

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Monasteries and Grammar Schools—Wigan Scholars of the 10th Century—Wigan Grammar School Wranglers—Old Documents connected with the Wigan Grammar School—Old Head Masters and Ushers—The Masters Publicly Admonished—Salaries—First Wigan Bookseller—A Bookseller's Petition—The Mayor and Aldermen of 1613—Foundation of the Grammar School—The Bequest of 1596 to the School—Wigan Charities—The Mayor and the School—Lynacre's Library—Subjects Taught—Schoolmasters—School Life—Book of Sports—Petition of the Inhabitants against Abuses in Grammar School—Rules and Regulations.*

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**M**ONASTERIES had been established all over the country in quiet, secluded glens, in their own extensive demesnes, and in the busy towns. Their cloisters were the only important schools and colleges: their monks were the friends of the poor and the schoolmasters of the rich. Although the sons of noblemen received their primary education from private tutors, youths generally were only educated with a view to entering the Church, and the students were scribes or clerks, who, in the *Scriptorium*, or writing-room, spent the greater part of their time writing, on parchment whose borders they beautifully designed and illuminated, portions of Scripture or classics, which were sold at a very great price. There were few grammar schools before the Reformation. Although the exact date of the foundation of the Wigan Grammar School is unknown, it certainly did not exist in 1536 as a grammar school, for there were then only three in the county, viz., Farnworth (1507), Manchester (1515), Warrington (1526). Nevertheless, prior to this, there was in Wigan, just beside the walls and on the site of the first grammar school, a scholastic institution, apparently of no mean repute, called the Wigan College. From 1536 to 1539 no less than 3,219 religious edifices and scholastic establishments, raised by cunning artificers, were laid in ruins; but whether it was at this time or before that the Wigan College was destroyed cannot be ascertained, but one thing is certain, that its ruins were still to be seen in the reign of Henry VII., at which time Wigan, then one of the best and most prosperous towns in the county, was without a school, or, at least, a proper school-house.

In all likelihood the Wigan College had been a prosperous school, and no doubt its destruction or disuse was much felt. Several Wiganers, at this period, purely on account of their previous education, were holding high positions in the learned world, and two promising lads from Wigan were registered on the rolls of the Merchant Taylors' School, London, although they may have been nominated by mercantile relatives who had successfully established themselves in the metropolis; yet, according to the school rules, they must first have passed a satisfactory preliminary examination. One of the most distinguished lawyers of his time was Sir Gilbert Gerard, the favourite Master of the Rolls and Attorney-General of Queen Elizabeth. James Gerard, of Ince, was his father. He was M.P. for Wigan in 1553, knight of the shire in 1585, and died 4th February, 1592-3. John Woolton, or Wolton, Bishop of Exeter, mentioned elsewhere, was a Wigan boy, who entered at Brasenose College, Oxon, when he was eighteen years of age (1553). The books at the school of the Merchant Taylors have these entries of admission:—

1587. May 31. Hugh Bullock, son of John, of Wigan, co. Lanc., husbandman.

1649. Ralph Walker, eldest son of Ralph Walker, of Holland, in parish of Wiggan, co. Lanc., yeoman, born 2nd June, 1639.—(MS. at Sion College, London).

Of the pupils in the Wigan Grammar School who have most distinguished themselves at college have been Mr. Cowling and Mr. Finch, who was each in his year senior wrangler.

The Mayor of Wigan in 1613 was Peter Marsh, and the twelve aldermen were the Earl of Derby, Sir Thomas Gerard, Knt., Sir T. Holcroft, Knt., Roger Bradshaw, Miles Gerard, James Banks, William Banks, William Forde, Ed. Chaloner, William Gardiner, Humphrey Matthew, and Robert Barrow. In the same year the Grammar School was built and endowed, although it certainly had been founded before that date, and was only then privileged with special school premises, or re-built. In all likelihood what had formerly been styled the Wigan College had resolved itself into the Wigan Free Grammar School. The earliest extant document in connection with it is written in contracted Latin, which is almost illegible. It is dated 1596. After the destruction of the monasteries and the introduction of printing the want of education was much felt. Books were, comparatively speaking, plentiful, but few were able to read them. Men who had acquired wealth, and knew the great drawbacks consequent on being uneducated, endowed or contributed to the endowment of schools for the education of deserving poor, where, at the same time, others might be educated on payment of fees. Printing was introduced into England in the reign of Edward IV. by William Caxton, who himself wrote or translated and printed not less than sixty works, so that for over a hundred years the craving for acquiring the art of reading had been steadily and rapidly

growing. Schools were established all over the country, and in 1613 the first Grammar School proper was built and endowed in Wigan by Banks, Bullock, and Mollineaux, and some feoffees of the town. The foundation of Wigan Grammar School is generally ascribed to James Leigh, who certainly gave money for its support in 1619, but in his deed the school is distinctly spoken of as an already existing institution, to the funds of which he added his contribution. The donations to the school at this period were very considerable, but altogether inadequate to make a substantial endowment. All deeds and testimonies tend to prove that it was in existence during the sixteenth century, but the actual date of its foundation is a mere conjecture. There is no mention made of it amongst the documents concerning the old Lancashire Grammar Schools, now in the Corpus Christi College, Oxford; but this is no proof of its non-existence, for even of some schools, which certainly did then exist, no mention is made. The bequest in 1596 was a message of land in Aspull, named Backshaw, or Backshaigh, by James Banks, Esq., of Winstanley, to Francis Sherrington, of Worsley. The latter gentleman, by deed dated 1597, passed over the same property for the benefit of the Grammar School to the Mayor, William Gardiner, and other gentlemen, as trustees. To these trustees for a nominal sum he "did grant, confirm, and deliver" a yearly rent of 53 shillings and fourpence for the benefit of the Grammar School. This estate contained 15 acres 2 roods of land, which were sold in 1812 to Robert Holt Leigh, Esq., of Whitley, for £2,930 7s., which was paid the governors of the school, together with the expenses for obtaining the special Act of Parliament required, making the sum total paid to the governors £3,796. These documents of 1596-97, which I have seen, do not mention these properties as about to be given for the benefit of the Grammar School, but as the acknowledged possessions of an established and recognised school. On this Grammar School document of 1596, by the way, is the name William Gardiner, mayor; further back than this no mayor is known. There is in the present school a long black oak school-desk, rudely carved by many an idle pupil or neglected genius, bearing the inscription by a skilled carver, "1616. James Ford, Mayor." James Ford was mayor in that year, and the likelihood is that this desk—being a school-desk—was purposely made as a gift for the Grammar School, perhaps, because James Ford himself was an old Grammar School boy, and was justly proud of being so. There were in all eleven gentlemen of this family mayors of Wigan, but in the churchwarden's accounts, and in other documents where I have seen their signatures, the name is invariably spelled *forde*.

