

# 'e-Owls'



## Contact us :

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**MLFHS mailing address is:** Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society,  
3rd Floor, Manchester Central Library, St. Peter's Square, Manchester, M2 5PD, United Kingdom

**Oldham & District Newsletter Archives :** Read or download back copies [HERE](#)

**November 2022**

## MLFHS - Oldham & District Branch Newsletter

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### Branch News :

#### Branch Officers for 2022 -2023 :

Committee Member : Chairman :	Linda Richardson
Committee Member : Treasurer :	Gill Melton
Committee Member : Secretary :	Joan Harrison
Committee Member : Newsletter :	Sheila Goodyear
Committee Member : Webmistress :	Sheila Goodyear

#### Links to the Website :



['Where to Find it'](#)  
On the Oldham & District  
Website Pages



Newsletter ['Snippets' Page](#)  
Find Articles, Transcriptions and  
Gallery Images you missed



Oldham & District Branch at the  
Huddersfield Family History Fair

### Oldham & District Branch Meetings :

**For current information on all M&LFHS Meetings, and other public activities,  
Please check on the Branch website pages for updated information.**

The Society Facebook page [HERE](#) and the Twitter page [HERE](#) will be updated frequently.

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### Chairman's remarks :

Hello All

I hope you are all keeping well.

The news has been quite interesting recently and I hope you all have a good supply of hot water bottles, blankets, candles etc ready to face whatever comes our way. I think I have some candles somewhere which were left over from the 1970's (I was in the Girl Guides so perhaps that explains the old candles (not four candles)).

Anyhow, enjoy reading the rest of the newsletter.

Best Wishes

Linda

Chairman, Oldham Branch

email me at < chairman-oldham@mlfhs.org.uk >

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### Editor's remarks.

Hi Everyone,

I'm not going to make any sort of comment on the parlous state of affairs we are suffering, whether it's local, national or international news. Even the weather is dismal as I write this! I think we're all feeling anxious so enough said!

In the Mixed Bag, we can find the last two chapters of our Manchester cotton manufacturer's autobiography. I hope you've enjoyed these final pages of his book as much as I've enjoyed reading and transcribing them. Transcription can be a relatively slow process and my enjoyment come from the fact that I am reading the text more slowly, (as I check for my errors). It gives me more time to ponder just what I'm actually reading and appreciate little asides that I might otherwise skim over and miss. I shall miss him ... ! Also in the Mixed Bag are a few more pages from a '*Ginnel to Life*' about a child's life in Oldham in the early 20th century.

In the e-Postbag we have a couple of family history stories from two of our regular contributors, Julie and Glyn who always find something interesting to share with us.

Again, I'm including something from the Oldham HRG's programme which I hope you'll also find interesting. In October, Mark Beswick, author of '*Iron Men and Wooden Ladders*' : *A History of Oldham Fire Brigade*, gave the Group his interesting and informative talk on zoom and allowed me to record it. I haven't had chance to upload it to our own Branch Video page [HERE](#), as I write, but will do so as soon as possible, so do keep an eye out for it.

Finally, in the Gallery a rather random collection of pictures which just caught my eye ... again!

Sheila

I am always very happy to receive articles, pictures etc., for the 'Mixed Bag' in the newsletter, copyright is always a tricky issue so do please make sure that you have the right to use any text or illustrations that you send! It is also helpful if you include mention of your source material.

You will retain copyright of any contributions that you send, whilst allowing MLFHS to re-use the material in an appropriate manner.

Editor reserves the right to edit any contributions before publication.

email me at : < Oldham\_newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk >

**Please note**, regarding using the links to website pages or .pdf documents : if clicking on a link when the newsletter is viewed on the internet, without first downloading it onto the computer, the new page opens in the same window so the 'back button' has to be used to return to the newsletter.

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### Monthly Meetings

Earlier this year, when the pandemic restrictions were lifted, we held the the majority of our regular meetings as hybrids ... simultaneously on zoom and in the library. We wanted to show how much we had appreciated the support that we had enjoyed on zoom, both from local society members and those from further afield. The bonus was that, in addition, we have also been able to welcome non-members with an interest in our programme, some of whom, gratifyingly, became members of the society as a result! The 2023 programme will be slightly different as we were unable to book all the dates in the library, that we wished for, and some of our intended speakers were reluctant to take part in either zoom or hybrid meetings. As a result, we intend to hold 4 meetings as hybrids, 4 meetings only on zoom and 4 meetings only in the library. In that way, our zoom audiences will continue to have free access to 8 of the meetings.

Please continue to support the Branch, either in person at Oldham Library or on zoom if preferred.

Details, of the programme of talks for 2023, will start being added to the 'Meetings' page of the Branch website [HERE](#) as soon as possible.

\* Booking for an online talk, remains free for members and non-members alike and, is essential on [Eventbrite](#).

\* No need to book if you attend in the library.

For attendance in person, in the library, members are free, non-members £3.

Wherever you live, Welcome!

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### Last Month's Meeting ...

#### October Meeting ... hybrid, in Oldham Library and on zoom



Saturday,  
8th Oct.  
at  
2 pm



#### ***"Not just the 3 R's" : Life in a Lancashire School***

An illustrated talk given by Louise Wade

*"Louise, who was born in Ashton-Under-Lyne but now lives in Wigan, has been tracing her family history since she was 10 years old (that's over 40 years!) and has been fascinated by some of the characters she has "met" whilst time-travelling."*

On Saturday we had a good number in the audience for our talk, given by Louise. It was a hybrid meeting on both zoom and in the room.

With her first slide in the presentation, of a small country school, Louise started by explaining to us how she came to be involved in this particular line of research, at this particular school, Shevington, Broad o'th Lane, Board School. The school went through several changes of name and location over the years, with the original building on Miles Lane now being two houses. The school moved into its current building in the 1920s and was eventually known as Shevington Community Primary School, which closed down in 2017 after financial cuts in education.

Louise's own children had been pupils at the school. When the school learned that it was facing closure, it was felt that their long history (over 200 years) should be celebrated and archived for posterity. A volunteer, to go through their many records, was asked for and Louise volunteered! It was a lengthy job ( two years!) but one which she found fascinating.

The original Broad o'th' Lane School was founded by the vicar of Standish, the Reverend Richard Perryn, and opened in 1814. This was at a time when education was not compulsory and it was open for boys and girls from all different backgrounds to attend.

She was able to show us a list of 10 benefactors, from 'the great and the good', who were instrumental in setting up the school. There would be just the one schoolmaster.

This is, seemingly, an early date for the founding of such a school. In the 1750s the Sunday School Movement, founded by Robert Raikes, had been set up and, in 1808, the British and Foreign School Society founded 'British Schools' then, from 1811, 'National Schools' came into being. It would be 1844 before the 'Ragged Schools' made an appearance offering a basic education to the children of poor families.

Louise set the context for the body of her talk against a brief timeline, with 'bullet points' covering the years from the 1870 Elementary Education Act and the creation of 'Board Schools', through the 1880 Elementary Education Act which made some education compulsory for all 5 to 10 year old children, and finally up to the 1918 Act which raised the school leaving age to 14 years old.

Going back to the documents, Louise described the school's location, in Victorian times, as being in a very rural community, with most children coming from either farming families or canal families, going up and down the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Children living on farms would sometimes have to walk quite a distance to and from the school. Attendances would drop when the weather was bad or when children were needed to help during harvest time.

The next image on screen showed us the two piles of log books, registers and documents that she was to work with. There were quite a lot!!!

Traditionally, the curriculum was based on the 3 Rs of Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic but, in the lesson plans, references were found to spelling, transcription and recitation; arithmetic was largely concerned with the basic needs for the '4 rules' and money. Geography, history and singing made an appearance as did 'object lessons', where the children learned about silk, rubber or glass etc.. For the girls there were sewing lessons and for the boys drawing and woodwork. Finally, there was Religious Education (catholic children were excused) and Drill (or P.T.)

There were periodic visits from inspectors (apparently with only a couple of hours notice!) and the remarks after one visit included such disparaging comments as "unintelligent throughout", "vague", "poor" and "the majority know nothing about this subject".

Registers and other documents show that there could be as many as 107 children being taught at the same time in the same room! The children, of all ages and abilities, would be in a variety of groups being taught by older, more capable (sometimes!) children. Registers were taken in the morning and afternoon with the attendance officer visiting the school each week. Reasons given for absence included the weather, helping with harvest, illness (often measles), as a result of arguments between parents and the School Master, missing an exam (parents were forewarned (encouraged?) in order to keep their children away if they were likely to under-achieve! Local holidays could be for church fêtes, fairs, processions etc.

Although this opportunity for education was open to any child, parents had to find coppers to pay for the privilege. In the books are records of non-payment of School Board fees which reached the county court. There were also entries suggesting that the Union (Poor house) would pay the fees for the poorest parents. And ... the children were expected to pay 'fire money' for the purchase of fuel for the stove in winter.



Then we came to Rules and Punishment! These entries logged the day, the child, the age, the crime (frequently trivial) and the punishment. This was usually strokes with the cane across the hand. One entry is over a period of time when children coming into school in dirty shoes or clogs were given lines to copy from their reading books.

Even entries for activities which could be considered as being for leisure or pleasure found their way into these records and included sewing, cooking and cleaning or helping round the house or in the fields. Games they played included swimming, hopscotch, football, cricket, hoops and spinning tops.

The training of teachers was touched on and we learned that 'pupil teachers' did 4 year training in school, 'on the job'. Subsequently including some sessions at a training school. The pupil teachers sat an exam each year and, when successful after 4 years, would qualify as a 'Certificated teacher' either 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th class.

Louise had a slide showing the results of one pupil teacher, in her 3rd year in 1898. Somewhat less than impressive, covering 7 subject areas, she gained only 207 points out of a possible 460. It wasn't indicated whether or not that constituted a pass!

The first teacher in 1814 was Thomas Gerrard who remained in post until his death in 1854. There followed two teachers up to 1879 serving 15 years and 10 years respectively. The next two teachers both resigned after 2 to 3 years in post. 1886 saw the appointment of the first woman, Mary Howard, who remained until 1891. She was followed by William Blight who remained in post from 1891 to 1928 when he died. The final teacher in that list was Frederick Gordon Moore, from 1928 until 1950 when he retired.

Finally, after a really interesting talk, Louise gave us some tips on how to find and access the logbooks and registers relating to schools, administration and teacher training etc.

She has put together a large collection of material from over the years, including many photographs, log books, admissions, registers and inspection reports. This archival material, relating mainly to Shevington, Broad o'th Lane, Board School, was deposited with Wigan Archives so they can be accessed by future generations.

Many thanks to Louise for an interesting and entertaining talk.

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**November Meeting ... only in the Performance Space, Oldham Library**



Saturday,  
12th Nov.  
at  
2 pm



***Exploring some of the city's finest underground spaces,  
that are shrouded in mystery and myths***

An illustrated talk given by Keith Warrender

"Keith Warrender, an historian, author and publisher, has produced two books on what lies below the Manchester streets. They are sites usually out of bounds to the public, but the speaker has had access to most of them and in his presentation reveals the true stories about these mysterious places. They range from underground canals, air-raid shelters and cold war networks to subterranean mazes."

Saturday 12th November at 2pm

\* No booking necessary for attendance in the library; members free, non-members £3.

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**The Oldham and District Branch of the Society**

**attended the Huddersfield Family History Society Fair on the 15<sup>th</sup> October.**

The Fair was held in Cathedral House in Huddersfield which is a very large Church with several off shoot rooms for other activities including a children's' playroom and a cafe.

Not all the stalls were about family history. There were people from Archaeology groups, Museums, Artists selling their paintings etc. It was a good mix of stalls from all over the area.

The fair was very well attended and we chatted to quite a number of people during the day.

Unfortunately, the Wi-fi wasn't too good, with bad reception so we couldn't use our laptop to do "look ups" for people. Otherwise a good day was had by all who attended and gave their support to the event.

