

Sea Front, Parkgate

*Arthur Maycock, Photo., Parkgate*

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## Parlgate: an old Cheshire Port

BY THE VEN. E. BARBER, M.A., F.S.A.,

ARCHDEACON OF CHESTER

*(Read 25th October, 1910)*



ANY visitors to the City of Chester are ignorant of the fact that it is a sea-port. They see the flowing Dee, and, it may be, enjoy a boating excursion on its upper reaches; but they are not aware that it is still reckoned as a port, though the tonnage of shipping which is berthed at its Quay is very small, and is getting smaller every year. Originally the waters of the estuary splashed against the City Walls on the western side, and the Roodey was covered by them. When the channel of the river was being silted up by shifting sands, a narrow and deeper waterway was constructed and confined within artificial boundaries, so that sea-going vessels might be able to find their way up to the city, and bring thereto merchandise and material.

The western gate was called the Watergate, and the name still clings to it, and to the street to which it is the entrance. But "the Port of Chester" extended, and still extends, far beyond the City and its neighbourhood. Its jurisdiction, in fact, goes as far

as the Red Stones at Hoylake, and so to Hilbre, on the Cheshire side; and, in the Principality, from the mouth of the River Voryd in the Vale of Clwyd, up the River Dee to the Weir. Vessels from the whole of that district would have to be registered as belonging to the Port of Chester, and this is still the case; and various bodies like the Port Sanitary Authority exercise their powers over that large and wide area. At the present time very few vessels, and these only of small tonnage, reach Chester, and such trade as is now carried on by sea is almost confined to Connah's Quay, Hawarden Bridge, Mostyn, and Bagillt. In very early days the port was no doubt an important one, even if we allow that the language of *Webb*, in "King's Vale Royal," is unjustifiably grandiose: "There, where the sea hath determined that creek, which shoots in between Flintshire and the west side of Wirral Hundred, was founded that beautiful city, and made the receptacle of merchandize from all kingdoms and nations, who traded into the British or Irish Ocean, and became the very key or inlet, whereby not only the Romans, in their time, made their passage to or from Ireland, and the other western and northern islands, but all other kings and princes ever since, upon all needful occasions."

That the Romans used the waterway here was proved by the discovery of a pig of lead of their time, in what must have been the bed of the river. The inscription on the lead was so perfect that there is little doubt that it must have fallen overboard from a vessel when the cargo was being landed. Documents are in existence which show that from the early part of the 14th century, navigation had been

impeded by the shifting of the sands, and certain royal grants were made to the city from time to time to relieve "the ruinous state of the haven." Various schemes were devised, and Acts of Parliament passed; and, eventually, a Company was incorporated for recovering and preserving the navigation of the River Dee. It is interesting to know that in 1569 Liverpool was still legally "a creek within the Port of Chester," and that then only twelve vessels belonged to it! Though the engineering operations which were carried out did result in some improvement, insomuch that the annual receipts of the port rose from £7,000 in 1813, to £25,000 in 1829, yet the channel was continually being changed or obstructed, especially in the lower portions of the river. It is more than probable that it would have needed a colossal and costly undertaking to preserve the Port of Chester, to say nothing of developing it to meet the necessities of increased trade, and the larger size of modern shipping.

With the development of Liverpool, it is not now likely that anything will be done to raise Chester into a higher place among the sea-ports of the kingdom. In passing, it may be remarked that the frequent allusion in old Churchwardens' Accounts of the City, to the relief given to sailors or seamen passing through, shows that the seafaring character of the city was maintained until the commencement of the 19th century. At the present day it is a matter of rare occurrence to see a small coasting vessel anchored by the Quay at Chester itself.

The obstruction of the channel in the higher reaches led naturally to the traffic being removed to lower

positions on the river, and now we find it is concentrated at Connah's Quay and places near it. But at one time a Quay was erected at Shotwick, and later there was in connection with it a ferry from the Flintshire side, thus affording means of communication between the Principality and Liverpool. Then at Parkgate, a few miles further down, another Quay was erected; and in 1560 a collection towards the expense of constructing this new haven was made throughout the country "under a brief," whilst seven years later the city was specially assessed for the same object. Later still, in 1822, a scheme was projected for forming a packet station at Dawpool, four miles below Parkgate, where a deeper anchorage was offered. A naval officer at the time gave it as his opinion that "Dawpool possesses many advantages over Liverpool for steam vessels to sail to and from Dublin." The celebrated engineer, Mr. Telford, was consulted, but the estimated cost (£30,000) was in those days prohibitive, and nothing was done.

