

## PAPER.

## GLEANINGS FROM OLD LIVERPOOL NEWSPAPERS, A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

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The contemporary accounts of Liverpool during the early and middle portions of the last century, are extremely meagre and unsatisfactory. The first history, that by Enfield, was not published till 1774, and although a very creditable performance, it presents little except dry facts. Derrick's letters, published in 1760, are lively and interesting, but very brief, and in many respects inaccurate. Williamson's Liverpool Memorandum Book, published in 1753,\* Gore's Directory, first published in 1766, and a few incidental notices of the town in scattered publications, are nearly all the materials which exist for portraying the state and progress of the town during the period alluded to.

Previous to 1768 there was only one map of the town published, which dates from 1725. Slender materials these, certainly, from which to draw a living picture of society as it existed in this locality at a time so comparatively recent.

It may with truth be affirmed, that in many respects we know less about the state of our own town a century ago, than we do of Rome under the reign of Augustus, or of Athens at the time of the Peloponessian war. And yet, which of us would not like to know something more definite about the manners, habits, social condition, amusements, tone of thought and feeling of our great grandfathers and their contemporaries?

There is, perhaps, a greater chasm between the Liverpool of 1754 and 1854, than between the respective periods of any town in the kingdom. Any contemporary records, therefore, which tend to throw light upon the earlier period, must be an acceptable contribution to our local history. Such records are found in the early Liverpool newspapers, to which it is somewhat surprising that more attention has not been paid by our local

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\* See Baines's Liverpool, p. 416.

historians. Mr. Baines, it is true, has drawn many illustrations and facts of much interest from this source. His particular object, however, did not require any extended illustrations, or admit of regular classification. The series of newspapers from 1758 to 1768, appears also to be wanting in the files to which he has had access. Being in possession of the volumes required to fill up some portion of the *lacuna* left by Mr. Baines, it has occurred to me that some interest and a little amusement may be afforded by the selection of a few gleanings from this comparatively unexplored field.

The newspaper, perhaps more than any other product of the human mind, presents the exact impress of "the form and pressure of the time" in which it is issued. It is a photograph, so to speak, of the particular phase which society is undergoing at the moment of its publication. The extent of civilisation, the degree of refinement, the amount of cultivation, the political feeling, the wants, the amusements, the literature, the religion, the trade and manufactures, the crime, the virtue, the benevolence of the age and place—all find their exact counterpart in the broad sheet which is the idol of a day, and then thrown aside and forgotten; and this all the more so, because it is unconscious and unintentional. Each man throws in his advertisement or his paragraph to the common stock to serve his own individual purpose, without the slightest regard or care as to the picture which the whole may present when resuscitated a hundred years hence. This it is which gives its lifelike truth to the aspect of society, exhibited in the old newspaper. Had newspapers existed in the ages of classical antiquity, it is not too much to say, that a single copy of the "*Herculaneum Gazette*," or the "*Pompeian Times*" would give us a better insight into the daily life of the ancients than has been done by all the treasures of art brought to light in the buried cities of antiquity just referred to.

*Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser* was first published on the 25th of May, 1756. Its proprietor and editor was Robert Williamson, who had his shop in Castle Street, not far from the *locale* of the lineal descendant of the *Advertiser*, the *Liverpool Times*. Mr. Williamson seems to have been a man of multifarious occupations. He was a printer, bookseller, stationer, editor, publisher, agent for the State Lottery Office, and, in addition, carried on business as a general broker, sometimes selling by auction, and at other times offering by private treaty Cognac brandy, Madeira wine, logwood and fustic, indigo and tar, even condescending sometimes upon "parcels of



boots and shoes," and a "genteel chaise" to be sold. When to these occupations a house agency was added, it must be admitted, that for a comprehensive establishment, these degenerate times can hardly afford a parallel. The newspaper itself was a small folio of four pages, each page considerably less than half the size of our modern newspapers. It was originally sold at 2d., the stamp being a halfpenny; but on the 17th October, 1760, the following announcement stands at the head of the paper:—

"The publisher of this paper begs leave to return his grateful thanks to his friends and readers in the northern parts of Lancashire, for their kind indulgence in promoting and encouraging this paper; and as he has been at the continued expense of expresses to meet the London post, in order to be as early with the news as possible, and messengers to distribute the paper, which have entirely taken away all profits arising from the sale, he presumes that his customers in Ormskirk, Preston, Lancaster, and adjacent neighbourhoods will further indulge him by advancing the price of the paper to 2½d., as no other newspaper in England, of the same size and matter, is sold under that price."