Thank you to Gill and Rodney Melton and Ina Penneyston for their help and support on the day.  
Linda Richardson, Branch Chairman



Photographs courtesy of Ina Penneyston

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**MLFHS Branches delivering their monthly meetings and talks**

**Anglo - Scots ... November 5th, in Manchester Central Library**

|                                                         |                                                             |                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>MLFHS,<br/>ANGLO-SCOTTISH<br/>BRANCH<br/>MEETING</p> | <p>Saturday,<br/>5th<br/>November<br/>at<br/>1pm to 4pm</p> | <p>Anglo Scots<br/>40th Anniversary<br/>Special!</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|

Please book on [Eventbrite](#) if you are coming, just to aid planning for the refreshments

**Anglo-Scottish Website Pages** [HERE](#) for more information and booking details

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## Bolton ... November Meeting

MLFHS Bolton Branch Hybrid Meetings	Wednesday 2nd November at 7:30 pm	<i>Records and Research Using the CWGC Archives</i>
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A hybrid Meeting on zoom and at  
Bolton Golf Club, Lostock Park, Chorley New Road, Bolton, BL6 4AJ  
all bookings on [Eventbrite](#)

**Bolton Website Pages** [HERE](#) for more information and booking details.

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## MLFHS updates

### Manchester ... No Meetings planned as of this newsletter

Keep an eye on the following pages, as some meetings may be added at short notice.

MLFHS Manchester, Website Events Page [HERE](#)

MLFHS Manchester, Eventbrite Bookings [HERE](#)

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**MLFHS Online Bookshop:** [HERE](#).

with CDs, Downloads, Maps, Registers, Local Interest Books, More General Publications, Miscellaneous Items with MLFHS Logo etc., and Offers.

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### MLFHS Manchester & Branch e-Newsletters

MLFHS Manchester and each of the MLFHS branches publish a monthly e-newsletter which provides useful news items and articles etc. The e-newsletters are free and available to both members and non-members of MLFHS Society. Members receive the Manchester newsletter automatically and non-members can browse the archive and download any they wish. You can sign up to receive the Branches' newsletter links monthly, by following the links, below. To sign-up, for a Branch newsletter, to be emailed each month, simply click the appropriate link below and complete the short form on the e-newsletter page, where you will also find copies of all past issues to browse.

[MLFHS](#) (Manchester)

[Bolton](#)

[Oldham](#)

[Anglo-Scottish](#)

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**MLFHS Updates to the Great Database** (located in the Members' area of the Website)

**Emails to the Members' forum**, from John Marsden (webmaster), listing the updates.

\* Another substantial addition to the Great Database. This time a further 224 sets of admission documents for children admitted to the Royal Manchester School for the Deaf & Dumb.

These are added thanks to Jim Chadwick and his team (Marie Collier, Susan Hilton-Brooks, Karen Hugill, Janet Moores and Chris Norcross).

They cover admissions at various dates between 1859 and 1881.

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\* Another substantial addition to The Great Database. This time it is a file of 2,408 burials at St.

Mary's, Radcliffe, Bury from 1841 to 1865.

These are also available as a listing in the Document Collection in the member area under the death & Burial section.

Thanks to John Gartside for these.

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\* A further 5,112 records have been added to the Great Database.

These are entries from the Creed Books for Bolton Workhouse 1892-1899.

Thanks to Graham Holt and his team for the above.

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\* Another small index added to The Great Database.

SALFORD POLICE ADMISSIONS 1893-1934

This index was created by Greater Manchester Police Museum as a finding aid for their archive of Police Officers' records.

Search results link to the appropriate page of the GMP Museum web site for the individual officer. From here, further information can be by contacting the GMP Museum.

There are 326 named officers. Not much information on each, but GMP Museum can supply more information.

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\* Another two volumes of admission documents for pupils at the Royal Manchester School for the Deaf & Dumb have been indexed and added to The Great Database. These cover dates between 1879 and 1890.

Thanks, as always, to Jim Chadwick and his team (Marie Collier, Susan Hilton-Brooks, Karen Hugill, Janet Moores and Chris Norcross).

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\* I have just updated the descriptions in the MI database of several graveyards in the Bolton area to include listings of the memorials.

Thanks to Cheyvonne Bower for this latest batch of listings and for her substantial work on many earlier ones.

Most, if not all of the descriptions now have MI listings with the exception of those derived from the Owen Manuscripts, which will, I hope, be the subject of a future exercise.

The churches involved in this latest update are:

St Peter, Belmont, Bolton

St Katherine, Blackrod

St Peter Bolton le Moor

St Stephen, Lever Bridge

Emmanuel, Bolton

St Paul, Astley Bridge, Bolton

Wesleyan Chapel, Fletcher St., Bolton

Christ Church, Walmsley

Unitarian Chapel, Walmsley

Old Chapel, Walmsley

St James, Breightmet

St Maxentius, Bradshaw

St Mary Deane (Old and New)

St Michael, Bolton

St John, Farnworth

St Paul, Halliwell

Holy Trinity, Horwich



Lea Lane Chapel, Horwich  
Congregational United Reform, Little Lever  
St Bartholomew, Westhoughton

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**Meetings and Talks at other Societies &/or Venues**

**Please note ...**

**Please check society/group websites or organisers for updated information**

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**Oldham Historical Research Group: ... all Meetings on zoom**



Wednesday  
16th  
November  
at  
7 pm



***The Election of a Councillor, Coldhurst Ward, 1922***

an illustrated presentation, on zoom,  
given by Jeremy Sutcliffe

Everyone welcome ... More details and free booking on Eventbrite [HERE](#)

Your support for our meetings is appreciated and, if you would like more information, please email me at < pixnet.sg@gmail.com >.

Website [HERE](#)

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**Saddleworth Historical Society** ... Wednesday 9th November

***" A Fortune made & lost in Velvet - The Mellodews of Moorside "***

an Illustrated Presentation by William M. Hartley, Author

7:30 at the Saddleworth Museum Gallery

At this meeting Society members are free, but a charge to non-members is applicable on the door of £3. All are welcome. Refreshments are available.

Subject to Government guidelines at the time you may be asked to wear a mask.

Website [HERE](#)

**Saddleworth Civic Trust** has no meeting or event planned in November or December.

If & when this situation changes members of the Society will be notified directly and through the local Press.


**For both societies :**



Please note that if there is any upturn in the state of the ongoing Covid Pandemic, any or all of these meetings might be cancelled. Members of each Society should check with any Committee member, at the Museum office, if in doubt. You may be asked to wear a mask.

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**Moorside & District Historical Society**  
*We are back, assuming the current regulations hold true.*  
**Monday 21st November 2022.**

**Photographic images showing changes in transport,  
work opportunities, leisure and local events  
as Moorside became part of expanding Oldham,  
from 1850 up to 1960s Part 2**





**To be held in the Moorside Cricket Club, Turfpit Lane, Moorside.**  
**7-30 p.m. all are welcome.**

*Note: Other meeting planned for the third Monday of the month, next year.  
Except for the summer break July & August + December. £2 including refreshment.  
April ~ September meeting in St Thomas' Church Hall. OL1 4SJ*

Monday 21st November, at Moorside Cricket Club, Turfpit Lane, Moorside, at 7:30

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**Library Events & Gallery talks at Gallery Oldham; Curator talks [HERE](#)**  
on [Eventbrite](#) and [Instagram](#)

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**Family History Society of Cheshire : Tameside Group meeting.**  
See their website [HERE](#)

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**Tameside History Club :**

Meetings on zoom.  
Website and programme  
&

**Tameside Local Studies and Archives - Regular Sessions and Events**

Website and programme [HERE](#)

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**Regional Heritage Centre :**

Website [HERE](#)

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**'A Mixed Bag'**

**'Autobiography Of A Manchester Cotton Manufacturer : Or Thirty Years' Experience Of Manchester ', pub. 1887.**

Originally published anonymously, later research showed that it was written by Henry S. Gibbs.

The reviewer had given it 5 stars, as had others who had read it.

The author used pseudonyms throughout ... actual names, where discovered, in the footnotes.

### **Serialised in the newsletters :**

The earlier chapters and an introduction can be read in previous months' newsletters, starting in October 2021, downloadable [HERE](#)

**The final two chapters follow, below ...**

## **CHAPTER XIX**

### **DISASTROUS TRADE - CLOSING AND SALE OF THE MILL.**

ON Tumbleton's decease, a serious consideration of my position was forced upon me. I was the surviving partner, and our articles provided the option of paying to the deceased partner's executors what was due to them in a stated time, or, failing this, the disposal of the business. Several offers of partnership were made to me; on the one hand by gentlemen who were capitalists but having no knowledge of manufacturing, and on the other by active capable men of business who lacked the indispensable capital. To secure the latter for the future conduct of the thriving little factory was my chief concern. Apart from this consideration, a partner was not a necessity. For sixteen years the work of the establishment had fallen to my lot, and as I remained young, active, and strong, I continued to feel equal to its performance. So I decided to work the oracle and run alone.

Unfortunately, cotton still remained at a high figure, and all kinds of machinery were in the same category through the high prices ruling in iron. The valuation, therefore, was a high one. On the other hand, I gradually began to see my way to grapple successfully with the money difficulty through the death of my mother and

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another relative, I had recently received some legacies amounting to several thousand pounds. These amounts, aided by others realized by conversions of pictures into cash, and the forbearance of Mr. Tumbleton's executors, who afforded me facilities, enabled me to meet the executorial claims and waive outside assistance.

Business continued good, and as now all the profits of it went to my credit, I began "to reap the toil of this my hard estate." Each year's results of good business was an improvement on the preceding one. If that of 1873 was satisfactory, 1874 was more brilliant, but it was excelled by 1875, which in its turn was beaten in excellence by that of 1876, which was the best business year of my life.

During these years I saw much of Mr. Thornton, who would rejoice in giving me the credit of having taken the "tide" of my affairs "at the flood." If I did so, the result was not that indicated by the poet. My good old friend did not survive to see the "ducks and drakes" which this old dame subsequently made of me, though he lived long enough to witness the devastation which she had wrought over the country generally.

In the early part of 1877 the trade was arrested somewhat abruptly, to the surprise of many, and contrary to the expectation of most business men. The causes, whatever they might be, were aided by bad harvests and the war between Russia and Turkey. Many regarded the stagnation as another inevitable decennial crisis, which would pass over, to be followed by the compensating reaction. I recalled to mind a conversation held a year previously on a homeward journey from Manchester

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with a fellow-passenger who must have been inspired. Much to my astonishment, he exhorted me to sell my mill, and withdraw entirely from cotton; the simple reason given for offering such advice being his knowledge of the incapacity of

our foreign and home markets to take off the ever-increasing production of the mills, and his conviction of a coming collapse in the cotton industry with regard to any more profitable business.

I had heard similar prophetic utterances during the time of former panics through which we had emerged and afterwards entered on a season of prosperity, and did not act upon his advice. To have done so, if practicable, would have appeared suicidal; but it would have been the only way of escape from disintegration. In opposition to this view, the trade generally looked hopefully for a renewal of business.

A prominent question ever presenting itself to my mind was the possibility that our goods were going out of consumption, but the unprecedented demand of 1876 forbade the arrival at any such conclusion. I was conscious that our fabrics, which were known by other makers to be in favour, had been imitated by them right and left, and the market was becoming glutted with the production of additional makers. I had also become unpleasantly aware that our former foreign customers were now sufficiently enlightened to make their own cloth, and were independent of us. But even these considerations were slow to be regarded as sufficient to account for the apparent termination of business.

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I was frequently in earnest consultation with my old friend Moregood, whose experience had been great and his judgment sound. He now confessed his perplexity, and regarded his experience of no value, though he advanced many a hypothesis. In view of contingencies, I decided that the present condition of the times with the uncertain look-out were inconsistent with the retention of so valuable a collection of pictures and drawings as that which I now possessed, and resolved on their dispersion. The collection was well known to the enterprising manager of the great firm of picture dealers in London, Manchester, and Liverpool. He had seen them many times at my house, and had spoken of the animation with which they would rekindle the picture market if brought into it. This gentleman, when I had told him of my intention, consulted his principals on the best mode of dispersion, and suggested an exhibition of them in their own establishments. His proposition was assented to, and in March, 1878, the exhibition was opened.

