

ART. XII.—*Kendal in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*. By J. D. MARSHALL, B.Sc. (Econ.), Ph.D., F.R.Hist.S.

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IT is a truism that north-western towns grew rapidly during the course of the eighteenth century. We are hardly surprised to learn that the textile towns of Lancashire became much more populous during its middle and later years, nor is the remarkable growth of Whitehaven, one of England's leading ports in that age, an unfamiliar story to our regional scholars. Yet the upsurge in population and industry was not restricted to the towns of the revolutions in manufactures and transport. Country towns could share in what was a general phenomenon, and could exhibit transformations which were both striking and subtle.

Kendal, as is now clear, grew in population between two and a half and three times during the course of the eighteenth century.¹ This growth is largely attributable to the effects of the woollen textile industry, organised in the town and its hinterland on a domestic basis, but also to the more general currents of growing commerce and a somewhat more highly developed agriculture in what had been a relatively "backward" area. The following remarks represent an attempt to sketch out some of the main features of Kendal's story during this period.

The population growth of the town is, unlike

¹ As shown by the mean quinquennial baptisms and burials in the MS. parish registers (used by courtesy of the Vicar of Kendal); an enumeration of Kendal dated 1695, Kendal Record Office, D/Ry; further enumerations of 1784 and 1793, taken by the parish clerk Joseph Garnett, held in printed sheet form at the Kendal Record Office; dissenting (non-parochial) registers at the Public Record Office, RG 6/1077-8 (Quaker); RG 4/2246 (Inghamite), RG 4/3928 (Catholic); Unitarian registers in Nicholson and Axon, *The Older Nonconformity in Kendal* (1916), 446 ff. See also p. 36 *infra*.

numerous more speculative demographic calculations, well attested, and can be based upon a census of Kendal taken in 1695, when its population *minus* that of Kirkland amounted to 2,159. Less than a hundred years later, two more enumerations (1784 and 1793) confirm the extent of the growth even when the relative increase of Kirkland must be calculated rather more tentatively. There is also clear evidence that Kendal as a whole grew most strikingly from about 1730, when its population stood at about 2,500, to the 1780s, when the total was round the 8,000 mark. This is a more than threefold increase, of course, but there are some indications of a decline in the last decade of the century. This is a much greater rate of increase than any so far calculated for the Lake Counties as a whole in a similar period,² and it is a reasonable supposition that much of this growth was sustained by immigration from the surrounding countryside.

In the late seventeenth century, Kendal was still very much a country town, with burgage tofts running down to the river from the nearby slopes. Its citizens did not merely look upon greenery; they were an organic part of a community which still farmed or bred stock in the vicinity of the town, or owned land in its environs. This is not conjecture. A good many Kendalians of the trading classes kept their own animals and engaged in a little husbandry, as is shown by many scores of probate inventories from that period.³ Many a craftsman or a small tradesman lived in what was really a converted farmhouse of one of the common types of that age, and even inns and taverns sometimes show traces of their evolution from that status.

Nevertheless, a visitor approaching Kendal from the

² C. M. L. Bouch and G. P. Jones, *The Lake Counties* (Manchester, 1961), 215-218, refer to the work of E. C. K. Gonner in this field, and make significant independent calculations.

³ Chiefly those in the collection of Wills Proved in the Archdeaconry of Richmond at the Lancashire Record Office, Preston.

south would soon have seen plenty of indications of industry. Some of these were of an unpleasant kind, and the lower part of Highgate, an abode of the leather and tanning trades, almost certainly stank of hides and tanpits. Here, too, lived most of the cobblers, shoemakers and cordwainers of the town (25 out of 34 in the entire 1695 census),⁴ and six out of nine of the town's tanners, a few of them men in a fair way of business. There were, too, nine out of eleven of Kendal's glovers in this area, and two curriers also. Here again we have a demonstration of a country town's intimate links with agriculture, for pelts and hides were a natural product of Westmorland and Furness. Some of the cordwainers and other leather-workers had as many as three or four servants in their households — these were in fact likely to have been apprentices — but there were extremes of wealth and poverty even on this thoroughfare. It is very noticeable that the more prosperous tradesmen or craftsmen lived in clusters, and in one part of Highgate, with 52 households in it, there were no fewer than 33 paupers, most of them heads of households, but a large number of them widows. There were, however, pauper glovers, cordwainers and weavers. Highgate was especially strong in weavers, many of whom had their "studdles" or loom-frames in garrets or small workshops at the rear; there were 21 such workers out of 48 in the town.