There is no leading article, nor any expression of political opinion by the editor. No parliamentary proceedings are given, except a very occasional notice of the most timid description. The principal attention seems to have been devoted to foreign news, especially from the seat of the war then raging in Germany and North America. Occasionally woodcuts and maps were given to illustrate the occurrences related. Public events, copied, probably, from the London newspapers, are given at some length. The capture of Louisburgh, the campaign in Canada, and death of General Wolfe, the trial of Lord George Sackville for his conduct at the battle of Minden, and that of Earl Ferrers for murder, are given at considerable length. The most singular deficiency is in the department of local news, which is meagre and unsatisfactory. The strife of party, local and political, the collision of opinion on municipal affairs, the correspondence and controversy, which form such a conspicuous and interesting part of our modern Liverpool newspapers, seem scarcely to have had an existence a hundred years ago. Sometimes a passing glimpse is obtained of the workings of Liverpool society, which causes regret that we have not more information afforded on the subject.

The advertisements are not numerous, but afford very valuable information on the state of the town at the time, to which we will now proceed to refer.

First, let us take a glance at the extent and external aspect of the town, as it appeared about the year 1757. Perry's large map, published about twelve years afterwards, enables us very accurately to estimate its extent, by making due allowance for the building which had taken place in the interval. Prussia Street and St. Paul's Square were the boundary to the north, and Mason Street to the south. Eastward of Whitechapel and Hanover Street there was very little building, and that little thinly scattered. Within this circuit, the buildings were far from being as crowded as they now are. It is true that the streets were narrow, but this was compensated by the extent of open garden ground behind—"backsides" as they were called, in the phraseology of the time. Here, for instance, is an advertisement on the 8th September, 1758:—

"To be let for a term of years, a commodious dwelling house, sashed, situate in Dale Street, near the Exchange, now uninhabited, in possession of widow Haynes, consisting of eleven yards to the front, and 150 yards backwards, containing four large rooms on a floor, two parlours, and a large dining room to the street, a good stable, brewhouse, and gateway for a carriage: a garden upwards of 100 yards long. For further particulars inquire of widow Haynes, or Mr. John Tyrer, sadler, in Dale Street."

Again, on the 16th of March, 1769:—

"To be let for a term of years, two fields or closes of land, near St. Peter's Church, commonly called or known by the name of Williamson's Field. For further particulars apply to Mr. Thomas Crook."

The population of the town at this time was not more than 30,000. Its general aspect was that of a respectable country town. Gardens and verdure peeped out in every quarter, and green fields were within a few minutes' walk in any direction. Nor were there wanting pleasant places of public resort. At the north were the Ladies' Walk—with its stately avenue of trees commanding a magnificent view seaward—and Maidens' Green, the favourite resort of lovers. Along the line of Duke Street was another public avenue, shaded by trees. Bowling greens, of which there were four or five, attracted the male part of the population. Ranelagh Gardens, which occupied the site of the Adelphi, were first opened in 1759. At first they would seem not to have succeeded, for we find on the 13th of June, 1760, the following advertisement:—

"To be sold by auction, on Monday, the 14th day of July, at the Golden Fleece, in Dale Street, all that messuage or dwelling house, with the outbuildings and large garden thereunto belonging, situate at the upper



end of Ranelagh Street, commonly called and known by the name of the White House or Ranelagh Gardens, &c."

On the 18th of July we find the following announcement:—

"For the benefit of Mrs. Ellis, *alias* Baptist, and Mr. Lava, at Ranelagh Garden. On Tuesday, 22nd instant July, will be performed, a Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music. Tickets to be had at the Talbot, Golden Lyon, Fleece, Pontack's Coffee House, and Mr. Williamson's shop, at one shilling each."

The proportion of respectable houses, as compared with the lower class, was much greater a hundred years ago than at present. The merchant had his establishment complete on the spot where he resided. Here, for instance, is an advertisement on the 15th February, 1760:—

"To be let, in Oldhall Street, Liverpool, a large, commodious house, now tenanted by Mr. Matthew Strong, merchant, containing four rooms on a floor; with a compting house, a two stalled stable, and a warehouse wherein may be laid 70 hogsheads of sugar on a floor, and a large, commodious yard, with a coach or cart road to it."

In the higher part of the town a good garden was generally connected with the house, as in the following, dated 14th September, 1759:—

"To be sold by auction, at the Merchants' Coffee House, &c., all that messuage or dwelling house, warehouse, and garden, situated in Hanover Street and Peter's Lane, and late in the possession of John Colquitt, Esq., deceased."

This garden, which extended along the west side of Peter's Lane, is now built on, but the dwelling house and warehouse remain, and give a good idea of the mercantile establishments of the olden time.

At this time, and for long afterwards, the supply of water to the town was scarce and dear. Advertisements such as the following are not uncommon. Nov. 17, 1758:—

"At Edmund Parker's pump, on Shaw's Brow, may be had water at 9d. per butt, for watering shipping or sugar houses; and is as soft for washing, boiling pease, &c., as any in the town. Any merchant or captain of a ship, &c., sending to his house, next to Mr. Chaffer's china pothouse, may be served immediately by their humble servant, Edmund Parker."

