

Ground for Stockport), kept by Samuel Davenport and an old lady ; the Stockport Sunday and Day Schools ; a school kept by Mr. Thomas Rathbone Smith in a dilapidated old mill in Etchells Street ; Mr. Alex. Edmund's School in the third storey of a mill in Egerton Street, off Heaton Lane ; Wm. Travis School, in School Lane, Heaton Chapel. The profession of a schoolmaster in 1822 was no sinecure. On the contrary it was one of the most tedious and trying and one of the worst occupations an educated man could follow. There were no steel pens—all writing had to be done with a quill—paper was expensive and slates were scarce. Copy books had to be ruled by the schoolmaster by hand with the quill pen. Most of the day schoolmasters at this time opened their schools also in the evening for the accommodation of youths and girls who worked in the mills. Arithmetic and writing were also taught in the Sunday Schools. A custom was prevalent in these days at certain seasons of the year to obtain holidays by "barring" the master—himself not unwilling—out of the school, and when he demanded admission the scholars would chant the following doggerel :—

Pardon, master, pardon,  
Pardon, worth a pin,  
If you don't let us have a holiday,  
We won't let you in.

The master at last consented to the holiday and was allowed to enter the school. This burlesque was enacted in almost every day school in Stockport in 1822.

In 1822 there were no organised games as there are now—football was played but only by promiscuous kicking a ball up and down the streets—there was no cricket club, though we hear of cricket matches being arranged and played on grounds connected with the houses of the gentry. The late Mr John Greenhalgh, who wrote his reminiscences of "sixty years ago" in the "Advertiser" of 1884, thus describes in homely language the games the young folk indulged in about the year 1822 :—

"Throstle overlookers were then, as they are now, very anxious to get the bobbins "doffed" (i.e., taken off the frame) as quickly as possible. To attain this end various plans were adopted. Some overlookers would stand at the frame end with a strap or a rope-end handy, watching the doffers doff, and the last doffer would get a stroke from the rope-end to sharpen him up. Another plan was for the last doffer to stay in the mill, sweep the room floor, and gather up the bobbins, whilst the rest of the doffers went outside the mill to play. Another method was for the last doffer to go through what was called the 'Pig Market.' This was somewhat similar to a sailor being flogged through the fleet. The doffers all stooped down and opened wide their legs. The culprit then had to pass through the aperture made by the legs of the other doffers, and as he passed along the other doffers gave him as many slaps on his posterior with their open hands as they could ; hence it was to the culprit's interest for him to pass through the legs quickly. There was also a game representing a bear bait. We cast lots who should be the bear ; then there was a boy chosen to represent the owner of the bear, whom we called the bellert. The dogs were made up by the other boys who were taking part in the game, each being armed with a rope-end or a knotted handkerchief. The bear crouched down on his hands and knees, having hold of the end of a string some yards in length, whilst the bellert held the other end. The bellert stood away from the bear the full length of the string, whilst the dogs stood round