One of the oldest documents which I have seen amongst those in the possession of the governors of the Grammar School is dated 12th October, 39th Elizabeth (1597). It is an indenture, in which the lands and other possessions then actually belonging to

the school, and not then for the first time being acquired, are specified. It is chiefly valuable as a relic which proves that the school actively existed in the sixteenth century. Of this early period nothing but deeds and indentures remain. No books seem to have been kept. The receipts and disbursements of that time are unknown, perhaps because the governors, like the churchwardens, could not write. The minute book of the feoffees or governors, which contains some interesting local information, is only preserved from 1650. These meetings seem only to have taken place when a master or usher was required. The salary of the upper master was £30, increased to £48 a year, with a house and other perquisites, which amounted to very little; the under master or usher received £10 a year. With a slight digression from chronological order, the names of a dozen of the early masters are here given. On the death of the head-master, Henry ffelden, the first master named in the minute books, Samuel Shawe was elected on May 27th, 1676. Sam was a noted character—not for drunkenness, which was the common failing of schoolmasters in times which are not yet ancient—but for his abilities as teacher, scholar, and citizen. He was honoured and revered by his pupils, and held in the very highest esteem by the feoffees and inhabitants. He had the *gift* of eccentricity, then considered a sign of true genius. He knew he was a scholar, and was proud of it. He was the Rev. Samuel Shawe. He knew he was esteemed in the town, and longed for an opportunity to prove he was worthy of admiration and an honour to the town of his adoption. Never maiden wished for a silk gown who did not at least obtain a sleeve of it, and Samuel Shawe saw his opportunity—his tide of fortune—in the visit of the bishop. He wrote a Latin poem of welcome, after the manner of the modern address. All the inhabitants knew what the scholar had done, and, dressed all in their best, they escorted in procession their highly delighted pedagogue to meet the approaching ecclesiastical dignitary. The bishop was pleased and surprised—for he so expressed himself in a letter written immediately afterwards—at the dramatic recitation and reception, and Shawe from that moment became a burghal god, for the inhabitants, of course, knew little of the qualities of the poem, and, therefore, admired it all the more. The head mastership of the Warrington Grammar School became vacant in 1686. Shawe's fame and ability were known there, and he was elected on the 16th March of the same year, and with the best wishes of the whole town for his welfare he left Wigan, and John Sumpner was appointed in his stead. He was master for seven years, during which time Richard Highfield was his usher. On the 5th August, 1692, James Liptrott was appointed to the mastership, and Thomas Ashurst was made usher, or master of the lower school. On the 16th June, 1694, two new masters were elected—Richard Duckworth, as head-master, and John Weaver, as usher. The

feoffees in 1710 came to the conclusion that Mr. Duckworth was too old and infirm to continue his duties, and at a public meeting it was resolved, with his consent, that another should be appointed. Mr. Shawe, of Warrington, was not yet forgotten, and the feoffees requested him to examine the candidates, and choose a master for them. At his recommendation William Ashburne was elected. A new usher, John Hooton, was chosen to assist him on November 5th, 1729. He was under-master for nineteen years—until his death. Richard Guest was then appointed for “the space of six months from the date hereof (13th April, 1748), and for such further time as he shall behave himself to the satisfaction of the said feoffees, or the major portion of them.” Mr. John Cowley succeeded William Ashburne as head-master on the 27th July, 1732. He was master until he died, 1753. Then, for the first time, a master was advertised for in the public papers—the “Generall Evening Post,” and in the Chester, Manchester, and Preston weekly papers. There were three candidates, including the usher, Mr. Richard Guest, who had had five years’ experience in the school. The other candidates were the head-masters of the schools in Waverham and Ormskirk. Mr. Samuel Robinson, of Ormskirk, was appointed 31st Dec., 1753.

On the 14th October of the following year James Acton was appointed usher, in place of Mr. Guest, resigned. The conduct of both masters was complained of by the inhabitants, and an indignation meeting of the feoffees was held in the New Town Hall, June 10th, 1760, “to consider of the complaints made by many of the inhabitants against Mr. Samuel Robinson and Mr. James Acton for breach of neglect of duty.” The *fifthly* resolution was—“That the head-master and usher have been guilty of a breach of the 15th statute by detaining the scholars in the school in the morning and former part of the day, till sometimes twelve or sometimes one of the clock, before they were dismissed to dinner, which occasioned great trouble and anxiousness to the parents and their family, and we order that the scholars shall not for the future be allowed to be absent from school, in order to go home to breakfast, as has been usual.” *Sixthly*—“That the head-master and usher be admonished by the feoffees of the school, that they do not for the future act contrary to the statutes of the school in any of the instances above mentioned, or otherwise, under pain of our displeasure.” This minute is signed Alex. Leigh, Mayor, and followed by the signatures of seven other feoffees. A note is appended, dated 11th June, 1760:—“The said schoolmaster and usher were this day admonished by the said feoffees, as above mentioned, in the presence of John Pennington, Town Clerk.”