It will be seen from this that Cheshire, like other counties, has suffered in the matter of sea-going traffic from coast erosion or other similar causes.

A recently-published book<sup>1</sup> has brought out these facts very fully, and we learn from it that of all the north-western counties Cheshire has been the heaviest loser by coast erosion, 104 acres of land and 1,120 acres of foreshore having disappeared. The silting up of the Dee has again produced great changes. Saxons and Danes, we are told, sailed up the creek right under

<sup>1</sup> "The Battle of Land and Sea on the Lancashire, Cheshire, and North Wales Coast," by W. Ashton. (W. Ashton & Sons, Ltd., Southport, Manchester, and London).

the walls of Shotwick Castle. From here Henry II. set sail for his conquest of Ireland. Once it was quite an important harbour; now the site of the Castle is a considerable distance inland.

The erection of the Quay at Parkgate, in the parish of Neston, preserved for a time a certain amount of traffic for the Port of Chester. In 1771, 297 coasting vessels entered inwards to Chester, and 526 ships outward. Of these 23 came from the Port of London, about 95 entered from foreign ports, and 215 outwards to foreign ports.

It has been supposed that the reclamation of the sands, and the confining of the waters into the present straight and narrow channel between Chester and Shotwick have had a disastrous effect upon the navigation possibilities of the lower portion of the estuary. At any rate, in 1732, such a result was predicted, inasmuch "as two hundred millions of tons of Tyde will be prevented from flowing twice in every twenty-four hours, which, on the reflux, acquireth the greater velocity to scour and keep open the lake and bar."

It is, perhaps, owing to this contraction of the channel that a very considerable "bore" may often be seen rushing up to the City of Chester, when the circumstances of wind and tide are favourable. Though not to be compared with the "bore" on the Severn, it is well worth seeing.

There was, no doubt, a temporary increase of traffic to the Port; in fact, in 1830, the Comptroller of Customs reported the number of ships in foreign trade belonging to the Port as three, and the number in the coasting trade as 74; and that the number of vessels entering

inwards from all parts was 826, and of those entering outwards 1,735.

It will readily be understood from all this that the various records of the County afford interesting accounts of the efforts which were made from time to time to protect the Port of Chester, and to preserve for it its sea-borne traffic, and thus maintain its prosperity.

*Leland*, writing about 1540, says that at Chester, "where a brook called Flokars Broke commyth ynto Dee River there is a Dok where at spring tide a ship may ly." He then describes, in detail, the course of the river, mentioning Shotwick, Burton, Denwall, Neston, West Kirby, and Hilbre; and gives particulars of the coast as far as "Birket (Birkenhead) & Lirpool." But long before this, in 1449, a commission of inquiry had led to the formation of a Port at Shotwick; and, a century later, to the making of "ye noo Key" seven miles lower down. This was, no doubt, at Neston, "the usual place" (according to *Webb* in "King's Vale Royal," written about 1601) "where our passengers into Ireland do so often lie waiting the leisure of the winds, which makes many people better acquainted with this place than they desire to be" . . . . and "here they embark and disembark both men horses & kine & all other commodities."

This New Quay, however, was never thoroughly useful, and vessels of more than twenty tons burden were obliged to lade and unlade at Dawpool much lower down. Ere long, the New Quay was superseded by another at Parkgate, though, judging from Mackay's Map 1732, this did not project into the river, but was rather a sea wall, the vessels lying at anchor before it.



In 1791, we are told, "these packets" (for Ireland) "sail regularly at least four times a week." An old map represents the packet-boat as sailing into Parkgate from Ireland; and an Irish ballad says that in May

"I gave the captain seven thirteen  
To carry me over to Parkgate;  
But before we got the half of the way,  
It blew at a furious hard rate."

Mackay's Map in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, has engraved on its margin some useful and interesting particulars, giving the course of the river and its channels at various points, and advancing reasons against the New Cut which was then (1732) projected, and for which parliamentary powers were being sought. The remarks conclude thus: "Whether the ill-consequences which must certainly attend the present undertaking are not more likely to destroy the present Navigation in Hoyle Lake and the River Dee, rather than to recover and preserve a better is humbly presented to ye Right Hon. the House of Lords."

