

OLD MANCHESTER.

A SKETCH OF ITS GROWTH TO THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

By G. H. TUPLING. M.A., B.Sc., Ph.D.(Lond.)

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I

MANCHESTER as a commercial centre owes much to its situation at the convergence of valleys from the surrounding moorlands. Its origin as a human settlement was probably determined by the presence of sandstone bluffs which afforded dry refuges from floods and a convenient passage between the mosses on the west and the eastern hills. The rising ground near the mouth of the Medlock was the site of a Roman camp which commanded important routes from Chester to York and from Buxton to Ribchester and Wigan. Subsequently, a Saxon community grew up on the eminence which occupied the angle between the Irk and the Irwell. This vill in Norman times first appeared as part of the manor of Salford, but it soon figured as a separate lordship, and even as the head of a barony. Already, before Robert Grelley's charter of 1301, it had a market, a fair and a borough court. The lord's fulling mill, together with the names of dyers and tanners occurring in deeds of about the same time, prove that a textile industry had already taken root. Little more than a century later, the wealth of Manchester cloth merchants was providing the means whereby the extensive alterations and additions attendant upon the collegiation of the parish church were carried out; and while the manufacture of wool and linen continued to be the chief non-agricultural employment of the inhabitants, the basis of industry was being widened by the appearance of wrights, bladesmiths, goldsmiths and other craftsmen.

By the sixteenth century Manchester had established itself as the most important and progressive town in the county. Its linen fabrics, woven from yarn derived from

Ireland and the district round Preston and Samlesbury, were sold in the local markets, but its coarse, cheap and brightly coloured woollens were sent to London, Hull, Liverpool and Chester for export to France, Spain, Portugal and South America. The great London cloth market in Blackwell Hall had a "Manchester Hall" for Lancashire goods. Manchester men, like Edward Hanson, the mercer and grocer, who was boroughreeve in 1569, supplied London dealers on credit; others, like the Mosleys and the Sorowcolds, formed family partnerships with a buyer in Lancashire and a seller in the capital. The Chethams for four generations were successful clothiers and merchants; and the Act of 1541, which abolished the town's short-lived privilege of sanctuary, did not exaggerate when it stated that the inhabitants by their industry and trade had "obtained, gotten and come vnto riches and welthy livings."

From the position thus attained Manchester has never receded, though the character of its trade has undergone important changes. In the first half of the seventeenth century the output of coarse woollens declined. Their place was taken to some extent by a semi-worsted material called bays. Allied to linen was the new production of smallwares. A separate market for tapes, laces and thread had sprung up by 1603, and before long these commodities figured prominently among the "Manchester goods." Another new departure was the trade in fustians, which for nearly two centuries remained the staple of the British cotton industry.

Along with these changes came developments in the organisation of the Manchester trade. Local middlemen, like the Chethams, and Henry Wrigley of Salford, bought raw and spun cotton and linen yarn, supplied them on credit to weavers and small country employers in the villages round about, and purchased fustians and linens for sale in London and elsewhere; and though the weaving of woollen fabrics was now being localised in the eastern parts of the county, Manchester merchants controlled a large part of the dyeing, finishing and marketing of those materials. At the same time, smaller dealers, called chapmen, bought cloths of all descriptions for distribution in the markets and fairs all over England. In this way the foundations were laid of a textile metropolis. A writer in 1642 described this Lancashire commercial centre as "the very London of

those parts, the liver that sends blood into all the countries thereabouts."

This metropolitan character accounts for the comparatively insignificant population of the town at that time. Its commercial-importance then rested not upon a concentrated industrial proletariat, but upon a widely diffused community of textile workers not yet wholly divorced from agrarian pursuits. Most of the spinning-wheels and looms which supplied the wares of the Manchester traders were plied by farmers and agricultural labourers and their women-folk, or by landholding clothiers, in the surrounding villages. Even in Manchester itself most of the houses seem to have had land attached, and the general appearance of the town was much like that of a village of to-day. There was nothing of that close network of streets which we are nowadays accustomed to associate with an urban centre. In its most populous parts there were considerable open spaces, as in the triangle formed by Fennel Street, Hanging Ditch and what is now called Cathedral Street, or in the irregular quadrangle enclosed by Fennel Street, Toad Lane and the upper part of Long Millgate. The actual number of inhabitants is unknown, but it can scarcely have exceeded 4,000—5,000 by 1650.

A plan which has come down to us represents the arrangement of the streets at that date. It shows the principal part of Manchester as lying closely within the angle of the Irk and the Irwell, with the church and the college as the two most prominent buildings. Both these appeared very much as they do to-day, though in the case of the church little of the original stone of the exterior remains. Due south of the church lay the Market Place, in the centre of which were the Booths. This building, which appears on the plan as an extensive block surrounding a courtyard, was a permanent wooden structure at which the tolls were collected; but, like the Tolbooth of Preston and the Common Hall of Liverpool, it was also the centre of municipal life, for in it were held the lord's court, the Quarter Sessions and other public meetings. In the open area south of it was the corn market, held round the Conduit, which, constructed about a hundred years previously, was to remain the chief water supply of the town for a hundred years longer. Through the munificence of Isabella Beck, the fountain was supplied

by means of pipes from springs near the top of the present King Street and Spring Gardens. On the north side of the Booths were the Shambles, occupying rather more space in those days than the narrow passages which now perpetuate the name. East of the fleshboards stood the Market Cross, with the pillory and stocks close by.