Mr. Robinson resigned, and was succeeded on 7th July, 1764, by the Rev. William Stopford, of Salford; and on the 25th May, 1765, Mr. Stopford was succeeded by Mr. Page Godfrey. Great changes were contemplated in 1771 by the feoffees; on the 2nd of January of that year they reduced the salary of the head-master from £48 to

£40 a year, and added the deducted £8 to the usher's salary, so that he afterwards received £18 a year. On the 4th of March in the same year the Mayor and feoffees "do order, limit, and appoint that, for the future, no preference shall be given to any master, or bachelor of arts, graduate or under-graduate of Oxford or Cambridge, or other university whatsoever, and that all persons whatsoever shall for the future have an equal right to offer themselves as candidates for the said school." At that very same meeting they appointed as head-master the Rev. Mr. John Bennett, of Astley, M.A. Two years afterwards, 15th May, 1773, the Rev. Mr. John Croudson, of Winwick, was elected master.—(Old Minute Books in the possession of the Clerk to the Governors of Wigan Grammar School).

In the early days of the Grammar School there was no bookseller in the town. The few books required were kept in stock by the head master, the profits from which formed part of his perquisites. The first bookseller in Wigan was Edward Rigby, who in 1685 requested and obtained permission to commence that trade. His original petition to the Mayor, &c., and the reply is preserved in an interesting collection of similar petitions:—

"To the Worp<sup>th</sup> the Maior, Aldermen, Recorder, and Counsell of the Towne and Burrough of Wigan, in the County of Lancaster. These :

The humble petition of Edward Rigby, of Wigan aforesaid,  
Sheweth :

That the Petio<sup>r</sup> having bene freeman of the said Town for the space of twenty years last past or thereabouts, and your petio<sup>r</sup> humbly considering that to sell Books within the said towne may not onely tend to the advantage of y<sup>r</sup> Petio<sup>r</sup>. But be serviceable to the neighbourhood.

Humbly begs the favor of yo<sup>r</sup> W<sup>or</sup>sh<sup>ps</sup> to sell Books within the said Towne and Burrough, and yo<sup>r</sup> Petio<sup>n</sup> will ever pray, &c.

The following answer of the jury, in different handwriting, was given to the petition:—

Wee grant the pet<sup>r</sup> to sell Bookes to the free Grammar Schools of Wigan such books as shall be . . . . . (\*) Mr. Sumpner, Schoolm<sup>n</sup>. there the time or (in ?) value . . . . . (\*) thirty shillings in Books, &c.—(\* Here the MS. is destroyed.)

The following petition in connection with the same trade is taken direct from the minute book of the Court Leet for 1742:—

To the Worshipfull John Marckland, Gentleman, Mayor of Wigan, in the County of Lancaster and to the Alderman and Jury at the Court Leet there assembled, the fifth day of October, 1742.

The Humble Petition of Wm. Stewart, Son of James Stewart, of Ormakirk, in the County of Lancaster, Bookseller,

Sheweth :

That your Petitioner has served an Apprentisship with his said Father, and been well Educated in buying Books, papers, and all sorts things in the way and business of a Booksellar and Stationer; has been informed that such a person is much wanted in this your Corporation. Promises that he will deal honestly and fairly with his customers, sell his goods at reasonable rates and prices, has no family, and is in good Circumstances.

Therefore your Petitioner humbly prays you Gentlemen of Jury that you would be pleased to elect him a freeman of this your Corporation, he being willing to pay such sum of money for his freedom as you shall think proper.

And your Petitioner, as in duty bound, shall ever pray, &c

The verdict of the jury was:—

We elect him a Freeman of this Corporation, he paying Five pounds Five shillings in a Month's time to the present Bailiffs.

The modern charities of Wigan are few and far between, although by no means insignificant. The burgesses of the middle ages were as philanthropic in their life, and as benevolent by their last wills and testaments, as the burgesses of any Lancashire town, when compared with the urban prosperity. In many cases the charities were small, but even then they were no mean moiety of the testator's "estates," and, besides, Wigan property has not increased to fabulous prices, as in many other towns. For a long period, during the very best commercial modern times of this country, Wigan had its full share of profitable monetary concerns, but the local government was neither energetic nor ambitious, and whilst other less prosperous towns with aspiring councils were not only beautifying their towns, enlarging their commercial facilities, and attending to the sanitary laws, but increasing their means of production, Wigan was content to make money, live up to its income, without enlarging or even securing the prosperity of the future. It was satisfied to reap abundantly without sowing generously. Because the unanimous public spirit was faint-hearted, wealth was heaped into the laps of a few capitalists, who decamped to more congenial climes to share those improved comforts which their own town had neglected, and thus, when the reaction came and bad times set in, Wigan stood as it was before its prosperity, while neighbouring towns from the very midst of their distress could look proudly on the improvements and increased importance of their station. Thus was the ancient town left behind in the race of urban prosperity, although its natural position and advantages were more conducive to prosperity than even those of Manchester, which is now a city to be proud of, though once insignificant in comparison with Wigan. It has been even more conservative in its progress than in its politics. In the 17th century many charities were bestowed on it which, had the town's prosperity been pushed and established, like that of others, would now have been worth fabulous sums compared with the original principal. The charities of Leigh, Markland, Guest, Sixsmith, Ford, Welles, Mason, Bullock, Molyneux, and others of the 17th century are, instead of producing enormous amounts, little more valuable according to the difference of money than they were at their foundation. Some charities have indeed been altogether lost, such as those of Sale (1722), Baldwin (1726), and Forth (1761).