In selling property, the supply of water for sale was considered a great recommendation. For instance:—

"To be sold, to the highest bidder, August 14, 1759, two dwelling houses at Bevington Bush, with a well of good water that will supply five or six carts, and a gin pump, &c."

The principal streets for shops were Castle Street, Pool Lane, High Street, Redcross Street, and James Street. Redcross Street especially seems to have been rather a fashionable resort. Thus we find on Nov. 16th, 1759 :—

“ R. Yates, successor to the late Mr. Whitfield, begs leave to acquaint the ladies and gentlemen, that they are returned from Chester fair, to their warehouse, the Golden Key, in Redcross Street, Liverpool, and have as usual a very large assortment of the newest patterns of millinery and linen drapers' goods, which will be sold, wholesale and retail, on the lowest terms, and as cheap as in London.”

Many names of streets, familiar as household words a hundred years ago, are now utterly forgotten. Patten's Garden, Pluckington's Alley, Turpentine Alley, Gorrell's Yard, Old Shambles, with many others, have been long ago swept away ; and it would be a difficult undertaking at the present day to ascertain their site.

From the streets and houses in which the actors on the scene of human life a century since fretted and strutted their little hour, turn we now to the actors themselves. Their names in the advertisements and news strike the reader at first with a strange difference to those of the leading characters of the present day. Some we find identified with the history of the town, though no longer connected with it, such as Tarlton, Cunliffe, Colquitt, Gildart, Shaw. Others there are whose names are conspicuous in the newspapers a hundred years since, and whose descendants still fill positions in the town of credit and respectability. Of such are the Earles, Drinkwaters, Heywoods, Lowndeses, Blundells. Amongst the principal merchants were Alderman Charles Goore, who resided in the Old Churchyard ; Alderman John Tarlton, who lived in Water Street ; John Crosbie, mayor, in 1766, who resided in Paradise Street ; Arthur and Benjamin Heywood, in Hanover Street ; William Earle, Redcross Street ; Bryan and Jonathan Blundell, in Water Street and Chapel Street.

The town was then, as now, principally dependent for support upon its shipping and commerce—not, however, as exclusively so as at the present time. Liverpool had been, and continued to be, down to the middle of the 18th century, the habitat of many persons of independent means, who probably selected this town for its pleasant rural site and contiguity to the sea. Hence the proportion of respectable houses was much greater than has been the case since. Various manufactories were carried on, with more



or less success, of a much more miscellaneous character than at present. On the 8th September, 1758, it is advertised that the Liverpool china manufactory have removed their warehouse to the top of Castle Hey (now Harrington Street), where they sell both wholesale and retail. On the same date it is also announced that "the stocking manufactory, which has been several years carried on at the bottom of Atherton Street, is now removed near the Exchange, where all kinds of silk, cotton, thread, and worsted goods in the hosiery way, for exportation or home consumption, are made and sold, wholesale and retail, at the lowest price." Other advertisements refer to sundry potteries and glass works, besides sugar bakeries, slitting mills, salt works, &c.

It is patent to all the world that one main cause of the rapid progress of Liverpool in the 18th century was the lucrative traffic in negro slaves from Africa to the West Indies. The newspapers contain comparatively few references to this traffic. The following advertisement would seem to imply that the negro was treated as a chattel in this country. It is dated 8th September, 1758 :—

"Run away from Dent, in Yorkshire, on Monday, the 28th August last, Thomas Anson, a negro man, about 5 feet 6 inches high, aged 20 years and upwards, and broadset. Whoever will bring the said man back to Dent, or give any information that he may be had again, shall receive a handsome reward, from Mr. Edmund Sill, of Dent; or Mr. David Kenyon, merchant, in Liverpool."

The foreign and colonial trade of Liverpool in the middle of last century was almost exclusively confined to the West Indies and North America. The tonnage was generally small, seldom exceeding 300 tons, but more frequently from 150 to 200 tons burthen. The import of Cotton from America, which has since attained such gigantic dimensions, did not at this time exist. The only advertisement I can find of the period, referring to this subject, is one on the 3rd November, 1758 :—

"To be sold by auction, at Forbes and Cambell's sale-room, near the Exchange, this day, at one o'clock, 25 bags of Jamaica cotton, in five lots."

Trade was at this time ruinously interfered with by the war with France. French privateers swept the channel, hovered between the mouth of the Mersey and the Isle of Man, and carried off many a rich prize bound for this port. In self-defence, privateering was taken up by the Liverpool merchants, and a desperate game of hazard was carried on, with varying

success, and many sudden turns of fortune. Numerous illustrations of this excited state of things are met with in the newspapers of the day. On the 8th September, 1758, occurs the first notice of the celebrated Monsieur Thurot :—

“ It is reported that the brig Truelove, of Lancaster, and the brig Jane, of Lancaster, had been taken off Lough Swilly, by the Marshal Belleisle privateer, of St. Maloes, of thirty 12-pounders on one deck, eight 6-pounders on the quarter deck, four on the forecastle, and four 18-pounders below, Captain Thurot, Commander.

