CHAPTER XII.

Appointment of Mr. Fleetwood—Gambling—Early Marriages and frequent Divorces—Midwives—John Woolton, Wigan Author—Books—Fleetwood and Irish Affairs—Bull-baiting, &c.—Purring—Superstition—Wrestling—Tinkers—A Wigan Vet.—Shuttleworth's Accounts—Fleetwood and Social Immorality and Ungodliness—Witches—Francis Sherrington—William Banks—Fleetwood more Fierce than ever—Lord Derby—New Local Law—The Commissioners—Derby's Seminary, Bell—Fleetwood's Letters to the Lord Treasurer—Lord Derby's Letters—Parish Register—Leland's Account of Wigan—Printing Press Destroyed—Fanaticism of Lord Derby—Arms on the Windows of the Parish Church in the 17th Century—Quakers—Miles Gerard—Jesuits—Libel on Fleetwood—Wigan Longevity and Population.

IN the last year of the reign of the unlamented Mary and the first of time-honoured Elizabeth, Thomas Stanley was made Rector of Wigan on the presentation of John Fleetwood and Peter Farington, patrons for that turn, on the grant of Sir Thomas Langeton, knight. He must have been an old man when appointed, for he was Bishop of Sodor and Man in 1510, of which office he was deprived (although re-appointed to it in 1556) in the third year of Queen Mary. In 1559-60 he sued the Corporation of Wigan respecting Courts, and as Bishop of Man and Parson of Wigan he sued William Gerard respecting tithes of Ince and Hindley. Having been rector for 13 years, he resigned, and the celebrated zealot, Edward Fleetwood, was appointed in his place. The young Mr. Fleetwood had not a brilliant prospect before him, unless, indeed, the boundless labour of toiling, and carrying on constant war against an enemy only visible in his deeds of immorality, be considered such a prospect. Like all well-intentioned youth, he was full of an admirable Christian zeal, the Calvinistic principles of which were unsoftened by the conviction that it is human to err. He had avowedly entered on a great spiritual war in his parish of Wigan, determined neither to give nor to ask for quarter. He had studied well from books the theory of existence, but knew little of the practical world or the battle of life. He determined to make no allowances for deficiency of

education, prejudices, force of circumstances, habits or customs. By his beliefs in the Liturgy he drew the hard and fast line between English Episcopacy and non-Christianity. He had chosen or was chosen to be the servant of the Church, and he was conscientiously determined to be a faithful one. He was fixed to his principles and determined in his actions, as if his motto were that of St. Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." With what unutterable anguish must his young soul have lamented over the corruption, immorality, and infidelity of Wigan. The town must have seemed to him entirely given up to iniquity. As his range of experience widened his tendency to sympathise with the frailties of human nature contracted, and he became more hardened against sin and sinners, until, believing himself wrapped in the whole armour of Christianity, he set himself to uproot every symptom of evil. Little was appreciated in Wigan by his pious mind, so he stedfastly determined to oppose and overwhelm all opposition. Prejudice and zeal were linked in him: heretics were an abomination to him, deserving nothing short of destruction: time-servers and unbelievers were unconvertible brands, who could not be too soon hurried from the face of the earth to their inevitable doom: compromise was no part of his stern creed, and to forgive was but to palter with wickedness. Such were the firmly-fixed and bigoted principles of the young rector, who, on the resignation of the Bishop of Sodor and Man, was instituted on the 8th February, 1571, and held the living for 33 years.

Gambling was a notorious public-house amusement, and, as there was no Act compelling the closing of taverns, the players, eager to win, often drank and gambled all night, whilst the host or hostess, with rubicund face, looked on the winner with patronising airs, ever anxious to bring the requisite one gallon more to fill the empty horn tankards. This was the fashionable pleasure of young and old, rich and poor. Burgesses and apprentices had their particular houses of call, and the natural consequence was that burgesses became bankrupts, apprentices drunken thieves, and landlords flourishing proprietors. This was the first great enemy that Mr. Fleetwood had to contend against. It was a giant foe, but, he believed, quite amenable to his spiritual abilities. The growing demoralisation in the town was very marked. Cheating, swearing, lying, discontent, drunkenness, and want of principle were the acknowledged habits of gamblers. So great did the social evil become, and so well did Mr. Fleetwood expose it, that a law was passed forbidding gaming, and commanding servants and apprentices to be home not later than nine o'clock in the summer evenings and eight o'clock in the winter.

At this period a scandalous system of early marriages prevailed, productive of the life-long suffering of unhappy couples, or short misery and divorce. Among the rich matrimony was looked upon as a mere market for buying, selling, or preserving

properties and estates. To be marriageable is often, in the present age, simply to be considered marketable, but at this period boys and girls were married long before they could reasonably be considered marriageable. Mere children were married to cousins simply to preserve the name and keep estates and money in the family. The children had no idea of the relationships they formed, and generally discovered, when too late, they were indissolubly joined to persons, excellent and virtuous, but altogether unfitted to be their life-long companions. When they grew up to years of discernment and discretion, and met others more like the ideals of their hearts, the spirit of discontent and misery was immediately fostered, and led in all cases where it could be afforded to a mutual divorcement, after which the severed couples generally again wed according to their wishes. There were very few families of property in which there was not one example of those who, being knit together by the bonds of holy matrimony, were mutually separated by divorce. Of course, Wigan was in the fashion both in the marriage market and the divorce court. Mr. Barlow, the member of Parliament for Wigan from 1547 to 1557, had a nameson, who, when quite a lad, was married—that is, went through the marriage ceremony as if taking part in a dumb-show performance—to Elizabeth Belfeld, to whom a large share of her father's extensive possessions belonged; but in years of discretion he fell in love with Mary Brereton, the daughter of a knight, and, as was not unreasonable, young Mrs. Barlow fell in love with Mr. Edward Assheton, M.A., Rector of Middleton. They both afterwards married their ideal choice, but there was first of all the miserable boy and girl man-and-wife life, for Master Barlow was but a lad and Miss Brereton only seven years of age when led to the Wigan altar. The divorce was obtained in 1574, when Mr. Barlow repudiated all knowledge of the marriage ceremony, and declared that he never remembered having even spoken the words of matrimony to his wife. She, in giving her evidence, was not anxious to prove the legality or knowledge of the ceremony, yet guilelessly admitted that she had sent her betrothed a gilt book, and that he had sent her a knife, which she faithfully wore at her girdle. So prevalent and scandalous were these mercantile marriages and natural divorces that such immorality grew as to cause to be issued the homily against adultery.—(Stanley Papers, part II., notes, p. 211).

The members for Wigan during the fourth Parliament of Elizabeth (1572-1583) were Edward Fitton and Edward Elrington. Fitton was the eldest son of Edward Fitton, of Gawsworth, Cheshire, whom he succeeded in 1579. He sat for Borough Bridge in 1588, was afterwards knighted, and died in 1606. His eldest son was created a baronet in 1617, but the title died out in 1643. Elrington was the son of Edward Elrington, Treasurer of the Navy to Henry VIII. He was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to Queen Elizabeth.

At this time midwives were licensed by the bishop of the diocese upon condition that they attended "any woman labouring of child, being married, and professing the reformed faith, whether the wife of a minister or otherwise." Neglect or inattention would forfeit their licence. Women are generally more superstitious than men, but the superstition in chirurgical matters in the neighbourhood of Wigan was extraordinary. For a common and yet extraordinary example of this superstition, see the note on page 154 of the second part of the Stanley Papers.

From the year 1580 a new and important source of information in connection with the history of Wigan is obtained from the registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials, which are preserved from that date. They speak like living and welcome witnesses about an age long passed away. It has hitherto been considered that the oldest register of the Parish Church only dated from the Restoration of the Stuarts, but another royal 8vo., strongly-bound, volume has been discovered by the present rector (the Hon. and Rev. Canon Bridgeman) at Weston-under-Lizard, in Staffordshire. The registers in it of christenings and burials date from November, 1580, and the registration of marriages from 1594. It is presumed the list was accidentally conveyed to Weston-under-Lizard in 1750 with the effects of Dr. Roger Bridgeman after his death. Like an old witness risen from oblivion, this volume silently tells its tale in hieroglyphics traced with trembling hands. It is in a remarkably good state of preservation, and, although it is impossible to read it in the few places where age or misadventure has obliterated or disfigured it, yet, upon the whole, the writing is very legible. The register is a parchment book, but the churchwardens' accounts are in paper ledgers, the latter being only preserved from the memorable year of 1651. The first four existing baptismal registers of 1580 are :—

"November 21 Rauffe Snarte f. James S. de Wigan.
22 Thomas higham f. Thomas Higham de
24 Richard harte f. Tho. h. de houghto'.
December 4 Margaret fforde. f. James ff. de Scowles."

The first extant christening of twins (?) in the Parish Church is dated the 11th of December of this year, when William and John Croichloe f. Gefferie C. d Wigan were baptised. From March to December of 1580 inclusive there are entered in the parish register 98 baptisms and 60 burials. The first extant registered marriage is that of Rauffe Wood to Agnes Brownlow on November 10th, 1594. According to this register there were only 24 couples married in 1594, and in 1595 only 13 couples. In specially large and distinct writing, apparently that of the rector, Mr. Fleetwood, himself, is entered the registration of the baptism of *Theodore Fleetwoode*, and two years afterwards, 29th March, 1593, in the same bold handwriting, *Christian ffleetwoode*. Mr. Fleetwood was then in the 63rd year of his age. From the entries in these registers I have made the following calculation of

the approximate population of Wigan at the end of the sixteenth century. I have taken all the numbers on which the calculation is based directly from the register at the Parish Church.

