CHAPTER XIV.

Change and Signs of Coming Trouble—M.P.'s—Stanley—The Court and Local Baronetcies—Gerrard Massie—Dispute between the Corporation and the Rector: The Decision—M.P.'s for Wigan—Missionaries of the King in Wigan—Re-building of Chancel in the Parish Church—Fourth Parliament of James I.—Apprentices—Haigh School—Ship Money: Amount paid by Wigan—Dr. Mason—Local Wills—Eve of Revolution—Members for Borough and County—Bell Founding, one of the Staple Trades of Wigan.

IT is good for a man to bear the burdens of life in his youth, if he has the satisfaction of succeeding at last. The more trials and difficulties one overcomes the better man he is at the end. Never had any constitution a more chequered growth than that of England. Sanguinary troubles abroad, civil wars, religious tyranny, and political turmoil at home were the constant successors and predecessors of each other. So great was now the combination of national evils that the national mind was quite undecided what to expect or do. Papacy and Protestantism had alternately triumphed: royal prerogatives had grown to gigantic tyrannies: rebellion had prospered: State trials had frequently been reduced to burlesques and justice to a farce. In Wigan, as in other parts of England, people were thinking what they should think about, and wondering what they ought to wonder at. The past was an enigma, and the future a mystery. Wiganers were as a people who dream they are awake, whilst thinking they dream. Great changes were expected, and yet no great change took place. The queen died, and the great royal pageant procession from Edinburgh to London commenced.

Sir John Poultney and Sir William Cooke were the members for the borough in the first Parliament of James I. (1603-4, March 19th, to 1610-11, Feb. 9th). They are supposed also to have been returned for the next Parliament (1614), all the returns for which have been lost. Lord Derby was Mayor. The persecuting Fleetwood was dead. What was there to fear or to apprehend? Was there not cause for Wigan to rejoice? The king himself on this southern procession was the guest of Sir Thomas Gerard, and afterwards of the Mayor, Earl Derby, at his house of English hospitality.

Notwithstanding the fear and trembling of the many different religious sects, Wigan rejoiced at her local honours, and hoped for the best. Ferdinand, the fifth Earl of Derby, and father of the Mayor, William, the sixth Earl, had been a notorious character, in the persecutions of Papal heretics. It was he who was the political tool of Fleetwood. He had scoured the country in pursuit of heretical game, and rejoiced to be always in at the death. The craftiness of the fox—which in him was mere religious zeal—was as much a part of his nature, or dogmatic habit, as that of the keen, instinctive earnestness of the pursuing hound. By his determination to succeed he raised up for himself many bitter foes, by one of whom it is generally supposed he was poisoned in 1594. His son, William, was of domesticated habits, and took very little part in public affairs, with the exception of regularly attending Parliament. Shortly after his mayoralty of 1618 his family was reduced to comparative poverty by a long course of litigation. He practically gave over his estates in his lifetime to his son, the "Great Stanley."

The prodigality and profligacy of the Court, and the urgent demands of creditors vexed by disappointments, soon brought James to the depths of regal poverty. Great was the opinion of his own self-importance, but greater still was the meanness of his actions. He was but a puppet in the hands of men by whom he believed he was worshipped. Yet these sycophants were his dependents, and money, the very source of their poverty, had to be obtained to support the profane and profligate customs of the Court, and such a despicable view did this despicable monarch take of the duties devolving upon him by divine right that he actually pawned and sold that justice which he was appointed to protect. Honours were sold for filthy lucre, offices of influence and State were vended, like articles of commerce in the Market Place, and for a thousand pounds the title of baronet could be obtained. The first creation of baronets was on May 22nd, 1611, when eighteen knights, for a thousand pounds a head, were so raised in the social scale. Of these eighteen three were knights from good families of the neighbourhood of Wigan, of which borough they were burgesses: Sir Richard Molyneux, of Sefton, knight; Sir Richard Houghton, of Houghton Tower, knight; and Sir Thomas Gerard, of Bryn. The Molyneux family are now ennobled as Earls of Sefton, and in 1876 Gerard of Bryn was created Baron Gerard of Bryn.—(Dugdale's list of English Baronets, 1681).

Gerrard Massie was presented by King James to the living at Wigan in 1604, where he was instituted on the 12th October of that year. He had been educated at Brasenose College, of which he was afterwards made a fellow. He was a Master of Arts, a Doctor in Divinity, and a Proctor of the University of Oxford. After having been Rector in Wigan he was nominated and elected Bishop of Chester in 1619, on the translation of Dr. Thomas Moreton to Lichfield and Coventry, but,

unfortunately, died that same year, before he was consecrated.—(Wood's Athenæ Oxoniensis).