Money is the representative of wealth, and can never be equally distributed. There is no fixed law, method, or certain road by which it can inevitably be obtained. Birth neither insures its stability nor increase, intellectual ability by no means guarantees it, and even commercial prosperity honestly gained and conducted, is liable to woful interruptions and failures. Affluence is not the infallible result of perseverance, nor one of the freaks of fortune and luck. Money and benevolence are not natural allies. Gold may be but the useless hoards of the miser who has no sympathy with his fellow-men, or the property of him whose only wish is to be rich. Many have toiled to be rich, with the noble intention of sharing their wealth with the poor, and yet have been so fascinated by the luxuries of acquired wealth that their former ideas of charity have given place to tyranny over poverty. Yet there have been many poor persons, in modern and ancient Wigan, who have shared their scanty crumbs with beggars who could not requite them, and rich men who, from the same philanthropic motives, have given their own comforts as luxuries to the poor. Often in the ancient and loyal borough has the "one touch of nature" moved the rich to provide for the wants of the poor both in their life-time and by their legacies. The motive, not the amount of money, is the measure of philanthropy. There are townsmen now who often bestow more charity than Bullock or any of the old charity founders did at their death, and yet their deeds are not heard of; but the relative value of money now and then, as well as incomes and capitals, is very different. Those philanthropic forefathers of Wigan knew the comforts of wealth and education, and said, not merely "God bless you" to the poor, but clothed and fed them, and thus lured them as it were from poverty to happiness by their Christian acts. The poverty of the town was remarkably great, and the misery and want of education must have made the lives of the poor a burden to themselves. Children grew up even ignorant of their letters, and, like their fathers, could neither read nor write. Pictures and images were the only substitutes for books, and these could only be seen in the parish church, and there were few there. The children of the rich might be taught to read and write at great expense, but there was no school for the poor, and lads, naturally intelligent and quick, received no scholastic education, but by their innate abilities became apt scholars in the evil ways of the world. Wealthy burgesses sometimes combined to pay for the services of a tutor, who could do little more than read and write; but the poor little ragged Arabs of the town, intelligent sons of intelligent workmen, had from an early age to work for their living without any education or knowledge of books.

There were no poor's rates until after the Reformation. Doles were given to the poor at the parish church, where also were kept, *pro bono publico*, spits, polls,

and other articles for dressing provisions, as well as the inevitable box for receiving collections from the benevolent for the benefit of the poor. The parish church was the rendezvous of lads and lasses, merry-makers, philanthropists, and the poor, as well as the sacred house of prayer and praise.

When Bullock had already seen some of the good effects of his scholastic charity, he bequeathed by will, dated the 25th of July, 1618, "five messuages in Mincing-lane, in the parish of St. Dunstan-in-the-East (London) and a messuage in the parish of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, to Roger Bullock, of Wigan, his nephew, son of his brother, John Bullock, of Wigan, in fee, charging the messuage in St. Botolph's, called the Chalice and Shepherd, being the corner house, with an annuity of £20 to the Corporation of Wigan, towards the maintenance of the Free School there."—(Not. Cest., vol. II., part II., page 251, note, Bullock). Roger made up his will four months afterwards, and then settled the annuity on the Wigan Corporation, although his widow retained her dower out of the premises. John Bullock, doubtless of the same family, was Mayor in 1640.

Whatever be the exact date of the foundation, there can be no doubt of the intentions of the founder or founders. It was instituted and endowed for the better educating and bringing up of youth and for the increase and advancement of true religion, virtue, and good manners. The scholastic laws, of Puritan strictness, were written out in a clear, bold hand, and by order of the Mayor and Corporation hung where they might be read. Master and usher were the servants of the Mayor for the time being. The Mayor was *le grande maître* of the school. The head-master had to be a graduate or undergraduate of some Protestant university, had to submit to an examination as to his fitness before the Bishop of Chester, and had to accept this post at a salary of £30 a year under the condition of a six months' trial. For £30 a year he had to give proof of his being sober and discreet, well skilled and experienced in school-learning and in original languages. He had to be able to speak Latin, for the elder boys were compelled to do the same in school hours on pains and penalties. He dared not accept any other employment, or absent himself from his duties without an *excuse* from the Mayor. Strange candidates must have been in the scholastic field in those days, for it was necessary for the governors to provide that the principal should be dismissed if he were detected of *notorious* licentiousness, such as *common* swearing, drunkenness, a common haunter of alehouses and taverns, or otherwise scandalous. Yea, they enacted that no schoolmaster or usher (at £10 a year) should keep any alehouse, or tavern, or house of gaming, or other unthriftiness or evil rule. If the head-master or usher were found to be infected with horrible, loathsome, or contagious disease, he was to be at once dismissed, but with a charitable relief as a pension, which was, no