The same paper contains the following advertisement :—

“ For a third cruise against the enemies of Great Britain.—The ship privateer Liverpool, under the command of Captain John Ward, and will be ready for sea as soon as possible. She carries 22 guns (18 of which are 12-pounders), and 160 men. All gentlemen, seamen, and others who are willing to try their fortunes, may apply to the Commander, or Mr. Henry Hardware, merchant.”

On the 15th of September, 1758, appears the following statement :—

“ On Saturday last, Captain William Hutchinson, late commander and part owner of the Liverpool privateer (notwithstanding he had appointed his lieutenant to the command of the ship, intending to stay at home, in order to forward his scheme of supplying this market with live fish,) proposed to undertake the command of her once more, and attempt to curb the insolence of Mons. Thurot, of the Marshal Belleisle privateer, cruising in the North Channel to intercept the trade of this neighbourhood ; upon which the principal merchants generously opened a subscription to indemnify the owners of the privateer, and to advance each seaman five guineas in hand for one month's cruise, exclusive of their right to the customary shares of prize money. Notwithstanding 207 seamen had signed the articles, yet as soon as the ship was ready for sea on Tuesday, only 28 appeared, which obliged the subscribers to drop the cruise, knowing that unless she got out immediately it would be impossible to execute the proposed expedition in time.”

The cruise was accordingly abandoned, the ship Liverpool was sold by auction on the 12th of April, 1759, and was subsequently employed, as appears from advertisements, in the trade between Liverpool and New York. Mons. Thurot continued his depredations in the channel with impunity. He is heard of from time to time “ picking up a great many of our merchantmen,” whilst the British fleet was lying in harbour deliberating what course to adopt. On the 21st of February, 1760, he attacked the town of Carrickfergus, which, with its garrison, was obliged to capitulate and pay a heavy ransom. His career, however, was drawing to a close. On the 4th



of March he was attacked off the north-west coast of the Isle of Man, by Capt. Elliott, with a squadron of three vessels, when M. Thurot was killed, and his vessels taken. Two paintings were prepared of this engagement by Mr. Richard Wright, formerly of Liverpool, from which prints were engraved and published, and may now occasionally be met with.

During the time when the French fleet were sweeping the channel, great alarm was naturally felt by the inhabitants of Liverpool. The proceedings then adopted may not be without interest at the present time, when the question of defences for the port and shipping has obtained a serious aspect. We read in the *Liverpool Advertiser*, of November 9, 1759 :—

“ On Sunday evening the account of a French squadron being sailed from Dunkirk, destined for the North Channel, arrived here ; upon which Lawrence Spencer, Esq., mayor, convened the gentlemen merchants and tradesmen at the Exchange, to consider of putting the town immediately into a proper state of defence against any sudden attempt of the enemy, when it was unanimously resolved to ‘ enter into an association, and subscription for defending the town in the best manner,’ and a committee of gentlemen was appointed to manage the whole. Expresses were that night despatched to his Majesty praying for a commission to be granted to the mayor in the same manner as was done in the year 1745, and as soon as the commission comes down it is proposed to raise at least 20 companies of 100 men each. At the request of the committee a return of the muskets in the hands of the merchants and dealers has been made, and it is found that on an emergency upwards of 4000 men may be completely armed, exclusive of the arms in private persons’ hands ; and it is expected that the gentlemen of the field and saddle will form themselves into squadrons of light horse, being at least 500 strong. Pilot boats have been sent out and properly stationed to give the earliest intelligence in case of the enemy’s steering this course, and regular measures concerted to destroy on their approach all the buoys, and blow up the landmarks leading into the harbour. To-morrow being Saturday, November 10, the anniversary of the birth of our most gracious sovereign George II., the five new batteries will be opened, and a royal salute given on the occasion. They are deemed the completest of the kind in England, and were erected at the private expense of the gentlemen merchants and tradesmen, who voluntarily opened a subscription for that purpose, and consist of two *batteries d’enfilade*, scouring the whole river ; a *battery en charpe*, which plays obliquely ; a *battery par camarade*, so contrived as to fire at the same time upon one body ; and a battery in form zigzag, making several angles, completely sheltering the garrison from being enfiladed or fired on in a straight line. This week upwards of 70 heavy cannon have been mounted on the platforms, and several hundred men employed in completing them.”