At this time (1618) an important dispute originated between the Corporation of the town and the Rector, Bishop Bridgeman. Since the borough had received its first charter it had grown in importance. Privileges, powers, and rights had been acquired which seemed entirely to eclipse those of the rector, and it was now considered a fitting time and proper duty of the Corporation to throw off all allegiance to him. They declared he had no right to the market tolls or fees, and that the Moot Hall—built in the time of Henry VII.—was the property of the town, and that the only court over which he had any claim was that formerly held at his own Hall, beside his own prison. He, of course, was unwilling to lose any of his powers or prerogatives, and the parties went to law. It was referred to the king, and he appointed four arbiters, who were to hear evidence on both sides and give judgment, which was to be final. The arbiters were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Ely, and two Chief Justices. They adjudged "that Wigan was a manor, of right belonging to the rector, and it was ordered that the Monday market and Holy Thursday Fair, with all profits, &c., should be the parson's in his own right; and that Friday market and St. Luke's Fair should be the town's; that the Easter Leet should belong to the parson, and Michaelmas Leet to the burgesses; that the use of the Moot Hall should be common to both, and that the Prentice Plea and Court of Pleas should be the Corporation's."—(Notitia Cest. Register Book, 2, p. 90, 203, &c.) Mention is also made of this suit in the award of Sir Orlando Bridgeman in the following language:—"Also, whereas, by an award made on or about the 23rd day of ffebruary, in the year of our Lord 1618, by George, then Lord Arch. Bpp. of Canterbury; Lancellot, Lord Bishp. of Ely; Sir Henry Montague, Cheife Justice to the Court of King's Bench; and Sir Henry Hobert, Cheife Justice of the Court of Common Pleas; between the then parson of Wigan and the Corporation, upon a Referrance from the late King James, of ever blessed memory, The sd. Refferrees did order that the faire kept yearly at Wigan upon St. Luke's day, and the Markett kept there every ffryday, weekly, and the Prentice and the Court of Pleas, and the Michaelmas Leet, wth. the profits of the same, shold be the Corporation's. I do accordingly," &c.

The third Parliament of James I. met on the 30th January, 1621, exactly twenty-eight years before the day on which British history was stained with blood by regicides. The two members for Wigan were Sir Thomas Gerard and Roger Downes. Sir Thomas was the first Baronet of Bryn, and was grandson of Sir Thomas Gerard, knight, who had been member for the county in the Parliament of 1562-3. He died in 1620, nine years after he had been raised to the baronetcy

(22nd May, 1611). Robert Downes had sat for Wigan before, in the Parliament of 1601, having for his colleague John Poultney. He was the son of Roger Downes, of Cheshire, and was the representative of his family at the visitation of St. George in 1613. The Parliament, of which these two were members, was an important one. The nation was already groaning under grievances. The Stuarts were stubbornly standing on their insane dignity of divine right, and flatterers who sought royal favours defended their views in speeches and publications. The evils of purveyance and sale of monopolies and bribery in high places the Commons sternly set their faces against, and impeached the Chancellor, Bacon, the greatest man of his day. Freedom of speech was claimed as the birthright of Englishmen, and a protest against all interference of such was formally entered in the Journal of the Commons, upon hearing which the king sent for the Journal, tore out the protestation, and immediately dissolved Parliament, and imprisoned some of the leading members.

Out of "his zeal for God's glory" the great pedant James I. paid for four missionaries, or itinerant preachers, to work up the benighted parts of Lancashire, so anxious was he for the spread of Episcopalian Protestantism. £40 a year was given to these kingly zealots who, of course, visited Wigan amongst other benighted places—benighted although the Bishop was the Rector. But they were worldly missionaries who rejoiced at an opportunity of becoming pluralists, for when they came to a wealthy place with a vacant living they contrived to persuade the people they were gifted zealots, and were generally successful in being appointed to the living, and retaining at the same time their royal pension of £40. King James objected, and, considering himself swindled, he wrote to Bishop Bridgeman to forbid his pensioners to accept other livings whilst retaining his missionary appointment.