Sanitary laws have been adopted and enforced in towns with the intention of reducing the rate of mortality, and statistics prove that the design has been a success. There are now fewer deaths in proportion to the population than formerly, and those who live attain a higher average age than our pre-sanitary ancestors. Statistics prove a great deal more than this. They clearly show that in suburban or rural towns the death-rate is far less than that of large manufacturing places. Medical evidence and statistics together prove that there are many fatal diseases altogether new to the medical profession, and also that there are fatal diseases peculiar to, and common in, manufacturing towns. In calculating the population of Wigan at the end of the sixteenth century these facts must be taken into consideration. The present exact rate of mortality of the town is known. It is now a large manufacturing and mining district frequented by fatal diseases which were altogether unknown in the sixteenth century, when it was but a rural town. Moreover the present death-rate would be four or five less per thousand but for one over-crowded district (Scholes), where children are not so well cared for as they might be, and where the infant death-rate is consequently very great. There is, therefore, the want of sanitation on the one hand and over-crowding and new diseases on the other to affect the calculation of population, and moreover the open air labours of the sixteenth century against the indoor close confinement of the nineteenth. As my present calculation is entirely based on the death-rate, I shall give the results at four different rates of 20, 25, 30, and 40 per thousand. The average death-rate throughout England then I accept as 25 out of every thousand, although I will take 20 as the basis for obtaining the maximum population of Wigan.

No. of Deaths in	At a Death-rate of 20 per 1000 gives a Population of	At a Death-rate of 25 per 1000 gives a Population of	At a Death-rate of 30 per 1000 gives a Population of	At a Death-rate of 40 per 1000 gives a Population of
1580 was 90	4,500	3,600	3,000	2,250
1582 ,, 30	1,500	1,200	1,000	750
1583 ,, 56	2,800	2,640	1,866	1,400
1584 ,, 84	4,200	3,360	2,800	2,100
1585 ,, 114	5,700	4,560	3,800	2,850
1586 ,, 89	4,400	3,960	2,966	2,225
1587 ,, 132	6,600	5,280	4,400	4,400
1597 ,, 138	6,900	5,520	4,600	4,450
1598 ,, 98	4,900	3,920	3,266	2,450
1599 ,, 100	5,000	4,000	3,333	2,500
	46,500	38,040	31,033	25,375
Average population for ten years	4,650	3,804	3,103	2,537

Sixty years after this period the population of Manchester was five thousand, located in ten streets, and one hundred years before this the population of Wigan was two thousand six hundred, being one thousand less than the population of Ormskirk. I consider the population of Wigan at the end of the sixteenth century might justly be stated as being between three and four thousand. Not a few cases of longevity in Wigan have been authentically recorded which tend to prove that the death-rate of the town was by no means high. Mr. Husan, of Wigan, died in 1778, aged one hundred and nine years; Mr. Wickstead, of Wigan, died in 1763, aged one hundred and eight years; Mrs. Wygan, of Wigan, died in 1806, aged ninety-four years, and left more than two hundred descendants.—(See Bailey's Records of Longevity). There are more wonderful instances of longevity than these, for, notwithstanding the great benefits and advantages derived from coal and steam, they seem to have poisoned the Lancashire air in the neighbourhood of Wigan. Almost the first thing in the neighbourhood that attracts the attention is the stunted stumps of trees. There are no ancient oaks remaining to tell by the rings on their distorted trunks that they were reverently planted by the Druids. There are no wide-spreading chestnuts to cheer the townsman with a gay floral display in spring. There are neither old fir trees, nor beeches with heads towering above their sylvan fellows, nor hawthorns of the olden times, from which the milk-maids plucked their May. They are all comparatively young, and, where unsheltered, sickly, dying, or dead. But it was not always so. The tender leaves, which are the lungs of plants, inhaled no such poison three centuries ago as now floats in the air. Vast forests were the habitat of wild animals, and extensive plains, like small American prairies, were the abode of oxen of a far superior breed to any found in Spain. The inhabitants of the town, too, were not like many of those now cooped up in unhealthy "yards" after the daily labour of the mill. The air, we are told, was subtile and piercing, not troubled with gross vapours or foggy mists, and consequently the inhabitants presented every appearance of a hardy and healthy race. Then Wigan was famed, not as having the highest birth and death-rate, but as having long-lived and healthy inhabitants, who were not subject to strange and unknown diseases. Examples and statistics of a rude sort prove the truth of this. Before registers were kept there were many centenarians, but since they came into vogue the inhabitants have been content to throw off their mortal coil at the modest age of three score and ten. Notwithstanding this, it is written in the annals of Wigan, as a fact, that one, Fairbrother by name, died at Wigan in the 138th year of his age (1770). At the time of his death the youngest of his four sons was 104 years old. Old Fairbrother was a cooper, and it would be interesting to know whether he abstained from tasting the prospective contents of the barrels he made, or whether he joined in the evil habit of fashionable intemperance to excess, and so prolonged his days.

Homely were the manners and customs of the Wigan burghal aristocracy of the sixteenth century, and yet no one had any difficulty in drawing the distinguishing line between superiors and inferiors. Though hard labourers themselves, they were far above toiling servitude and far below luxurious lords. Each sedulously attended to his own business, like a well-to-do settler in a new country, such as those now in the British Colonies or the United States, although they certainly did not work so very hard, for the great object of life then was not, as now, to amass wealth, but simply to gain enough to produce what was then considered a maximum of happiness, although that now would only be the minimum of misery. They had their special suit of clothes for Sundays and holidays, their work-a-day garbs, and that was usually the extent of their wardrobe. Luxuries, according to the modern idea, were unknown. A quiet and jovial drink at the chief room of the tavern was a social necessity; such social gatherings were really the only means of self-culture. There interesting news, often very old, and local topics were so frequently discussed that the majority of old men generally knew every detail of every local gossip, and were in themselves living local histories. These were harvest times for the Wigan attorneys. Many old deeds are extant which were then drawn up in the town, and yet writing was an accomplishment common only to a very few. In searching over the old registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials, I found the writing in most cases—where not actually damaged or defaced—exceedingly legible, and in some cases artistic and beautiful. But who wrote these pages? In all likelihood it was the clergyman himself. Every page is signed by the curate, and witnessed by the two churchwardens. For many years the curate was Mr. Thompson, who signs himself "Thompson, minister." Every page is witnessed by two churchwardens, but, alas! not one can write his own name, but all make their mark with hieroglyphics that would not seem out of place on a Ninevite slab. The most artistic and most general mark bears a remote likeness to a very rude target with three supports, being perhaps a simple object most familiar to them. But the century is saved from scholastic disgrace, for one churchwarden, William Lamb, succeeds in making, apparently with extraordinary effort and no small pride, marks that can be deciphered as his name. This he first does in the year 1600. Every year he writes his name more and more legibly, as if practising to gain perfection, although at the best it is still so bad as to be sufficient circumstantial evidence to prove that the words are the only two he can write. From the beginning of the next century every churchwarden signs his name.

Mr. Fleetwood proved himself a most zealous supporter of the Crown and Church, and the Crown was not forgetful of him in its time of need. Ireland was a strong Roman Catholic country, and from thence the Pope, determined not to lose England

without a struggle, prepared to attack England, and there his supporters landed in great force. The living of Fleetwood was a rich one, and he was well able to afford great support to the Government in worldly substance, as he had proved himself so strong with his spiritual grace. He was one of three Lancashire clergymen called upon to fit out a Light Horseman by the 20th October, 1580, for the queen's service in Ireland, and, moreover, if he neglected to do so—so ran the royal order—he was to "give an account for his forgetting himself." The expense of this outfit was estimated at not less than £25, being a very large amount for those days.—(Peck's Desid. Cur., vol. I., p. 95, and Stanley Papers, part II., pp. 132 and 146). He held a very humble opinion of the ways of the world in general, and of Wigan in particular. He acted as if he believed he had in his borough a religious-charnel house to clean out. The inhabitants were mostly composed of two parties, holding extreme views from him—the Puritans, who abhorred his frankincense of resin-pitch and brimstone, then constantly used at the Parish Church, and the Papists, who were to him heretics, and brands whom he had no wish to pluck from the fire, but rather was wishful to hasten them thither. With such a religious mixture the county was inundated from Holland after the death of Mary. As many as 600 recusants were presented at one time at the Lancaster Assize Court. Fleetwood was horrified to find that Sundays were holidays when churches were empty. The Parish Church bells only rang to gather the people to their debased and debasing sports. The priests in the county generally were not distinguished scholars and the people ignorant, and wise Jesuits were furtively training the masses in the papal doctrines. The Wiganers gave Fleetwood no help or encouragement in capturing heretics, but rather connived at their escape. The justices themselves did not summon "all parsons, vicars, curates, churchwardens, and sworn men, and examine them on oath how the statutes of 1st and 23rd Elizabeth are obeyed." Yea, even the "coroners and justices and their families do not frequent church, and many have not communicated at the Lord's Supper since the beginning of her Majesty's reign." Drunkenness, gambling, and sports took the place of all ecclesiastical services, and immorality, according to Mr. Fleetwood's belief, recklessly ruled. Some of the enormities of local wickedness were harmless pleasures in the opinion of many, but with him all that savoured of worldliness were the works and devices of Belial for ensnaring the souls of men.

Bull-baiting was a common source of amusement in the principal towns in England, and, although not specially recorded, was doubtless a source of rare sport on the meadows or school-common of Wigan. Bear-baiting was a great national sport, patronised by Royalty. The Master of the Bears was an office held under the Crown at a salary of sixteen pence a day. The Queen was entertained at a bear-baiting exhibition at Hatfield, and expressed great entertainment and

pleasure at the sight, and that in her 67th year. Cock-fighting certainly was common, and that up to a very recent date, for even colliers in modern "good times" kept their game cocks for Sunday and play Monday sports, when bets of generally a week's wages were laid on either the one side or the other. In these times also hounds of the best breeds were kept, and received better treatment often than the wives of the owners. Bull dogs of the most ferocious types were the pets of the family, and their battles with other dogs or tussles with rats were the only interesting subjects of conversation. Then, too, were pigeons household gods, whose flights were known to a second.