Of the two exits from the Market Place towards the church, that on the right was Old Millgate, then called the Mealgate, the way to the lord's mealhouse at the eastern

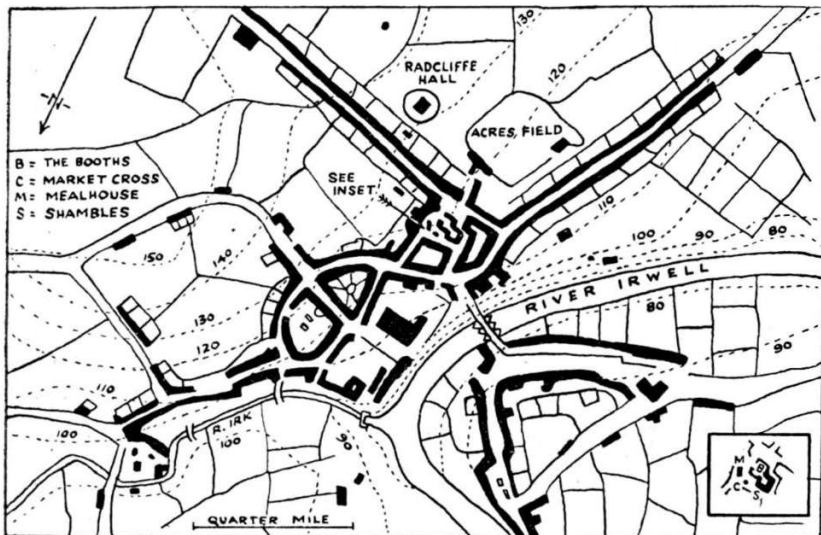


FIG. 1.

G.B.

Plan of Manchester—Salford.
About 1650 A.D.

end of the Booths. On the left, passing by the Shambles, was Smithy Door, an important thoroughfare giving access to Salford Bridge by Smithy Door Bank and a flight of steps. Just beyond the bridge, emptying into the Irwell from Shudehill, was an open ditch or sewer, whose name, the Hanging Ditch, is still borne by a street which marks part of its course. Across this stream, leading into the churchyard from Smithy Door, was the Hanging Bridge, whose fifteenth century arches still exist beneath the buildings of Hanging Bridge Passage. The watercourse is now a culvert, but at the date of our map, and for at least a century before, Hanging Ditch was a "Kinges highe waye." The only

passage for vehicles, however, was along the channel bed, and even in the eighteenth century wheeled traffic had to pass "through a wash-way so narrow that only one cart could pass at once"; pedestrians walked on a "raised causeway, guarded by battlements to prevent them from falling into the water." Alongside the upper course of the ditch was Withingreave. The modern spelling, "Withy Grove," does not occur in the seventeenth century, but it preserves the probable derivation of the name from "within,"

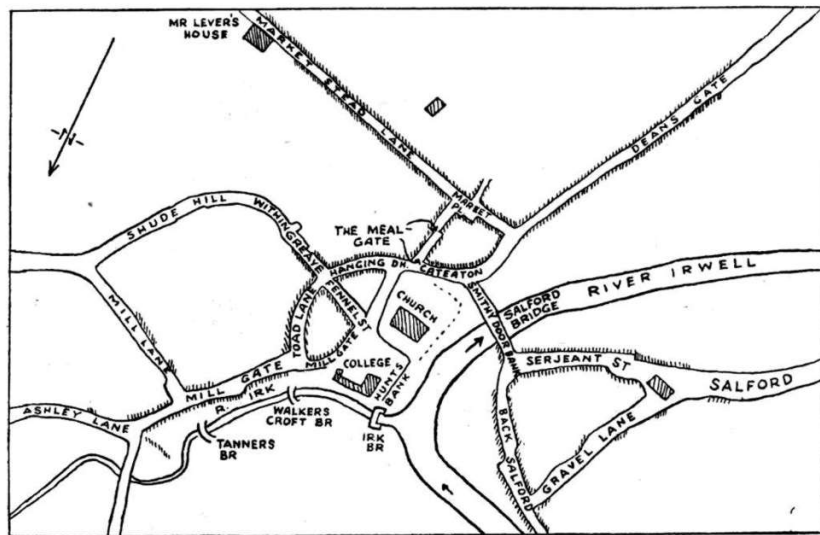


FIG. 2.

G.B.

Explanation Diagram to Fig. 1.

an ancient dialectal word for "willow," and thus reminds us of the one-time rural character of the lane. In 1650 the further end of Withingreave and its continuation, Shudehill, were bordered by green hedgerows.