A little more than a hundred years after, Captain Denham wrote: "The Hoyle Bank has been cut in two, the Hoyle Lake choked up with sand, Parkgate and Dawpool have been deserted, and there has been in fact a tidal scour of 80 feet deep and a positive removal of 147,739,975 cubic yards of sand by tidal action alone."

The prophecy of Mackay seems thus to have been fulfilled; and the annals of the Commissioners since then would also show that the preservation of the navigation, even in its imperfect and moderate condition, has been attended with considerable anxiety, and has involved no little expense. Moreover, the reclamation of "the whyte sands of the Dee" has not served to

add to the area of the county, for the Dee appears to have been regarded as a Welsh river, the limits of Flint extending to the high water-mark on the English side. As a consequence, the new-made fertile fields which have been recovered have been added to the acreage of that small county of the Principality, and are reckoned not as English but as Welsh.

The land thus reclaimed is in the higher reaches of the river, and some distance above Parkgate, and the operations in connection with the reclamation have not always been attended with success, as, some years ago, the inroads of the sea destroyed a protecting embankment which was being constructed, with disastrous results.

Turning now to Parkgate, as "the old Cheshire Port," it will readily be understood that its history presents many vicissitudes. Strictly speaking, it is only a limb of the Port of Chester; but for a time, at any rate, it occupied the principal place, though its glories have now vanished. Some doubt exists as to the origin of the name. It has been suggested that it is due to its position below the beautiful park-land of the Whitmores at Leighton, and that when houses were erected near the entrance for fishing or other purposes they not unnaturally received the name of Park-gate. *Bishop Gastrell*, in his "Notitia Cestriensis," says: "Some houses by ye water side at Great Neston are called Park-Gates." Another theory is that to the "New Quay," which, in Elizabeth's day, formed part of the site of Parkgate, was afterwards given the name—"all on one side, like Par' Gate," as for ages they called it. The former supposition is most likely the correct one.



The Top Slip, Parkgate

*Copwright*

*Arthur Maycock, Photo., Parkgate*



It has already been stated that here was one point of embarkation for Ireland, the other being Bristol. The importance of the place will readily be understood, and also the fact that it would receive from time to time many visitors of importance. That some of these had to make a prolonged sojourn is proved from old papers. A large number of inns and ale-houses was necessitated for their reception and entertainment. Sir Henry Bunbury, in a letter to the Council, dated May 25th, 1619, says: "The passengers for Ireland some times wait a quarter of a year together for a wind, so that if there were twice as many (ale-house keepers and victuallers) as there are, they would not be too many sometimes; for passengers are obliged to go to country houses or to the neighbouring gentry." The communication with Ireland was occasionally a source of anxiety. We read, for instance, in 1549, of 500 Irish kernes invading the City of Chester, and being severely handled and driven to Parkgate on their return.

In 1822, when the scheme for the establishment of Dawpool was launched, and a report from Mr. Telford awaited, the "Gentleman's Magazine" contained the following allusion: "Independently of the general accommodation which packets would afford at that station, the ready communication between Dublin and the depôt at Chester, where nearly 40,000 stand of arms are kept, and the war-like stores, is of vital importance, especially at a time when the sister island is in a dangerous state of fermentation." For these and other reasons, Parkgate acquired an importance far beyond its size. This is perhaps shown by the fact that one of the two main roads leading from the City of Chester is called the Parkgate Road. It must

often have been a puzzle to the present residents why this name was given to it, seeing that the place is but a hamlet of the larger, and ancient parish of Neston. There can be no doubt that it owes its name to the fact that Parkgate was the point of embarkation for Ireland, and that the traveller who might be posting thither would thus have the direction of his journey marked out for him. The advantage would also be felt in later times, when the place ceased to be a port, and became the most fashionable watering place in the North of England, and for forty years maintained that pre-eminence. The road *may* have been a very ancient one, and "*may* carry us back to Roman times, or even earlier, to days long before any Roman Cæsar ever cast longing eyes on the sea-girt island in the northern sea, when the Britons, undisturbed except by their internal wars, peacefully cultivated the rich lands of southern Wirral, and needed a good roadway by which to bring their fruits to market at the fortress-crowned heights overlooking the Dee." <sup>2</sup> At any rate, the road is a good one, forming one of the principal exits from the ancient city.