One thing is certain. Highgate at that period had none of the elegance to which parts of it later aspired. Our visitor would have admired Kendal's fine church as he passed through Kirkland, and he might have noted the old Abbot Hall, occupying the site of the Museum of Lakeland Life and Industry (the stable

⁴ This census was taken in August 1695, under the terms of the Acts of 6 and 7 William and Mary C.6 (1694) and 7 and 8 William and Mary C.35 (1695), which imposed taxation on marriages, births and deaths, and also burials, bachelors and widowers. It was especially interested in "bachelors over 25 years". It gave occupations of heads of households, children therein, wives and servants.

block of the present Hall, which was built in 1759).⁵ The elegant town houses beyond the foot of present day Gillinggate had not taken shape. There were, indeed, a few substantial buildings, like the Sandes hospital and almshouses, and the early eighteenth century saw a good many transformations and conversions. Hence Henry Fletcher, innholder, at the Royal Oak in Highgate,⁶ quite plainly had a house (1743) with pretensions to style, with a Red Room, Green Room, a "Coffy House", a "Billyard Room", a Far Parlour, Middle Parlour and First Parlour. Much more typical of an earlier phase, however, was the house of John Ashburner, Maltster, Highgate (1665), who had among his rooms a House (main chamber), Parlour, Buttery, Chamber over Parlour, Chamber over the House, New Loft and "Loft over Entrie" — in this instance a standard type of yeoman house was evidently in the process of acquiring an upper storey.⁷ Sometimes the connection with agriculture is even more palpable, as in the case of the burghage house of John Gilpin, waller, of Highgate (who also had another burghage house and tenement in Stricklandgate). The former of these buildings was one of the type with a toft sloping down towards the River Kent, and was also of a common yeoman plan, with Kitchen, Bodystead, Buttery, Parlour, Houseloft, Buttery Loft, Roofloft and Cowhouse!⁸ This was evidently still the basic single-storey construction with loft boards in the rafters. Other houses of this type, in the same vicinity, had been converted into shops, like that of Robert Beethome of Highgate (east side), chirurgeon, 1672, whose house had a Bodystead, Parlour, Kitchen, Shop Parlour, "Shopp", House Loft and Roof Loft.⁹ Even

⁵ For the detailed story of Abbot Hall, see C. Roy Hudleston, "The History of Abbot Hall", in *Quarto* (pub. by Abbot Hall Art Gallery), vol. IX, no. 4, January 1974, and vol. XII, no. 1, April 1974.

⁶ Richmond Wills; inventory of 18 February 1742/3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, inventory of 2 November 1665.

⁸ Will of 20 May 1700; inventory of 13 June 1700.

⁹ Inventory of 4 March 1671/2.

a minor gentleman's house might indicate agrarian practices and uses, and Allan Willson, of the same thoroughfare, had a dwelling with House, Little "Kitching" and "Old Kitchinge", Buttery Passage, Milkhouse and Drinkhouse, Near Loft, House Loft, Flour Loft and High Loft as well as a "Studdy" with books and papers in it.¹⁰

Despite the evidence for much poverty in Highgate and other parts of Kendal,¹¹ there was some modest affluence also, especially as the new century unfolded, and Thomas Hudson, yeoman, of Highgate (1728), had household effects valued at some £1,692.¹² Indeed, there is plenty of evidence that yeomen of some little prosperity might retire to the town following social and cultural aspirations, and that it was common for small landowners to retain possessions outside it while residing in Kendal in retirement or as tradesmen. Hence the John Ashburner mentioned above had a house at Fellside, Crosthwaite (1665),¹³ while Henry Fletcher of the Royal Oak inn, had customary estates at Sedbergh, Stainton and on Kendal Common.¹⁴ Richard Chambers, yeoman (1718), had purchased a tenement and dwelling-house in Kirkland from two Hutton men, and had land in Preston Richard which was earmarked for sale to provide patrimonies for his children.¹⁵ His possessions included "Two Mapps", "Seven Books in Folio", "Seven Books in Quarto", "Books in Octavo", and "Schoole Books". The wills of a substantial number of Kendal citizens of this age refer to friends and relatives still in the countryside.

However, our traveller, picking his way through an irregular and miry thoroughfare, would have had time

¹⁰ Inventory of 28 October 1675; this rambling residence was listed as containing two taxable hearths in 1671; Farrer, *Records Relating to the Barony of Kendale*, vol. I, 121.

¹¹ See p. 12 below.

¹² Inventory of 10 December 1728.

¹³ Will of 23 October 1665.

¹⁴ Will of 15 November 1740.

¹⁵ Will of 15 November 1740.

to notice only the most prominent trade signs protruding from irregular shop fronts — a barber, chirurgeon and apothecary all had sites in Highgate in 1695—as he picked his way up the slope towards the extraordinary obstruction of the New Biggin, and the Fish Market. He would have found the latter area *thrang* enough on a Saturday, for Kendal was an established market for an area stretching from the Furness Fells to Kirkby Stephen and the edge of Lunesdale. At that point he would have turned down Finkle Street and into Stramongate to cross the River Kent at the Stramongate bridge, and to follow the old road to Carlisle *via* Shap.