When hanging on the walls of the extensive gallery in which they were exhibited the effect of the drawings was very imposing. Hitherto they had been scattered, and had hung in every room of my house. Now that they were assembled on one background they afforded an agreeable sight, no one being more astonished with their harmony of colour than myself, notwithstanding my familiarity with each individual work. In my enthusiasm I exclaimed to the devotees of David Cox and De Wint the Italian proverb, "See Naples and die," substituting the two clever old artists for

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the former capital of the Two Sicilies. Such an exhibition, with a view of sale on the part of a client, was a departure from the rules of the eminent firm who conducted it. They made an exception, however, in my favour, for which they will always remain entitled to my warmest acknowledgement. I was afterwards informed by the head of the firm he would not again consent to a similar transaction, for the sufficient reason that their gallery generally existed for the sale of their own works.

When the depressed condition of the Lancashire industry of 1878 is taken into consideration, the exhibition was a success. In its earlier stage there was a rush of visitors and customers. It was only when the great strike of the Preston cotton spinners occurred that a check was put to the business which commenced so auspiciously. Of the 122 beautiful works forming the collection, the following artists, with their number of examples, were included: David Cox, thirty-seven; De Wint, ten; George Barrett, seven; George Cattermole, seven; Copley Fielding, five; D. Roberts, five; William Hunt, five; Sam. Prout, four; F. Taylor, three; J. M. Turner, one. The

collection contained two wonderful little oil pictures by Briton Riviere, and another by Luke Fildes, and in it were also works by Colman, T. M. Richardson, Turner of Oxford, Danby, Robson, Hills, Harding, Holland, Austin, Topham, Shields, and Marks. During the gloom which prevailed and was deepening, it was a daily relief to the mind, after passing the allotted conventional hour on the Exchange without results, to hurry away to the pictorial establishment, where the intelligent and

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active manager, during some months, imparted to me from time to time the welcome intelligence of art sales on my behalf.

The atmosphere was thick with rumours of failures in addition to those which had recently taken place, the minds of people with dismay at their unlooked-for occurrence. When 1878 had run its course, the appalling number of 169 failures of important firms connected with and affecting the trade of the district had been announced, representing liabilities to the amount of thirty-two and a half millions sterling.

There was sufficient material in this medley of misfortunes to incite the powers of the thinking portion of the community. Shrewd and clear-headed men traced our disasters to the evils attendant upon one-sided free trade, and many clever letters appeared from time to time in the newspapers from writers who advocated a system of reciprocity in our fiscal policy. They urged amongst other cases that the payment annually to France of forty-five millions sterling for manufactured articles admitted free of duty was a mistake which might be corrected by the policy of a tax on those articles, unless France received our manufactures on similar terms; and that such a policy would not be an encroachment on the principles of free trade, which were established with the object of providing the nation with cheap food, and should be exclusively applied to the importation of raw material, such as corn, cotton, and cattle.

They also stated our purchases from the foreigner were nearly double the amount of his purchases from us; that whilst our business with him from

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the year 1872 to 1876 had increased only thirty-nine millions, his takings from us during the same period had diminished one hundred and fifteen millions. It was argued by the anti-reciprocist that our ability to take so much in return for so little, proved clearly the superior position we had attained through the policy hitherto followed; whilst, on the other hand, the advocates for reciprocity maintained that had the hundred and fifteen millions sterling not been abstracted from the country by the foreigner, a greater number of our own workpeople might have found employment which languished for want of the capital which went into the pockets of the foreign workman.

It was in vain Mr. Bright inquired if these gentleman complained of too many customs duties being repealed, and if they wished to put a duty on corn again, or cattle, or perhaps on imported cotton. This was considered no reply to men who recognised the necessity of free corn, cattle, and cotton, but who contended that in our blind devotion to free trade we had given everything in the way of remission of duty, and received very little in return, and that little was gradually being withdrawn; and they urged that the time had arrived for a searching inquiry into the soundness or otherwise of the regulations of our tariffs with foreign countries.

The cup of gloom seemed to be filling one day when Mr. Moregood informed me, with a countenance unlike that he had worn for many years, that he and his partner held the enormous quantity of thirty thousand pieces of their heavy goods in stock; that in the hopelessness of disposing of

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them by any other means they had resolved upon the unprecedented course of selling the whole of them by auction, and afterwards retiring from the trade. The times had indeed changed



when a first-class firm inaugurated such a proceeding as this! The effect of the sale was to put an end to business in the ordinary channels, and also to cause other makers to adopt the same method for the distribution of their goods.

From this time another period was marked in the commercial darkness which overspread this particular industry. In my own case, the difficulty of following the decisive movement of my neighbour seemed insuperable. Had I acted on the advice of my travelling friend of 1876, and "cleared out," as he tersely expressed it, supposing I could have found a buyer for the mill; or had I courageously, and perhaps inhumanly, brought it to an abrupt termination, I should have escaped the losses attendant upon the remaining calamitous years. It is no small, or easy matter to close an old-established concern, especially one having a successful history like this. The dismissal of workpeople, with office and warehouse officials, was trying enough when the ordeal had to be endured; but whilst any hope lingered of a favourable change, and the people were piteously pleading for a continuance of employment, it became an impossible alternative, and the position of the master remained one of pain and perplexity. So long, therefore, as the necessary funds could be raised from one source and another, the engines jogged on, the looms kept in motion, the people were employed, and cloth was produced

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and sold again and again with never-failing loss.

My picture hobby preserved me from extinction. Whilst any available resources remained, they were absorbed in the manufacturing vortex; when they ceased, there remained the only alternative of a final close. The sale of pictures by this time had come to a temporary end. They appeared to have quite lost their inherent value. Had it been otherwise, their proceeds would probably have been devoted to an extension of an additional period of the now miserable mill existence, had my powers of endurance continued equal to the demand upon them, of which there was now little prospect.

In the spring of 1880 I was unwell, and made a few days' visit to my sister, at Keynsham. During my absence I heard of the serious illness of Mr. Thornton. On my return to Manchester, I received a note from his nephew describing his uncle's indisposition and asking me to visit him. The intelligence would have been painful under any circumstances, but was made especially so as I was ill myself. After the visit to my old friend, on which occasion there was no mutual recognition, as the patient was dozing and must not be disturbed, in accordance with the nurse's injunctions, I returned home with uneasy and unsettled feelings - in fact, I felt undone. Mrs. Thornton afterwards told me her husband, on returning to consciousness, was informed by her of my visit, and the nurse's objection to his being disturbed. His feeble reply was, "Then I do not thank the nurse." I was too ill to visit him a second time, or pay him my last mark of regard at his obsequies.

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I have, however, to some extent, re-lived my life with him whilst penning these pages. In the incidents mentioned in these chapters - some of them very trifling - a wholesome feeling has been engendered in the contemplation of a good man, who, far above many of his fellows, was ever unselfish and true.

It was a distressing time when the last warps were being woven prior to closing the mill. I heard of a deputation of the workpeople, which I was too ill to receive, who wished to inform me of their readiness to work for reduced wages if the stoppage of the mill might thereby be averted. In one instance, a conspicuous worker offered his services for a year without payment, for the same object. When, eventually, the inevitable climax had arrived, the mill was closed, and the place with its contents stood in its naked misery waiting for the sale by auction, which was announced in glaring and ghastly placards fixed upon its poor old walls. The owner was *hors de combat*, and in that condition of body and mind which cared little for future eventualities.

I had barely strength left to attend at the hotel where, under the personal direction of my faithful friend and legal adviser, the mill and its contents were put up for sale, and where there were no buyers, when, in the course of a few days, I was laid up with a serious illness, which for a long period defied doctors and medicine. The bow had been bent for three weary years, and but for a naturally good constitution must have shivered into splinters. The eminent medical man, who was quietly watching me, saw how I was tending, and ordered

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my removal from Manchester, with everything that would remind me of it.

Just twenty-five years previously, I was ordered by my doctor to leave Manchester to take care of itself for three months, whilst I recovered from a liver attack, brought on by work and anxiety. During the process of restoration, I well remember my fear and solicitude lest the great city during my absence would take to its wings and fly away (like another certain commodity of which I have had experience), and that on my return to health it would nowhere be found. There were no such fears now. The dominant feeling was one of indifference and a consciousness that we had to part. A series of visits was decided on.

One of my first entertainers was Pollard, at whose hospitable house in the north I found a retreat. If there were any man capable of arousing and stimulating me, Pollard was the man. In vain, however, he resorted to a variety of devices for that object. How well I remember, on a lovely summer day, the last of my visit, he had me on the pretty lawn outside the vicarage, where the poet Wordsworth had lived in bygone days, and probably had received many an inspiration; how my friend placed me in a chair and ingeniously fastened an umbrella at the back of it to protect me from the sun, then shining with unusual vigour; how he then consulted me in selecting an appropriate chant for the coming Sunday evening service, the perfect performance of which was uppermost in his heart; how he selected Dr. Oakley's chant as being the most suitable for the fifteenth evening of the month, when the 78th

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... ould be sung; how, lying flat upon the ... Joule's book on the ground, he sang from memory the whole of that long Psalm to the ... ful chant mentioned, at the end of which he each time left off on a minor third, instead of the key-note! I afterwards learned this was one of his little stratagems to excite my attention. I remember, most of all, the soothing effect of his voice, in causing me to doze, and at intervals to feel I had done with earthly affairs, and to have a glimpse of the happier state in which, however, I no lot.

Other and extended visits were made to friends and relatives in the South of England and on the Continent, and in the course of fourteen months I returned in the best of health, to see what Manchester had been doing in my absence.

### **CHAPTER XX.**

#### **DEPARTURE FOR AUSTRALIA.**

WHEN I next beheld the great city I did so as one having a doubtful interest in it. I was no longer a cotton manufacturer. For thirty years my career, with little deviation, had been one of quiet, successful progress. I had, indeed, so to speak, never looked behind me. I was now out of the race. The mill and its contents I had parted with at a frightful sacrifice, though for the best price which could be obtained, and I was without occupation.

I soon discovered business to be in as profitless a condition as when I left it fourteen months previously, and in regarding it from whatever point I could I failed to discern any prospect of a return to the old prosperity. In many directions I marked the absence of old firms which had for a long period been conspicuous commercial landmarks, those that remained having passed into the hands of companies, whilst the others had retired from the scene. New faces appeared, whilst few of the old ones remained. The last six years of depression had left its indelible mark. In a community which, according to Ellison and Co.'s estimate, had lost nineteen millions of

capital in three short years, there must necessarily be seen the effects of such a prostrating process on every side.

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The conversation I had with some of the survivors offered not a shred of encouragement for another effort. Though out of the groove, I felt another attempt, however desperate, must be made, and a year was spent in efforts which were fruitless otherwise than affording a more comprehensive acquaintance with the impaired condition of the cotton industry.

At one time of the denuding process, which continued in its relentless and uninterrupted course, I thought no man (with the exception of Job) had been so stripped as myself; but I was forced to a contrary conclusion before finally deciding, at a late period of my existence, that I must bid adieu to home and country, and begin life afresh in some unknown land. The decision was a serious one, but it secured a course of action which brought relief with it, in the preparation for departure.

It would have been amusing, if it had not been so disagreeable, to watch the process of denudation at every subsequent step, whether in the destructive auction room - where people buy articles for which they have no need, and pay nothing for them - or in the wear and tear and costs of packing and freighting; not even ending with the heavy contribution levied for the final plunge which carries one across the ocean.

I had occasion to remind my old friend Eusebius of my existence, and sent him a note, to which there was no reply. On paying a visit to Mr. Howard's rectory, on a Sunday afternoon, I saw the reverend gentleman and a stranger leave the house. A large familiar cough, to which they had

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both been accustomed, brought them to a stand. The stranger was Eusebius. The ten years since last we met had told its tale upon him, as with the most of us. During this time he had ceased to be a bachelor.