Old Parkgate would no doubt have tales to tell of those stirring times when Nelson was scouring the Mediterranean in search of the French fleet. In common with other sea-ports, it would witness the operations of "the press-gang," which would tear from their homes and physically force into the service peaceable citizens to take an active part in the defence of their country. Local tradition tells of the press-gang laying hands on a Denhall collier—Denhall being in the Parish of Neston. His fellow-workmen,

<sup>2</sup> *Mr. Fergusson Irvine* in "Cheshire Sheaf," August 1898.

roused to indignation by this act of injustice, armed themselves with their implements of daily toil, fell upon and vanquished the press-gang, and liberated their comrade.

Then the place would naturally have its Custom House, though no trace of it, not even the name, seems to remain at the present day. This is not the case at Chester itself, where a newer building is called "The Old Custom House," and, as was to be expected, is situated in that part of the City which is nearest the Quay. Doubtless the archives of this office are still preserved, and a search might bring to light some curious revelations. These must be left to the vivid imagination of my readers, who will readily understand that the difficulties and humours of the Custom House would not be likely to be lessened by the character of those who would preside over its transactions in this small sea-port. *Hanshall*, in 1817, says, "a Custom House is still supported at Parkgate, but nearly the whole of the trade—if the word may be used—is confined to the vessels frequenting the adjoining collieries at Ness."

Then, beside the Custom House, there would be other buildings connected with the shipping. Foremost amongst these would be the Quay House, sometimes known as the Packet House. Here again, the change in the course of the river would bring other changes with it. The old Quay House would give place to another, which, in its turn, became private property, and is said by some to have been the place where *Samuel Warren* wrote "Ten Thousand a Year," though others associate his sojourn with the old Mostyn Arms Hotel, now the site of a large scholastic establishment. Then there was the old

Ferry House, sometime used as a lock-up or prison, but still marking the spot where the Irish Packet berthed, and where merchant vessels loaded and unloaded. There would also be the hostelries and houses of entertainment for the travellers, who, as we have already seen, were frequently compelled to remain for some time, waiting for a favourable wind.

It may be noted here that in the Muniment Room at the Town Hall there is the Account Book of the Comptroller of Customs from 1790 to 1802. It is beautifully written and would no doubt amply repay careful examination. It gives the names of the various vessels as, for instance, "The Prince of Wales," "The Princess Royal," "The King," which were Irish packets; "The Dorsetshire Yacht," "The Polly," and many others. The amounts received in each quarter vary considerably; witness the fact that in one quarter of 1790 the sum was £27 12s. 9½d.; and in one of 1794, £61 9s. 6¼d.; whilst in another in 1797, it was £129 16s. 10½d. Distinction is drawn between British and Irish goods, the former, apparently, being duty free. Thus we have mention of a British chariot, a British phaeton, an Irish post-chaise; feather-beds, too, are sometimes specified, whether for the comfort of the passenger on his voyage, or being taken with other goods by a person moving his domicile, is not stated. The following entries may be of interest, as they occur together:—

	Customs.	Dues.	d.
		d.	d.
2 Irish Matrasses valued at £1 10 0 ..	8 3	5	5
2 Irish Bedsteads valued at £1 10 0 ..	8 3	5	5
2 Hampers containing old Kitchen furniture, all British manufacture, and formerly exported from this Kingdom and now returned without alteration per Oath .. ..	—	—	—



The last entry is on Lady Day 1802, and refers to the Act of Union, which came into operation about that time.

The documents connected with the port would supply us with interesting information as to the distinguished and other personages who passed through on their way to and from Ireland. For instance, in 1573 the expedition for the settlement of the North of Ireland was conducted by Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, when six hundred men were dispatched thither and must have embarked here. The passage of these troops through the City of Chester was not unaccompanied with difficulty, as their state of discipline was not very high, and, as a consequence, the mayoralty of Foulk Aldersey in 1594 was full of troubles. Then Royalty must also have passed through, and we read of Henry II. and William III. doing so; the latter, on his way to the Battle of the Boyne, stayed at Gayton Hall before embarking at Hoylake, and knighted his host Sir William Glegg. It was from Parkgate that "Lycidas" King set sail, and no doubt other reminiscences could be unearthed from diaries and other sources, which would introduce us to the former history of this old Port of Chester.