Privateering at sea, and parading on shore, at this period occupied no small share of the time and attention of the inhabitants. The appearance

and costume of the independent companies, as they were called, raised by the town, will be shewn by the following paragraph. dated March 14th, 1760 :—

“ On Tuesday last, Col. Spencer's, Captain William Ingram's, and Captain John Tarleton's independent companies of this town, were reviewed by the Right Hon. the Earl of Scarborough, in Price's (now Cleveland) Square, and went through the manual exercise, platoon and street firing, &c. The companies were all clothed in their new uniforms, at their own private expense ; the Colonel's company in blue, lapelled and faced with buff ; Captain Ingram's in scarlet coats and breeches, lapelled and faced with green ; green waistcoats, gold laced hats, and cue wigs ; and Captain Tarlton's in blue, with gold vellum button holes ; Captain Thomas Johnson's company of the train of artillery wear the uniform of the navy, blue and buff, with gold laced hats.”

It has been frequently asserted that the merchants of Liverpool greatly enriched themselves in the last century by the practice of privateering. At a subsequent period this may to some extent have been the case, but for several years after the breaking out of the war, the results to the Liverpool merchants were most disastrous. From a list published in July, 1760, it appears that in four years, ending at that date, there had been taken by the French, of vessels *belonging to Liverpool alone*, the number of 143 ! The tonnage is not given, but as they were all sea-going vessels, principally in the West Indian and American trades, the losses must have been enormous.

We will now turn our attention to the indications as to the state of social life which our file of old newspapers presents. The lapse of a hundred years has made prodigious advances in every department relating to the convenience and intercourse of society. In nothing is this advance and improvement more visible than in the means of travelling and locomotion. The steamboat, the omnibus, the railway, have become not mere luxuries reserved for the wealthy, but absolute necessities for all classes, without which the ordinary intercourse of society could not be carried on. Let any one endeavour to calculate the annoyance, the injury, the absolute pecuniary loss which would be sustained in the town of Liverpool by the suspension of passenger traffic for a week, or even for a single day, and he will find the sum total frightful to contemplate. Far different was the state of things a century ago. It is difficult at this time of day to conceive of a commercial town with a population of 30,000 inhabitants, prosperous and progressive, without a single public conveyance ; yet such was



the actual case with Liverpool less than 100 years ago. Prior to 1760, there did not even exist a road decently fit for wheel carriages nearer than Warrington. Persons visiting the metropolis had to ride on horseback to Warrington, where they had the opportunity of proceeding on by the means described in the following advertisement, which first appeared on June 9th, 1757 :—

“The Warrington flying stage coach (in three days) sets out every Monday and Thursday morning, from the Bell Inn, in Wood Street, London, and the Red Lyon Inn, in Warrington, during the summer season, and arrives at the above inns every Wednesday and Saturday evenings. Each passenger to pay two guineas; one guinea to be paid at taking place, as earnest, and the remainder at taking coach. Each passenger to be allowed 14lb. weight luggage, and all above to pay 3d. per lb. To be performed, if God permits, by Thomas Whalley, Anthony Jackson, and Henry Secrett.”

Goods for Manchester and the metropolis were forwarded by river boats to Bank Quay, Warrington, and from thence by waggons on the high road.

The first indication of the high road from Liverpool to Warrington being open for wheel carriages is contained in an advertisement on the 18th July, 1760.

“Post chaises and able horses to be had to any part of England, by applying to Mrs. Rathbone, at the Golden Talbot Inn, near the Exchange, Liverpool.”

It was some time after this before a stage coach was established from Liverpool. The first announcement of a public conveyance to Manchester is the following, from the *Advertiser* of September 19, 1760 :—

“Manchester, Warrington, Prescott and Liverpool machine sets out on Monday, September 1, 1760, and on every Monday and Thursday morning, at six o’clock, from Mr. Budworth’s, the Bull’s Head, in Manchester; will call at the Red Lyon, in Warrington; at Mr. Reynolds’s, the Old Legs of Man, in Prescott; and lies at Mr. Banner’s, the Golden Fleece, in Liverpool. Returns from thence every Tuesday and Friday morning, at six o’clock, and calls at the above places on its way back to Manchester. Each passenger to pay 8s., and so in proportion for any part of the road.”

The “flying machines,” as they were called, continued to occupy three days in the journey from Warrington and Manchester to London, until August, 1760, when the journey was first to be performed, according to an advertisement of August 1st, in two days. In 1766, there were two stage coaches from Liverpool to London, performing the journey in two days in summer and three days in winter.

Extending our view to the state of morals and manners, the security for persons and property must have been deplorably feeble, and the police of that day in a most inefficient state, to judge by the multitude of announcements and advertisements of highway robberies, horses stolen, persons breaking out of prison, deserters, apprentices running away, &c. A few specimens of these may be quoted as a sample of the rest. On the 11th of April, 1760, it is stated that "The frequent robberies, shoplifting, and housebreaking, in this town of late, if recited, would take up a considerable part of our paper; and it is with concern that we see no methods hitherto attempted have found out the delinquents. In several other places, there are subscriptions and associations fixed, who employ thief-takers, and allow handsome premiums for the discovery of any offender. It is proposed this day to open a subscription, a book for that purpose being left at R. Williamson's shop; and to appoint a committee out of the principal subscribers, to settle the plan, &c. There is at present a standing order of vestry, to prosecute all robbers, shoplifters, and housebreakers, at the parish expense, when discovered."