The circuit round the church was continued in Toad Lane, part of which survives in Todd Street, and which was then sometimes called Crooked Lane. It debouched into a longer and even more sinuous thoroughfare, Millgate, or the Milnegate. The epithet "Long" was a later addition to distinguish this road from Mealgate, which had got corrupted to Millgate. Leaving the churchyard at Fennel Street, the Millgate proper proceeded to the left bank of the Irk, up which it wound in a devious course past the lord's mills on the way to

Cheetham and Blackley. Though houses lined the route on both sides, gardens and fields lay beyond them, both down to the river and up towards Shudehill.

At the lower end of Millgate stood Hugh Oldham's Free School, adjoining the gatehouse of the College. The old Baron's Hall had not yet been converted into the Hospital and Library, although its purchase had already been contemplated by the founder. During the Civil War and the Commonwealth its repair had been so neglected that much expenditure was necessary before the Bluecoat boys could enter into residence. Between the College and the Irwell ran Hunt's Bank, whence a narrow path along the sandstone cliff in front of the church led back to Salford Bridge.

On the southern side of the town there were two projections, which prove that ribbon development of urban areas is a feature not peculiar to the present age. That running south-south-west along the line of the ancient Roman road to Chester was probably the oldest thoroughfare in the town. The origin of its name, Deansgate, has exercised the ingenuity of antiquaries without conclusive result, but its early ecclesiastical associations are commemorated in the neighbouring street names—St. Mary's Parsonage and College Land. Tenements and burgrave gardens extended nearly as far as Peter Street. Behind them lay open country, representing the arable fields of the medieval vill, long since enclosed. Upon one enclosure, Acres Field or Four Acres, was held the annual September Fair, and in later times, if not in 1650, the tolls on the cattle and horses admitted were collected at a narrow entrance from Deansgate called Toll Lane.

The other projection stretched east from the Market Place as Market Stead Lane or Market Street Lane. Here the habitations extended continuously nearly as far as the present High Street, again with fields behind them. The isolated house on the north side was a residence of the Levers of Alkrington, from whom this part of the lane later derived the name Lever's Row. Higher up on the opposite side, where are now the flags in front of the old Infirmary site, it is thought that the Daubholes already existed, left by the extraction of clay needed for plastering timber buildings. In later years the Daubholes was used as the Ducking Pond. At the period of which we are speaking, "lewd women and

scolds" were ducked in the Horsepool, which Ogden informs us was situated lower down the lane near High Street. Prior to that, the place of immersion was a pool believed to be the remnant of the moat surrounding Radcliffe Hall.

Writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have given us their impressions of the town as they found it. Leland, who visited Manchester about 1536, described it as "the fairest and best builded . . . town in all Lancashire." About fifty years afterwards Camden declared that it surpassed the neighbouring towns in elegance, while a description, said to have been annexed to the plan just examined, informs us that the streets were open and clean kept and the buildings good. The attractive picture thus presented is not altogether supported by contemporary records, though allowance must be made for the primitive standards of the time. As we shall see, the thoroughfares remained dangerously narrow till the nineteenth century, and even in the seventeenth there is ample evidence to show that they were badly congested on market days. They were mostly unpaved, and presentments for obstructions and nuisances on the highways formed a large part of the business of the local court. Almost every building was constructed of timber and plaster. The houses of the poorer sort must have been mere hovels, with thatched roofs, tiny windows and earthen floors. The better class of dwellings and shops, however, with their curious black-and-white patterns, their mullioned or latticed windows, their overhanging gables and ornamental finials and pendants, must have presented a strikingly picturesque appearance. Many of them survived to the eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and a few of the less ornate may be seen to-day.

II

After 1650 we pass over a gap of nearly a hundred years before we have another detailed plan of Manchester. Before, however, tracing the expansion which the next chart displays, it will be well to note the developments which had meanwhile taken place in the workaday life of the people.

Prominent among the changes to be noticed was the introduction of the Dutch loom. Coming into general use in the second half of the seventeenth century, this con-

trivance was responsible for a great increase in the output of smallwares and for the greater relative importance of this branch of the local manufacture. By 1751 it was estimated that the number of Dutch looms in the parish was about half that of broad looms. They were mostly concentrated in the town itself, and being more costly and more complicated than the machines used for broadcloths, were chiefly owned by master weavers who employed journeymen and apprentices in shops containing from five to twenty looms apiece. Thus, there was growing up a wage-earning class, entirely dependent on capitalist employers. Moreover, it is probable that by this time most of the makers of checks, linens and fustians in the town were also full-time weavers. Outside the immediate vicinity of Manchester, the textile workers still to a large extent combined farming with their handicraft.