Though oil, insurance, and invention alike had proved unkind, a rich wife had made amends for all. The meeting was eventful; the times had changed, and our positions were reversed.

Eusebius, before I recognized him, was hastening, under the rector's guidance, to my house, to make the *amende honorable* for the neglect of my note, to assure me of his sympathy in my recent experiences, and his delight at my restored health. We now returned to the parsonage, when the rector's thoughtful wife considerably placed a room at our disposal, in which the long-separated friends might, undisturbed, talk to their hearts' content of bygone times, the present, and those that are to come.

Eusebius was slow to realize that any disaster, national or otherwise, could touch his veteran friend in the manner I had been handled; and many were the regrets which mingled with the astonishment he expressed. Eusebius was inspired with the purest feeling of affection towards "the man with whom his happiest days had been spent," not unmixed with gratitude for the kindnesses he had received. His generous Irish nature was seen to perfection when essaying to turn the current of events by the noble-minded benevolence which found expression in his looks as in his words. No, good Eusebius, I shall yet, I trust, recover equilibrium, without extraneous help,

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though thy good wishes are none the less esteemed because they may not be fulfilled.

It was refreshmg to hear of the trust reposed in Providence by an old acquaintance, who imparted to me the strongest encouragement in picturing the silver lining which fringes every cloud. The happy times had returned. Eusebius brought them with him on the night he afterwards passed under my roof, where a further delight was planned for a future allotted week to be devoted to rambling on the Derbyshire hills. Then *au revoir*. An epistle followed, breathing on paper the sentiments already testified in words, whilst the coming walking tour, when our

minds would be unburdened and our bodies acquire fresh strength, was hailed as the coming event. There was something very nice in prospect, therefore, after the recent gloom; and I waited for the happy week, which, alas! never came, and also replies to my letters, which were never considered. O, Eusebius! Eusebius!

Soon after this time I received a letter from Mr. Moregood, to whom I had written for information respecting one of the colonies, but which he was unable to impart. In my early days he had given me his helping hand, and now was ready, as then, to bestow what aid he could :-

"April 30th, 1883.

"Dear Mr. G.,- I lost your note with your address. I cannot give you any information about Canada. I feel deeply with you and your family. It is a great trial but you are doing quite right. *Manchester is finished*. You will become citizens of the country of the future. I believe in Canada there are ten chances to one in our country.

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"I have seen many changes during the last ten years - the big ones down, the little ones up. I see the difference between one man and another to be small in comparison with the great future, and that the only question is, how shall I stand in fifty years? To this question I am giving the whole of my attention. I think God in His Providence is speaking clearly to you to depart and dwell in another land.

"I again say I feel deeply with you and yours; there being that in English people which prefers the old country to any other place. May the blessing of God be on you and yours. - I am, yours very sincerely, F.M."

In a fortnight after I received the following, in reply to another letter to him :—

"May 14th, 1883.

"Dear Mr. G., - Yours of the 12th is to hand. I am sorry you find it so difficult to realize, but very glad you are not the slave of regrets. I am sorry to say I have wasted scores of days in regretting I did not go out of business in '76, but I find, in looking over your note, that it will be much better not to reply to it. I will, therefore, meet you at your own hour and place in Manchester on Thursday, Friday, or Tuesday week. Send me a post-card with time and place of meeting. My daughter, who well remembers the meeting at the station, joins me in kind remembrances to you and yours. - Sincerely yours, F.M."

On Tuesday, June 5, he paid his promised visit at my office, which was much enjoyed; and again on Friday, the 22nd, when he spoke in the earnest, fatherly manner that reminded me of the old days. This was the last time I expected to see him, and I felt our long friendship was drawing to a close. We lingered when parting time came. At my request he wrote his name in pencil in my mem. book on my promising to write to him from

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Tasmania with information of the colony. In twenty-four hours from that time he had parted with all on earth, and I mourned the loss of another of my best and earliest Manchester friends. When it was known I was on the point of leaving Manchester, one of my club friends intimated his desire to mark the event by giving a farewell dinner to commemorate the occasion. Many friends, old and true, were invited, and fourteen gentlemen sat down to the splendid repast which was provided. It was quite a new position when I found myself for the time being an abashed hero, listening to strains of unaffected regard and goodwill from men with whom I had long been pleasantly associated, and upon whom I was now looking for probably the last time as they rose one

after the other in the order they were sitting, beginning with the good-hearted' chairman, at whose right hand I sat, until the vice-chairman was reached, who in turn added to the kindly words which had previously been uttered. After him the friendly sentences flowed from each individual until I only remained to express my opinions of it all as best I could.

They were all good men at that glowing gathering, whom I vividly remember, rising one after the other down one side of the long table and up the other, to deliver their sentiments, which they did with much ability, force, and animation. Could they have had a vision of the two years of perplexity which followed me after I had parted from them, and from which I have not long emerged, their commendations would have been less unequivocal, and their good wishes less confidently bestowed.

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On the 26th June, I spent an hour with the Bishop at the Registry, in St. James's Square. We had frequently corresponded on Church matters, but I had never been introduced to him. He was familiar to me in the pulpit and on the platform, and I was one of the myriads who loved the Bishop without a personal knowledge of him.

I was one of the trustees of the Church of St. J., as was also his lordship, who wished to see me on the subject of my resignation, previous to my departure from Manchester. After the genial greeting, which one might expect from a man of his overflowing good-heartedness, I was quite unprepared to receive his thanks, which he accorded to me with unaffected earnestness, for what poor labours I had performed in connection with the church; and wished me, "with all his heart," God's blessing on the step I was taking, which he thought was the right one, in leaving the old country. He then wrote me a letter of introduction to my "future " Bishop of Tasmania, and after a further conversation of a hopeful kind on his part wished me God-speed on my journey. Now that the good Bishop is no more, and everything connected with him must possess an interest for Lancashire, it may not be out of place to insert the letter he wrote for me, which was not presented, as I remained only two months in Tasmania, and never reached Hobart :—

"Manchester, June 26, 1883.

"My dear Bishop of Tasmania, - My first communication with you since your elevation to the Episcopate - in which I earnestly trust that God may prosper you in all the works of your hand - is to introduce to you the

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bearer of this letter, Mr. --, who with his family is going to settle at Launceston, in your diocese, intending to engage in business as a general merchant, and to plant out his four boys upon the soil. Mr. -- has been thirty-three years in Manchester, and has always taken an interest in church work, and has been trustee of the patronage of one of our large city churches. But things lately have not prospered with him, and he tells me that he is now a poor man. He is going, therefore, to try his fortunes in a new world, and I thought I should be doing no harm if I gave him this letter of commendation to his new Bishop. - Trusting that every blessing of health and usefulness may be yours, I am, very sincerely, your brother in Christ, "J. MANCHESTER."

When the tidings of the Bishop's death were telegraphed to Melbourne, many were the expressions of sorrow on the part of members of the community, even at this distance, by whom Dr. Fraser was known to be one of the most distinguished and energetic of the English prelates. Though far away, I mourned with Manchester in her grief, and shudder now, as many men there must, in contemplation of him who will hereafter assume the episcopal reins.

But I was not allowed to leave the city where the best portion of my life had been spent without another token of friendship and goodwill.

The good Rector of St. J. informed me that his people desired to give me a parting tribute of their regard before I vanished from the scene. I was touched to the heart, if I might use the expression, by this intimation, which was as grateful to me as it was unexpected, and comforted my last hours in Manchester. There was no time left me to meet the good folks who were prepared to

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give me a parting welcome in the old scene of happier times. Time and Tide wait for no man. My hours in Cottonopolis were numbered.

On the following day, Mr. Wonsat, accompanied by Mr. Womley, on behalf of the good friends at St. J., who had not forgotten me, though I should see them no more, presented me with a Bible, prayer-book, and other volumes, bearing within them the expression of their feeling towards me. I often look lovingly on these books. There are few I value so highly.

As I mentally pass from the church and glance at the valuable institution on the other side of the way, which has grown to the importance of an

Infirmary, under the presidency of Fidus Achates, I hear the sound of looms, and on crossing the canal and turning the corner, enter the mill once more, and passing up the narrow staircase see Mr. Rathway, who spent so many years of his life there. John, as I familiarly called him for more than twenty years, was at my right hand. John was a fine fellow. He weighed close on seventeen stone, and was an enthusiastic quoit player and fisherman. In the latter functions I believe he was the acknowledged head of the piscatorial amateurs in Manchester, and president of some of their associations. I once asked him how seventeen stone could stand all day by the river side when such things as varicose veins might be looming in the future. He replied to my question by presenting me with a small regulation stool, used by the members of one of his societies. It is of light weight, can be conveniently carried as a walking-stick, and is capable of bearing twenty stone if necessary. It has

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many times done duty for me during deficient chair accommodation, and serves to remind me of John. Had I become a millionaire in Manchester, John would certainly have been a participator in the spoils. I hope he is alive and doing well, as he deserves.

My leave-takings had nearly been accomplished. After unsuccessful efforts on the part of Fidus Achates and myself for a final interview we failed to meet, and now two alone remained whose hands were still unshaken. Alas! those of one will ever remain unshaken. Good Mr. Rareworthy was absent from home in feeble health. Under the circumstances his daughter thought it better he was absent. We were spared the pain of parting. Few men had met more frequently for thirty years than he and I. During that long time there never was a moment when our relations of reciprocated goodwill and esteem cooled in the atmosphere of genial warmth which we breathed together. It was merciful, when we met for the last time, we were not conscious of it. Yet, another whom I must see, if possible. His office is close by, and I have some minutes yet to spare - how fast they fly, and he has not returned. I see him in his son, the image of the father, who, when his age or younger, would have legislated for India in the Athenaeum, but I waited his return in vain. A twelvemonth after, to the day, when the Editor knew where I had cast my Antipodean lot, he sent me 'the hurriedly-penned "God speed you," which he jotted down just after his arrival at the office and my departure from it.

One more call in Piccadilly to see another of the

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men with whom I trafficked all the thirty years, from whom I have the parting gift of "Vice Versa" (now filled with passenger sketches) to cheer me on the voyage.

One friend is left me in the cab, from whom I part at London Road. He was the last. No, yet another on the platform, in railway uniform, who sees I am in the right compartment, as in days before, and then, "Good-bye and God bless you both," and, "Farewell, Manchester!"

Manchester! The same in name as when I entered it thirty-three years previously, but how changed to me, now elbowed out of it! Then a pathway lay before me, in which I walked and worked, and am still pursuing, but it leads away from former scenes of labour and toil; and believing, as did Mr. Moregood, that the departing path was the right one, I followed it, not looking back for any purpose but to record these pages. If asked how they may "interest and

instruct," I scarce can say, beyond that the discharge of duty has been my effort, and faith in the result my exercise. Had I to live these thirty years again I cannot see how differently I would use them. They are but a fraction of the limitless existence which (like my friend, F.M., who asked of himself how shall I stand in fifty years hence) I regard as one complete whole, looking upon the little portion that has passed only in its relationship with the great Future, in the contemplation of which I am satisfied.

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**From Mike Hoddy (see August newsletter for first chapters and more details)**

This manuscript was an account written by Frank Pogson of Oldham that describes his life in Oldham from the early 1920s to 1939. It was mostly around the Derker area and the 3rd Oldham Boys Brigade at Hope Congregational Church. Mike's own family members had been associated with the B.B. since 1904.

We're happy to serialise Frank's story, in the newsletter, over the next few issues.

***A GINNEL TO LIFE***

***Childhood in a Lancashire Mill Town***

***1924 - 1939***

by Frank Pogson

**CHAPTER X**

**JUNIOR SCHOOL DAYS**

'Daddy' Fenton lived at Waterhead and was Headmaster of Derker Junior School. He was highly regarded by pupils and parents alike and his nickname indicated something of the affection and esteem in which he was held. Short of stature, he made his presence felt when ever it was necessary. I have no recollection of ever being sent to him in disgrace but he always appeared to be fair and consistent.