Dean Swift, for instance, passed through Parkgate when he came to England in 1707. On November 28th, he set sail from Dublin and landed at Darpool (Dawpool), and next day rode to Parkgate on his way to Leicester. He spent 1708 in England, and set sail from Darpool again for Ireland 29th June, 1709, and landed next day at Ringsend, and went to Laracor, where he was Vicar. Apparently, at that time, the anchorage at Parkgate was somewhat indifferent, or perhaps Dawpool was a port of call.

Later still, between 1760 and 1789, John Wesley<sup>3</sup> travelled at intervals this way, and must have been well known in this locality. In his diary he gives us the names of the packets, "The Nonpareil," "King George," "Kildare," "Prince of Wales," "Princess Royal," and "The Dorset." Of the second-named, the following sad notice appears a few years later in "The Gentleman's Magazine": "September 14th, 1806. The 'King George' Packet of and from Parkgate for Dublin was lost this night near Hoyle Bank, and it is said all on board except three or four perished. She had upwards of 100 passengers, but only four cabin passengers."

In his diary, Wesley gives some interesting references which enable us to form a little idea of Parkgate and the traffic. Thus, in 1760, he writes: "On Tuesday, Sep. 26, we landed at Parkgate. Being in haste I would not stay for my own horse, which I found could not land till low water. So I bought one; and having hired another set forward without delay." Two years later he was again at Parkgate; this time on his way to Ireland. "1762 April 1st—I rode to Parkgate & found several ships: but the wind was contrary. . . . At half hour after four one brought us word that the wind was fair and Captain Jordon would sail in less than an hour. We were soon on the ship, wherein we found about three score passengers. The sun shone bright, the wind was moderate, the sea smooth, & we wanted nothing but room to stir ourselves; the cabin being filled with hops, so that we could not get into it, but by climbing over them on our hands & knees. In the afternoon we

<sup>3</sup> These particulars were contributed to "The Cheshire Sheaf" by the late Mr. G. Gleave.

were abreast of Holyhead, but the scene was quickly changed. The wind rose higher & higher & by seven o'clock blew a storm. The sea broke over us continually & sometimes covered the ship, which both pitched & rolled in an uncommon manner."

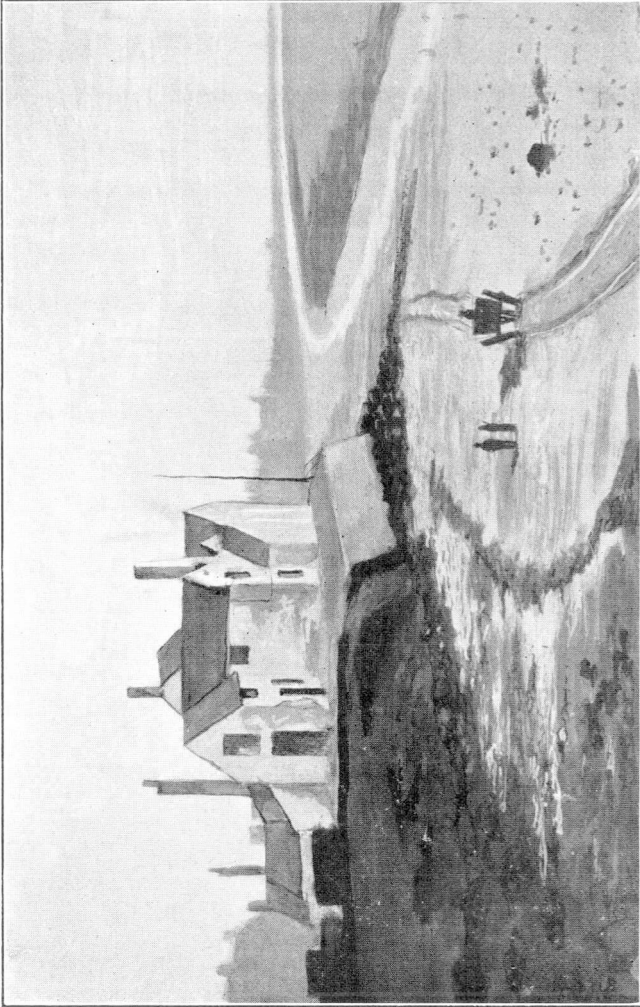
His journals tell us of the uncertainty of the traffic. In April 1765, "several ships were ready to sail from Parkgate, but after waiting two days & the wind continuing foul he crossed over to Liverpool," and spent his time there, preaching to a large congregation on the Sunday. He gives his opinion of the packets: "'The Kildare' (in 1771) was abundantly the best & cleanest ship which I have sailed in for many years"; and on his last voyage from Ireland, in 1789, he states "that 'The Princess Royal' of Parkgate is the neatest & most elegant Packet I ever saw." The voyage was not a very rapid one, as the wind failed; he shut himself up in his chaise, so that he must have taken that on board with him; they had "to lie by for some hours not having much water to cross the bar." However, "we landed between 4 & 5 in the morning Tuesday July 14th at Parkgate & after resting an hour I went on to Chester."