Here is the portrait of a pair of worthies taken on the 11th of January, 1760:—

"Broke out of Lancaster Castle, by knocking down and dangerously wounding the turnkey, on the 12th of December last, about eight o'clock in the evening, William Roughsedge, late of Prescott, in this county, by trade a shoemaker, about 30 years of age, broad sett, middle sized, very black complexioned, a scar above his left eye, several on his head, wide mouth, with a remarkably rough voice; had on when he went away a bad hat and black wig, a dark coloured thick-set fustain coat, a pair of leather breeches, and grey woollen yarn stockings. Also,

"John Davenport, of Liverpool, mariner, about 40 years old, about six foot high, well made, dark brown complexioned, spare thin visaged, a dimple or cut in one cheek, his left leg something thicker than his right one; had on when he went away a dark brown cut wig, no hat, two coats, the top coat blue, with yellow metal buttons, the under coat blue, with flat large silver buttons, a blue waistcoat lined with white flannel, short and doublebreasted in the manner of a sailor's dress, black or very dark blue breeches, black stockings, a pair of large square open-worked silver buckles in his shoes."

Prison dress and prison classification seem to have been then unknown.

The manners and habits of the time were somewhat coarse. Cock-fighting and bear-baiting were still patronised by a class much above the lowest. Advertisements, such as the following, are very common:—

"A main of cocks will be fought at Ulverstone, in Lancashire, betwixt Cumberland and Lancashire gentlemen, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wed-



nesday, in Easter week next, for five guineas a battle, and fifty guineas the main or odd battle.

"DAVID SMITH, for Cumberland,  
THOS RICHARDSON, for Lancashire, } Feeders."

The old practice of lifting in Easter week, now quite obsolete, was in the middle of the last century commonly practised, and converted Easter Monday and Tuesday into a saturnalia of the lower orders. In a paragraph, dated April 4th, 1760, it is stated that it was then carried on in Liverpool "in a manner that outrages decency. Sensible, modest women are afraid to be seen out of doors, lest they should be exposed to the insult of the mob. People are not seldom molested and taken off horseback to be lifted, unless they submit to this insolence by making a pecuniary compensation, which is always spent in a manner not consistent with propriety."

Amusements of a more refined character, however, were not wanting. The new theatre, as it was called, in Drury Lane, was kept up with considerable spirit. The following is a specimen of the advertisements:—

"By comedians from the Theatre Royal, in London. At the New Theatre in Drury Lane, Liverpool, this present Friday, June 15th, will be acted an Historical play, call'd King Henry the Fourth, with the humours of Sir John Falstaff. Falstaff by Mr. Shuter, with dancing by Mr. Granier. To which will be added a Farce, call'd the King and the Miller of Mansfield."

Concerts also were not unfrequent, got up by subscription during the season, as appears by the following advertisement, of August 24, 1759:—

"At the Assembly Room in the Exchange, on Tuesday, August 28, 1759 (being the last night of the subscription), will be performed the Masque of Acis and Galatea, as an Oratorio, composed by Mr. Handel. Acis by Mr. Sullivan, the Giant Polypheme by Mr. Pratt, Damon by Mr. Spence, Galatea by Mr. Arne. The choruses by gentlemen of Chester and Manchester choirs and others."

A society at this time flourished in Liverpool which occupied a somewhat prominent position for a considerable time. It was called "The Society of Bucks." It seems to have been principally convivial, though to some slight extent of a political complexion. On Monday, 4th June, 1759, they advertise a celebration of the birthday of George Prince of Wales, (afterwards King George III). On Wednesday, July 25, their anniversary meeting is held "by command of the grand;" dinner on the table at two o'clock. On August 3, they command a play at the Theatre; and on the 8th February, 1760, the society is recorded as "having generously sub-

scribed £70 towards clothing our brave troops abroad, and the relief of the widows and orphans of those who nobly fell in their country's and liberty's cause. This is the second laudable subscription made by them, having some time since remitted 50 guineas to the marine society."

The mode in which marriages are inserted is somewhat amusing. It seems to have been thought requisite in all cases to append a complimentary epithet to the bride, and the extent of her fortune, if any. For instance, in June 13, 1760—

"Married, on Tuesday last, John Atherton, jun., Esq., to Miss Bird, only daughter of Alderman John Bird, an agreeable young lady, with a fortune of £10,000.

Again, on the 19th September, in the same year—

"On Thursday, the 11th instant, was married in London, Mr. Oliver Beckett, merchant, of Oporto, to Miss Dorothy Snaith, an agreeable young lady, with every accomplishment, suitable to make the marriage state happy."