Associated with this development was a change in the position of the merchant class which formed the link between the local producers and the outside market. The linen-draper came to play a greater part in the actual production of the wares they vended. The place of the merchants of the type of Chetham and Wrigley was being taken by men who were manufacturers as well as middlemen—men who not only purchased raw materials and sold the finished products, but also put out cotton and yarn to independent spinners and weavers, or advanced them to smaller employers. Some of these manufacturing traders rose from very small beginnings, and like the earlier linen-draper, acquired wealth and purchased landed estates. Joshua Browne, for example, whose name is borne by Brown Street, after being apprenticed to a Manchester chapman, began without capital to trade on his own account. He purchased cotton from London, supplied fustian-makers in Chadderton, Middleton, Blackley and elsewhere, and dyed the cloth in his own dyehouse in the Ackers. He grew to be one of the leading merchants in the town, and before he died in 1694 at the age of forty-three, he had become the possessor of considerable property in the neighbourhood of the present St. Ann's Square, and had purchased a chapel in the Collegiate Church in which he was subsequently buried.

Thomas Touchet, a pinmaker of Warrington, started in Manchester as a dealer and manufacturer of cotton and

linen goods. He built up a trade in ticks and fustians with the West Indies, and on his death in 1744 left a fortune of £20,000. His four sons were all employed in his business. The eldest, Samuel, went to London and made himself the most notable Lancashire merchant in the capital, importing raw cotton from the Levant and the West Indies, and linen yarn from the Continent. He became a prominent financier and speculator, had important Government connections, and formulated ambitious trading schemes in Labrador and West Africa. Unfortunately, he overreached himself, and involved his brothers in his downfall. They, however, confining their energies to the Manchester side of the business, were able to retrieve their fortunes, and the firm continued an honourable existence until the early years of the nineteenth century.¹

The growth of capitalism and commercial enterprise thus exemplified was rendered possible by the opening up of fresh markets, especially on the mainland and in the islands of America. And in this connection, though much of the foreign trade of Lancashire was still done through London, account must be taken of the rise of the western ports. Liverpool in particular was becoming more and more associated with the trade of Manchester. Superseding Chester in the importation of wool and linen yarn, she collected cotton and dyestuffs from the West Indies, and exported an increasing quantity of textiles to the continents of America and Africa. But Bristol and Lancaster were also supplying the Manchester workshops and shipping Manchester goods. Even the tiny fishing village of Poulton occasionally imported cotton.

The traffic to and from the ports necessitated an organised system of transport. Waggons and caravans of packhorses made weekly journeys to London and Bristol. There was also a busy coastal service between Manchester and the same ports *via* Liverpool, to facilitate which the navigation of the Irwell and the Mersey was improved in 1721. Such intercourse was of course additional to the conveyance of goods by chapmen to the markets and fairs throughout Britain.

¹ For detailed accounts of the operations of J. Browne, the Touchets, and other Manchester merchants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600-1780*, by A. P. Wadsworth and J. de L. Mann (Manchester University Press, 1931).

In his well-known description of Stourbridge Fair, Defoe relates how he found there "all sorts of Manchester ware, Fustians and things made of Cotton Wool," and he adds that he was told that "there were near a thousand horse packs" of goods from Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Perhaps the most reliable indication of the growth of Manchester during these hundred years is furnished by an estimate given in 1758, which put the population then at about 17,000. From this we may infer that the increase since 1650 had been almost fourfold. The visible expansion of the town is strikingly demonstrated by the series of maps which were published by Casson and Berry in 1741 and subsequent years. The accompanying plan, prepared from the issue of 1746, shows that while the quadrant round the old church had not been materially altered since 1650, many new streets had been struck out from Deansgate and Market Street Lane, filling up the angle between these two main thoroughfares as far south as Yates Street (now Peter Street) and as far east as Spring Gardens. The west side of Deansgate also, down to the river between Smithy Bank and South Parade, was now housing a considerable population. Parsonage Croft, however, was still a vacant plot, crossed by diagonal footpaths. On the north side of Market Street Lane, High Street had been built, and, together with Marsden Square, Church Street and Turner Street, was forming another nucleus round which the town was expanding. Shudehill could no longer be regarded as a country lane, and was sending out offshoots on both sides.

Since 1650 several new places of worship had been established. In 1694 a Nonconformist chapel had been built for Henry Newcome in Pool Fold, a winding lane which has since been straightened out and is now called Cross Street. Wrecked by a Jacobite mob not long after its erection, the chapel was restored with the aid of a Parliamentary grant, and was again rebuilt and enlarged in 1737. St. Ann's Church was erected in 1712 by special Act of Parliament upon Acres Field, largely through the generosity of Lady Ann Bland. The Act authorised the erection of other buildings on the plot, but it provided also for the continuance of the fair. The space reserved for the purpose became St. Ann's Square—"The Square," to give it its eighteenth-century name. Large houses were put up on