In the "Nineteenth Century" for May 1898 was given a description of a journey from Dublin to Chester in May 1791, extracted from the journal of a young lady. She gives a vivid picture of some of her fellow travellers, and of the voyage and of the difficulties presented by "the Bar of Chester," and by waiting for the tide to carry us *down* (sic) the River Dee to Parkgate. Then the landing was not quite easy, for "the tide not being quite in we could not get close to the shore, but went some part of the way

in a small boat & were carried by the men the rest of the way. We found chaises on the beach to take us to the Inn where we dressed as soon as we could get the luggage from the Custom House. While we were dressing there came a merchantman into the harbour on fire and the whole time we were there they were striving to save the cargo and sink her. Just as we were setting off from Parkgate 'the King' (no doubt the 'King George' above referred to) arrived in the harbour. It had left Dublin twelve hours later than 'the Prince of Wales' in which we sailed but had more of the breeze which blew up in the evening than us."

In *Coward's* "Picturesque Cheshire" we find other information. In 1819 Parkgate is spoken of by *Dugdale* as a "convenient and fashionable bathing place, and as the station for some of the packets for Ireland, which generally sail to that country four times a week." In 1784 Lady Hamilton, then Mrs. Hart, visited Parkgate to remove some disfiguring eruption of her skin by the application of salt water, and complained of the expense of the bathing horse and her dress, 1s. 2d. per day! *Handel*, too, passed through on his way to Ireland, and, according to some, composed "The Messiah" (possibly some of its numbers) at the George Hotel while waiting for his boat. This hostelry, much enlarged, is now a Boys' School.

For some time Parkgate had a kind of double life; it was, as we have seen, a sea-port to some extent, and it developed into a watering place and a fashionable seaside resort. A Chester Guide Book of 1791 alludes to both these characteristics; it speaks of "the extensive and brilliant patronage shewn to the Parkgate



**The Old Boat House, Parkgate**

(From an old water-colour drawing, kindly lent by Joseph Lloyd, Esq.)

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*Arthur Maycock, Photo., Parkgate*



packets, which, from the regularity (?) of their sailing, the excellency of their accommodations, and every other advantage, seem to have a decided ascendancy over all others; and in consequence Parkgate is become the resort of elegance and fashion." It states that "at Parkgate the convenience of sea-bathing is inferior to none; indeed, the growing attention shown to it during these seasons is a better proof of its accommodation than can be given of it here." And so the place had its theatre (in earlier times a curing house for the herrings), but which was afterwards converted into a school; it had also its Assembly Rooms, which may still be picked out by their elaborate but corroded balcony railings, and its lodging-houses, now well-nigh deserted or turned into dwellings of a humbler character. The air is as salubrious as ever, and the neighbouring Chester Infirmary still has, in connection with it, its Convalescent Home at Parkgate; and during the summer season some few visitors are to be found in the houses, which in former days were crowded. But sea-bathing is as impossible here today as is the embarking on a passage to Dublin. At high-tide, though Parkgate Deep, some little distance out, may be full, the sand which is close to the old forsaken sea-wall is barely covered with water, and that only for a very short time. The piers, which were used for the packets and for the ferry-boats to Flint and Bagillt, have long since been buried beneath the invading sand. The fishing boats have to be anchored lower down at Heswall and Gayton, and the heavy nets must be conveyed to them in carts over the waste of wet mud when the tide is out. Parkgate, once "one of the gayest towns in England," is now little more than a fishing village. Shrimping

and trawling give employment and a fair living to the fisher-folk who dwell there. The mussel-beds also find occupation for others, whilst the visitors who are content with the ozone-laden air, and with the distant prospect of the Welsh hills, enable some of the residents to add a little to their income. But it is a place of departed glories, and it is difficult for a stranger to realize the change which has come over it, say in the past hundred years, not to speak of an earlier date.