Many illustrations present themselves of the frightful extent to which the impressment of seamen for the navy was at that time carried out, and of the brutal manner in which it was enforced. We read, for instance—

"Captain Thompson, of the *Golden Lyon*, Greenland ship, is discharged from the *Vengeance*, man-of-war, on board of whom he and several of his crew had been carried by force, by the pressgangs out of the Custom House here; several bullets have been found that were fired from the pistols in the Custom House by the pressgangs, and we are assured that the magistrates and the merchants are determined to prosecute them for their insolence, one of the magistrates being then in the Custom House, and very ill treated for commanding the peace, &c."

Again—"On Tuesday last arrived here the letter-of-marque ship *Ingram*, from Africa and Jamaica. The crew having secured the captain, attempted to get clear of the man-of-war and four tenders; the tide being spent, the ship's company and officers were all impressed, except the chief mate and commander; on their being brought on board the man-of-war, Capt. ——— *ordered each man to be tied up, stripped, and whipped.*" The editor adds—"This needs no comment, for had the seamen committed any offence against the laws of this realm, they were entitled to an Englishman's right."

Protections, it seems, might be obtained, probably "for a consideration," for we meet with advertisements such as the following. Sept. 14, 1759:—

"Protections from the press for ships' companies, sailors upwards of 55 years of age, apprentices, foreigners or landsmen who incline to betake themselves to the sea service, may be had with the greatest expedition by applying to Thomas Statham, at the Post-office, Liverpool."



A few glimpses are occasionally obtained of the condition of the working classes in Liverpool a hundred years since. In June, 1760, the cabinet-makers had a difference with their workmen respecting the hours of work, and the result was a strike. The masters put forth an advertisement to excite the sympathy of the public, in which, amongst other things, they state that—"About twelve months ago, we advanced the wages 2s. per week to several of our best workmen, and to others in proportion." They further state, that "a great part of our work was formerly made by the piece by these men, which we call good workmen, and have earned frequently from 12s. to 16s. per week." We see from this that the maximum of wages obtainable by the best workmen in that occupation, which required skilled artisans, was 12s. to 16s. per week, all the necessities of life, except house rent, and occasionally bread, being quite as dear as at the present day. The remuneration of the workman has at least doubled within the last century in this locality, as in most others, and the standard of comfort amongst the operative classes has been raised in an equal proportion.

A few notices in these papers connected with individuals who have been in their day worthy of remark in this locality, may be briefly alluded to.

On the 25th of May, 1759, appears the following advertisement:—

"The school lately kept in Redcross Street by Mr. William Smith, writing master, deceased, is continued by his son, Edgerton Smith, where any gentlemen that shall think proper to commit their children to his instruction, may depend on their being carefully and expeditiously taught writing, arithmetick, merchants' accounts, navigation, geography, the use of the globes, maps, charts, planispheres, the rudiments of astronomy, geometry, &c., &c., &c. N.B.: Those persons that have already paid Mr. William Smith the full price for navigation, merchants' accounts, geography, and the use of the globes, are at liberty to come and make themselves compleat masters of that branch without any additional expence."

The Egerton Smith who thus advertises was the father of the late Egerton Smith, the founder of the *Liverpool Mercury*, and for many years the active and energetic promoter of every benevolent and philanthropic effort.

A notice of the life of John Wyke, who may be called the founder of the watch manufacturing trade in Liverpool, was recently read before the Historic Society. It is there stated that he settled in Liverpool in 1758, and first resided in King Street; and that in 1764-5 he erected the premises in Dale Street, subsequently called Wyke's Court, for his residence and manufactory. This does not appear to be quite correct, to judge by

the following advertisement, extracted from the *Advertiser* of February 16th, 1759:—

“Prescot, 20th December, 1758.—To be let, to enter on in May or June next, a commodious, pleasant, and well situated dwelling house and shop, both fronting the market place in this town, with or without a stable, and a number of workshops.....convenient for whitesmiths, brassfounders, pewterers, pinmakers, &c., &c. The situation is very proper for most manufactories, having plenty of coals round the town; a good market, the town daily increasing, postage, convenient carriage, &c., and only eight post miles of turnpike road to the great seaport of Liverpool. The present stock of toys, books, stationery, china, and hardwares to be sold separate or together, and the said branches of trade (which will be much wanted, it being the only shop of the kind in town) will be turned over on reasonable terms by John Wyke, he intending to remove, in May next, to his house in Dale Street, Liverpool, and there only to carry on his large manufactories of watchwork, and watch and clock makers’ tools, &c.”

Singularly enough, in the first Gore’s Directory, issued in 1766, we find the name of John Wyke, watchmaker, in King Street. On the 7th of August, 1760, appears the following notice:—

“Whereas Ann, my wife, eloped from me the 27th day of April last without my knowledge, and since contracted various debts, I do hereby give notice that I will not be accountable for any debts she may contract, &c., &c. Signed John Wyke.”