At tournaments single combat was the greatest attraction, as it forms also the most interesting chapter on narratives of the battle field; but a strange system of single combat called "up and down" fighting began to be prevalent in Wigan, and was more brutal than a fixed fight between a man and a wild animal, and yet it drew crowds of wondering admirers. It was a mutual agreement, for some fixed bet, between two men to strike with fists or feet any part of the body, whether standing, lying, or rolling about. Heavy wooden clogs with iron toe points and large horny hands dealt the blows. Biting, although not forbidden, was considered unmanly. As recently as 1876, in the field at Rylands' mill, the writer witnessed a purring match between two sturdy fellows which was a mere repetition of what was frequent in the 18th century. The combatants were two young colliers, who, ready to begin, stood a few yards apart, with their eyes fixed, and teeth set like two enraged bull-dogs. They rushed at each other, wrestled, and fell, whilst from 20 to 30 onlookers, forming a ring, encouraged each his favourite. Long they struggled, each in turn holding the other down on the ground with his hands whilst kicking with his clogs. In half an hour not a shred of clothing was left on their bodies. Shirts and trousers lay in shreds, like the feathers of two infuriated and unbeaten game-cocks. But the sharp-toed clogs were still there, and still the men clutched each other's flesh—the hair being cropped close—wrestled, kicked, and growled, till at last one, pressing the other down with dreadful advantage, drove his right foot into the other's skull, and won the battle, for the foe lay senseless on the ground. The victor rose and wept, but he wept not because he had half-killed his "friend," but because, as he said, "I have fought seventeen battles, and never was bitten before." After a while the victim recovered, wrapt himself in his rags, and slunk away without saying a word. The contest was for a pair of new clogs, which the victor claimed and carried away. To such an extent were these brutal contests, or purring matches, carried that at almost every assize in Lancashire cases of murder and manslaughter were tried. On the conviction of manslaughter from kicking many judges sentenced the prisoners to be burned in the hand, which punishment was not abolished till the third year of George IV. (1823).

Wrestling in Lancashire has always been a popular and manly sport, but the Wigan style is of a peculiar nature, and exists to this day. It is much to the advantage of wrestlers to get a "grip" of the opponents, and to avoid this it is customary in the north to wear, as at football, a close-fitting jersey jacket. But the purchase of a jersey incurs expense, and this the lower order of Wiganers avoid by practising in a nude state, with the exception of a scanty bathing costume—nothing more than wrestling drawers. I have frequently witnessed (1881) such contests in a field on the banks of the Douglas, in the presence of a group of admiring friends of the rivals. Races in such costumes were not unusual during the last century. The frequency of these contests in the county gave rise to the following riddle :—

"As I was going over Rooley Moor, Rooley Moor shaked,
I saw four-and-twenty men running stark nak'd ;
The first was the last, and the last was the first."

For the benefit of those who are not good at guessing the answers to riddles, it may be said that the answer to this is—the 24 naked spokes of a wheel.

Ignorance fosters superstition. The superstitious beliefs of Wigan, in common with other Lancashire places, show that its education was at a very low ebb. Every peculiar phenomenon of nature that was not understood was believed to be supernatural. The most common beliefs were those of the powers of witches, and the assuming of some natural shape by the Evil One, and that always with the mere intention of surreptitiously purchasing souls. His Satanic majesty feasted on souls, according to the popular beliefs of the period, as the Lancashire giant, Tarquin, breakfasted on babies. He appeared as a man or a beast, as best suited his design, and gave estates or money, according to the value of his purchase. If anyone harboured an ardent wish for power or influence, the insinuating Devil would grant it by purchase ; or if any young woman wished for a lord, she was sure, at least, to get a yeoman, but this only on the consideration that, at a fixed hour and day, his covenanters should be his, and when the bargain was once made it was irrevocable. On similar conditions he granted marvellous powers to witches, who were not always wizened hags, but sometimes young women of such prepossessing appearance that even yeomen and lords could not resist their fascinations, but were wooed, won, and wed by them. Such witches could enslave and harass their enemies, and bring dreadful murrains on land and cattle. Distance was no obstacle to them, for with their magic wands they could summon ships in which to sail over seas or mount their broomsticks and ride through the air ; but when they were once caught, they were as helpless as Samson with his shorn locks.

As there are many words which, in the sixteenth century, had quite a different meaning from what they have now, so there were some important trades then

which are now insignificant, and even considered despicable. The tinkers, for instance, to which honest calling the great John Bunyan belonged, were not, as now, the coarse, quasi-gipsy class, who go about helping themselves at farm-houses, getting drunk in the town, and reading fortunes in the suburbs, but comparatively well-to-do travelling tradesmen, who mended tinware and chairs, and were generally useful in repairing. They had no fixed place of abode, but, when they had exhausted the work of a town or village, wandered from one country-house to another, where they were hospitably received as superior beggars, and paid liberally for their small jobs. In the accounts of the Shuttleworths of Smithals and Gawthorpe, by their steward, and whose diary, by the way, is an excellent index of current prices, it is found that a tinker's charge for mending a dripping-pan was one penny, which was a large sum when one considers that in the same month a quarter of mutton cost seventeen pennies. Then, by the account of this steward, who was a well-to-do farmer, on his special visit to Wigan at the beast fair of St. Luke's, in October, he, with his natural liberality, spent with three old friends he met there the extravagant sum of sevenpence. According to his interesting diary, the mending of his kettle by a tinker cost him one penny, and the killing and dressing of a cow threepence, and again five days of hard labour at pulling up weeds in the garden cost him sixpence, and in the same month he treated three men to dinner, which cost him elevenpence. These are expenditures noted in his diary as with a feeling of regretful remorse for his unbridled extravagance.

Wigan was a great horse fair, and horse-dealers then were even less honest than they are now. It was no unusual thing to buy a horse at one end of the market at a low rate, clip and otherwise disguise him, and then to re-sell him, as another horse, to his previous owner at the other end of the fair. The horse doctor of Wigan had a thriving trade. He was consulted specially on the market days by suspicious buyers, and bribed by confident dealers, as well as pecuniarily applied to by local breeders. Robert Markland was the Wigan Vet., and for medicines and treatment his charges were as low as fivepence for a perfect cure, and as high as fifteen pence. A dozen hempen halters cost one and tenpence, and the market price of four bridles, breast-plates, and bits was six and sevenpence, a bridle bit alone costing fivepence. Another curious fact was that "Two boards to mend a gutter between two houses at Lastoke cost one shilling," being half the price of a waistcoat. At the Wigan Market on Ascension Eve the current price of a heifer was 30s. 6d. and an ox 51s. 11d., while a month's fodder for a horse cost 1s. 8d., and three calves' skins sold for one and fivepence, a cow skin at the same time fetching the high price of 6s. 7d. The author of this important diary never visited Wigan or Wygonne, as he sometimes spells it, without spending at least threepence, and on one occasion,

November, 1587, when a special show of horses was made before the lieutenant of the county, he spent no less than twelvepence, when his cattle were specially admired. In November, 1589, as provision for a special feast, he bought in Wigan Market one shilling's worth of fish and fresh water trouts. At the annual fair of 1594 he bought at Wighann two stirks, one of which had a broken leg, for six and twopence.—(The Shuttleworth Accounts, part I.)

The reign of Elizabeth was the great period of literature, both of middle and modern English. Authors were cropping up all over the land, and Wigan had two distinguished representatives. John Wolton was born at Wigan of "honest parents and worshipful by his mother's side." He was educated at Oxford, and suffered exile with his uncle, Bishop Nowell, at Strasburg, through the Marian persecutions. On his return he was installed Warden of Manchester Collegiate Church, but continued there only for a very short time, because he was made Bishop of Exeter in 1579. He zealously exhorted all, by precept and example, by his speeches and his writings, to conform to the principles of the Reformation. Two hours before he died (March 13th, 1593) he wrote a letter "full of wisdom and piety." He was the father-in-law of Francis Godwin, Bishop of Hereford. He entered Brasenose College, Oxon, 26th October, 1553, graduated as B.A. in 1555, 26th April.

Roger Dodsworth's account of the Bishop's parentage, &c., is as follows:—"John Wolton, Bp of Exeter was sisters sonne to Alex' Nowell Deane of Paules. Mr. Chambers p'son of the Church of Newton Kyme nr Tadcaster in Yorkshire 14 Sep 1627 told me he did teach this Bp Woltons children and did copy over 4 bookes of this Bp's making viz one called The Armor of Proofe, wch afterwards was contrived into Section 2, David's Chaine, Dedicated to the E. of Bedford. 3, The Immortalitie of ye Soule, Dedicated to Wm. Cecill Ld Burleigh and ye 4th The ffortresse of ffayth. Mr. Chambers told [me] he was born att Whalley in Lanc, others att Pendleton adjoyning [2 miles N.E. of Whalley]. Howbeit Dr. Goodwin [Godwin] his son in lawe in his Catalogue of Bps [ed 1615, pp 414-15] sayth yt hee was borne at Wiggan in ye sd co."—(MSS. vol 153 WW p. 152).

Godwin's account is as follows:—"1579 Eliz 22, 36 [th Bp]: Iohn Wolton my most reverend father in law, being a Canon residentiary of the Church of Exceter, was consecrate in the beginning of Aug. 1579. He was borne at Wiggen in Lancashire, and hauing stayed in Oxford but a few yeares, in the beginning of Queene Mary attended into Germany his uncle the thrice reverend Alexander Nowell after Deane of Powles, his mother's brother, with whom hee stayed there all Q. Marie's time. He sate Bishop almost 15 years; dyed March 13 1593 being 57 yeares of age, and lieth buried in the south side of the Presbytery neere the place where wee see a Monument of touch and free stone erected vnto the memory of him."

In the fifth Parliament of Elizabeth (1584-1585) the two members for Wigan were William Gerard and Thomas Grimsditch. Gerard, of whom little more is known than that his daughter was married to Richard Walmsley, Esq., had been member for the borough during the first three Parliaments of the reign, and Grimsditch represented Manchester in the previous Parliament. In the next Parliament (October 15th, 1586,) Peter Legh displaced Grimsditch. He was the representative of the Leghs of Lyme, and son-in-law of Sir Gilbert Gerard, Master of the Rolls, who had represented the borough in 1553 and 1555. He sat for the borough in the next Parliament, and for the county of Cheshire in 1601. He was knighted 2nd July, 1598, and died February 17th, 1636. His direct line failed in 1797.