My first class in the Junior School was 2B and so I remained separated from my bosom friend, Gordon. I completely fail to recall anything of particular note in this year. I think that my teacher was Miss Olive Butterfield but I am not even sure of that. It is as if I do not wish to recall it. I do have a simple school report dated 30 June 1939, at the end of the school year,

which gave me 75 marks out of 100 and places me as being 5th in the class. The only different thing I recall doing that year was sticking the point of a drawing compass into a lad by the name of Harold Wood. I have no idea why I did such a brutish thing for it certainly seemed to be quite out of character for me. I do remember that he yelled out loud, and who would not? The last time I saw Harold was in a forces canteen in Plymouth when we met by chance in 1942 when both of us had recently joined the Royal Navy.

I am sure that it was a blow to my pride to find myself in the B stream but the following year, I was redeemed when I entered Class 3A. The Teacher was Miss Eastwood. She was tall, slim with her hair in a bun looking every inch like a teacher in those days should. She always looked the same and I cannot put an age to her at that time but she could not have been very old. I liked her and clearly developed under her influence. Apart from the Christmas Party, the most notable event of the year was an Empire Day play in which all the main characters of the Empire came to life. There was Clive of India, Wolfe of Quebec, Captain Cook of the South Seas, Drake played by Gordon and myself as Nelson. There followed a hooded figure - the next great man of the Empire? In 1933 we still thought in those terms and yet only a few more years would pass before it became increasingly considered

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that an empire of colonial subjects was no longer a viable proposition as it once had been.

The summers throughout Junior School Days always seemed to be sunny and fine. It was a period of activity, good health and excitement. I am not alone in having fond memories of glorious summers of childhood. Without deadlines to keep, and without any real responsibility, summers were almost unending periods of sunshine, events and happenings full of drama and excitement as the 1950's further unfolded.

The overflight of Concorde today causes scarcely an upward glance but the passage of an intrepid aviator in his wood, fabric and wire bi-plane brought us all out to gaze in wonder. One Spring morning, we were privileged to see overhead the incredible hulk of the dirigible R.100, sister airship of the ill-fated R.101, Cinema and theatre owners missed no opportunity in dramatic advertising. The film, "All Quiet on the Western Front", caused a mock-up tank to be driven round the streets. Since we had never seen a real tank except the remains of one which was set in concrete in the Park, this had to be real for the purposes of our fantasies. "Ben Hur" provided us with a real live Centurion in his chariot, while "Showboat" was presented with a large mock-up paddle boat complete with organ and singers. It progressed grandly turning Ripponden Road into 'Ole Man River' himself.

Regularly the Territorial Army paraded flying the Colours of the 10th Battalion, the Manchester Regiment. To us children, this was the real army and every bit as spectacular as a crack Guards Regiment. Crowds assembled for the Battalion's return from annual summer camp. In addition to all the sporting events, Whit-walks and Sunday School outings, was the annual Bicycle Parade, which was a pre-cursor of the modern carnival. It was, however, the unadvertised events, accidents and happenings which created a kaleidoscope of experience and colour in what were, economically, grim years.

An accident on the road would cause the ambulance to race up the main road with silver bell ringing but to add to the urgency, if it was a serious accident, a policeman might be seen riding on the running board of the ambulance. An occasional mill fire offered a splendid display of firemen in action with their well polished brass helmets and bright red solid-tyred Dennis fire engines. With fire bells clanging, how could the blood fail to race? On a sunny Saturday lunchtime with the doors wide open, the local public house, The Lowerhouse, gave an interior view of white scrubbed tables and a stone-flagged floor generously supplied with black-leaded cuspidors. We children sometimes gathered outside as a long, solid-tyred charabanc, with doors only on the nearside and a

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canvas roof (or hood) which was folded down at the back, drew up to the door of the pub. The regulars came out noisily for their outing, having already partaken of Oldham Brewery's best ale. At least one obese but benevolent excursionist would scatter largesse in the road for which the children would scramble before the char' moved off. Across the road at the Sunday School, the Band of Hope might also be off on an outing. With a complete disregard for safety, heavy forms (or benches) would be carried out of the School and placed on a flat and completely open horse drawn cart. Adults and children clambered aboard and were driven away for a rural picnic. The long summer evenings echoed with the sounds of games, rallyo, hopscotch, girls' skipping rituals which usually ended with 'peppers' when the rope was spun at high speed. Often games would be interrupted as a Scout troop marched past with bugles, poles and a trek cart. Other passers-by might be the Church Lads' Brigade with trumpets or Hope Boys' Brigade Brass Band. Earlier in the evening may have seen the return of Henshaws Blue Coat School from its annual cricket festival at Broadbent Road. Sometimes a senior brass band would appear, selling raffle tickets in aid of band funds or, the kilted St. Johns Ambulance Scottish Pipe Band or even the local Dinky Jazz Band with drums and cazoos. The stream of free entertainment at times seemed endless and once included a Barrel Organist who got angry when we stole the handle

with which he turned the organ. Then, on the evening air came the merry strains of a concertina.

A troupe of girl dancers appeared swinging down the street preceded by a small but suitably attired boy carrying a board on which was affixed the name of the troupe. The girls cavorted, cartwheeled and walked crab-like on their backs and behaved every bit as brazenly as any leggy dancer seen on T.V. today except, they wore clogs. The only other male with the troupe was usually a wiry 'musical director' whose eyes seemed to be constantly darting all over the troupe as his fingers tickled the ivory buttons of his concertina.

We sat on someone's backyard step and regaled each other with useless information. George said that there were wrist watches that never needed to be wound up. Half the company present heard him in complete disbelief. What a period in which to grow up. What a glorious summer.

Most of those schoolboys have now reached their middle and possibly later years but have probably lived through the most exciting period in the history of man. The benefits of technology have now reached the majority of people in the developed world. Most of us have flown, most have a reliable car and some may even have owned an automatic watch. We enjoy

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so much of life as it now is, despite the pressures. It is summer all over again as we enjoy Our holidays and social activities. The reality is that those glorious summers of our youth were not really all that glorious when weather records are consulted. Events in the past were often by no means as good as they seemed or as they are now recalled.

We had begun to wander further away from home and each new place we visited had to be explored. We explored Oldham Edge which was then a completely barren ridge of higher ground, and many other places as well. If we found a brook, so much the better, for we could set about damming it like the eager beavers we were. We fished for tiddlers in a stream by the Woodstock Mill and rested on our backs as a bi-plane wrote "Persil" in the sky. we spent endless hours at Royton Junction watching the shunting in the sidings there. In the holidays we would take sandwiches and go off walking in Saddleworth over paths I had trodden with my father at weekends. We felt that we had walked miles and miles from home. As we walked, Gordon and I relived the adventures of the hero in the most recent film we had seen. Such a one was "Lives of a Bengal Lancer".

I remained in the A stream and found myself in Class 4A. For some unknown reason its classroom was upstairs on the balcony of the Senior School. Miss Annie Howarth, who lived locally, kept us enthralled between serious lessons as she read to us the exploits of Charlemagne and Roland. It was a happy year and like all others passed very quickly but in this year came my first visit to London.

The L.M.S Railway Company organised a series of trains which in one day would take a very high percentage of Oldham's Junior School children to London. The Headmaster arranged for a special bus to take the party from Derker to the railway station for 6am. Prior to this we had been crocodiled to the Cosy Cinema to be shown some of London's most famous sights on slides. The trip was exciting but confusing for there was far more to be seen than could be assimilated by juniors. Oldham's Honourable Member, Mr. Hamilton Kerr, met us at the House of Commons where a picture was taken for the press as we held up our packed lunches supplied by Samars, Caterers, of Glodwick. We were whipped round the Capital at a tremendous rate of knots but tea on the train when we boarded at St. Pancras was a new adventure and experience. We arrived back at Mumps station, Oldham at 9-30pm to be greeted by fond parents. All this for the princely sum of fifteen shillings (75p). Weekly collecting cards had previously been supplied by the Railway Company.

Teachers and pupil teachers all seemed to be prepared to go the extra mile and I well

remember going with a party during the Christmas holidays one year to visit an exhibition of model engineering at the City Hall in Manchester. With Miss Howarth also, one outing is well remembered when

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practically all the class, boys and girls, met at Glodwick Road Station one Saturday afternoon. We travelled by rail to Greenfield and then walked the slopes of Pots and Pans, a Pennine knoll which is the site of Saddleworth's War Memorial. We took our own food but tea was provided to drink. The fellowship was great and I recall exchanging headgear with the girls as we walked towards Greenfield Station on our way home. We were certainly losing some of our inhibitions about silly girls.

The big year was fast approaching at the age of 11+ as we moved up the School into Class 5A. The Class Teacher, Mrs. Constance Webb, (whose husband had a taxi business) was a formidable woman. She emphasized the importance of the year, in fact, she emphasized everything. She also inspected everything and I recall that she held up one lad to ridicule because he bit his finger nails. She drew a graphic picture of the nail on the blackboard in coloured chalks. Despite her strong personality and forceful manner, we really felt that she was a little naive at times. Inevitably, some lad would secretly and silently, break wind. Mrs. Webb stalked round the classroom like an affronted bloodhound bitterly complaining that some boy's trouser linings required to be washed. Smirks had to be concealed from her because we just did not believe it. She told us of former pupils who had achieved by winning scholarships and of a former pupil who had gone 'mad' in class and who had flung the plants and pots from off the window sills.

The last year in Junior School was a year in which many were gaining confidence in themselves. Personalities were developing and more subtle humour was emerging. For a time, whenever Mrs. Webb left the room one or two 'mad' pupils simulated their really 'mad' predecessor by jumping up and waving plant pots in the air. Adolescence was in the air too. Rude little exchanges began to be made between boys and girls as well as little assaults on the girls sitting behind. Some lads took this a step further, which worried me quite a bit. At break time when the teacher went out, over a period of time and breaks, they systematically took down the pants of every girl in the class. I was as curious as the rest but discretion held me back from taking a direct hand. With a teacher like Mrs. Webb, all the lads would have been given merry hell and our parents would have been informed had the matter been reported. Surprisingly, not one girl complained for I cannot imagine that they enjoyed the rough and undignified handling they got.

If it had got to this at Junior School, what must it be like at a mixed Senior School? The mind boggled.

The form came for my parents to complete on which they were required to indicate if they wished me to sit for a scholarship to the Hulme Grammar School, or for the Municipal High School or a Central School. The Central School offered a slightly higher standard of education but the leaving age

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was still 14 years. If my parents did nothing about it at all, then I would automatically go to the local Senior School, or Council School as it was known, in the same complex in which I had spent all my school life so far. I was duly entered for the Central School although I am now certain that I would have passed for the High School had I had the opportunity. Waterloo Central School was nearer to our station in life, whatever that was, according to my parents.

The day of the dreaded examination approached and we were instructed that we would be required to attend on a Saturday morning when the desks would be spaced out in the Hall. The



day before the 11+ examination was Empire Day which, by tradition, gave us the afternoon off. Mrs. Webb exhorted us to get out into the fresh air. We did not always do what she said but on this occasion some of us did. We made our way to Grains bar where we met up with 'some of the girls from the class. I remember that we walked down a hillside and there were lots of bluebells. It was, after all, May. We returned to School on the following Monday morning to be arraigned by Mrs. Webb about our activities on Friday afternoon and then about the examination. Gordon was the first to be asked and he said the first thing that came into his head. "We went to Bluebell Valley, Miss". She moved to the girls who all chorused, "Bluebell Valley, Miss? The other lads were quite amused and offered much ribald comment as to what might have taken place in Bluebell Valley. Town junior school kids are far more street-wise and knowledgeable of the facts of life than most parents would care to acknowledge. I saw my first real pornographic picture at Junior School and still wonder why they always kept their socks on. The examination itself was not difficult but approaching the School on a Saturday morning made it special and a little awe-inspiring. None of the familiar faces of our teachers could be seen. Only faceless unsmiling invigilators. In the afternoon, I went out across the moors with my father.