The old Parish Church had weathered the storms of ages, but, like many of the formerly grand houses of Wigan, was rapidly falling into decay, and it was necessary to make an effort to re-build or prop it up in its old age. Its memories and associations were too dear to allow it altogether to decay, like the dust of their forefathers of the town who slumbered in its precincts. There the ancestors of the town had worshipped and were buried; there their fathers and themselves had been christened and married; there they listened to the truths that console humanity; and there they hoped to take their long last rest. Surely the feelings of patriotism and sympathy of a people are dead when they allow their ancient sacred edifice to die away, like an unknown pauper in a large union. Bishop Bridgeman took a hearty interest in the matter, and spoke of the necessity of the restoration. The people knew what was needed, but money was scarce, times were bad, and never had really been so good as to create a necessity for banks.

However, sufficient subscriptions were forthcoming, and the bishop re-built the chancel in 1621 in a "debased style."

In the fourth and last Parliament of James I. the two members for Wigan were Sir Anthony St. John, knight, and Francis Downes. Sir Anthony was the brother of the first Earl of Bolingbroke, and was knighted in 1608. Francis Downes was the second son of Roger, who was member for the borough in the previous Parliament. The Parliament met on the 12th of February, 1623, and was dissolved 24th March, 1625, on the death of the king.

The great political struggle, afterwards matured by civil war, was about to begin. A Briton who has attained to years of discretion, and yet has no politics, has no mind of his own. If he be a Whig to a Whig, and a Tory to a Tory, he is an individual who should be avoided in business as well as in politics. If he have an unwavering, uncompromising, and yet reasonable bias for one side or the other, he is a man with a fixed principle, and will not wilfully do a mean act. The most bitter and decided political enmity in England is quite compatible with sincere friendship and respect. The greatness of a country can neither be ascribed to one party nor another. Party spirit has made Britain what it is, and maintains it so. Had any one of the two great parties had its own wilful sway, England would long before this have decayed, like other great nations. The mainspring of English political machinery is the counterbalancing rivalry which, in all cases of emergency, sinks into insignificance, yields to the national feeling or impulse, and, when the national crisis is over, a strong opposition party inevitably springs up, the rivalry becomes as keen as ever, and thus the grandest constitutional monarchy is in the hands of reasonable people, and the endowment of unsurpassed human freedom bestowed on us by our forefathers is maintained as the special beauty and glory of our land.

In many respects Charles I. contrasted favourably with his father, but he was a Stuart, and so believed himself bound by no promises or oaths, but answerable to God alone. His first Parliament had but a short existence of two months, his second was equally unfortunate, and as summarily dismissed in a temper, although he had taken the precaution of imprisoning his most violent political opponents or of making them sheriffs, so that they might not be eligible as members of Parliament. Of the Wigan elections for his first Parliament only the results are known, but for the second (1627) I have been fortunate enough to find at the Town Clerk's office the original writ and a complete poll book, which, although in some respects very dilapidated, are yet for the most part quite legible. In 1625, the first Parliament of Charles I., the members elected for Wigan were Francis Downes, Esq., and Edward Bridgeman, Esq., the latter being the younger brother of

John Bridgeman, Bishop of Chester and Rector of Wigan, and the ancestor of the Earl of Bradford. He died in 1645, having sat for Wigan in two Parliaments (1625 and 1628) and for Liverpool in one. Having illegally raised taxes and highly displeased his already embittered subjects, the king was prevailed upon to summon a second Parliament, and for Wigan the following writ was issued by the sheriff, Edmund Assheton :—

"Edmund Assheton, Esq., Sheriff of ye County Pallantyne of Lancaster, unto ye Mayor of Wigan, or his sufficient deputy, sendeth greeting :—By virtue of the writt of our Sovereign Lord ye King to mee, dyrected and delyvered, I command you that, freely and indyfferenty within your borough, you make choyce, according to the form of the statutes in such cases made and provided, of two of yr sufficient burgesses, to come unto and bee at His Mat's High Court of Parliament, to bee held at the City of Westminster ye seventeenth day of March next ensuing. And that you duly return this warrant unto me; as also that you send me one indenture sealed with the common seal of your Corporation, expressing the names and surnames, with the true additions of those whom you for this specyall service shall so choosse. See hereof you fayle not at your peril, and as you tender his Mat's favour.—Given under the seals of my office, the 7th day of February, 1627.—J. Edm. Assheton."