If this John Wyke be a different individual, the coincidence is singular, more especially as the elopement corresponds so exactly in time with the removal from Prescot to Liverpool.

A man more eminent than either of those alluded to, resided in Liverpool about 1759, of whom we find some traces in the volumes now under consideration. I allude to the Rev. John Newton, vicar of Olney, and afterwards rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, the friend of Cowper, and author of the *Cardiphonia*. It is well known that in early life he was a sailor, and subsequently commanded a slave ship. At this time he held an office under the customs at Liverpool. Although he had not yet entered the church as an ordained clergyman, yet his thoughts and attention had already been directed that way. On the 16th November, 1759, the following advertisement appears:—

“In the Press, and speedily will be published, Six Discourses as intended for the Pulpit, by John Newton, Price two shillings, octavo. Tho’ the author thinks himself of too little consequence to solicit a formal subscription, he will not be insensible to the countenance of his friends, and if they



are pleased to leave their names with Mr. R. Williamson, the printer in Liverpool, that the number of the impression may the more easily be adjusted, it will be considered as a further favour."

This leads us to the subject of the current literature of the middle of the last century, as indicated by the various announcements and advertisements relating to it. Magazines had some twenty years before sprung into existence and already swarmed from the press. We have advertisements of the venerable "Gentleman's Magazine," the patriarch of monthly literature, the "General Magazine," the "London Magazine," the "Grand Magazine," the "Grand Magazine of Magazines," the "Royal Magazine," the "Ladies' Magazine," *cum multis aliis*. Most of these were published at 6d. per number. Although their literary merit was not great, yet they greatly assisted in the general diffusion of useful intelligence, and prepared the way for a higher class of literature at a succeeding period. Works published in numbers began at this time to be common, and are frequently advertised. Derrick's Letters, frequently alluded to as illustrative of Liverpool about the time we are treating of, were issued in 1760. On the 15th of August, in that year, they are thus advertised:—

"Proposals for printing by subscription one beautiful quarto volume of poems, plays, essays, letters, and translations, written by Mr. Derrick, editor of Dryden's works. The price is one guinea for royal, or twelve shillings for common paper; half to be paid at the time of subscribing, and half on the delivery of the book. Those who choose to honour this work with their names will be pleased to pay their first subscription to the author in Liverpool, or to Mr. Williamson, printer."

The municipal affairs of the town appear to have been conducted at this time with tolerable quiet. The war was the great absorbing theme, and became the channel into which all the efforts and public spirit, both of individuals and the community naturally flowed. In addition to the construction of four or five large batteries by voluntary subscription, raising an artillery company, and several corps of local troops, subscriptions were entered into for the relief of English prisoners in France. The inhabitants further showed their loyalty by contributions towards raising soldiers for the regular troops, as recommended in the following advertisement:—

"Borough of Liverpool, Robert Cunliffe, Esq., mayor. At a council held this third 3rd day of October, 1759, on the motion of Sir Ellis Cunliffe, Baronet, resolved, and ordered that the following proposals be made, and stand as resolutions, orders, and acts of this council, and are as follow:

"That a subscription be immediately opened at the mayor's office for voluntary contributions to be given in bounties of four guineas (over and above the king's bounty) to each able bodied landsman as shall, within two months from the date hereof, enlist himself to serve his king and country as a soldier in Captain Jeffery's company of Royal Volunteers, now raising at Liverpool, and for the company of Captain Nathaniel Haywood, of the Royal Volunteers." &c.

The excitement caused by the varying news of the war by land and sea was naturally great. We read on the 26th October, 1759:—

"On Monday last an universal joy having dispersed itself over this town on account of the glorious news of Quebec's surrendering to the English forces, late under the command of General Wolfe, whose memory will ever be dear to England, Lawrence Spencer, Esq., mayor, gave a general invitation to the gentlemen, merchants, and tradesmen, who waited on him at the Exchange, and were elegantly entertained. Bonfires, ringing of bells, a general illumination, and plenty of free liquor to the populace crowned the evening, which was conducted with the greatest regularity."

I will not trespass further by extending these extracts. For many persons they may possess but little interest, but to those who are accustomed to ponder over the past, and mark the gradual changes of manners and feelings, and the steady advance of society as a whole, nothing can be more interesting than an occasional glimpse of the past in all its freshness as it lived and breathed, whether it be in the pages of a newspaper, or in the columns of an old almanac. The middle of the 19th century possesses many advantages over the middle of the 18th in every thing that relates to convenience, physical comfort, the arts of life, and the social laws by which we are governed, but it is questionable if there are not some drawbacks. It is a subject of inquiry which circumstances may probably soon test, whether there is not at the present day more individual selfishness, a less amount of identification with the interests of society as a whole—in fine, less patriotism—than distinguished our forefathers a century since. Common risks and liabilities, common dangers, have a strong tendency to produce a firm and united feeling in a community, and probably the events now passing may produce similar effects at the present day.