doubt, a very small moiety of the £30 or £10 salary. The head-master had constantly to reside on the premises, and be specially careful of the books left as a library to the school by Dr. Lynacre. The dust had to be beaten from their sacred boards once every week. No holiday, except the ordained ones, could be given without the Mayor's special leave. If any grumbling or brainless parents, ignorant perhaps of their own trades, much more of the schoolmaster's important vocation, complained of the treatment of a spoilt or stupid son, the case had to be referred to the Mayor. If any scholar struck, spurned, or abused the master or usher, evidence of the facts had to be given before the Mayor before the pertinaciously bad boy could be expelled. The Mayor was literally the master of the school. Children who were toiling for their living had to work not less than twelve hours a day, and had only Sunday as a day of rest, but the Grammar School boys had only to attend eight hours a day, from seven to eleven in the morning, and from one to five o'clock in the afternoon; but they had also to attend on Sundays, go to the Parish Church, be therein catechised by the rector or his curate, and again be questioned on the service on Monday morning at school. A special rule enacted that no scholar should be allowed to go home to breakfast. No pupils were admitted who were not fit to be instructed in grammar. Grammar Schools were not meant to give mere mercantile education in, nor a common smattering of reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic, but for a good fundamental, classical education in the literature of languages. In Wigan the master was to read and teach classical authors, chaste and clear, in order to grammatical learning and knowledge of the tongues, choosing for his authors Tully, Cassius, Salust, and Livy, with what others were used in the best schools for prose, and for verse Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and Terence; and in Greek he was to use the Greek Grammar, Greek Testament, Socrates, Zenophon, or such books as were usually used in the best schools. Special care was to be taken in the training of the pupils in good manners and decent deportment, and masters were required to punish the crimes of swearing, cursing, lying, drunkenness, filthiness, or obscene talking or bellowing, and were specially to see that the Lord's day was kept without profanation, both in and out of church.

No man could keep a public or private school without a special licence from the Bishop, by whom the candidate's character, ability, and religion were scrutinised. The law was that "No man shall teach either in public or private school but such as shall be allowed by the bishop of the diocese or ordinary of the place, under his hand and seal, being found meet as well for his learning and dexterity in teaching as for sober and honest conversation, and also for right understanding of God's true religion."

There were few schoolmasters in olden times who believed in gentle moral suasion. Thieves and robbers look on modern policemen as their born enemies, and such was the feeling of pupils to masters. Boys were apparently the very epitome of evil, and masters the only demons who could rule them, and that only with fear, flattery, and the lash. One would think all the evils of human nature were concentrated in the young mind; that these had all to be uprooted, the mental soil prepared by rude cultivators on the flesh, and then the seminary required to sow the seeds of sense and usefulness, change the young rascal into a human being, train him up in the way he ought to walk, and turn him out a perfect man with a complete education. Some masters were pedagogic despots who, with frowning countenance in the morning, shed a dark melancholy over the bright animal spirits which tried to sparkle with joy, as if they had forgotten and forgiven the cruelties of the previous day. Such a despot was too great a mortal to condescend to talk to ignorant youth with winning and persuasive tongue, and lads were so stupid and untrained that knowledge had to be driven into them with such emphatic language as gentlemen would not apply to dogs. He was king in his own domains, and a tyrant under whose rule the urchins trembled in their shoes. All feared, but none respected or loved him. Affection was left at the door, like the mud on the mats from their little feet. If he was to be seen in the streets, instead of a happy and welcome recognition the lads changed their minds, and went another way, like a debtor from his solicitous tailor. If by some strange chance he visited the parents, the boys crouched silently and tremblingly in the corner, as if wishing he would, yet fearing lest he should, cane even his father and mother. But this inhuman strictness only made spirited youth more boisterous and mischievous when occasion offered, just as too Calvinistically brought up children run wild in revelry when they are set out in life. If they were thus unruly in stolen moments, what must have been their wild riotous pleasure in the legitimate custom of barring out the master. This was a custom allowed even by the deeds of the endowment in many schools, and was looked forward to by the boys with greater glee than if it were a holiday. Under the captaincy of the head boy, on a special day, generally before Christmas, books were packed away, the army of pupils arrayed, and the master pushed roughly or gently, according as he was a tyrant or favourite, to the door. Then all hands to work, forms and desks were piled one above the other behind the door, with the master's chair on the top. The door was barricaded, and the master barred out. Then there were wild revelry and lusty cheers. The head boy took the cane, and, in the middle of the ring of smiling pupils, broke it, and threw the pieces to be further broken by the younger furies. The room was like a den, in which the leader was the lion, and the others

the untamed cub. In a few minutes was heard the knocking at the door, and everyone, knowing well it was the exiled master, called out, "Who's there?" "It is I; open, you rogues!" the master would call in pretentious fury, but they were masters of the situation, and would only open conditionally, like the infuriated barons and people of England of whom they had been daily reading, who would not grant the supplies until royalty signed some charter. The conditions were that all past and present offences should be forgiven, and on no others would the door be opened. Evasive answers would be made, but in vain, and at last, like a poor benighted suppliant at the gates of a monastery, he would feebly yield to the conditions, and be admitted, with three hearty good cheers, no punishments for that day, and the usual routine commenced. This was a custom not at all confined to Lancashire grammar schools, but was general in the kingdom.

Fleetwood, in his day, had laboured zealously to purify his parish, and that with great success, for he had strenuously put down the scandalous scenes by which the Sunday was desecrated; but the influence of a corrupt example at Court was by no means easy to withstay. The king had made his south-western tour, and observed the Calvinistic solemnity of Sunday, and, thinking to win the favour of the people, published his "Book of Sports," by which he granted them leave to desecrate the holy day, for was he not Lord of the Sabbath, being appointed king by divine right. He ordered his book to be read in all churches, which was accordingly done by Mr. Bridgeman, in the Parish Church, fourteen years after the death of Mr. Fleetwood, and three years after Mr. Bridgeman had been presented to the living by the king. Many clergymen and Archbishop Abbot himself refused either to read it or allow it to be read. All quietly disposed persons were shocked at the proclamation, and the evilly disposed became licentious to an extraordinary degree, being like wild animals let loose after being long cooped up. The Book of Sports, so offensive to all well disposed persons, authorised as lawful recreations, after morning divine service, "dancing by both sexes, archery for men, leaping and vaulting, May games, Whitsun-ales, and morris dances;" but as if to limit license itself "bull-baiting, bear-baiting, interludes, and bowling" were denounced as unlawful, ungodly, and therefore prohibited by the divine appointed king. Thus the work of the Ecclesiastical Commission under Lord Derby in 1579 was undone. That commission had issued a mandate against pipers and minstrels, making and frequenting bear-baiting and bull-baiting on the Sabbath days or upon any other days, and also against superstitious ringing of bells, wakes and common feasts, drunkenness, gaming, and other vicious and unprofitable pursuits. To these must be added the ordinary sports of the Grammar School boys. One corner of the playground was specially sacred and memorable to many generations—the tennis

court. It was there that new comers had to decide whether they were brave boys or bullies by an honest stand-up fight within a ring formed by their gleeful fellow pupils. Such school fights were common not only in Wigan, but at all good schools up to the middle of the present century, when they justly began to be discountenanced, and are now almost affairs of the past.