The Rev. Edward Fleetwood, B.D., was determined to regenerate his backsliding parish. There was no good he could think of—his good being evil in the eyes of many—which he did not prosecute with ardour. He was specially aggravated to find his parishioners would not attend his services on Sunday. He zealously spent the week in finding out their faults, writing convincing and condemnatory sermons, and was heartily grieved to find they would not come and listen to his admonitions. Like a true philosopher he set himself to find out the cause which, of course, lay not in himself. To his horror and disgust he discovered that his flock liked small beer, worldly amusements and good fellowship, and jocular provincialisms better than his prepared and learned homilies. In those days there was no closing, or Forbes McKenzie, Act. The doors of the Black Horse, Bird and Bairn, and every tavern were open to all, as well as the doors of the venerable Parish Church, and, horror to relate, men preferred having beer with their pence to giving it to church collections. This was too much for Mr. Fleetwood. It was very hard that, at the tolling of the bell, people would come the length of the Market Place, crowding and gossiping there and then break off into parties, some for public-houses, some to the Common, some to the meadows, and many actually to bull-baiting and bear-baiting on his own demesnes whilst he was laying down the principles of the precious truth to well-nigh empty pews. It was more than any zealot could bear. He denounced, anathematised, and excommunicated, but Wigan was Wigan still. He enlisted the sympathies of the righteous few, but the wicked many went on in their old courses. The people persisted in devoting to recreation and amusement that time which Mr. Fleetwood declared should be occupied in devout humiliation and prayer.

The enthusiasts of the town were stirred up to behold the enormities of the evil. On the other hand, let it not be forgotten that there was then no Factory Act, no nine hours' movement, and no Saturday afternoon for the working classes. Twelve hours was considered a short day's work, and Sunday was the only day that could possibly be taken as a day of rest. But Mr. Fleetwood thought only of

strictly keeping the Fourth Commandment. Having preached in vain, he took the machinery of the law to his help, and found it was insufficient, for, although the people were clearly breaking the moral law, they were still abiding by the law of the land. The father of lies and all his powers seemed allied against Mr. Fleetwood, but he was not to be done or cast down. With the dreadful state of local affairs he acquainted the two members of Parliament, William Gerard, Esq., and Thomas Grimsditch, Esq. A new law was made, which held good till the times of James I. He failed to persuade, so he determined to coerce. Coercion was a failure, for the law was not only repealed, but gave birth to the royal "Book of Sports." During the time the Act was in force there was no piping and dancing in the Market Place as of old during divine service. Then the voice of the minstrel was silent, and gambolling in the fields and gambling in taverns were stopped. The mayor, bailiffs, civil officers, and churchwardens, during the service, were playing at policemen, and Mr. Fleetwood was lecturing to the sinners of the town. Doubtless the change was agreeable to these officials. His reforms, although highly dissatisfactory to the town generally, resulted in a decrease of public-houses and compulsion to sell not less than a full quart of ale at once, which, no doubt, had the effect of making one loving cup go further round. Moreover, he fixed the price of a full quart of beer at one penny.

But he had other and greater researches to make. During 1585-6 a famine and murrain visited the neighbourhood. He was lord of the manor and rector of the parish, and therefore it was his bounden duty to find out the cause of these disasters, and he set himself right zealously to the work, for in men of such prejudices conviction comes before reasoning. His mind was previously made up, and, of course, with his usual success, he discovered the cause and the cure. He had an eye to sanitary reform, but it was the sanitation of morality and religion. He never thought of the physical filthiness of the people and want of drainage in his borough. He could only see that the people had sunk into the moral slough of despond, and that the famine and murrain were the deserved visitation of Providence. Yea, he traced it further. He discovered that Wigan particularly, and England generally, was abandoned to the power of the Evil One, who had delegated his power to old, wrinkle-faced widows. It was the witches, he found, that brought the murrain on the cattle, so woe to the Witches of Wigan! He, like Infallibility personified, persecuted them without mercy. To be ugly was sufficient to be considered a witch. Fuller says of the Lancashire women:—"I believe that the God of Nature having given fair complexions to the women of this county, art may save her pains (not to say her sins) in endeavouring to better them." Not these, but hags were the Fleetwood witches. Bed-ridden beldames and honest old women,

whose faces had been wrinkled with care; subjects for pity, not for blame! He could smell the brimstone about them as distinctly as the most ignorant in his parish. He tormented and persecuted them from no spirit of devilry, but from a candid and conscientious belief that they were the hirelings of sin, and that he himself was a servant of sanctity. Woe to wicked Wigan! seemed to cry the persecuted zealot.

The fickle nature of a growing civilisation has been nowhere more clearly shown than in the history of England. Fluctuations in religion and politics: variations in the causes and consequences of war—foreign and civil: changes of customs and transformations of costumes: rise and fall of families: redistribution of wealth—these are but a few of the remarkable characteristics in the growth of the English constitution. Nowhere in the kingdom was change more marked or rapid at this period than in the neighbourhood of Wigan. Spiritual opinions were the causes of many temporal changes. The property of recusants and Nonconformists was often sold to nominal purchasers. One Wiganer who benefited largely by such transactions was Francis Sherrington, "a wealthy man, a land buyer, and money lender," and frequent guest under the hospitable roof of Lord Derby. He was supposed to be the brother of William Sherrington, of London, merchant, whose daughter, Susan, about 1574, married James Bankes, of Winstanley.—(Lanc. MSS., vol. VI., p. 179, and Gregson's Ped. of Bankes).

Unfortunately there was at this time a great scarcity of labour in Wigan and throughout the country generally. Thousands of able-bodied men were able either to work or go to war. Healthy men of honest purpose were deeply grieved when, for the first time, they were thrown out of employment. It is the lot of man to earn his living by the sweat of his brow, and to be idle without being able to live independent of work is certainly by the enforced idler considered a disgrace, as well as misfortune. But this fine feeling of sensitiveness soon wears off, especially if the scarcity of work be great. Discontent takes its place and then an overbearing spirit of dishonest independence and arrogance. The disbanded retainers of nobles were infesting towns, and their numbers and arrogance were so great that the public sympathy first raised in their behalf had now assumed a determined opposition and hatred. Want drove the tramps to despair, and Wigan, in common with other towns, took up the cudgels of defence against the idlers, for whose services there was now a great demand. They had reached the verge of rebellion. Their spirits were like prepared gunpowder, to which the match had only to be applied. They were the raw material for conspirators, assassins, and rebels. They had tasted the fruits of idle independence, were soured against servitude, and unfit for settled occupation. Discontented leaders of parties saw and seized their opportunity. A *causus belli* was wanted to aid religion, and the cry was, the prosperity of the working classes. Elizabeth was

on the throne: papacy was in danger: Protestants were heretics, and to fight against heresy was the duty and glory of all. Queen Mary had been cruelly persecuted, and unmercifully murdered, said her partisans. Help was offered by the powerful Spaniard; yea, the fleet was on the sea, and all that was wanted was the rising of the people.

The Pope had objected to the accession of Queen Elizabeth, for, said he, "England was a fief of the Apostolic See: that she could not succeed, being illegitimate: that the reigning Pontiff could not reverse the decrees of his predecessor against the marriage." The entire separation of the Church of England from Rome was settled from that moment. The day of Papacy was over, and English Episcopalianism established. There is a lull before and after the storm. After all great movements, physical, political, or otherwise, there is invariably a reaction, and action and reaction are said to be equal. The reactionary religious war began, and, like the returning tide, which spreads its stormy billows over the sometimes forsaken beach, with dreadful revenge it ravaged the coasts of ruthless victors. Protestants came out of their hiding places, and Papists rushed into them for shelter. In those days the true religion seemed to be what the law demanded, and the law, and, therefore, religion, changed with changing governments. The Papists had had their day, when Protestantism was treated like the great personified Antichrist; now Protestantism, like a refreshed giant, gains the advantage, and the Papal Antichrist is trodden under foot. There is a great demand for soldiers of the cross, but not for men of peace. Spies, scouts, and persecutors are wanted all over the land. Ferrets to unearth the blood-stained Catholics, and hounds to hunt them in every county! Churchmen to pronounce absolution on the red-handed murderer of Papacy! Fox-like friends to lie in wait for the sayings of the unwary! Hypocrisy to catch sincerity! What a time of happy revenge and glorious victory the triumphant Protestants are having. Parson Fleetwood, of Wigan, in his burning zeal, hunts out the secrets of families and the sources of scandal, and as people who look for faults always find them, so he constructs every evil rumour as the work of some heretic, to find out whom it is his godly duty. Earl Derby, too, for the sake of Christ, becomes the accomplice of Fleetwood and the slave of the Devil, and hunts the suspected souls of poor old mortality with as much zeal as if every soul he cast with the firebrands of sin would place a special jewel in his own crown of glory. Between these two zealots Wiganers had a miserable existence. Men of one denomination eagerly hunted others at the bidding of their supreme power like dogs unleashed in the chase. Ignorant men and women were proud to be the tools of such men of influence who desired the destruction of honest thinking men simply because they differed from them in religious opinions. Inhabitants who could not

exercise their own thinking powers were proud to show their zeal by allowing themselves to be guided by the acts and wishes of those in authority, and thus merely gain protection for themselves. Those who had no brains were the puppets of the crafty. Those without money were the tools of the unscrupulous rich. Good men were hunted by hypocrites: avarice hunted prosperity, cant hunted sincerity, and dissimulation hunted self-preservation, as if the persecutors felt in their hearts that they only were holy, and were the fit and chosen subjects to work out the unsought vengeance of the Deity on those whose opposite convictions proved them unworthy to live, and, being past all the fulness of redemption which their own creed taught, fit only to die and to be cast into the pit. False zeal, dissimulation, revenge, and hypocrisy ran rampant in the streets of Wigan in 1587, being the 29th year of the reign of good Queen Bess of happy memory. It was a "critical year," says the honest historian, Strype, and Lancashire was specially to be looked after. In that year Wigan sprang into historical prominence. It was then like a rabbit warren, where Papists and favourers of Papists swarmed in fear of their lives. Protestant yeomen and feeling-hearted gentlemen of the neighbourhood, forgetting and forgiving the persecutions they themselves had suffered, took pity on the persecuted wretches, and let them shelter in their barns, shippons, and outhouses, and were sometimes bold enough to feed them, as the Hebrews of old fed their lepers. Burgesses and poor inhabitants allowed heretics to hide in their garrets whilst the "very good lord Derby" and the "holy Fleetwood," like blood-thirsty hounds, searched every street and farm yard. Rumour and suspicion tainted every man's character, except that of the sycophants that crouched like curs at the heels of Derby or Fleetwood. Men who openly refused to aid and abet them were marked as recusants, whilst those who, for their personal interest, seemed to prevaricate, or were inactive in their endeavours to persecute, were characterised as of cunning and subtle device. Their keen eyes were alike on the lawyers, merchants, tradesmen, and labourers of Wigan.