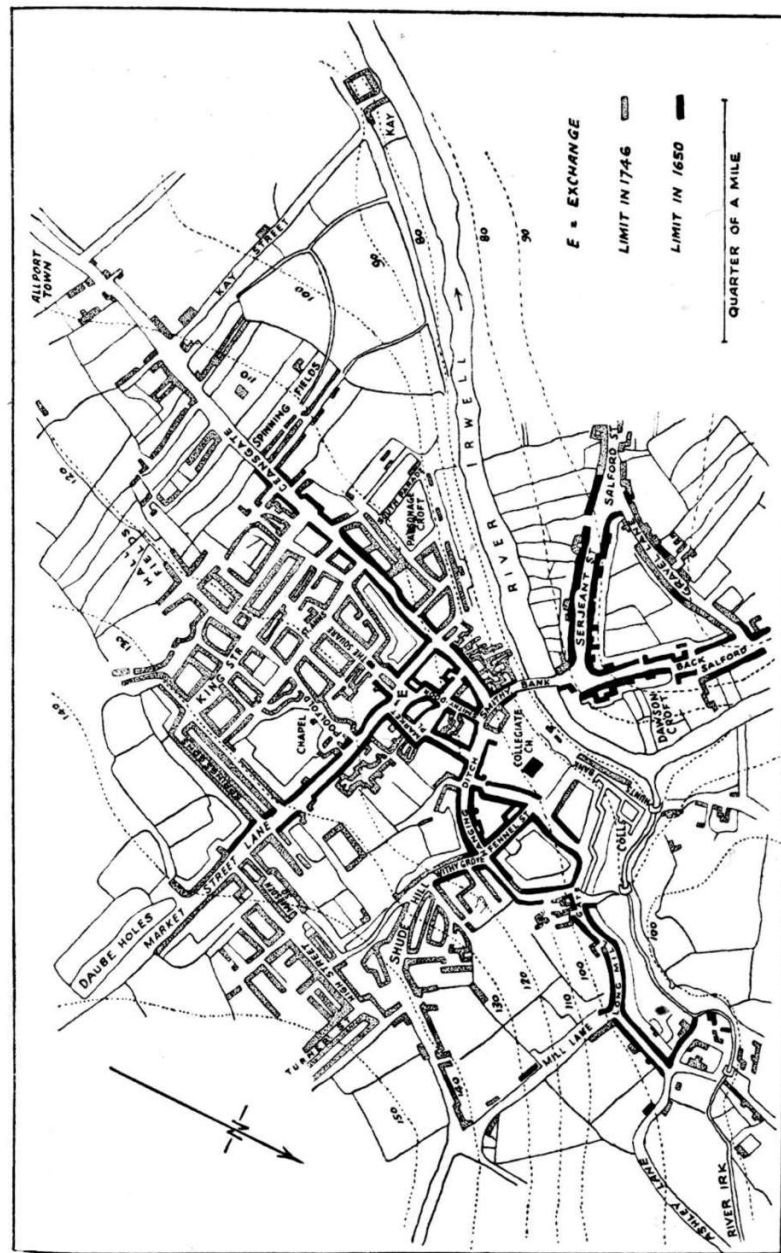


FIG. 3.

Plan of Manchester and Salford, 1746 A.D.

After Casson and Berry. With contours inserted at 100 ft. intervals.

both sides, and two rows of lime trees planted, protected by wooden cases. The Square became not only a fashionable residential quarter, but also a centre of civic life. Here the Young Pretender reviewed his troops in 1745; during the Napoleonic Wars it was the parading ground of the Volunteers; later it became the scene of the Sunday School Whitsuntide gatherings; and after the Reform Bill of 1832 it held the hustings at which the elections were conducted.

It is said that the foundation of the new church was necessitated by the spread of population; it was certainly followed by the extensive building of a new type of house which contrasted markedly with the wood and plaster domiciles of the previous period. It would be tedious to enumerate all the new thoroughfares which were filling up this part of the town, but mention must be made of King Street, in which were many large houses made of brick. Amongst them was the residence of Dr. Charles White, one of the founders of Manchester Infirmary. It stood at the corner of Cross Street until 1821, when it was pulled down to make room for the first Town Hall.

In Deansgate, at the corner of Jackson's Street (now Jackson Row), stood the Quaker Meeting House, reconstructed in 1732 to replace a seventeenth-century building. It was not until 1795 that the Friends moved to the Mount. Only the lower portion of Peter Street existed—as already stated, it was called Yates Street; but Quay Street (Kay Street, as the map has it) had been laid out as a straight road leading to the wharf on the river.

In the Market Place the first Manchester Exchange had been built in 1729 by Sir Oswald Mosley, the acting lord of the manor. This two-storeyed structure, fronted with Ionic pillars, was no doubt intended to be an impressive symbol of Manchester's commercial importance; but it seems to have failed of its purpose, for the traders refused to use it, perhaps because the lower floor was occupied by a meat market. At any rate, a traveller who saw it in 1764 remarked that "instead of affording a convenient walk for the merchants, it is crowded with butchers' stalls, and stops up the road." In consequence, the merchants met in the streets outside, while the building became the resort of idlers and petty criminals. Its unwholesomeness gained it the name of "the Lazaretto." The old Cross, still to be

