

cession with a band of music and all the insignia of municipal office, to hold their Court and sit in Council in a dirty mealhouse; all crowding pell mell into a poor unplastered room, hardly superior to the meanest stable in the town, and all the assembly in danger of knocking their dignified heads against the ceiling, or metamorphosing their blue surtouts into the floury habiliments of a dusty miller?" (The mealhouse was so called because of the accommodation it provided for market people, but for municipal and magisterial purposes it was always styled the Court House). It was used as a prison until the County Lock-up was built in Mill Lane, Warren Street, which subsequently was superseded by the modern cells attached to the new Court House.

The powers of the Court Leet were in the later years of its existence merely nominal, and confined to small fines for minor offences, and the annual appointment of ale-tasters, beadle, and dog muzzler, with scavengers and burleymen for the various districts of the town. The Court Leet was almost a matter of form, the tenants answering to their names or in default having to pay a small penalty; and the jury afterwards retiring to the Bulkeley Arms Inn, and enjoying themselves gloriously that night, at the expense of horrid headaches and nausea next morning. The fairs at this time were always proclaimed by the mayors in state, with a gold chain about their necks, accompanied by the constables, with silver chains about theirs, and silver-headed staves in their hands. On the occasion of the October fair, the mayor-elect was sworn in at the miniature Court House from whence the procession went to the Parish Church of St. Mary in the Market place, where a sermon was preached; after which a boy from the Grammar School stammered through an oration in Latin to his worship, who handed out a golden pledge of approbation from his breeches pocket, and the cortege proceeded to perambulate the principal streets of the town, preceded by twelve men carrying painted javelins with tin gilt heads (formidable weapons!) until they arrived at the Bulkeley Arms, where a feast awaited them to which they did full justice to their own cost next day. The Lords of the Manor were formerly in the habit of attending the Mayor's procession and feast until the death of Sir George Warren in 1801, and before the ceremony the mayor had generally a coursing day at Poynton, the proceeds of which, with other game, formed a portion of the good things which appeared on the table at the feast day.

Stockport, in 1822, was a prosperous manufacturing town. Silk was the original manufacture, and the first mills in England for winding and throwing silk on the Italian principle are said to have been established here. The superior advantages of the cotton trade, however, induced the proprietors to turn their machinery to the spinning of cotton which was in 1822 the staple manufacture of the town. Whilst there was only one silk mill working in 1822, there were 47 cotton factories, worked, we are told, "by 62 steam engines and water wheels, of the aggregate power of 1880 horses, exclusive of four steam engines used in calico printing, one in grinding corn, and three in machine making, forming a total of 70 engines of the power of 1,960 horses. There were 5,730 power looms, chiefly worked by steam engines. The silk trade, we have seen, had died a natural death and the cotton trade in its turn had gained a firm footing in the town. Many large cotton mills had been erected and a few of the silk mills had been converted into cotton mills.

Mr. Peter Marsland's "colossal works," as they were then described, in the Park, were in full work manufacturing cotton cloth and turning it out in appearance equal to the finest Irish linen. One portion of the works was devoted to manu-