Leaving Derker School after a number of happy years was sad but then, I later realised, it is the regular pattern of life, leaving, parting, and moving on. They had been great years of sunshine and of song. I remember performing as a fireman in a school production of the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Mickey Mouse. This coincided with a particular advertising campaign when Mickey Mouse masks were given a way with some product or other. Gordon was Pluto the dog. Another time we had sung of the beautiful isles of New Zealand and of the produce of that land down under. Very early in my school career, our teachers almost without exception, had been greatly influenced by the success of Manchester School-children's Choir with the recording of "Nymphs and Shepherds" and then later with 'Hansel and Gretel'. Soon we too were set to foot tapping and finger clicking.

I had seen Amy do a song and tap-dance routine for the last time - the same

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Amy that I had first met in the Baby Class. In glorious sunshine towards the end of my Junior Schooldays we celebrated the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary by attending a parade given by the Territorial on the Rugby League Ground at Watersheds. In the evening, the sky was aglow with the reflection of many bonfires lit around the town. It was the end of a glorious summer of pre-adolescent magic when the grim realities of life had been swept away or hidden in our youthful fantasy and play. Yet the same play was a preparation for the more serious business of life ahead when each of us would be expected to face it responsibly.

**to be continued next month**

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## **From the e-Postbag**

More very welcome '***Random Recollections***' from Julie Schwethelm

### ***School Milk and Royal Scots***

There was no ambivalence about school milk; it was was one of those things that was either loved or hated.

Our infants and primary school was one of those red brick buildings from the beginning of the twentieth century, with chunky heating pipes painted a yucky brown running through the classrooms. Their sole purpose was not to heat the classroom but to curdle the free school milk. The crate of third-of-a-pint bottles with their aluminium foil bottle tops was inevitably strategically placed next to the pipes. By break time the warmth had managed to produce enough thick

floating bits of cream to conjure up that slightly nauseous feeling. No wonder so many kids didn't drink it. Those who did were rewarded (in retrospect punished) with leftover extra milk in the afternoon. This was of course even warmer and definitely more often than not "on the turn". Jeanette was wise enough at the age of six to inform the other lucky extra milk drinkers that sour milk "makes you early". Somehow it never did make us early – or even ill. Maybe we were just immune because we were literally brought up on almost curdling milk. When I told her what Jeanette had said, my mother astutely figured out that she actually meant that sour milk can make you ill, but ill wasn't part of the basic vocabulary of a six year old Lancashire girl. You were "poorly" or, if you were really seriously ill, you were "very poorly".

And then of course children especially, and with astounding regularity, were "sick", which was a particularly proactive way of feeling poorly. That always seemed to happen in the school hall during assembly, usually in the middle of prayers, when we were all tightly packed into rows according to class. There would be that familiar retching noise followed by a splat which immediately triggered the emergency response procedure involving a teacher strewing evil smelling crimson wood chippings over the mess on the highly polished parquet floor. The resulting stench was worse than the original product, but it must have magically prevented stains otherwise caused by generations of vomiting primary school children.

Probably the best part of the free school milk drinking ritual was poking the paper straw through the foil bottle top and hearing the "phwit" as it punctured the foil and was absorbed by the thick cream layer. One day we ran out of straws in my classroom and had to drink from the bottle. While this for the majority of children was a perfectly normal thing to do, for me it was an absolute no go.

My mother had lost her father to tuberculosis when she was nine, in the days before penicillin. He had been badly wounded in the trenches in Flanders during the first world war and his leg never really recovered. My mother spent much of her early childhood visiting her daddy in the sanatorium as he became too ill to be looked after at home. My Gran had made sure that all the cutlery and crockery were painstakingly kept apart to avoid contagion. My mother had grown up in as sterile an environment as was possible in a terraced house in Openshaw in the nineteen thirties. These habits were ingrained for her lifetime until they were mercilessly taken away from her in instalments by Alzheimer's disease.

As well as politely refusing when some mangled half chewed chocolate bar was being thrust under my nose with a "d'you want a bite?", I had learnt that you simply didn't drink from a bottle, so how could I possibly know how it worked? I remember feeling completely devastated and ashamed at not mastering this common skill but I felt too silly to admit it. Instead I burst into tears and after much guesswork on the part of my fellow extra milk drinking pupils - "Miss, she's crying" - and the teacher, I finally admitted the problem. It wasn't an issue to "borrow" a straw from the classroom next door, and that saved the day and my milk, but I felt stupid about it for a long time afterwards. I'm still not particularly good at drinking from a bottle, but I no longer burst into tears if there is no other option.

When we graduated from the Infants to the Juniors at the age of seven, our break time horizon was widened as we became acquainted with Biscuits. Every morning just before break time, trestle tables would be set up in the assembly hall, biscuit tins carried ceremoniously out of the classroom where they were stored and two of the fourth year pupils, the grown up eleven year olds, would take it in turns for a week at a time to "be on biscuits". This was a responsible job as we had to remember the price of each type of biscuit, do quick mental arithmetic, take the money, dole out the goods, give change and somehow control the rowdy mob of hungry schoolchildren pushing and shoving their way to the front, coins in their hands.

The cheapest biscuits were the rather boring Rich Tea. Dry as sawdust. They cost a halfpenny. That meant you could buy two for a penny, but who would want two Rich Teas? Then further up

the biscuit popularity scale were Royal Scot, a crumbly classic among biscuits whose smell can still manage to conjure up a memory of junior school – stuffy classrooms, hamster cages, chalk covered blackboards – and which cost one a penny, two for three ha'pence, the nightmare you hoped to avoid when it was your turn to be on biscuits. I always tried to stand behind the tins that didn't contain Royal Scot. Then there were bourbons and custard creams, familiar inhabitants of the family biscuit tin. The epitome of biscuit luxury was the individually wrapped McVitie's chocolate digestive, at threepence each. The milk chocolate ones had a thick blue silver foil wrapper, the plain chocolate ones were wrapped in red. It was well worth doing without three Rich Teas or even the odd bourbon for one of those.

For a short time I was recruited along with a classmate for filling up the biscuit tins. We had to check the stocks in the dedicated biscuit cupboard in our classroom, then go across the playground to another building where the big boxes were stored, and cart new supplies back to our classroom. This other building was in fact a prefab and it still housed two classrooms. There were many prefabs which had been intended as temporary accommodation at the end of the Second World War, but which continued to fulfil their purpose well into seventies, and some even longer, although they were only expected to last about ten years due to their primitive construction. All this stock taking and trundling backwards and forwards with boxes of biscuits took time, so it meant we got out of PE, which I thought was wonderful because I hated PE. I only remember the outdoor things like playing rounders and getting my thumb joint in the way of the ball. I didn't mind rounders, it was manageable, but all the other sporty things we did must have been so awful that they have been effaced from my memory forever.

Many thanks, once again, for such lovely and entertaining memories.

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And another welcome addition from Glyn Collin ... ***"I have put together the story of the embroidery that was given to me."***

### **EPIDEMIC**

Several years ago I was given a family heirloom by a relative for safe keeping, a piece of embroidery with wool on cotton. It is a memorial to three children who all died in January 1873, the children of my grandfather's aunt who all died in a scarlet fever epidemic.

The text reads :-

"In MEMORY OF Granville who died on the 19th instant aged 10 months and was interred at Greenacres Chapel on the 21st instant

Also Rhoda who died on the 26th instant aged 3 years and 9 months and was interred at the same place on the 28th instant

Also Mary Ann who died on the 28th instant aged 7 years and was interred this day at the same place

All the beloved children of Thos. & Ellen Rhodes of Spencer Street. Jany. 30th 1873.

These lovely buds so young and fair, called hence by early doom, just came to show how sweet these flowers in paradise could bloom, he took them in his arms and blessed them and said Suffer little children to come unto me, forbid them not for such is the kingdom of God

Sweet little flowers, their bloom is fled and they are mouldering with the dead, short was their stay with us below and loth we were to see them go."

**The Liverpool Courier in February 1873 reported ...** the quarterly mortality returns for Oldham, in the last December quarter, of 1898, showed that 372 were from scarlet fever.

**The Manchester Evening News on January 28th had reported on ...**The Prevalence of Fever in the Oldham District, and that the Government Inspector was sent to consult with

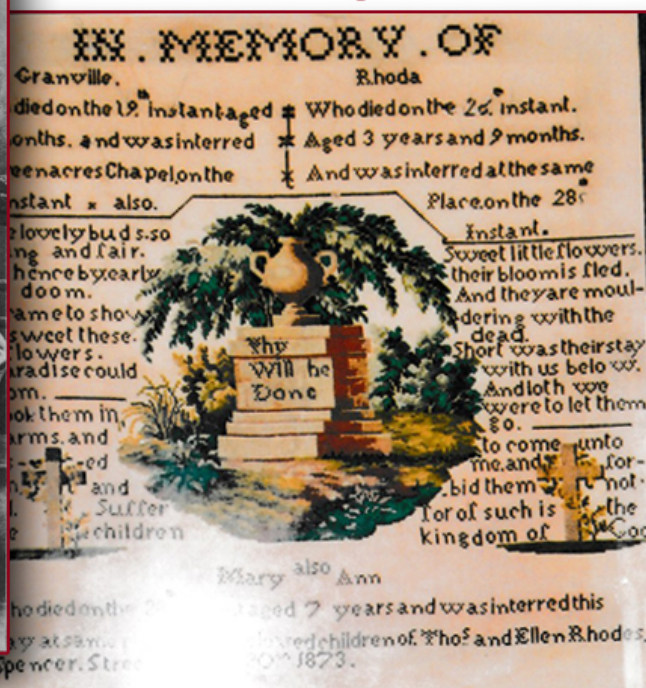
Oldham Town Council on the best way of checking the epidemic of scarlet fever in the Borough.

Today, death is hidden from view but in 1873 attitudes were very different, death was all around, all the time, and people took comfort in religion. Ellen Collin was born at Greenacres Moor on December 31st 1843, became a cotton reeler and married Thomas Rhodes in 1864. In 1873 after losing all 3 of her surviving children, her brother married on October 1st, her mother died on October 22nd and she gave birth to a daughter Rhoda Ann on October 31st; she later had a son Thomas in 1879. On January 2nd 1883 her husband who was manager of Cross Bank Mill hanged himself from a beam in the mill; the inquest found "Suicide through drink."

Ellen started a confectionary business at Werneth and later in 1897 took the licence of The Radcliffe Arms pub on Radcliffe Street. She fell foul of the law for selling beer out of hours and was charged with perjury; she fainted in the dock when a sentence of four months in prison was passed. After 16 years of widowhood she married a widower in 1899, Joseph Hall, a cotton ring overlooker but was widowed again in 1907 and later went to live with her son. She lived to the ripe old age of 85 and was buried with her husband and children at Greenacres Congregational Chapel in 1928.



*Ellen and her grandchildren  
at age 70*



## MLFHS FACEBOOK PAGE

**A short selection of entries from the MLFHS FACEBOOK PAGE [HERE](#) ...**

since the last newsletter :

\* Agricultural Labourers: Stepping Out From The Shadows  
[HERE](#)

\* A Genealogist's Guide to Archival Supplies

[HERE](#)

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\* Women's Land Army records go online... and other news from The National Archives

[HERE](#)

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\* Researching Black history in the 1921 Census

[HERE](#)

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\* 'These were babies, not numbers': New website documents deaths in mother and baby homes

[HERE](#)

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\* How to Use the Internet Archive for Genealogy

[HERE](#)

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\* When Heaton Park was the horse racing capital of the north

[HERE](#)

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\* Apprenticeship evidence from Stationers' wills, 1600–1641

[HERE](#)

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\* How to research ancestors who immigrated during the Irish Famine

[HERE](#)

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\* Patrick Colquhoun on the criminal code relating to capital offences in the UK compared with that which prevailed in Austria

[HERE](#)

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\* Manchester's Forgotten Burial Sites

[HERE](#)

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\* For many more, visit the MLFHS Facebook Page : [HERE](#)

And [HERE](#) is the link to the MLFHS Twitter page.