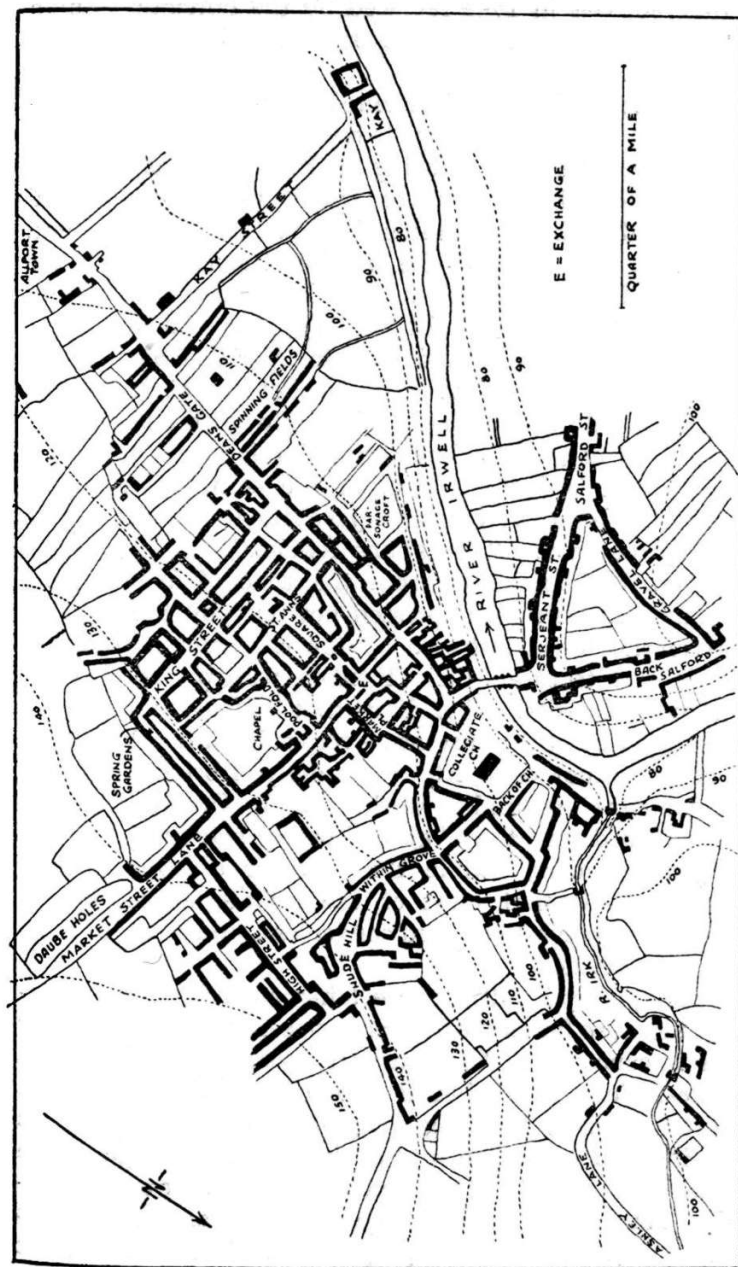


FIG. 4.

Plan to show growth of Manchester between 1650 and 1746 A.D. Contours at 10 ft. intervals inserted.

seen in 1746, was in 1752 replaced by the fantastic column of Oliver Nab, topped by some decorative ironwork and a gilded crown.

Market Street Lane had assumed very much the appearance which it presented until the improvements of the early nineteenth century. Facing the Exchange was a curious row of gabled shops, beneath which were two covered passages leading into St. Ann's Square. At the other end of the lane, still beyond the inhabited portion, was the large pool of the Daubholes. The Infirmary, which later stood behind it, was not built until 1754-5. Oldham Street was as yet non-existent, and between Marsden Square and Old Millgate the area north of Market Street Lane was mostly occupied by fields and gardens, though the beginnings of Cannon Street, which later crossed this space, might be seen in Hunter's Lane. Here, at the corner of Hanging Ditch, lived John Byrom, the Jacobite laureate and the author of the hymn, "Christians Awake."

Visitors to Manchester from the time of William and Mary onwards were all impressed not only by the growing extent of the town, but also by the character of the new domestic architecture. Celia Fiennes, who passed through about 1697, recorded in her diary that "Manchester Lookes exceedingly well at the entrance—very substantiall buildings, the houses are not very lofty, but mostly of brick and stone, the old houses are timber work." Lady Oxford, in 1745, also remarked on the "good houses belonging to the Manchester traders," while the traveller of 1764 already referred to said that most of the private houses of the merchants were handsome and convenient, and many of them elegantly furnished.