The old borough had not yet acquired the *soubriquet* of malignant, for it had neither been a political nor revolutionary representative. Englishmen generally took little or no interest in politics, for affairs upon the whole had been going very smoothly with sovereign and people, except in religious matters, in which it was generally allowed by both parties that a natural national stubbornness, rather than want of persuasive argument, prevented a mutual agreement. The issue of a writ for Wigan was consequently looked upon with somewhat of indifference, for the inhabitants placed no great value on their elective prerogative, although the thinking part of the population were not blind to the advantages. The political enthusiasm of discontent throughout the country was, as yet, only like the growling of a disaffected dog which has no thought of biting; but the deeds of this, the third Parliament of Charles I., by which the famous Petition of Rights was enacted, gave a new stimulus to the thoughts and actions of the people. The election in Wigan was by no means devoid of interest, neither was it one of the stirring elections with which the name of the town afterwards became associated. The complete Poll Book for this year (1627) on two "Pot" pages (two leaves) has been temporarily placed at my service for use in this history. It contains the names of 138 burgesses, of whom only 74 voted. There were seven candidates, viz., Peter Houlford, one vote; Milus Pooly, one vote; Edward Boulton, one vote; Willus Prescott, one vote; Robert Gardner, eight votes; Sir Anthony St. John, sixty-five votes; Edward Bridgeman, sixty-three votes.

As this is the oldest known Poll Book I give a complete copy of it, direct from the original. Over all contracted Christian names there is a dash in the MS.

Nom. Burghm. infra vill. d. Wigan,
in Com. Lanc.

Thomas Bancks, gen., Maior—Sir Anthony St. John, Edw. Bridgeman, Esq.
Willus Comes Derby (Earl Derby).
Thomas Gerrard, miles et Barronett.
Ricus Molyneux, miles et Barronett.
Radus Asheton, Barronett.
Edrus Stanley, Barronett.
Alexr. Radcliffe, miles.
Anthonius Sanct John, miles—Edward Bridgeman.
Carolus Gerrard, miles—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Thomas Walmesley, miles.
Will. Trafford, miles.
Gilbtus Houghton, miles.
Johes Stannope, miles.
Ricus Bould, Ar.
Thomas Gerrard, Ar.
Rogerus Bradshawe, Ar.
Rogerus Downes, Ar.
Alexander Rigbye de Midleton, Ar.
Hugo Rigbye, Ar.
Chrus Banistre, Ar.
Thomas Charnocke, Ar.
Alexander Rigbye de Burgh, Ar.
Thomas Standishe, Ar.
Chrus Houleford, Ar.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Edrus Eltonhead, Ar.
Theophilus Holte, Ar.
Thomas Langtree, Ar.
Willus Houghton, Ar.
Thomas Cosson, Ar.
Petrus Daniell, Ar.
Hugo Chamley, Ar.
Johes Meare, Ar.
Willus Gerrard, Ar.
Johes Gerrard, Ar.
Edrus Bromley, Ar.
Johes Culcheth, Ar.
ffranciscus Downes, Ar.
Hugo Adlington, senior, Ar.
Willus fforth, Ald.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Robtus Barrowe, Ald.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Willus ffoster, Ald.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman
Jacobus Markland, Ald.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Robtus Mawdesley, Ald.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.

Document torn.
- Ald.
- Ald.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
- Ald.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
- Ald.—Document destroyed.

Doubtless the names of the two other Aldermen have been torn away from this, the end of the column.

Carolus Leigh—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Willus Casson—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Chrus Banckes—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Thurstanus Whalley—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Jacobus Hardey—Robt. Gardner and Milus Pooly (?)
Gilbtus Gardner.
Robtus Jolly—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Ricus Casson—Sir Anthony St. John and Robt. Gardner.
Willus Ormeshawe—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Rogerus Scott—Sir Anthony St. John and Robt. Gardner.
Rogerus Baron—Edw. Bridgeman and Robt. Gardner.
Willus Leigh—Edw. Bridgeman and Robt. Gardner.
Jacobus Atherton—Edw. Bridgeman and Sir Anthony St. John.
Robtus Bancks—Edw. Bridgeman and Edward Boulton.
Radus fforth, braseer.
Henricus Marshedon.
Gilbtus Ashton—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Alexander fforth, braseer, senior.
Galfrus Boulton.
Radus Astley—Edw. Bridgeman and Robt. Gardner.
Gilbtus Pennington.
Jacobus Cronck—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Robtus Mason—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Robtus Markland, braseer—Sir Anthony St. John and Robt. Gardner.
Edus Winstanley—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Georgius Walton.
Gilbtus Baldwin—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Willus Langshawe.
Alexander fforth de Scoles—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Johes Brighhouse.
Edrus Boulton—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Josephus Pennington—Sir Anthony St. John and Peter Houlford, Esq.
Jacobus Greene—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw Bridgeman.
Oliverus Leigh, senior—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Gerrardus Johnson—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Willus Watson—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw Bridgeman.
Michus Pennington.
Thomas Tarleton, senior—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Willus Prescott—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw Bridgeman.
Robtus Kyndesley (?)—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Rogerus ffoster—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Henricus Hulme—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Thomas fford