The Grammar School was founded for the free education of the poor, and endowed that the master's salary should be assured. Although a free school, the number of free scholars was limited, and the master received his salary whether he had pupils or not. The certified stipend had the effect of procuring an able master, superior to any who might be sufficiently venturesome to devote a lifetime as a labour of love for the chance pence of the pupils, and thus, in addition to the free pupils, the better classes, for there was little caste in towns in those days, paid for their sons being educated there. The paying far outnumbered the free pupils, and by and by the claims of the poor, with the improvements of the age, seemed to be overlooked altogether, and the fees so augmented as practically to close the doors against the poor altogether. In short the institution was monopolised by the rich, whose sons received a classical and commercial education at the lowest possible fees, which were far beyond the means of the poor. The people grumbled, but did nothing until the 11th January, 1838, when a petition was drawn up, signed by 683 inhabitants, and presented to the Mayor and Council, reminding them of their duties as guardians of public trusts and custodians of charities, and drawing their attention to the necessity "of taking immediate steps to abolish the unjust monopoly connected with the management of the Wigan Free Grammar School, and to urge upon the Council, as the real reformers of abuses, the propriety of opening the school for the benefit of those for whom the original founders intended it, viz., the poor, and express regret that the Council, as the guardians of the rights of the people, should so long have overlooked an object of such vital importance to the present and to every future generation."

As the Statutes, Constitutions, and Orders of the Grammar School have never before been printed, I here give a copy of them. The first twenty-eight of them were first drawn up in 1664, and those, with the two added in 1711 and 1720 respectively, were exhibited in a prominent part of the old school in Rodney Street, until scholastic work ceased in those premises.

STATUTES, constitutions, and orders made and appointed by the Mayor of the Corporation of Wigan, in the county of Lancaster, by the advice and consent of all the feoffees, intrusted for the Free Gramar Schoole there for and concerning the honest qualities, manners, and learning; as also the election, admission, expulsion, displacing, manner of teaching, houres of teaching, and all other things whatsoever

concerning the rule and government of the schoolemasters and schollers of the aforesaid schoole, as followeth. Aug. 9th, Ano. Dom. Caroli Scdi, Ang. Scot, Franc et Hibern, Decimo Septo. Annoy Dom. 1664.

IMPRIMIS.—It is limited and ordayned that no person whatsoever shall be capable of being admitted to be principall or head-schoolemaster of the said Free Gramar Schoole, but such as have taken the degree of Master or Batchelor of Arts in one of the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, or some Protestant University elsewhere; or, if such cannot be procured, some undergraduate of the Universities aforesaid, or other sufficient well-qualified scholler, who is to be sober, discreet, and also well skilled and experienced in schoole learning and in the original languages, wherein they are to instruct their schollers. And to the end that they may be certaynly thus qualified, it is ordayned that, before the election of any master, his abilities aforesaid shall be tried by the Right Reverend Lord Bishop of Chester for the time being, or such other learned orthodox persons as the said Mayor of Wigan for the time being and the greater number of feoffees shall desire or appoint; and being very well satisfied of his sufficiency and integrity, the said principal, or head-maister, shall first be and remayne six months upon tryall in the said schoole, and then upon further approbation shall be confirmed principal master of the said Grammar Schoole, under the hands of the said Mayor of Wigan for the time being and the greater number of the said feoffees, at which time the said master shall subscribe a bond of £100 that he shall submit to the rules and orders of the schoole, and quietly depart from and leave the possession of the said schoole when the said Mayor of Wigan and the greater number of feoffees shall require.

SECONDLY.—It is ordayned that no person shall be capable of being admitted usher, or under-master, of the said Free School of Wigan but such as are of competent knowledge and learning, both in the Latin and Greek tongues, and so well qualified in school learning as may enable him to instruct the schollers in case of the head-master's absence; and that he shall be fit and capable, by reason of his learning and abilities, to be received and entertained in either of the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, and the tryall hereof to be before the said Reverend Lord Bishop of Chester for the time being, or such other learned orthodox persons as the said Mayor of Wigan for the time being and the greater number of feoffees shall desire and appoint.

THIRDLY.—It is ordayned that if any person or person so elected and appointed as master or usher shall be afterwards found insufficient or remissly negligent, or upon just occasion be detected of notorious licentiousness, such as comon swearing, whoring, drunkenness, a comon haunter of alehouses and taverns, or otherwise scandalous, or shall take upon him or them any other charge or employment, to the

hindrance of his or their performance of the duty of the said places that then they, the said Mayor for the time being and the greater number of the said feoffees, upon their own knowledge or assured evidence thereof, shall remove him or them, or either of them, found so obnoxious to good rule and government, and cease all further payments to him or them (save for the time he or they shall serve); and in their rooms elect and settle such other sufficient master and usher into the said places and employments, qualified as before mentioned, as they, the said Mayor and feoffees, shall think fitt.