Parson Fleetwood was the second son of William Fleetwood, of Plumpton, by his first wife, Bridget Spring, of Suffolk. He had now been sixteen years the Rector of Wigan, and had made more foes than friends among the upper classes, including his own bishop, because of his political clericalism. No doubt he was of honest purpose, though certainly of mistaken zeal. He was better fitted for a persecuting attorney than a servant of the gentle Gospel. He knew Wigan well, down even to the very hovels that, to people of the present time, would look more like piggeries than human habitations. He knew the abodes of avowed Papists and the lurking places of suspected recusants. He knew there were men in the town who were Papists or Protestants as best suited the times and their own purposes. He knew many who would not conform to the rights of the Church who were neither Papists nor Churchmen,

but honest Puritans. He was the shepherd of the parish flock, and he determined to force it into the fold. As a clergyman it was his privilege to be admitted to every house, and it was not against his principles to further the prosperity of his church by what worldly men would call mean means. As the rector of a very rich living, and the lord of the manor, he had access to the houses of all persons of influence. There was open door to him at the houses of the better classes in the town, who lived in superior buildings of brick or brick and stone in the Standishgate and Market Place, the Hallgate, Millgate, or Wallgate. Such people were now prosperous enough to afford the luxuries of chaff beds for their masters and straw for their servants, and as a middle class, conscious of their growing political and social importance, were proud to welcome as a guest or visitor such a representative of the nobility. Now, instead of the flat dishes and spoons of wood used by those in the back streets and courts and alleys, the tradesmen, burgesses, and yeomen could boast of pewter platter and silver or tin spoons, tidily wrapt up for special occasions, like the rector's visit, or for the use of the family on Sundays. The ground floors of their rooms were paved with flag stones, whereas those of the lower orders had still the old, less expensive, fashion of hard baked clay floors, covered with rushes from the neighbouring bogs or marshes, and were seldom "mucked" out oftener than once a week, being the especial labour of Saturday, when the rubbish, thrown out into a continually accumulating heap before the door, was like that from the lair of a wild beast. To all these had the rector access, and over all had Derby spies, and these two great worthies came to the conclusion that Wigan was going headlong to the Pope and to ruin, and they determined to summon all their giant strength to destroy the wicked and save the righteous. He had visited the Earl of Derby, preached in his chapel, dined with him, joked perhaps with his fool Henry, listened to the players who entertained the many guests, and criticised with his Christian eyes both host and guest; he had called upon and conversed with burgesses and labourers of the town and yeomen of the suburbs, he had listened to the plaints of the poor and the gossip of the idler—in short, he knew everything about the whole neighbourhood, and, lamenting the sad condition of local irreligion, and his own want of power to punish where he could not persuade, he proposed to Lord Burghley, the Lord Treasurer of the Queen, that a new Ecclesiastical Commission should be issued (Cotton MSS., Titus, b. 2), with many of the lesser gentry and clergy included in it. He was dissatisfied with the Commission, which was then dealing leniently with heretics. He confesses that he attended the assizes himself with the intention of listening, spy-like, to cases, and hearing the punishments awarded, and he was shocked to find so much leniency. There was too much lukewarmness, if not a decided want of zeal on the part of the Commission. There was too little bloodshed and physical

torture and too few lives taken as awful examples. He was hurt to the very heart, and could only think of one revenge—a revenge that can only be taken by clergymen. He preached the Commissioners' faults in their very faces from the pulpit before the congregation, who, no doubt, would rejoice at his boldness. He told them plainly of the corruptions of the time and place, and reminded them of their duties, so unfulfilled that the evils grew instead of lessened, until their guilty consciences might well have made cowards of them all. But they were callous judges, for, strange to say, they were uninfluenced by his holy homily, and he, in increased indignation, wrote to Lord Burghley, depicting to him the sad state of affairs. His proposal was most offensive to the aristocratic assembly of Commissioners, who sent a remonstrance to Burghley, which was disregarded, and Fleetwood's advice accepted. In his advice he complains, like a petulant schoolboy and bigoted egotist, of his unsatisfactory interview with Lord Derby, who had just returned from Flanders, and had not yet entered heartily into the persecuting spirit, except by proxy. In his correspondence suspected persons are mentioned with great minuteness as to character and opinion that could only be excelled by a criminal detective. High and low, rich and poor, are named by the god-like inquisitor with his confirmed opinion. He owns that even his keen eye fails on some occasions to tell what some men really are. He has his doubts about the soundness of the doctrine of not a few. He is willing to believe in the sincerity of Lord Derby, but he also believes that he is badly influenced by "the suggestions of some evil instruments about him." The reverend gentleman characterises the principal inhabitants of Wigan after this fashion:—"Halsall is a lawyer, presented this last assizes as a recusant in some degree. Farrington is as cunning as he: not anything sounder in religion, though much more subtle to avoid the public note than he. Rigby is as cunning and unsound as either, and as grossly to be detected therein as Halsall." Could the faults of any man escape the eagle eye of such a morality critic? Could one Wiganer sin in secret without Mr. Fleetwood being able to proclaim it on the housetop. The followers of Antichrist, they discovered, were lodging in the very houses of the elect. Those who had been deprived out of their livings, and literally and legally cast out of society, were not despised and avoided as lepers, as they wished them to be. Sincere professors and hypocrites were discovered to prosper no better than temporisers, recusant and avowed Papists. More power was wanted for the arm of the Commission, else the sincere, the discreet, and those full of good purpose had no advantage. Something greater must be done to drive the discontented into the fold. Scorpions must be used for ordinary whips. Zealous gentlemen must be kept in the public service by rewards, and the Nonconformists paid with terrible punishments. But not only were the town and gentry against the severity of Mr. Fleetwood, but the very magistrates

themselves, who ought to have been his coadjutors, stood up against him like a wall of which every man formed a brick. What a persecuted martyr he must have been when he felt that every man's hand was against him. Instead of wavering in the cause, he grew stronger and more determined, for was he not fighting the battles of the Cross, and were his hopes not beyond this earth? In advising the Lord Treasurer who should be of the Commission, he objects to one specially, and pithily gives his opinion of the whole thus:—"One bad man among many, not all good, shall be able to do no small hurt." What garb would Wigan have worn had the Lord Treasurer made Edward Fleetwood, B.D., the Commission!! Although Mr. Fleetwood had withdrawn all confidence from the existing Commission, he yet knew many gentlemen, nearly as sincere and zealous as himself, who could be turned out as excellent and faithful Commissioners, who could not fail to be a terror to the land. Such gentlemen, he says, crowded to the assize courts, eager, no doubt, to hear of wholesale punishments, but went away grieved to find that Nonconformists were as well treated as common felons. Perhaps these gentlemen were young men, for it is a well-known and recognised fact that old men are more sympathetically lenient with the failings of humanity than young men; but Mr. Fleetwood himself was 54 years old, and yet he had no sympathy with convictions opposed to his own. These zealous gentlemen stated upon oath that they had detected 600 recusants, 21 vagrant priests, and "25 notorious houses of receit for them." This last statement itself proves what a slough of despond Wigan must have been in the eyes of Mr. Fleetwood. The weeds in his baronial garden were more numerous than the flowers, and he was at his wits' end how to uproot them. The magistrates were against him, the inhabitants were harbouring the very priests, the neighbouring gentry were tolerant, and the Commission too lenient; but yet he did not despair. With commendable zeal he perseveres, and in less than five years the Earl of Derby is his openly-avowed friend and ally, after he has been fully convinced by his spy, the seminary, Bell. Here are the reverend gentleman's letters:—

"Fleetwood, Rector of Wigan, to the Lord Treasurer, upon occasion of a new Commission of Justices of Peace for the County of Lancaster; and the good effect thereof.

Rt. Honourable,—Being, by your special good favour, made acquainted with your honourable action concerning the placing and displacing of the justices of the peace in the county of Lancaster, I have thought it my part to advertise you of the sequel thereof, which I might the more fully be able to do. I bestowed my attendance at the assizes, when I perceived in them that stand displaced no small indignation towards those whom they could any ways suspect to have been furtherers, or suppose to be favourers of that honourable action. Wherewith, also, they presumed to possess the Rt. Honourable the Earl of Derby, as of a matter of no small dishonour unto him, and deep discontentment. Whereupon, for the present time and place, I thought good (myself remaining in some part of jealousy with them) in general to lay forth, as occasion served, in the pulpit to their faces that which before I had more particularly delivered to your honour concerning the corrupt state of the whole country, that

every guilty conscience of them might gather up that which was due unto it. Whereof it pleased my lords, the judges, to take so good notice that they delivered the chief points thereof after to the jurors in charge, and the same also more especially recommended to the justices of peace, to be in their continual service regarded. All which so nearly touched the guilty consciences of the discontented sorts, that they began, for the residue of the assizes, to pluck down their high looks, and somewhat better to pacify their discontented minds, and to brook their emulated friends, than before they seemed to do.