Robtus Markland—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Document destroyed. { fforth, pewterer—Edw. Bridgeman and Robt. Gardner.
th, pewterer.
Another name destroyed, *dner* only visible.
Willus Crosfeild—Edw. Bridgeman and Robt. Gardner.
Alexander fforth, braseer, senior.
Carolus Bancks.
Gilbtus Baron.
Alexander Boukley (?)—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Milo Turner—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Edrus ffareclough—Sir Anthony St. John and Willus Prescott.
Petrus Greene—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw, Bridgeman.
Willus Lythgoe—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Radus Leigh—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Humfrus Chroychlawe—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Johes Molyneux—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Jacobus Lowe—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Alexander Ascrofte—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Hugo Cary (?)—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Thomas Lowe—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Johes Hyndley—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Ricus Scott—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Robtus Whalley—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Petrus And'ton.
Hugo Scott, junior—Sir Anthony St. John and Robt. Gardner.
Radus Bancks- Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Robtus Prescott.
Hamlett Greene.
Johes Gregson—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Ricus Seddon—Sir Anthony St. John and Robt. Gardner.
Johes Winstanley—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Robtus fforth de Scowles.
Willus Ascroft, jun.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Edrus Mason—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Hugo Laithwaite—Sir Anthony St. John and Robt. Gardner.
Willus Baldwin—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Bayles Heyshawe—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Willus fforth, gen.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Document destroyed. —— gen.
Johes Hilton, gen.
Radus Marshe, gen.
Andreus Leaver, gen.
Thomas Anderton, gen.
Oliverus Martin, gen.—Sir Anthony St. John and Edw. Bridgeman.
Alexander Greene, gen.
Radus Banckes, gen.
Henricus Hodkinson, gen.
Radus Aynesworth, gen.

Primo ffebr., 1627.
Witnes thereof, Will. Browne.

The Sheriffs of Lancashire in the reign of James I. were:—Nic. Moseley, Thom. Baker, Edw. Fleetwood, Rich. Ashton, Rob. Hesketh, Edw. Trafford, Roger Nowell, Johan Fleming, Cut. Halsall, Rob. Bindlose, Rich. Shirborn, Edw. Stanley, Rolan. Moseley, Edw. Trafford, Ric. Shuttleworth, Leonar. Ashawe, Ed. Moore. The last three sheriffs in the reign of James I. and the first three in the reign of Charles are unknown.

The oldest gift in the possession of the Wigan Corporation was given by Robert Robert Mawdesley (named Alderman in this Poll Book), in 1631, for the use of the Mayor and his successors. It is a silver ewer or jug, bearing the inscription, "The gift of Robert Mawdesley, 1631; renewed 1680, by Sir Roger Bradshaigh; again by James Hodson, Esquire, for the use of the Mayor and his successors." Since then several valuable gifts have been bestowed on the Corporation. Of the municipal insignia the oldest is a copper mace, surmounted by a crown which, although of unknown date, was certainly in the possession of the Corporation in the sixteenth century. Robert Mawdesley was the son and heir of William Mawdesley, of Mawdesley Hall. The ascertained genealogy of his family begins with Hugh de Mawdesley, named in an inquisition dated 1323, relating to the Priory of Penwortham. Robert seems to have taken no active, and certainly no distinguished, part in political matters. No doubt he admired the energetic Alexander Rigby, M.P. for Wigan, for he loved and married his daughter, Dorothy, in 1621, and by her had three sons and three daughters. His sons died unmarried; his second daughter, Elizabeth, the only one of his children married, married the Rev. Peter Earle, Rector of Grappenhall, in Cheshire. They are the ancestors of the Earls of Liverpool. Robert Mawdesley, on the 21st September, 1657, purchased for £80 the estate of the Bamfords, of Mawdesley; and afterwards the estate of Heskin Hall from Sir Richard Molyneux. His will is dated 9th September, 1651: in that same year he died, and at his request, expressed in his will, he was buried in the grave of his brother, Joseph Rigby, where his wife Dorothy and youngest daughter had previously been buried. He bequeathed to his daughters, Dorothy and Elizabeth, all his goods, &c., and to his heir, Alexander, his two signet rings; to his cousin, Edwin Rigby's wife, a mare; and his best cow to his youngest son. His will was proved 23rd April, 1661.