Contemporary illustrations certainly confirm these descriptions, at least so far as the outward appearance of the superior houses is concerned. Unfortunately, most of the mansions have been demolished, but that of the merchant Abraham Haworth survives in Long Millgate, though bereft of its palisading and converted into an inn under the sign of the "Manchester Arms." It is a fine specimen of the eighteenth-century house, with a certain quiet dignity expressed in its plainness and well-balanced proportions. Not unlike it, but of two storeys instead of three, was the town house of the Dickensons of Birch, which stood in Market Street Lane,

and after entertaining the Pretender in 1745 received the popular designation of "the Palace." Somewhat larger, and a little more ornate, with a gabled front over the central bays and a more pretentious doorway, was the residence of Thomas Johnson, who traded in silk and cotton handkerchiefs in High Street. Many of the merchant-manufacturers, like him, carried on business in their homes. The large house of the Touchets in Quay Street had an arched entrance for vehicles to the left of the door, obviously connected with a warehouse on this side of the building.

III

The remarkable rate at which Manchester had grown during the century preceding 1750 was to be greatly exceeded in the next fifty years. With the expansion of foreign trade and the introduction of new methods of manufacture, additional impetus was given to the increase in wealth and population. The output of fustians was enlarged in range and quantity. New spinning machinery established the manufacture of calicoes, muslins and other pure cottons as a staple industry, and led to the multiplication of subsidiary trades. At the same time, Manchester received an increasing proportion of the cloths woven in the country districts for the finishing processes, which, owing to the greater variety of fabrics now produced, became more numerous and complex. The printing of Lancashire calicoes, in particular, was captured from London.

The convenience of Manchester's situation, combined with its growing monopoly of the finishing processes, tended to concentrate the marketing functions still more in the hands of its merchants. This development was further encouraged by a remarkable improvement in the means of communication. The link with Liverpool, which had been forged by the Navigation Scheme of 1721, was enormously strengthened by the extension of the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal to Runcorn in 1772. Within a generation after that, Manchester was connected by inland waterways to the midlands and the south, as well as to the principal towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Simultaneously, a long series of turnpike Acts provided the town with a system of good roads radiating in all directions. As a consequence, the

entrepot character of Manchester's trade became more pronounced. The bulk of the raw materials required by the country manufacturers was distributed from the town, and most of their production returned to it; while the so-called "manufacturers" of Manchester became more and more dealers and less and less direct employers of labour. The transition reflected itself in the urban architecture: separate warehouses became a prominent feature in certain localities.

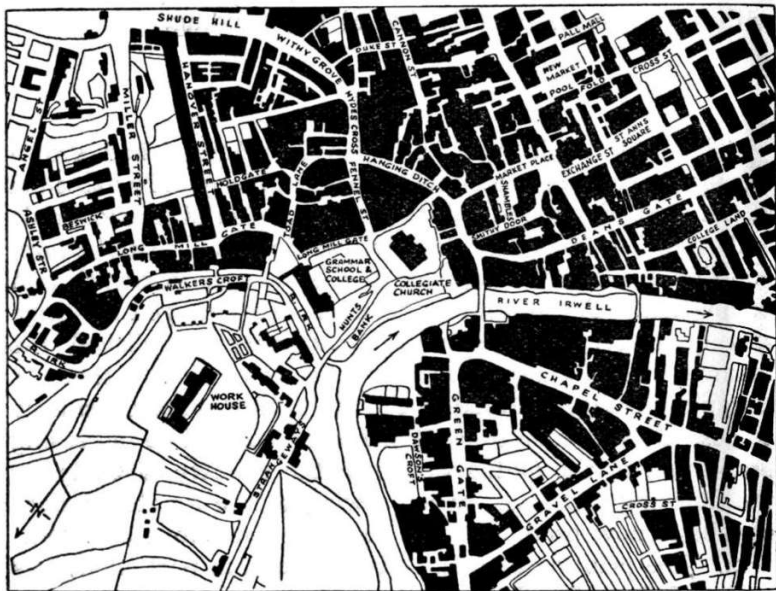


FIG. 5.

G.B.

Central portion of Manchester, 1793 A.D. After Laurent.

Meanwhile, increased opportunities for employment were attracting immigrants from other parts, chiefly from the rural districts of the neighbouring counties. Ireland, however, was sending a steady stream, which, according to contemporary estimates, raised the number of Irish residents to more than 10,000 in 1804 and about 30,000 in 1836. They were mostly poor, and engaged chiefly in handloom weaving. The much smaller immigration from Scotland, on the other hand, included men who, like the Bannermans, the M'Connells and the Kennedys, became leaders of industry in the place of their adoption. By 1801 the population of the township had risen to more than 70,000. If we include the immediate

suburbs of Manchester, it amounted to nearly 100,000. The increase since 1758 had been at least fivefold. Of the other towns in the county, only Liverpool, with its 87,000, could show a comparable growth; none of the rest had as many as 20,000 inhabitants.

The obvious effect of this enormous rise in numbers was both to enlarge the area of the town and to intensify the density of population at the centre. The accompanying plan, prepared from Laurent's map of 1793, demonstrates the intricate network of streets which had completely covered the older part of Manchester. From the line of the Irk and the Irwell southwards to Oldham Street and Mosley Street, and from Miller Street westwards to Quay Street and Peter Street, scarcely a yard of uncovered land remained; while beyond these bounds streets were laid out to the Medlock, and the buildings were extending into Ardwick and Hulme.

