, which came roaring “ as if the devil were in't.” He is subsequently loquacious about St. Winifred's Well, the repulsive sick who bathed, and the pretty girls who proffered the water for drinking ; and shortly after breaks off his poem at Conway.

An extremely interesting book has recently been published for the first time by William Brown, of

Edinburgh, in a limited edition, "A Journey to Edenborough in Scotland, by Joseph Taylor, late of the Inner Temple, Esq." The author, of whom nothing else is known, left London with several friends in the beginning of August 1705, and proceeded north by an eastern route mainly, but with a divagation into Derbyshire as far west as Buxton and Chatsworth. The return journey began on September 8th, and the route being westerly brought them in due course to Lancaster, where Taylor found trade decayed owing to the flourishing condition of Manchester. Preston he dismisses in a few words, and then describes his journey to *Liverpoole*, and devotes much space to that town. His account is too interesting to abridge, and I must refer readers to the book for this and for his Chester and Nantwich gossip, as it is too lengthy for appearance here.

In conclusion, I would repeat that this account makes no claim to be exhaustive, even within its own limits. Among intentional omissions is literature and ballads connected with the Stanley family, and gleanings such as this last fact, not to forget an old Cheshire worthy: "they [the pale meadow cress] are commonly called . . . in Northfolke, Canterburie bels; at the Namptwich in Cheshire where I had my beginning, Ladie Smocks, which hath given me cause to christen it after my countrie fashion." So Gerard, in his *Herball*, 1597.