Apprentices were generally bound for seven years on very strict conditions, legally drawn out, both parties entering into a bond to keep the same. The father being responsible for the son, he had to pay a certain amount to the master for taking him in charge, and also for keeping him in clothes and shoes. The master provided the apprentice with an apron, gave him board and lodgings, and promised faithfully to give him the best instruction he could. The apprentice was the entire servant of his master, bound to do all he could for his interest, keep the secrets of

his trade and family, never to absent himself day or night without special permission, was forbidden to visit taverns or marry during his apprenticeship. The employer was both master and guardian to the youth, and had full power to chastise him as he thought fit. The chief tradesmen of Wigan were braziers, pewterers, bell-founders, dyers, and weavers.

Haigh School was founded by Miles Sumer, according to his will dated 15th October, 1634. He had been a tenant, or superior and successful servant, of Roger Bradshaigh, of Haigh, to whom he gave full power to carry out his testamentary instructions. He devised that, after all expenses, debts, and legacies had been paid, his remaining property should be divided into three parts, two of which should go for the immediate repairs of Haigh roads and the perpetual benefit of the poor. A meeting of the inhabitants of Haigh decided that the money should be invested in lands, and the proceeds applied according to the testator's will. Accordingly a farm in Billinge, called "Outley-snape," was purchased, and the public school built and endowed for the teaching of children whose parents should be inhabitants of, or possessed of lands or tenements, or contributed to the lays in the said township of Haigh.

History shows there are intellectual, scientific, religious, and political, as well as meteorological cycles. There are ages of reason, of faith, and of doubt; ages of superstition and ages of science; ages of religious fanatics and ages when the Creed is "eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die;" ages when the attention of all men is given to the building of constitutional governments; and ages when reasonable men quietly submit to the yoke of the tyrant. For centuries the king and the country struggled for the mastership of the British Isles. Fierce and furious were the contests. Few and short were the lulls between the civil storms. The lowering clouds never dipped beneath the horizon. The sun that set resplendent in the glories of the victory of one day rose on the morrow to view a land bedewed with tears, but refreshed and ready to renew the struggle. However strong Reason might seem, Force was the conspicuously victorious tyrant; yet Reason never yielded, though trampled on, persecuted, and imprisoned; yea, these were its nourishing elements. The flames that burned the religious martyrs were the flickering blaze of beacons that illumined and exposed the superstitions of the dark age. The scaffold was the national pulpit, from which the blood of political preachers called upon all to behold and consider the earnestness and truth of the doctrine for which the martyrs died. Persecutions exposed the follies of infatuated rulers and fallibilities of all. The wayward tyranny of kings roused the stubbornness of the people. The religious cyclone had barely passed, with its thousands of victims, when the hurricanes of unconstitutional policies were renewed, and the suicidal Stuart beliefs reared their giant heads. Charles I.

was left with an empty exchequer, whilst he held a strong impression as to the necessity of carrying on war. The bold politicians which his father had bred and nourished by persecution were determined to uphold the constitution, to stand or fall in the cause of right. Favourites of the king, who were enemies of the people, were assassinated, and nobles were beheaded for supporting the law. The burdens on the people were grievous to be borne; they murmured and petitioned in vain, and the king prepared to lay the last straw on their backs, for when tyrants feel there is but one act standing between them and their will, it seems that fate drives them to hazard all on its destruction. Barbarous sentences were pronounced and executed, powerful opponents were put out of the way, and the illegal tax of ship money was levied, when the whole nation, like a hive of bees robbed of their queen and liberties, murmured and prepared to rise in rebellion. Every town and county was rated according to its wealth, and it is interesting to see that Wigan is proved by this tax to have taken one of the foremost places in the county for opulence. In 1636 the county of Lancaster had to provide one ship of 400 tons and 160 men, or £1000. Of this amount Wigan had to provide £50, Preston £40, Lancaster £30, Liverpool £25, Clitheroe and Newton £7 10s. each.

Among the most distinguished natives of Wigan the Rev. Henry Mason, B.D., must be mentioned. He was born in 1573, and received at least his primary education at Wigan, and doubtless from a private tutor In his nineteenth year he proceeded to Brasenose College, Oxon, where he graduated, after distinguishing himself as an ardent and successful student. At the age of 29 he received the chaplaincy of Corpus Christi College, where he distinguished himself by taking a very active part in the controversies of the day. He was remarkable for his consistent orthodoxy, polished education, and philanthropy. The Bishop of London appointed him his chaplain, and he was afterwards made Rector of St. Andrew's, London. He was so vexed and harassed by the Presbyterians of London that in 1641 he gave up his living there and retired to Wigan, where he wished to live a quiet and unostentatious life; but even this was denied him, because of the constant harassments of the Republicans, who had been so displeased by the doctrines which were published not only by him, but by his elder brother, Francis, whose Vindici Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, in five books, is often referred to and consulted by eminent divines of the present day.