After which, immediately, when matters were at the hottest, I also thought good to attend the Rt. Honourable, my very good lord, the Earl of Derby, by way of accustomed duty, which I accordingly did; thereby to give opportunity to his lordship of speech in the premised matters, and myself also to win occasion to lay forth that to his honour concerning the unsoundness of divers of his counsel, as might either fully satisfy his lordship, or at the least clearly justify your honour's most considerate action. But I obtained not one word of the premised matter, though I endeavoured to stir him up thereto by many words on my part, uttered concerning your honour's direction of the ecclesiastical commission; whereat he seemed to have great good liking, and professed his best furtherance thereto. Wherefore, howsoever, the discontented sort (the rather to countenance their discontented state) will seem to cast upon his lordship a prefixed purpose of discontented expostulation; yet I am persuaded, when he shall come in presence with your honour, it will be wholly turned into an honourable request of a most dishonourable matter. Wherein, that your honour should not be narrowly overtaken, as unfurnished of sufficient intelligence, I have with all speed addressed these my letters to your honour, as soon as I understood of the earl his sudden departure towards the Court.

By which to give your honour to understand that, as our state standeth, the satisfaction of his lordship's request, or rather of the suggestion of some evil instruments about him, shall breed not a little inconvenience to your honour, his honour their reformation that are displaced, to the public service, and to the good estate of the sincere professors, both of the commission and of the whole country. For, first, it shall argue your honour's former action of insufficiency; being indeed in all judgment of those that fear God among us, most sincerely, discreetly, and fully to all good purposes accomplished, both for the sincere comfort of the faithful professors of the truth and the rare disparagement of the adversaries thereof in our country. Then it shall not a little nourish in the earl that humour of careless security in tolerating, and no ways soundly reforming, the notorious backwardness of the whole company in religion, and chief of the chiefest about him. In some it shall harden the discontented in their former state of unsoundness. It shall drive the zealous gentlemen from the public service, and settle in the minds of all the true professors an utter despair of any good course of reformation hereafter to be taken in these parts, when they shall see your honour's first acts, and the same of so great importance to their well doing, to receive so speedy and untimely an overthrow. And thereby a main wall, as it were, of corrupt magistrates set up here, at home, among us, against all good directions of your honours hereafter to be made from above. These considerations, Rt. Honourable, have caused me to wish the earl to want in this matter some part of his desire. Whom yet I honour many ways, not unworthily; and so likewise many others, if such there be, that seek to have their private humours of singular sovereignty still nourished with public discommodity. Neither may your honour think that two, or but one, more of his lordship's counsel added (as it were but Mr. Halsall or Mr. Farrington) to the commission, or Mr. Rigby of the quorum, shall work no great prejudice; for one bad man among many, not all good, shall be able to do no small hurt.

Halsall is a lawyer, presented this last assizes as a recusant in some degree. Farrington is as cunning as he; not anything sounder in religion, though much more subtle to avoid the public note than he. Rigby is as cunning and unsound as either, and as grossly to be detected therein as Halsall. All three of them are busy contrivers of dangerous devices against the peace of the ministry and free course of the Gospel, and direct proceeding of justice, in all common opinion, as any that ever bore

authority among us. If there were yet room for any more of his lordship's counsel, it might rather be wished that Mr. Tildesly or Mr. Scarisbrick, gentlemen of best note among the rest for honest and upright dealing in civil matters. But much rather to be wished that his honour would be persuaded to hold himself sufficiently contented with those three of his counsel, and chief about him, which your honour hath already unrequested freely given to his lordship—namely, Sir Peter Lee, Sir Richard Sherborn, and Mr. Rigby, all three of the same affection of the rest: and yet Rigby as discontented, and as presumptuously using his speech against your honour's former proceedings, as any that remain wholly expulsed. But it may be that his honour, or some other, the rather to gain their purpose, shall bring in question the state of the present Commission, in respect either of the whole body of the Commissioners or of the particular members thereof.

Wherefore I thought it also most expedient to lay forth unto your honour the sundry observations which I have made in this behalf. First, for the whole body of Commissioners, they are so proportionably allotted to the shire, as our store of sound men would any way afford. Five or four, or three justices, at least, unto every hundred, by means whereof every hundred hath his sufficient magistracy within itself, and every quarter sessions (entertaining the most of them two hundreds) a competent number of justices, and the general assizes a full furnished bench of worshipful gentlemen to countenance and attend that great and honourable service. Which appeared evidently in the eye of all men this late assizes, by the most plentiful concourse of all the gentlemen justices well affected, from all parts of the shire; providing thereby, that neither the common service, specially laid upon them, should be disfurnished of due attendance, nor the discontented sort should obtain any just occasion to argue your honour's direction of insufficiency, or them of any neglect of duty. Where they employed themselves so thoroughly in the cause of religion that there ensued a most plentiful detection of 600 recusants by oath presented, as also the indictment of 87 of them (as many as for the time could be preferred to the jury). And further a notification by oath of 21 vagrant priests usually received in Lancashire, and 25 notorious houses of receit for them. Such are the manifold commodities which we feel already by your honour's most sound direction. In respect whereof it is of all that desire reformation among us (as justice of her children) most confidently justified.

The only want in general is the want of sound gentlemen in most parts of the country, whereof (I assure myself) they that promote the office against your honour's direction will say little. Hereunto your honour conceived a most apt and necessary supply, namely, the attendances of the justices of Salford hundred at the quarterly sessions of other parts of the country worst affected. To which effect it is given out that your honour hath already sent down letters to the earl, but I fear me his lordship's absence and the sinister emulations of some of his counsel, as, namely, of Mr. Farrington (as I certainly hear) will disappoint them of their due success. Wherefore it was good your honour's more special letters were written to the gentlemen themselves, of whom I doubt not but they shall enjoy a most dutiful acceptance, and a most effectual regard to the great commodity of myself and others that dwell in the most desolate parts of the country, from all goodness and good men.

Then for the particulars, gentlemen, by your honour's more particular direction assigned to this service; as namely, Mr. Warren and Mr. Talbot, most commodiously borrowed of the two countries next adjoining: Mr. Banister and Mr. Hopwood, for their former most approved service, put forward to the quorum: Mr. Wrightington and Mr. Bradshaw, for the special benefit of the ministry, most happily planted in the parts where they both dwell necessarily added; Mr. Langton, Mr. Eccleston, still retained in places most disfurnished of able men for that service; there is no exception to be taken, either for their gentry, livings affections in religion, good discretion, and well-furnished experience for all parts of the services. And so I beseech your honour to rest most resolute upon my poor credit with your honour; which I be easily able to uphold in this matter with your honour, with the most plentiful testimony and censure of my brethren, the preachers of the country, and of the gentlemen best affected in the commission, if your honour require it of me.

In the meantime I shall crave your honour to vouchsafe me your special letters unto them of encouragement and direction, by which they shall not a little be strengthened in the busy charge they have in hand, for the suppressing of many ungodly enormities of the Sabbath, imposed upon them by lords, the justices of assize, at the special instance of myself and some other of my brethren. Where I must not omit to signify unto your honour the special good countenance I enjoyed at their lordships' hands; being indeed the more favourably bestowed upon me, as upon special notice they had some way taken, and there openly professed of your honour's good favour toward me; whereupon, I suppose, your honour shall gather convenient occasion to make your honourable good liking of their effectual proceedings this last assizes in the cause of religion to appear unto them. Whereby, no doubt, they shall receive no small encouragement to continue the same hereafter, to the great comfort of the true professors and faithful preachers. For the which I shall not cease to be thankful to the Lord, with all my brethren of the ministry, by which we shall enjoy a most sound means of thankfulness to your honour.

Concerning my proceedings with the commission ecclesiastical, I have, according to your honour's directions, wholly possessed Mr. Solicitor therewith. And he further required of me and Mr. Goodman a full advertisement of our manifold enormities which, by mutual conference with all my brethren, I have readily furnished, and against the next week to attend the bishop and Mr. Solicitor by their appointment. I fear nothing therein but my Lord of Darby his discontinuance, lest it breed some inconvenient delays. But your honour's continual presence and ready mind shall work us, I trust in the Lord, a more speedy despatch.

Thus commending my humble duty to your honour, and your soul and spirit and body to the most comfortable presence of Christ's spirit in you now and for ever, I humbly take my leave.

From Wigan, the 7 day of September, 1587.

Your honour's most bounden in the Lord,

EDWARD FLEETWODDE, Pastor of Wigan."