FOURTHLY.—The schoolmaster and usher elected and appointed, as aforesaid, shall be constantly resident and attendant upon their trust; and if they be observed to be absent from the school at the times hereafter mentioned for his attendance, without the Mayor of Wigan's consent, and to neglect his due performance in the instructing and teaching of the schollers, so that upon complaint inquiry and examination it be found to be true by the said Mayor for the time being and the greater number of the feoffees; and thereupon the said master or usher being admonished, and no amendments imediatly follow, then the said Mayor and feoffees, upon three months' warning, shall remove them, and shall proceed to elect and settle other sufficient persons, qualified as before said, in their place and office; and if the master or usher at any time desire to depart for their preferment or otherways, they shall give three months' warning to the Mayor of Wigan, upon payne of forty shillings, to be deducted out of their wages, that so the schoole may not be disapointed of constant teaching.

FIFTHLY.—No schoolmaster or usher shall keep any alehouse or tavern, or house of gaming, or other unthriftiness or evil rule.

SIXTHLY.—The schoolmaster and usher shall not be absent from the school at one and the same time, that so the schollars may not be neglected.

SEVENTHLY.—It is ordayned that the schoolmaster for the time being shall have and receive the sum of thirty pounds per annum, and the usher ten pounds per annum, standing wages, to be paid quarterly, and the first payment to comence upon the twenty-ninth day of September next ensueing the date hereof.

EIGHTHLY.—The master shall take special care of the library now belonging to the school, or that shall hereafter be brought for the school; to have a perfect catalogue of them written in a book to be fixed to the desk, there always to remain, of all such books as are or shall be brought together, with the names of the authors and editions, together with the number of the volumes of every the said books, with the names of any future donors; and shall be ready to give a true and perfect account of the said library when the said Mayor for the time being and the feoffees shall require it; and that none of the said books (upon any pretence

whatsoever) shall be lent out or removed out of the said library at any time. And the master and usher for the time being shall from time to time appoint such or so many of the schollars as he or they know fitt to make use of the said library books, or so many of them as shall be usefull for their better profiting in their respective way of learning; and that none whosoever shall be suffered to write in, scratch on, or deface with pen or otherwise, any of the said books; and that once in a week, by the care and appointment of the master and usher, the dust shall be beaten and putt of the said books, and the like care to be taken by them for the preservation and good usage of them the aforesaid books, as by experience they shall find best, or otherwise shall be advised.

NINTHLY.—The master may grant part of a day, and no more, for recreation in a month, except it be by consent of the Mayor of Wigan for the time being, provided it be not on Friday (market day); and also each Thursday, in the afternoon, from three of the clock, in the summer half-year, and the whole Thursday afternoone in the winter half-year shall be a remedy for recreation; and for the winter half-year the school shall be continued, as now it is accustomed, till twelve of the clock.

TENTHLY.—If the master or usher be visited and infected with any horrible, loathsome, or contagious disease, he shall be removed by the Mayor and ffeoffees for time being, with some charitable relief out of the revenue of the said school, to be extended towards him at the discretion of the said Mayor and feoffees, and another meet person chosen in his stead that shall be removed.

ELEVEN.—The master or usher, upon the first meeting every morning, after a solemn prayer for God's blessing, shall cause a chapter to be read by any schollar he pleaseth to appoint; and before their departure in the evening they shall sing one of David's Psalms, or a part thereof, as the master or usher shall appoint, and then conclude with prayer and thanksgiving; and hereof the master and usher are injoynd to take care that these religious duties be duly and diligently performed and attended by the schollars as becometh such holy performances, to which end the master is to have a roll of all the schollars, which is to be orderly called over twice or thrice every week, that the absent schollars may be punished for their negligence, according as the master and usher judge meet.

TWELVE.—The master and usher shall take special care that all the schollars do constantly repair to the church every Lord's Day morning and afternoon, and other days set apart for God's worship, and be placed together in the church, with or neare unto the master and usher, if so there be, or hereafter shall be, any conveniency procured so to do, and that they decently and reverently behave themselves under the publick ordinances, and submit themselves to be publickly catechised, as the Rector of Wigan, or his curate, shall from time to time appoint. And that one

or more schollars be appointed to view and take notice of such schollars as shall absent or not decently behave themselves during the time of publick prayers and sermons; and that every Monday morning account shall be required by the master or usher of any so offending, who shall be corrected as the nature of the offence shall deserve. And it is further ordained that every Monday morning, after reading of the chapter, some short convenient time be spent by the master or usher, or both, in calling some schollars at one time, and some at another time, to give account of their profiting on the Sabbath Day before, and to the end that catechising, being of such singular use for the trayning up of youth in the knowledge of the oracles of God, may be the better carryed on that the master or usher, or both, shall spend one hour at the least every other Saturday throughout in catechising the schollars.

THIRTEEN.—The school shall break up six days before the Feast of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and three days before Easter and Whitsonday, and not sooner; and the master shall begin to teach after Christmas upon the next week day after the twelfth day, and after Easter upon the Monday next after Low Sunday, and after Whitsonside upon Monday after Trinity Sunday. Saturday, in the afternoon, with all holidays used in the Church of England, are to be allowed for the schollars' refreshment, as is accustomed.

FOURTEEN.—The master shall teach and read classical authors, chaste and clear, in order to gramatical learning and knowledge of the tongues, with a special regard to the Protestant religion, morality, and pure language, such as Tully, Caesar's Comentaries, Salust, and Livie, with what others are most used in the best of free schools for Prose. And for verse, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and Terence; for Greek, the Greek Gramar, Greek Testament, Socrates, addemoni, or Zenophon, his Tyrus, with such other authors for verse or Greek as are usually taught in the best schools.