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**PETERLOO : the Bi-Centenary**



Visit the website for **The Peterloo Project** with particular reference to Oldham, people, accounts, life at the time and more ... at [Peterloo-Manchester](#)



Although the long-anticipated Bi-Centenary has come and gone, there are some Peterloo websites still active with history, news, photos and reports.

You can make searches on websites such as :

**Manchester Histories - Peterloo 1819** ... Manchester Histories have created a website which publicises all that is happening, or has happened, around the region.

Visit their website [HERE](#)

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## Need Help!

### Oldham Local Studies and Archives

#### Opening hours are as follows:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 10am-5pm; Tuesday 10am-2pm; Saturday 10am-4pm.

Although it will not be essential to book your place as has been the case previously, we encourage you to consider booking in advance as this enables us to get everything ready in time for your visit, particularly if you wish to view archives. To order archives please visit :

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/forms/form/891/en/local\\_archives\\_document\\_order\\_form](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/forms/form/891/en/local_archives_document_order_form)

If you wish to use PCs to access family history websites or to use microfilm readers, we advise you to book a place by contacting us at:

[archives@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:archives@oldham.gov.uk) or telephone 0161 770 4654.

#### Local Studies and Archives at 84 Union Street, Oldham, [OL1 1DN](#),

Archives are unique, original documents created in the course of everyday activities. Oldham's date from 1597 and cover an enormous range of subjects and activities :

- Hospital records
- Poor Law Union records
- Coroners Court records
- Local Authority records including Chadderton, Crompton, Failsworth, Lees, Oldham, Royton and Saddleworth
- Schools and education records
- Records for statutory bodies like the police force
- Church and religious records
- Business records
- Solicitors and estate agents records
- Trade unions and associations records
- Co-operative Society records
- Sports, entertainment and leisure records
- Personal, family and property records
- Society and Association records
- Records of Oldham communities

There is no charge to look at archival records although you would need to bring proof of your name and address (e.g. your driving licence) to do so.

Most archives can be produced immediately, with no advance booking required. However, some archives are stored off-site, in which case at least 2 days' notice is required in order to see them.

**Other archives may be closed due to their fragile condition, or because they contain confidential information.**

## [Oldham Council Heritage Collections](#)

There are regularly changing displays in the Local Studies Library.

[Opening hours](#) and contact details.

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### Website Links

#### Other Society Websites

Catholic Family History Society – [www.catholicfhs.co.uk](http://www.catholicfhs.co.uk)  
Cheshire Local History Association – [www.cheshirehistory.org.uk](http://www.cheshirehistory.org.uk)  
Chadderton Historical Society (archived website) – [www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk](http://www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk)  
Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society - <https://www.lfhhs.org.uk/home.php>  
Lancashire Local History Federation – [www.lancashirehistory.org](http://www.lancashirehistory.org)  
Liverpool and South West Lancashire FHS – [www.lswlfhs.org.uk](http://www.lswlfhs.org.uk)  
Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society – [www.mrias.co.uk](http://www.mrias.co.uk)  
Oldham Historical Research Group – [www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg](http://www.pixnet.co.uk/Oldham-hrg)  
Peterloo - [Peterloo-Manchester](#)  
Ranulf Higden Society (Latin transcription) - [Ranulf Higden Soc.](#)  
Royton Local History Society – [www.rlhs.co.uk](http://www.rlhs.co.uk)  
Saddleworth Historical Society – [www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk](http://www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk)  
Tameside Local History Forum - [www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk](http://www.tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk)  
Tameside Local & Family History - <http://tamesidefamilyhistory.co.uk/contents.htm>  
The Victorian Society - [Manchester Regional Website](#)

#### Some Useful Sites

GENUKI - [Lancashire](#)  
Free BMD - [Search](#)  
[National Library of Scotland](#) - Free to view, historic, zoomable maps of UK :  
1891 - Oldham and locality [HERE](#)  
Online Parish Clerk Project : Lancashire - [HERE](#)  
British Association for Local History - [HERE](#)  
and for their back issue journal downloads - [HERE](#)  
Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, website, [HERE](#)  
and for their back issue journal downloads, website, [HERE](#)  
Internet Archive ... The Internet Archive offers over **24,000,000** freely downloadable books and texts.  
[HERE](#) There is also a collection of 1.3 million modern eBooks that may be borrowed by anyone with a free archive.org account.  
Made in Greater Manchester (MIGM) [HERE](#) and Research guide [HERE](#)  
Historical Maps of parish boundaries [HERE](#)  
Regiments & Corps of the British Army (Wayback machine) [HERE](#)  
Special Collections on Find My Past [HERE](#)  
FmyP - The Manchester Collection [HERE](#)  
Goad fire insurance maps of Manchester [HERE](#)  
Cheshire Parish Register Project [HERE](#)



## Some Local Archives

Barnsley Museum & Discovery Centre – [www.experience-barnsley.com](http://www.experience-barnsley.com)

Birkenhead – [Local & Family History](#)

Bury – [www.bury.gov.uk/archives](http://www.bury.gov.uk/archives)

Chester - [Cheshire Archives & Local Studies](#) (linked from Discovery at the National Archives)

Derbyshire - [Local & Family History](#)

Leeds - [Leeds Local and Family History](#)

Liverpool Archives and Family History – <https://liverpool.gov.uk/archives>

Manchester - [Archives & Local History](#)

Oldham - [Local Studies & Archives](#)

Oldham - [Oldham Council Heritage Collections](#)

Preston – [www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives)

Stockport – [www.stockport.gov.uk/heritage-library-archives](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/heritage-library-archives)

Tameside Local Studies and Archives - <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/archives>

York – [www.york.ac.uk/borthwick](http://www.york.ac.uk/borthwick)



## For the Gallery

*From:*

***Manchester Streets & Manchester Men*** (2nd series)

by T. Swindells, pub. 1907

### **THE ANCIENT NAME OF PORTLAND STREET, A PLEASANT COUNTRY LANE.**

Long before Manchester became a populous town, and whilst yet the population clustered round about the Old Church and the Market Place, the thoroughfare known to us as Portland Street existed. In those days it was a portion of a winding country lane fringed on either side with fields, which were divided from the lane by hedges, in which grew the dogrose and many another wild flower. Garratt Lane was a favourite walk for the residents of the little community, and we have heard of lovers strolling under the shade of overhanging oak trees and listening to the songs of birds, meanwhile inhaling the country air fragrant with the scent of new-mown hay and honeysuckle. Even little more than a century ago, as De Quincey tells us, before the new Oxford Road was made, persons walking or riding from the town to the village of Rusholme or the country beyond, went by way of Garratt. Garratt Lane extended from what is now known as Piccadilly, then usually described as being near the "daub holes," along the line of Portland Street as far as the present Princess Street, where it turned sharply to the left. Near to Shooter's Brook it passed the old

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black and white hall from which it derived its name. Past the hall it bore somewhat to the right. and near to Clifford Street it turned slightly to the left. When the new Oxford Road. was made it formed a direct communication between this portion of the old lane and Deansgate. This will serve to give some idea of the appearance of our street long before the days of warehouses and electric trams.



### **GARRATT HALL**

As I have stated that the former name was Garratt Lane it will be of interest to say something about the building from which the name originated. Garratt Hall was a picturesque black and white mansion whose numerous gables and tall chimneys gave it a delightful appearance, contrasting very much with the buildings now to be found thereabouts. A small but interesting portion of the old hall still remains. It was, in the fourteenth century, the seat of a branch of the Trafford family, and in the reign of Henry VII was occupied by George Trafford and his wife Margaret. These were evidently benefactors in some way to the Manchester Grammar School, for in the statutes appended to the foundation charter is found the direction that the scholars should daily say the Litany together with the responses and supplications following "for the sawles of George Traford of the Garret and Margaret his wif, them and them next imydiate insuying, when and what tyme it shall please God Almighty, of his mcy and gce, to call for the said George and Margaret, or author of them." Truly a quaint, if somewhat

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incorrectly spelled, instruction for the offering of prayers after the death of either person. The line of the Traffords of Garratt was broken by the death of Ralph which took place about 1555. The court leet in 1559 declared a number of persons to be his heirs. One of these was Gilbert Gerard who appears to have succeeded to the Garratt estate. In 1596 it was sold by Thomas Gerard to Oswald Mosley who died in 1622. His son, Samuel, sold it to Ralph Hough in 1631.

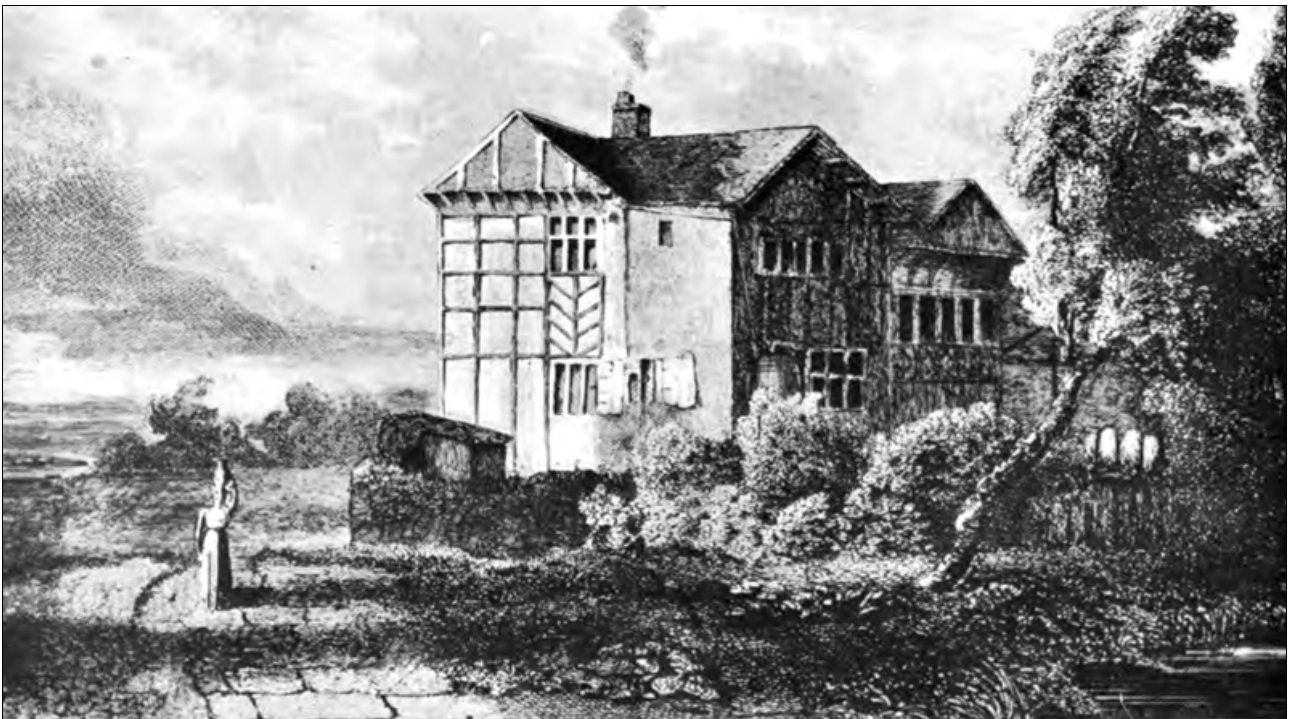
### **THE ROMANCE OF GARRATT HALL**

In *Household Words* for June 7, 1851, there is narrated a curious story concerning the mysterious disappearance in the first half of the eighteenth century of the then owner oi Garratt

Hall. The owner married when very young, and lived for some time in quiet contentment at Garratt. A journey to London, was in those days, a serious undertaking, and having been called thither by business, he wrote home immediately upon his arrival in the city. After writing this letter he appears to have been lost. He never again wrote home, and his wife (or widow) in ignorance of his fate devoted herself to the education and training of her children. Years passed over, and at length the eldest son came of age, and it became necessary to obtain possession of certain deeds and other family documents of which all trace had been lost. A carefully worded advertisement was inserted in certain London newspapers, but for a long time no response was received. At length a mysterious answer came to hand, and in accordance with the conditions laid down in it, the heir proceeded

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to London. At a certain house in Barbican he was told that he must submit to being blindfolded before proceeding further. This being done, he was placed in a sedan chair, carried some distance, and after many turnings was put down. When the bandage was removed he found himself in a decently furnished sitting-room, and face to face with a middle-aged man who required him to take an oath of secrecy. The stranger then confessed himself as being the missing husband and father. He told the story how, passing as a bachelor, he fell in love with a daughter of the person in whose house he lodged. In a very short time he proposed marriage, and, abandoning all idea of returning to his rightful wife and estates, ultimately became the son-in-law and junior partner of a London shopkeeper. He handed over the documents, inquired as to his former wife, expressed approval of her training of the children, and promised that when he died a message should be sent to Garratt. With this the son's eyes were again bandaged, and in course of time he found himself back in Barbican. Many years afterwards the promised message was received, and the son legally succeeded to the estates so abandoned in this remarkable manner by his father. Such is the romance of the old hall at Garratt.