The house of Lord Derby was the resort of the *elite* of the land, learned and grave. There there were intellectual feasts, rational amusements, and a hospitality not exceeded by that of any house in Britain. There was philosophy for the wise, a fool to amuse the melancholy, the flower of English chivalry, and the beauty of the land. Intellectual advancement was as much fostered there as in any monastery in England. The Derby family was one of the richest, and now it was at its zenith, although immediately afterwards lawsuits and hospitality threatened to overwhelm it, as if it were the very fate of greatness to be most easily overturned when perched on the pinnacle of glory. The best tutors that could be found were appointed to superintend the education of the Derby family, and the sons of wealthy peers shared the instruction, so that it was a college of the very highest class. The earl's chaplain in the 29th Elizabeth was the Rev. William Leigh, B.D., who was for fifty-six years rector of Standish (1583-1639). In his time the Grammar School of Standish was founded and endowed with £300, given by Mrs. Mary Langton, widow. Mr. Leigh died in the eighty-ninth year of his age, and was buried in the chancel of Standish Church. Several sermons were written and published by him, the best of which is a funeral sermon, called "The Soul's Solace against Sorrow," from which the following is an extract:—

"Well! she is gone! and now behold her seate is empty and her grave is full, and methinkes for the present we feel her want on earth, whom God hath found in Heaven—our prayers lesse powerfull, our preaching lesse precious, our psalmes lesse powerfull and melodious on her behalfe. For you all know that there she sate and there she sung, there she read and there she prayed, there she heard the Word, there she received the sacraments, there lately she lived, and there now she is dead; therefore may I say with the Prophet (Isai. xl. 6) all flesh is grasse, and all the grace thereof as the flowers of the field; but comfort yourselves in hope of a joyful resurrection, as also in respect of her holy life, blessed end, and most happy state in glorie, and sith she is gone, let it be remembered as a sacrament of her rest that she went upon a day of rest, one of the chiefest of Sabbaths, and high Feast of Pentecost (31st May, 1601, æt 22); even then that she should ascend when the Holy Ghost did descend, by which Spirit she was sealed up to the day of redemption. Worshipfully was she descended, but most honourably (may I now say) is she ascended; yet behold the husband mourneth, for he hath lost his wife; the mother mourneth, for she hath lost a daughter; the brother mourneth, for he hath lost a sister, which is, methinks, not much unlike the mourning of Hadadramon in the Valley of Megiddon (Zack. xii., 2). And yet this is not all, for we preachers may mourne most, for that we have lost an auditor who heard with reverence, felt with passion, and followed with perseverance. But, beloved, what we have lost Heaven hath found, and the holy angells rejoice at the gain; in the meantime the Lord of Heavan supplie the want upon earth, and increase the number of faithful professors, *in Sionis gaudum et Anglo-Papistarum luctum.* Amen. Amen."

One of the gentlemen of the best calling in the hundred of Derby, in the county of Lancaster, was Miles Gerard, who had recently married a daughter of Sir Thomas Hesketh, of Rufford, knight. He exerted himself much in the time of the dreaded invasion of the Spaniards, and, besides being a captain of a regiment, he raised 200 soldiers from the neighbourhood of Wigan in 1557 for the public service. He was Sheriff of Lancashire in 1553 and 1558, and M.P. for the county in 1563.—(Stanley Papers, Harl. MSS., 2219, p. 19 b.) Though thus approved and rewarded as a good and loyal subject, neither he nor his family were exempted from the religious persecutions of the time. Judging from the information lodged against him there must have been a constant watch on all his movements. In 1593 he was brought to trial, with other recusants, before Lord Derby, as a suspected person, on the charge of Mr. Bell. He was accused of receiving and relieving several seminary priests at his own house. He had given them shelter, food, and, in some cases, provided them liberally with money, yet confessed that he himself had never taken the oath of allegiance as required by law, and that although he had neither gone to Church, nor taken the Sacrament for seven years, owned that he was willing to do all required by law. The lord keeper, Puckering, collected the following information concerning him:—"Miles Gerard, of Ince, Esq., charged by Mr. Bell to have received and lodged divers seminary priests at his house, namely, Norden, Blackwel, Gardiner, Fourth, Hughs, Hardwyt, Dakins, Butler, and Bell, alias Burton. His brother a seminary, to whom he gave 30s. and another time 40s. and after sent him £10 to Wisbich, and to another brother of his . . . . Saith, he hath frequented the church these seven years, but hath not received the communion; but desireth

therein respite and conference, hoping he shall conform himself. That he never took the oath of allegiance, according to the statute, but is willing to take it, if it be tendered."—(Strype Annals, vol. IV., p. 261, A.D. 1593).

Many prisoners are men of the highest intellectual ability, but by a wrongful education their gifts, which might have distinguished them amongst the highest ornaments of the land, or ranked them with the most useful members, have only brought them down to be specially distinguished for crime. So, too, all good and great inventions used for illegitimate purposes may become great instruments of evil. Thus the printing press was put to libellous and treasonable uses at this period. The fifth Earl of Derby, Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, was apprised of a press being carried from town to town in his county, whose owners were printing and spreading libels and seditions in every town. It was illegal to have such a machine, much more so was it to print such broadsheets. He searched for it in Wigan, Warrington, Manchester, and other places, and captured both it and its owners in Manchester. The owners who were found in possession of the seditious song printed by them, "Ha' ye any more work for the Cooper," were imprisoned and the press destroyed (1588).

Lord Derby was a great and influential man and an honest, although bigoted, one. His house, as already stated, was the college for the sons of the neighbouring gentry, whom he entertained in princely fashion with feasts for body and mind. He paid strolling players to amuse his guests, and kept a fool in motley—Henry—for the fun of all and sundry. He was a good husband, a strict and yet indulgent father, a sagacious politician, a good man, and yet, with his own right honourable hand, he unwittingly confesses a sad weakness. He kept a spy, Bell by name, who unravelled for him, whilst he pretended to be uninterested in local affairs, the religious conditions of the district. He had fully come round to the views of Fleetwood, and was now as ardent for power to persecute as the shepherd of the flock himself. He knew then, from his spy, the whereabouts of many Papists and temporisers, but pretended to be indifferent to their ways until he should have a better opportunity and stronger power to bring home their guilt and punish their stubbornness. He was anxious to draw to certain conviction, and, as when the huntsman betrays the game by decoy-ducks, he seemed to give them full liberty that they might grow bolder and expose themselves to certain detection and destruction. He longed for a "sudden receipt" of legal power to perform a better piece of service. In his religious sincerity he complains of the growing blindness of the people that leads them to Papistry and Puritanism, but good, far-seeing man he does not blame so much as pity the ignorant poor, who, he believes, are led on by "the backwardness and deep dissimulation of the principals," whom he longs to number with the dead. He

further complains of the leniency of the Commission and its powers, as well as of the enormities of backsliders, and then he finishes with a testimonial to Mr. Fleetwood, whose character is all that the nation or Church could wish for. Action was food for his zeal. How great are the satisfaction and honest pride of the detective when he brings to the bar of justice the perpetrator of some mysterious deed. Pecuniary rewards are as nothing. To be recognised by the learned judges as clever, and acknowledged by the public as a valuable acquisition to the State, are the laurels of his profession. Yet he only performs that duty for which he is paid. Were his discoveries the results of his hobby, how much greater would his elation be. Lord Derby was a religious judge upon principle: to detect immorality was his hobby: to capture a guilty conscience was his crowning glory: to bind, hand and foot, and arraign before justice, all evil-doers, dissemblers, temporisers, recusants, and non-church goers, were the proofs of his Christianity and the glory of his life. Fanaticism and love of glory goaded him on. The narrow opinions of Calvin were the foundations of his creed: the golden law had not been discovered in his edition of the New Testament. His intentions were good, but his creed was false, and the result of his ardent labours, although bringing ruin to the immediate subjects of persecution, utterly failed in their object. Here is an example of the zealot's work:—

"A note of the evidence of all the prisoners for Popery in the several counties; as the lord keeper Puckering collected, and writ it down for and against the persons hereafter named. So endorsed by his own hand; anno 1593."

"Humphrey Cartwright, of Warrington, in Lancashire, scholar, of the age of 47. Committed to prison in Manchester nine years by the Earl of Derby. Thence brought up to the Counter in Wood-street, in which he remained about a year for recusancy. Indicted at Manchester. Hath neither lands nor goods. Knew Bell, a seminary priest, in Lancashire. Did help him to say mass at Mr. Stopford's house in Lancashire, who was dead. Saw Mr. Michee, a seminary priest, in Lancashire: one Baret, a priest, at Mr. Whitmore's house in Cheshire. Met one Brian, a seminary priest, in Fetter-lane, and one Lloid, in Fleet-street. But never relieved any of them. Refuseth to come to church. Never had conference with any preacher since his imprisonment; neither doth he desire it."—(Strype Annals, vol. IV., p. 261, A.D. 1593).

When Derby had once put his hand to the plough there was neither halting, looking behind, nor doing things by halves. The fire of his wrathful zeal had taken nearly five years to kindle into a public blaze, but now it was like a wide-flaring flame, and woe to the Papists, public and secret, whether they were on his own estates, in the Standishgate, or back hovels of Wigan, or in Scholes. The sword of the

Lord was in his hand, and all he longed for was extended legal power to suppress the heretics. Wigan and its neighbourhood had always been a stronghold of Papists, but now they were so numerous as to be bold enough often to declare themselves openly, regardless of the purgers, Derby and Fleetwood. Lord Derby gave a full account of the debased condition of ungodly Wigan and neighbourhood to the Lords of the Privy Council, and besought extended power from them. To further the success of his wish he made Fleetwood the bearer of his letter, with a testimonial of strong commendation, and advising them to believe every word he said. To make assurance doubly sure, he gave a copy of this urgent letter, accompanied by another letter, strongly commending the bearer, the same Mr. Fleetwood, to be delivered, along with his fuller discourse on the contents, to Sir Thomas Heneage, Vice-Chamberlain and Chancellor of the Duchy. The result of such a powerfully combined appeal was that Lord Derby had his zealous request granted, so he set about his work with a well-prepared appetite. He acted like an eager master of the hounds, who not only does his duty well, but enjoys the sport; yet was his zeal genuine, for he believed he was doing God good service. The brave ones who dared him openly to do his worst were first taken, and "their appearance dispensed withal for a time for good purpose," whilst the timid and those who valued their lives and liberty hid themselves in terror and dismay. He had spies everywhere, dwelling even "in corrupt places" of the town, who bound themselves by oath to discover them. Persecution, as a natural consequence, made hypocrites of many honest men. Many put on the garb of conformity for the sake of peace and security. There were thousands of wolves in sheep's clothing. Many who believed not in the justice of the law conformed to its letter, but had no faith in the spirit of its creed. Suspected persons were persecuted to death, and rich men robbed of their estates, while hypocrisy and sycophancy sat in high places, protected by law, ready to change their opinions at the earliest convenience.