So many were the changes which were altering the face of the town that only a few of the more important can be noticed. The whole southern bank of the Irwell down to the quay was completely built up, the high cliff on both sides of the Old Bridge presenting a confused medley of cottages, taverns and workshops. Along the Irk, past the new Grammar School, which had been erected in 1777, stretched another closely packed area of tenements and factories as far as Scotland Bridge. Though this tributary was still the effective northern limit of the town, buildings had begun to encroach upon the opposite side, and a new workhouse had been put up in Strangeways in the midst of the fields adjacent to the Park. South of Long Millgate most of the vacant land which had extended to Fennel Street and Shudehill had been taken up, largely by working-class dwellings.

Since 1750 Cannon Street had been struck out from Hunter Street to High Street, with numerous courts and alleys on either side. Some of these intricate passages have left their vestiges to this day. By the 'eighties this area was becoming the principal warehouse centre. The change is said to have been initiated by Sir Robert, then Mr. Peel, who bought a plot between Cannon Street and High Street, "in a retired situation, where land was cheap." The name Peel Street reminds us of the warehouse which he built. Other manufacturers followed his example, erecting new premises or converting old houses into places of business.

In the centre of the town, the Exchange erected by Sir Oswald Mosley had just been pulled down, and its site marked by four posts around a monument which consisted of four pillars surmounted by a clock. Some of the antiquated shops opposite had been demolished to provide a more spacious way, by the name of Exchange Street, into St. Ann's Square. This select quarter was also at this time undergoing transformation, for the trees were gradually being removed and the houses of the gentry converted into shops.

The farther end of Market Street Lane was, as before mentioned, named Lever's Row. Past the Infirmary Pond it was continued in Piccadilly and Shooter's Brow down to Shooter's Brook, and then in the lane called Bank Top as far as the Medlock. Houses faced the road all the way to the fashionable suburb of Ardwick. To the Infirmary had been added first a Lunatic Asylum (1766), then Public Baths (1781), and lastly a Dispensary (1792). The land about these buildings was laid out as a public garden, and, together with the pool, was enclosed within palisadings. The neighbourhood was the pleasantest part of the town. Lever's Row itself and Piccadilly, and the parallel streets behind the Infirmary—Faulkner Street, George Street, Mosley Street and Spring Gardens—were then and until the 1830's the fashionable "West End" of Manchester.

Another new residential quarter was the district about Quay Street and Byrom Street, where, fortunately, a number of the better-class houses have escaped destruction to our own time. The line of Quay Street itself had been extended along Peter Street to St. Peter's Church (opened in 1790), and from this point Oxford Street had been opened up to cross the Medlock by a new bridge. Until this had been built, the only way from Rusholme to the town was by a small bridge leading to a country lane which passed Garratt Hall. The ancient timber mansion of the Traffords, with its pointed gables and tall graceful chimneys, was still there to link the Tudor age with the rapidly growing brick-built town of the late eighteenth century.

In the outer parts of Manchester the streets were usually straight and wide; but in the old town they were confined, tortuous and obstructed by projecting steps and cellar entrances. According to a contemporary writer, the principal thoroughfare, Market Street, was "a mere lane" along

which "two carriages could scarcely move in line," and in which "the flagway was in many places hardly a yard wide." It was extremely narrow at the lower end, and the irregular alignment of the houses and shops made the carriage-way crooked and inconvenient throughout its entire length.

Inconvenience for traffic, however, was not the worst evil that resulted from increasing population and unregulated building. The sanitary arrangements, which were comparatively harmless when the number of residents was smaller and the streets were separated by wide spaces, proved dangerous when the old houses became overcrowded and the land behind them covered with hovels. Many of the larger seventeenth-century dwellings had been divided into tenements for poor people, often a whole family living, working and sleeping in a single room. The later houses were frequently put up in gloomy little courts and blind alleys, while hundreds of families lived in dark, damp cellars. Modern ideas of drainage were as yet unborn; the water supply depended upon wells and two pools in Shudehill and Lever's Row; the streets were unlighted, and for the most part unpaved.

Yet it was not considerations of public health that primarily brought about improvement. But for the urgency of traffic requirements, it is probable that the work of reconstruction would have been considerably delayed. Even so, though a beginning was made in 1776, when Old Millgate, Cateaton Street and St. Mary's Gate were widened and Exchange Street was made, it was not until 1821 that the task of clearance was seriously undertaken. An Improvement Committee, set up under a special Act of that year, set to work upon Market Street, Toad Lane, King Street and other thoroughfares, and eight years later received additional powers which enabled them to deal with Cross Street, Long Millgate and other congested areas. With the necessary removal of narrow and crooked ways, of squalid and unhealthy dwellings thus begun, went also much that was picturesque and of historical interest in Old Manchester.

The illustrations for this article have been adapted from old plans in the Manchester Reference Library by Mr. Gordon Bennett, a student in the Geography Department, Manchester University.