To call Parkgate a port is indeed to call up a memorial of old Cheshire. As the old inhabitants pass away the memories become fainter and fewer. We owe a great deal to the late Mr. Gleave, Mr. Stonehouse, Mr. Kerns, and others, for preserving some of these memories, which were made public in the local newspapers and elsewhere. They tell of the troubles connected with Irish labourers, who spent much time here waiting to be hired, or to return to the Green Isle after harvest was over. They speak of smuggling as not unknown, and of the expedients adopted by the "runners" to evade the Coastguard or the Custom House Officer. They give an account of the service of coaches established between Parkgate and Birkenhead, which thus gave communication between Liverpool and Ireland or North Wales. They tell of the entertainments given in the Assembly Room by Ryley the Itinerant or others, when Parkgate was crowded with summer visitors. They tell of the competition between the Dee and the Mersey for the conveyance of the Irish Mails, though the packet set sail not from Parkgate, but from Dawpool. They give us a picture of the vanished Bath House, the water with which the baths were supplied being



pumped up from large tanks formed on the beach, which were left filled on each recession of the tide. They give a description of the traffic in Irish cattle and Welsh ponies and flannel, and other merchandise, which was brought to Parkgate, and for which temporary accommodation had to be supplied until it could be passed on to its destination.

But all this is now changed. The packet service stopped about 1830, and then, or shortly afterwards, other traffic ceased, and Parkgate could no longer be considered a Port, or a limb of the Port of Chester; whilst now the whole Port of Chester itself is of very little importance.

Our local papers still print, week by week, the tide-table and the list of local shipping; thus, on Saturday, October 23rd, 1910, were recorded four arrivals at Flint, four at Hawarden Bridge, three at Saltney, and two at Chester; and two sailings from Flint, three from Connah's Quay, and three from Queen's Ferry. All were British vessels save one—a Danish one bound for Denmark—and were from or to British Ports; but it is many years since Parkgate appeared in such a list.

### LOCAL SHIPPING

#### ARRIVALS

1910	FLINT	
Oct. 14—Catherine Latham	.. Dublin	.. Scrap Iron
.. 16—Penrhyn s.s.	.. Liverpool	.. Wheat
.. 16—The Star	.. "	.. "
.. 17—Lizzie	.. Fowey	.. China Clay

#### HAWARDEN BRIDGE

Oct. 16—Glittering Star	.. Liverpool	.. Spelter
.. 16—Ellen	.. "	.. "
.. 17—Florence Louise	.. Southampton	.. Loam
.. 18—Sarah Ann Widdup	.. Glasgow	.. Bricks

## SALTNEY

Oct. 18—Petrel	.. Liverpool	.. Grain
„ 18—Edward Blower	.. „	.. „
„ 18—Maggie s.s.	.. „	.. „

## CHESTER

Oct. 16—Agnes Glover	.. Belfast	.. Grass Seed
„ 18—Assurance s.s.	.. Penmaenmawr	.. Stone

## SAILINGS

## FLINT

Oct. 18—Thomas & Anne	.. Liverpool	.. Salt Cake
„ 18—Victoria	.. „	.. Chemicals

## CONNAH'S QUAY

Oct. 18—Despatch	.. Belfast	.. Bricks
„ 18—Glad Tidings	.. Cork	.. „
„ 18—Not Forgot	.. Liverpool	.. „