FIFTEEN.—The hours of coming and departing from the school, from the 10th of March to the 10th of September yearly, shall be from seven of the clock in the morning to eleven, and from one of the clock untill five of the clock in the afternoon; and from the said tenth day of September untill the said tenth day of March from half an hour after seven of the clock in the morning (save about two months, when days are shortest, from eight) till eleven, and from one of the clock till three, four, or five of the clock in the afternoon, according as convenient daylight may fall out for the scholars going home. It being ordained that no candles shall be used in the school for teaching at any time.

SIXTEEN.—That no children that have upon them any *noysome* or infectious diseases shall during the same time be admitted, or if, after admission, any shall fall into such maladies, they shall be removed untill they are perfectly cured.

SEVENTEEN.—The master and usher shall have a special care to the good manners

and decent deportment of the scholars towards all persons, and shall exemplary punish all misdemeanors, especially the crimes of swearing, cursing, lying, drunkenness, filthy or obscene talking, or betting, reproaching or miscalling persons by foul language, gaming for anything of price, and in an especial manner shall diligently endeavour to see the Lord's Day kept free from any profanation (as much as in them lyeth), as well after as during the scholars being in the church.

**EIGHTEEN.**—All scholars, of what degree soever, are to submit to due correction from the schoolmaster or usher, which shall be promised by the parents at their admission and referred to the schoolmaster's discretion; and all stubborn or disobedient scholars that are pertinaciously or exemplary bad browbeating the master or usher, or offering to struggle with, strike, spurn, or abuse the master or usher when he or they are orderly correcting them for their faults after two admonitions, wherewith their parents or friends be acquainted that the third time be expelled the school, after due proof thereof made before the Mayor of Wigan and greater number of feoffees for the time being; and those parents that molest the schoolmaster against reason and order for correction of their children, their children shall be utterly expelled the school for ever, unless they can prove the correction unreasonable; and all schollars shall be obedient and ready to help the master or usher for the due and lawfull correction of any stubborn schollar they punish it.

**NINETEEN.**—No schollar shall bring to the school or wear any weapons neither shall any schollar make an *affray* upon his fellow-schollar, upon pain of severe correction from the master or usher; and if any schollar be a common quarrellor and setter of debate, and fighting amongst the schollars, and will not amend after correction and admonition by the master or usher, upon complaint from the master or usher to the Mayor of Wigan for the time being and the greater number of feoffees, and due proof made thereof, he shall be expelled the school.

**TWENTY.**—No schollar, being in health, shall be absent above six days together, and that with the master's allowance, and if he shall be longer absent after admonition of the schollar, or notice given to the parents or friends, unless in some extraordinary case and the master approveing the excuse, shall forfeit all priviledges in the school, unless the said Mayor of Wigan and greater number of feoffees for the time being, upon hearing the cause, do order re-admission upon promise from parents or friends that there shall be more constant attention upon the school for better profiting in learning.

**TWENTY-ONE.**—All schollars that have attained to such progress in learning as to be able to speak Latine, shall neither within school or without, when they are among the schollars of the same or a higher time, speak English, and that the master shall appoint which are the formes that shall observe this order of speaking

Latin, and shall take care that it be observed and due correction given to those that do neglect it.

**TWENTY-TWO.**—Each schollar shall be placed according to his progress in learning, and without partiality, preferred by the master according to his desert, and in case of injury offered herein by the master, there shall be appeal to the Mayor of Wigan and greater number of feoffees for the time being.

**TWENTY-THREE.**—That once in six weeks, or two months at the furthest, throughout the year, Saturday in the forenoon shall be spent by so many of the upper formes as shall be fitted for it in such exercises as these:—Construing of such authors of themselves as the master shall appoint; proposing of gramatical or historical questions one unto another, and making declarations; and such like exercises as may tend to the begetting of an emulation amongst the schollars in learning.

**TWENTY-FOUR.**—No schollar shall at any time with knife, or otherways whatsoever, cut or break the windows, wainscott, formes, seats, tables, desks, doors, or any other materials belonging to the school or library, the master, upon conviction of such offender or offenders, shall give him or them exemplary punishments.

**TWENTY-FIVE.**—The usher shall stand to the master's direction for method and order of teaching; also the master shall often examine the profiting of the schollars under the usher's teaching, and by himself (or if need be) by advice of the Mayor of Wigan and feoffees for the time being take course for regulating for what shall be amiss.

**TWENTY-SIX.**—The schollars' play shall be shooting in the long bow, running, leaping, and other harmless sports; but to avoid cards, dice, and other unlawful games, and betting openly or covertly, upon pain of extreme punishment.

**TWENTY-SEVEN.**—These statutes and orders fairly written shall be fixed upon a convenient place publicly in the said school, and the master shall cause them to be read or shewed to all such persons as offer children to be admitted schollars, and also shall openly read them in the school once in a quarter of a year, from time to time, that so none may plead ignorance; and if any parents or friends refuse to have their children or relations to observe these statutes and orders, or any of them, they are not to be admitted into the school.

**TWENTY-EIGHT.**—The Mayor of Wigan and the greater number of the feoffees for the time being, upon their apprehending defects in any statutes or orders herein comprised, and that other orders are necessary, and may further tend to the good of the said school, shall meet so often as shall be requisite (at least twice in every year) to inlarge, alter, change, in substance or words, what by experience and prudent counsel shall appear to be behooffull to the furtherance of literature and education of youth.

11TH JUNE, 1760.—Ordered further by the feoffees of the said school—first, that

the head-master shall not for the future take under his care and instruction any schollar or schollars who shall not be then fitt to be instructed in the grammar. And that no schoolmaster or usher shall hereafter teach or instruct any schollar or other person writing, or arithmetick in the school hours. And that the schollars shall not for the future be allowed to be absent from school in order to go home to breakfast.

2ND OCTOB., 1711.—That the usher shall not hereafter take upon him to teach and instruct any schollar or schollars, but that are learning in the Testament and books above.