The zeal of Lord Derby, the newly-avowed accomplice of Fleetwood, cannot be better described than by his own letters. Therein he owns that he has been stealthily waiting for an opportunity of distinguishing himself. He has a thorough understanding of the emergency of the times, but is as wise as a serpent, if not as harmless as a dove. From his own "experience and knowledge" he knows the information given by his spy is true, but he forbears to deal against the Papists until the Lords of the Privy Council, to whom his letter is written, are prepared to give him unlimited licence to pounce on the unsuspecting temporisers or avowed Romanists, and that purposely that they may be unwarily committed by their own actions. He continues to lament the backslidings and blindness of the people, and their neglect towards God and her Majesty, but still wisely and sympathetically acquits the

poorer and more ignorant classes of people, as he believes they are led astray by their designing leaders. He ends his letter with a most favourable reference to Mr. Fleetwood, whom he believes to be a discreet and *painful* labourer in the Church of God :—

"To the Lords of the Privy Council.

May it please your lordships,—Since I despatched Bell, the seminary, I have well considered of that he revealed. And, forasmuch as by mine own experience and knowledge of the party, I conceive that many of his informations be true, and that a number of those whom he chargeth are either known Papists to the world, or at best temporisers, keeping in their houses those that are badly given, I have thought meet hereby to signify that my opinion to your lordships, and to let you know that, in hope of your like conception of the information, I still, expecting some round direction of proceedings from your lordships, have foreborne hitherto to deal much against the Papists, on purpose only to draw them into a doubtless and secure mind of troubles, to the end I might, upon a sudden receipt of your lordship's direction, perform a better piece of service than I should if I had stirred much in this meantime. For in vain it were to have attempted any matter or service of importment immediately upon Bell's sending up.

Nevertheless, forasmuch as your lordships see by our last certificate the great relapse of the people into blindness, and neglect of their duties towards God and her Majesty, which cometh to pass only by means of the backwardness and deep dissimulation of the principals, whom the meaner sort follow. And thus you perceive well by Bell's information the inclination of sundry of calling. As also that those who stand out as recusants do shift and convey themselves away, so as they cannot be met withal.

I will spare to trouble your lordships with mine opinion of mine own, but leave all to your grave considerations, nothing doubting but your lordships will devise such remedies for the suppressing of these enormities, and presumptions of continuance of lenity, as shall stand with God's laws, the safety of her Majesty, and the quiet of the whole commonwealth. Praying also your lordships to credit this gentleman, Mr. Fleetwood, parson of Wigan, a discreet and painful labourer in the Church of God, who can truly make known unto your lordships upon demand the state of this country, and private affection of the most persons of account, and so commending your lordships and your labours in the direction of God's holy spirit, do end.

Your lordship's assured loving friend, and at commandment,

H. Derby.

New Park, my house, this 30th of Octob., 1592."

"The Earl of Derby to Sir Tho. Heneage, Vice-Chamberlain, and Chancellor of the Duchy. With a copy of the former letter to the Council enclosed. The bearer, Mr. Fleetwood, Parson of Wigan, Papists, temporisers many.

Sir,—Albeit I well know my letter to your lordships will come to your hand, yet to the end you may be the better armed to further my intent, which is to have the presumption of public and secret Papists, being temporisers, suppressed, here enclosed to send you a copy thereof, being well assured that, answerable to the hope of all well given subjects in these parts, you will effectually further the good of the Church and the suppression of the maligners thereof. For any particulars touching that sort of this county, this bearer, Mr. Fleetwood, Parson of Wigan, a discreet and learned preacher, can inform you truly, whom you may believe. And so with my heartiest commendations do end, wishing to you as to myself,

Your assured loving friend, always faithfully to use,

H. Derby.

New Park, my house, the 30th of Oct., 1592."

"The Earl of Derby to the Lord Treasurer, that upon the directions of the lords he was in prosecution of the recusants.

My very honourable good lord,—What success your lordship's very grave directions (which I assure your lordship have much revived and comforted all well given subjects here) have taken will appear by my letter to your lordship and Mr. Wand's reports, who, having been an eye-witness of all proceedings, hath carried himself very discreetly, and with great diligence in the service. The which, although it hath been hindered by such means as are set down in my letter, yet within a short time, and upon the sudden, when all things be quieted, I hope will appear to effect some good service in the apprehending of Jesuits, seminaries, and such like traitorous persons. The rather by intelligence and help of those whose appearance there is dispensed withal for a time for a good purpose, who by bond and oath (dwelling in corrupt places) have undertaken to discover them.

And so, nothing doubting but your lordship will further the continuance of these well-begun proceedings, I do commit your lordship and your labours to the direction of God's holy spirit.

Your lordship's assured loving friend,

Always faithful to use,

H. Derby.

New Park, my house, the 27 of Novemb., 1592."

A new religious sect took origin at this time, that of the Quakers, many of whom lived in Wigan. Their manner of living was as different as possible from either of the two great contending parties.

Notwithstanding the peculiarities of the sect of Quakers or Friends, they have great principles and good habits that might advantageously be studied or followed by the community at large. They act upon the principle that life is too short for frivolity and too precious to be wasted in war. They are unostentatious and orderly in behaviour, kind to one another, and consider it a duty to help the distressed and provide for their families. They all engage in some trade, and their word is their bond. Statistics prove that their quiet manner of living is conducive to longevity, and in their Assurance Societies a smaller premium is paid on a life policy than has to be paid by other life assurers, simply because statistics prove they live longer, and therefore must pay longer.

Now was the time for the invincible Jesuits to prosper. They were to be found at every tavern and squire's house. There were many of them in Wigan. It was their rule to be all things to all men, so that they could prosper their cause. Their lives were devoted or consecrated to the cause of Catholicism. They were to trade with tradesmen, dine with princes, or beg with beggars, as occasion required or opportunity offered. They were Catholics with Catholics and Puritans with Puritans. All the principles in them were to sink into insignificance before the one principle of working for the Papal Church. They were to become the lewdest of the lewd or the very slaves of licentiousness in the cause of their Church. Their mission was pointed out to them, and in the face of death itself—which to them would be a martyr's death—they were to fight their way and conquer or die. There were Jesuits in Wigan and Jesuits in Derby's house. Father Holt was one of Derby's men, who

did all in his power, with the offer of 40,000 Spanish ducats, to get York to assassinate Queen Elizabeth, or even if he would assist in doing so (1595).—(Stanley Papers, part II., notes, page 180).

It was natural that such an enthusiast as Mr. Fleetwood should make many bitter enemies. Enthusiasm was no palliation for what many worthy persons considered crime, for all those whom he persecuted as heretics believed that he and those of his faith were the real heretics, and they themselves the true believers. By them he was accounted the great persecutor of those of the true Catholic faith—worse than a Jew, Turk, or infidel—aye, even worse than Judas himself. Whether as private revenge or from a feeling of religious duty, many of his own parishioners would gladly have seen him brought to the gibbet or stake, although their vengeance seems to have been satisfied by simply plying him with threatening letters. The following is a copy of a small note left for him in his own pew in the Parish Church about the year 1596 (Harl. Coll. Codex, 286):—

"I.H.S.

Edward Fleetwood, parson of Wigan, I heire of yor Invious Hereticall words againste our Feathe that I canot stay my pen from writing vnto youe to commande youe to leaffe blasfeminge againste thees our Catholike Feath, oe eles yow will drink of Joudas sope, moreover if yor hereticall mind will not be stayed against or Feathe I must nide acounte yow worse then the Revinge Souldeerse than Persequted Christe, for they would never stint vntell they had Christ for to persequt him, therefore I must nide acount yow one of these becauc you will never stintt vntell that you have persequted the poore Catholicke. And again it is very onnaturall a speretual man so to forswere himself in so indetinge so many of yor town wiche ar as good Goers to the Churche as you are, therefore I must nide Acount you worse than Jou, or turks, or Infideile. I worse then a doupe thinge In so For swer Ringe yor self, I if tyme and plase did so requer I could so proff it therfor Rest with this and be contented, and I will writ vnto you her After.

G. C.

Indorsed,
Lre incercepted Pap."

The burgesses determined that the town should not be despised by foreigners, whose business brought them hither. The Court Leet specially investigated the condition of taverns and hotels, for it was seemingly a common complaint that strangers had bad accommodation in them, as if the landlords were eager only to grasp the stranger's money without concerning themselves about the comfort of the guests. Where ale was sold it was generally understood that beds could be had, and often the weary stranger sat imbibing his refreshing glass, and only inquired for his place of repose when too late to go farther abroad, and, rather than stir out, would huddle his languid body in any out-of-the-way corner. To prevent such inhospitable abuse the court directed that no ale should be sold where four men and four horses could not be accommodated, and thus the hotel accommodation was so much improved that the town became noted for its good inns. In all the taverns of Wigan, and

there were not a few, a custom prevailed at this period which afterwards gave rise to one of the most common and expressive proverbial sayings still existing in our own time. The habit, of course, was not confined to Wigan. Drinking-cups were made of horn or wood, and when a jovial party went into a tavern it was neither the wish of the company to have, nor was it in the power of the landlord to give, each individual a cup. To drink out of the same flowing bowl was considered a token of sincere friendship: to refuse so to drink was a declaration of enmity. There was a vertical row of pegs at regular intervals on the cup, each distance representing a certain share of the entire liquor. To each drinker was allotted the portion between one peg and another, as the loving-cup passed round each drained his draught by bringing the contents down a peg—a feat that old cronies could accomplish to a nicety by one great gulp—and thus gave rise to the common saying, "Bring him down a peg," applied to conceits who aim at riding the high horse.

In 1585 William Banks purchased the estates of Winstanley Hall, which remained in possession of his direct male heirs until 1800. The Winstanleys of Winstanley were first mentioned in 43 Edward III. The pedigree is among the Harleian MSS. and Visitations. One of the last of the Winstanley Hall family on record was one of the poor Windsor knights. The hall was rebuilt in 1618 (Gregson). Peter Leigh, member for Wigan in 1586-7, was the son-in-law of Sir Gilbert Gerard, and owned the estates of Bradley and Haydock, in Lancashire, and Lyme, in Cheshire. He was knighted in 1598, represented Cheshire in 1601, and died 17th February, 1636.