Notwithstanding the persecutions to which he was subjected by the inhabitants, he was not forgetful of the poor of the town. He was the great local philanthropist of his day, who searched out the poor, supplied their present necessity, and provided for their future welfare. He gave Bibles to the poor and money to bind apprentices to useful trades, and added to Dr. Lynacre's first Free Library in the town by leaving his

extensive collection of valuable books for the use of the Grammar School. With the first hundred pounds which he gave to the Mayor and Aldermen for charitable purposes a cottage and thirteen acres of land were purchased in Rainford. On 17th June, 1639, he delivered to the Mayor, Aldermen, and others one hundred and forty pounds to be applied to the relief of the poor. In 1647, at the age of seventy-four, he died, and was regretted by all, notwithstanding his former religious differences. In him the poor lost a friend and the town a benefactor and worthy son.

No man with any property to dispose of hesitated to make his will, for to die intestate was to cause disputations amongst friends as certain as death itself. It is a strange relic of superstition that causes many to delay the performing of this important duty, for they are somehow impressed with the idea that when they have thus set the house in order they have prepared to die, and must die accordingly. But it is none of the work of preparation for death, but the representative of one's own speech to express an order which is morally and legally sacred when the tongue is no more able to give expression to a wish. Such are the eccentricities of human nature that there are many who cannot but laugh and joke in the very face of death itself. The most solemn scenes to many are times of levity, not because they are unsympathetic or mean to offend the more grave or melancholy feelings of others, but because of the natural buoyancy of their own dispositions and temperament. Many local wills and epitaphs of this nature might be cited. Jocular epitaphs have been written by the dying, and solemnly requested to be placed on their tomb-stones after death. So some of the most humorous and witty sayings in the language have been written on beds of languishing and distress, even when the writer was in agonising pains.

A husbandman was in the social scale a degree beneath a yeoman, for titles in olden times had far more definite limits than the questionable affix of Esq. which is now added to the name of every man who gains his living without taking his coat off his back. These husbandmen had wills to make, for they had properties to devise, some of them being comparatively wealthy. William Marsh, husbandman, of Hindley, for instance, devised in 1639 half of his property to his wife, Ellen, and legacies ranging from one shilling to three pounds to friends. He requested that his body should be buried at Wigan, and the expenses of his funeral and the usual feast to his friends should be paid out of his estates. To James Platt, son of John Platt, he bequeathed messuages in Hindley on condition that he should pay his relict, Alice, the sum of twelve pence whenever she requested it. Unfortunately history does not record whether she was a very solicitous widow.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;" so there is in the affairs of towns. They, too, have their histories, turning points, and opportunities. Persons who fail in life compare their present with their

past, the actual existing state of affairs with the once possible, but now only enviable, and say, "Thus we are, and yet how different we might have been." There are great towns which might have been insignificant villages, and villages that might have been great towns. Wigan might have been Manchester, but it is not. Its facilities for trade were once more advantageous than those of the great city of cotton, and its natural wealth is certainly greater. Moreover, Wigan might have been Oldham, but it is not. It was the purpose of the founder of the great staple work of Oldham to erect all his works in Wigan, but from pride or other want of foresight Wigan refused to allow it; the opportunity was lost, and that prosperous trade, with its many auxiliaries, was shut out of Wigan, and had to rear for itself the excellent town of Oldham. These are trades that might have existed in the town, but there have been other prosperous trades, which have left the town long ago, like the descendants of reduced families, who migrate to healthier climes. By far the most important of these lost trades is that of bell-casting, which gave employment to many skilled artisans in the town in the seventeenth century and affluence to the heads of the firms. It was then customary to take the metal to the place where the bell was wanted, and there melt and pour it into a place prepared for the casting in the churchyard, but with the Wigan bell-founders it was not so. All the work was done at their own establishments in the town, and the finished work despatched, with several skilled men to assist in the hanging of it. The carts on which the bells were conveyed were clumsy, and the roads were exceedingly bad, so that the work was always done at very great risk. The hanging of the bell was always a gay occasion, and in many old churchwardens' accounts in different parts of England and Wales the bill for beer to the Wigan workmen is carefully noted. There were several firms in the town, but only one on a very large scale. In the accounts of the Parish Church of Wigan there are frequently items in different names for bell-hanging and bell-mending. The largest firm undoubtedly was that of the Scott family, which existed in a prosperous state throughout the whole of the century. The original firm was that of James and John Scott. Their superior workmanship was well known throughout the country, and many bells made by them are still to be seen and heard. It is not recorded that they actually made any bells for Wigan, but several bills have been paid to them for repairing the several bells, for even at this time there was an excellent chime of bells in the Parish Church tower, and they seem to have been very frequently used, as the bell ringers were often paid extra wages for ringing news, and there are many bills for repairing or replacing ropes and clappers. In 1658 there are several small items paid for repairing gate doors, bell clock, ropes, clappers, and finger of clock, and in 1659 Jackson and Marsh did much bell repairing. Mr.