GARRATT HALL,  
*From Painting by PHILLIPS about 1820.*

The Court Leet records contain several references to the old lane. The archery butts were situated there but in spite of the persistent action of the court, the practise of artillery, as it was formerly called, fell gradually into disuse. Another entry in the records, under date 1681 gives us another side glance on the

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customs of the period. It appears that one James Cheetham, in building a cottage, had encroached in some way upon the town's privileges. He was ordered to remove the obstruction in the course of the next two months, and if he failed to do so the burgesses should be at liberty to pull down the cottage if they thought fit. They seem to have had a curious way of doing things in those days, and one wonders what would be the state of affairs today if our City Council acted upon the same lines. One section of the community - the hooligans - might certainly have a good time.

#### THE DECAY OF THE HALL.

A century ago the period of decadence had set in and the hall was divided into a number of tenements, and a few years later the announcement "Garrett Hall Academy" intimated that the members of the rising generation might be instructed in the mysteries of the three R's. The fields were being gradually covered with buildings, the gardens had disappeared, as also had the fishponds which at one time had formed an attractive feature of the grounds. The latter were for some time remembered in the street name of Fishpond Street, which was afterwards changed to Leamington Place, but when the alterations consequent upon the making of Whitworth Street were carried out, all trace of the street disappeared. A century ago the cottages in Fishpond Street were very pleasantly situated. Facing towards the town, long gardens extended in front of them, whilst from the back window the outlook was over the fields that fringed both sides of the brook;

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and a little distance away was the hall, still retaining much of its picturesqueness. The cottages were four in number, and close by the end one was the pump from which the cottagers obtained their water. In summertime the gardens were gay with many of the flowers so popular with our grandfathers. As a child my grandmother lived there, and she often told me in later years how many of the residents of Ancoats would find their way there by the footpath that ran along the bank of the brook, and would purchase salads and bunches of flowers on fine Sunday mornings; and this was confirmed by James Lamb, the furnisher, who said that he had often visited the gardens, when living in Bridge Street, Deansgate. It requires a stretch of the imagination to realise that this state of things existed so near to the Technical School only a century ago. On the opposite side of Garratt Lane, near to the hall, a row of cottages was built which was known as Salt Pie Row. About 1815 Hunt Street was laid out. The canal was opened in 1804, and very soon afterwards the Union Corn Mill was built on its banks. The name of Garratt Lane had been replaced by Portland Street, David Street, and Brook Street, although only few buildings had been erected in the two latter named streets. During the next twenty years the changes were many, and in 1840 little front land remained unbuilt upon, although between David Street and London Road the Granby Row fields were frequently used by the Chartists for the purpose of holding political meetings.

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From :

#### ***A History of Everyday Things in England (1066 - 1499)***

written and illustrated by Marjorie and Charles Henry Bourne Quennell  
published 1918

Very little is known of early puppet shows, but that there were such things is proved by reference to the illustrations in old manuscripts. In Cervantes' tale of *Don Quixote* written at the end of the sixteenth century, there is an account of a puppet show, in which was enacted the tale of a Spanish knight who rescued his lady from the Moors. Many puppets would appear to



have been manipulated in these scenes, and the book speaks of the showman behind, working the little figures, while a boy stood in front pointing with a wand to each puppet as he told the tale.

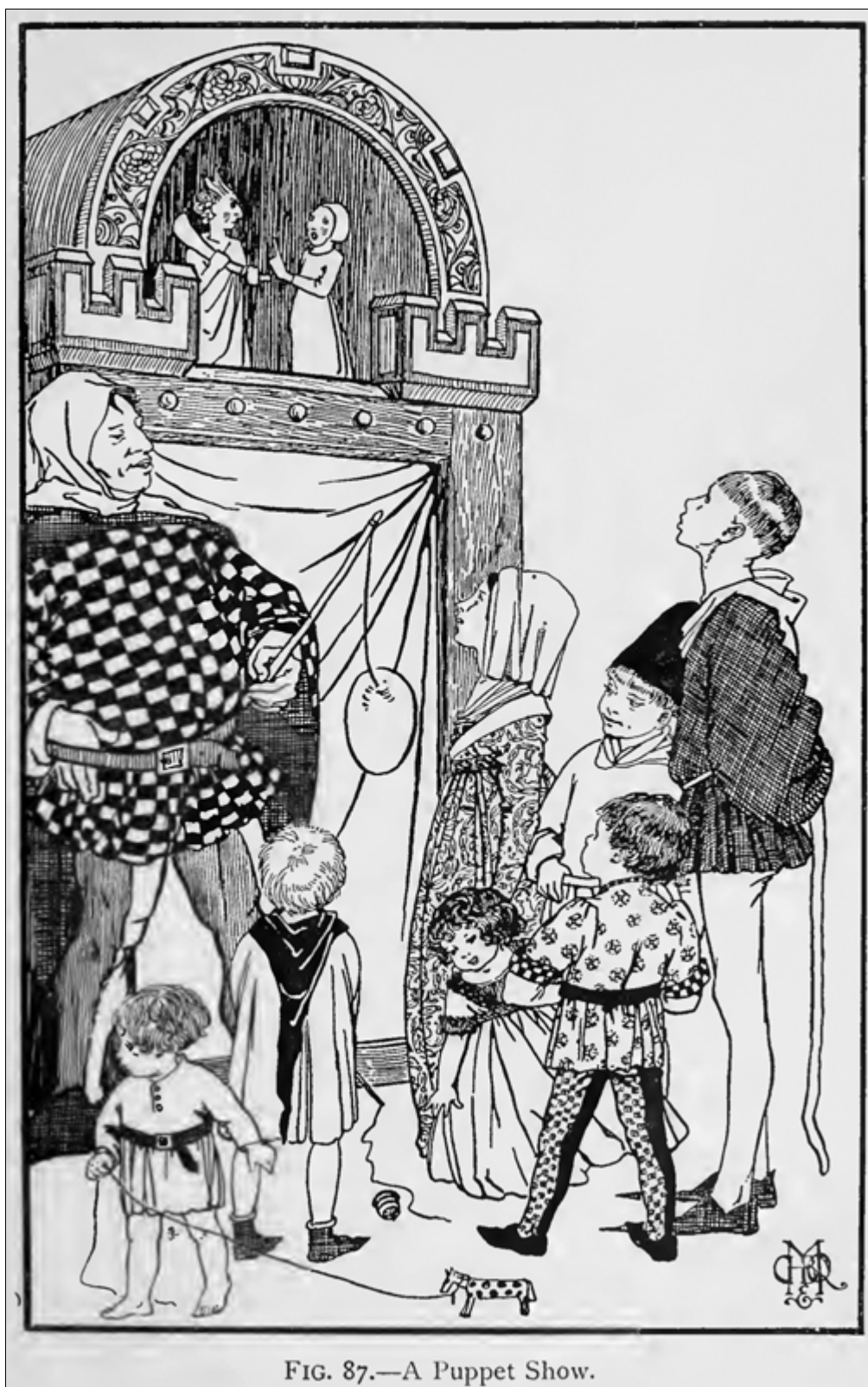
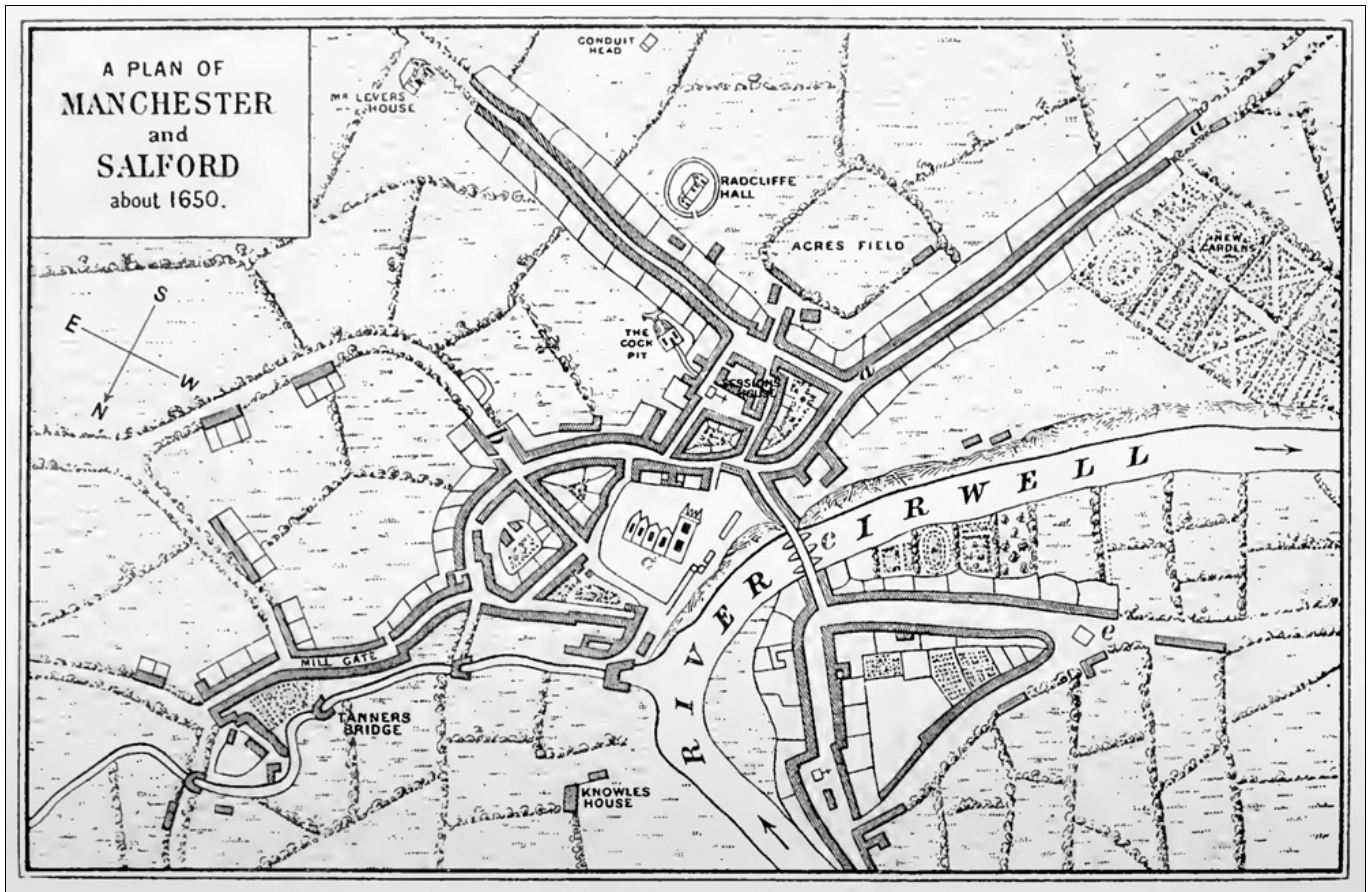


FIG. 87.—A Puppet Show.

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***The Great Civil War in Lancashire (1642 - 1651)***

by Ernest Broxap, pub. 1910



***A Plan of Manchester & Salford, about 1650***

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