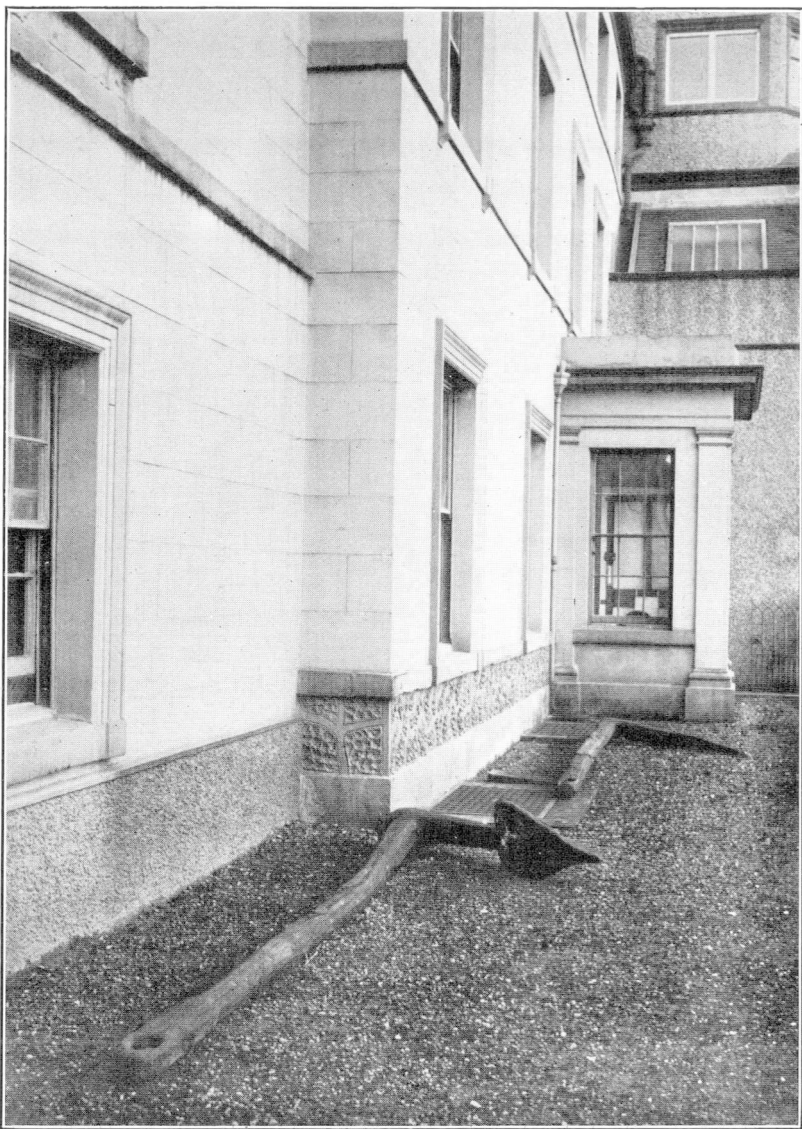
## QUEEN'S FERRY

Oct. 17—Vriendschap	.. Randers	
„ 18—Mourne s.s.	.. Swansea	(Denmark) Creosote Oil
„ 19—Eller s.s.	.. „	.. Coal Tar Pitch

The old *mooring* anchors, ten or twelve feet long, are still to be seen within the railings of Mostyn House School. These were not carried by the boats, but were permanently buried in the sand, and buoys fastened to them; but that is practically all that is left to tell us of those days.

What a change since the days of Charles I., when Chester was still the chief Port on the Irish Channel! The first assessment for Ship Money demanded £100 from Chester, and only £15 was asked from Liverpool!

But though “smugglers and wreckers, fashionable bathers and cross-channel travellers, have gone from poor stranded Parkgate, there is hope for the place yet.” The Dee-side villages are becoming residential



Old Mooring Anchors, Parkgate  
(now lying in front of Mostyn House School)

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Arthur Maycock, Parkgate, Photo.



outskirts of Birkenhead and Liverpool, and houses are being built where the busy toilers in our towns and cities during the daytime may find their refreshing rest and quiet at night; but Parkgate will never again have its packets and its ships. Some twenty years ago the idea was again broached of deepening the channel and restoring the Port, but it came to nothing. A sanguine believer in it, a Welshman, said to me: "I have never been to America, and I will not go until I can set sail from Parkgate." He has since died, but had he lived to the age of Methusaleh he would never have been able to accomplish his desire. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

We ought to mention that the importance of Chester as a sea-port is shown by the fact that in the reign of Henry IV. the Mayor and Sheriffs of the City held by patent the Office of Admiral in the King's Fleet; whilst, by letters patent in 1528, it was declared that the jurisdiction of the Admiral of England from Arnold's Eye to Eaton Weir belonged to the Mayor and Citizens "according to custom prescribed from time and for time immemorial."