Jolly sent in his bill for climbing the tower and mending the finger of the clock—6d., and one shilling and a penny was the amount paid for a pint of oil (oyle) for bells and clock, whilst fivepence was given for a pound of candles. In the same year Edward Marsh received eight shillings and a penny for work about the great bell and mending the chimes, and Mr. Glover received ten shillings for making the great bell clapper, and in the following year (1660) he provided two more bell clappers, for which he charged and received eighteen shillings.—(Wigan Churchwardens' Accounts, 1659). From several such accounts it is evident there were many bell-founders in the town, but the Scotts undoubtedly took the lead in the trade. Their social position was high, and many members of the family took an honourable part in the government of the town. James and John Scott, the original firm of bell-founders, were bailiffs in 1627, and in the years 1653, 1688, and 1701 members of the same family were Mayors of Wigan.

Inscriptions in Latin or English were always part of the bell casting, as well as the names of the bell-founders, and often the churchwardens' initials. The Scotts never gave their names in full, but initials only. They seem, according to the churchwardens' accounts of Wilmslow, to have done the most of the bell work there. Frequent mention is made of them. For instance, in 1657, in the accounts there are :—

Given by ffrancis Newton, the younger, towards the casting of two bells, 2s. 6d.

Spent when wee did meete concerning the sendinge of the bells into Wygan to bee cast, of ourselves and those wch came from Wygan concerning them, 2s.

Spent when the bells were brought from Wygan, 3s.

July—Spent when the work was finished, of ourselves, the bell founder, and all the rest of the workmen, and several p'ishnors which were with us that day, in meete and drink, 9s. 6d.

Mr. Earwaker, author of the history of East Cheshire says :—"The 'little bell' now in the tower of Wilmslow Church bears the following letters :—W. S., R. N., H. H., G. K., 1657, C. W. These are the initials of the churchwardens of that year."

William Smyth, Robert Newton, Hugh Heyes, George Kelsall. These names are in one line, underneath which are the initial letters of the bell-founder, W., J. S., Wigan, James Scott. In the churchwardens' accounts of Prestbury Parish, too, there are items "paid for fetchinge mettell from Wigan for the organes and for four locks for the organs," and in 1656 one of the bells there was re-cast by Scott, the Wigan bell-founder. In 1684 the entries occur :—

When Mr. Scott, the bell founder, came afterwards to Prestburie, when wee agreed with him for casting of the 4th bell, 4s. 6d.

Paid for carrying the said Bell to Wygan and Re-carrying to Prestburie, 15s.

Paid Mr. Scott, the Bell founder, for casting the Bell aforesaid, and for one hundred and twelve pound of mettle, £18.

Mr. Earwaker again says:—"In the old tower of Lascal Church are three bells. On one is the letter S., a cross, and two bell-founders' marks; on the largest of the three are the initials and date, J. S., W., 1656, showing that this bell, like the small one at Wilmslow, had been cast by Scott, of Wigan." In a private note from the same gentleman he informed me that he had also discovered an old Wigan bell in Wales.

The following is a copy of a most dilapidated document written in 1632, when Christopher Bancks was mayor, and William Ford and Richard Casson bailiffs, showing the recognised divisions of the town, and giving the names of the overseers of the highways in Wigan for that time:—

Overseers of the Highwayes within Wigan.

Standishgate	Willm Pilkington. Alexander fforth.
Scoles	Willm Bancks. Michael fforth.
Milnegate	Robt Barrowe, senior, gent. Laurence fford.
Markett Stidd	Thurstan Whalley. Robt. Mason.
Waltgate	Willm Ormeshawe. Willm Leighe.
Halegate	Roger Baron. Willm Waitson.
Woodhouses	James M (hole in document). Richard Seddon.