Stramongate had a greater variety of trades than the other Kendal thoroughfares, and consisted of a jumble of small workshops and lofts, with an occasional smithy giving forth acrid fumes. As in the case of Highgate, the more substantial dwellings would occupy the frontages, and poorer dwellings would tend to occupy rear premises — the building up of the tofts into complete yards was very largely an eighteenth-century transformation, and to that extent the process had only commenced. There were several gentleman's houses in Stramongate, and numbers containing three to six hearths.¹⁶ Yet, for some reason, Kendal's labourers congregated in Stramongate, and 25 out of 30 listed in the 1695 enumeration were in this locality. There were, in addition, five out of eight of its blacksmiths, as well as 19 out of 48 of its weavers, four out of five of its dyers, three out of four of its listed butchers, two out of three of its saddlers, all of its carpenters and joiners, and its only tobacconist¹⁷ and its only ironmonger.

Stramongate, unlike the other thoroughfares, had few paupers and comparatively few servants, and was

¹⁶ Farrer, *Records, etc.*, vol. 1, 124, relating to the 1671 hearth tax for Stramongate.

¹⁷ The manufacture of snuff may have originated from the work of tradesmen such as this. Tobacco was locally prepared in George Fox's time, as his *Journal* makes clear.

on the whole a place of the modestly situated and the industrious. There were, indeed, some affluent households, like that of John Garnett, mercer, whose five-hearth house had five servants and a family of thirteen (1695); but he was exceptional. Meanwhile, our traveller would have missed seeing the real evidence for Kendal's wealth, for that lay along Stricklandgate, the road to the central dales, where the majority of the town's shearman dyers and mercers lived. The evidence for this concentration of wealth is fairly conclusive, and this comparatively short stretch of thoroughfare had a higher average number of taxable hearths per house than the others (1671), and the greatest number of servants proportional to households (1695). It housed 26 out of 41 of the town's shearmen at the latter date, and 12 out of 20 of its mercers. Here, too, were six out of nine of its innkeepers, and at this point it will be in place to comment on Kendal's position as a supplier of hospitality as well as a collector of wealth.

Here, again, the evidence is fairly conclusive, and is to be found in a remarkable survey, mounted *temp.* James II, of local inns and alehouses with a view to making a record of accommodation for military purposes.¹⁸ It should be said at once that the geography of this survey is, to say the least, vague, and that Furness was included in Westmorland. Most of the towns and villages listed are identifiable, however, and the most substantial relative to Kendal and district are here given:

Table 1.

Town.	Guest-beds (1686).	Stabling (places).
Kendal	279	439
Kirkby-Lonsdale	153	190

¹⁸ Public Record Office, WO/30/48, "Abstract of a Particular Account of all the Inns, Alehouses &c. in England with their Stable-Rooms and Bedding" (1686), s.v. Westmorland, fols. 457-465, and Cumberland, fols. 71-78. I am grateful to Mr David Twiss for his help in transcribing this information.

Table 1.—*contd.*

Town.	Guest-beds.(1686)	Stabling (places).
Appleby	117	126
Kirkby Stephen	52	70
Burton	35	49
Brough	34	62
Milnthorpe	25	37
Ambleside	18	31
Shap	17	20
Heversham	17	29
Hawkshead	14	27

It is clear from this that Kendal was the major provider of accommodation in a very large area; even Penrith, which was also a main route town, had only half as many beds and stable places (136 and 214), and only Carlisle (413 and 522) exceeded it in the entire region. Yet it must be said that Kendal's total accommodation is certainly not adequately accounted for by a perusal of the rooms listed in inventories for the main inns, such as the Royal Oak.¹⁹ Accordingly, we are led to believe that much of the balance was made up by small tavern and alehouse owners who combined other trades with the sale of liquor and the furnishing of modest accommodation for travelling traders and country people. This would not be a surprising development, for many town houses, like country farms, had their "drink-houses" and "mash fatts" (vats), and the sale of beers and ales could easily follow. The multiplication of lofts and garrets, as upper storeys were added, completes the tale.

Hence Thomas Airey, wooldealer of the Market Place (1661), had a house with a "Taverne Loft" as well as a "wool loft".²⁰ At a later date, James Fell of Highgate was both a blacksmith and an innholder, and he not only had numerous "garretts" in his residence but also "ail and ail casks" worth £8 - 00.²¹

¹⁹ See p. 4 above.

²⁰ Inventory of 26 June 1661.

²¹ Inventory of 2 May 1735; will of 1 April 1735.

Before that time, Robert Wilkinson of Highgate (1678) had had a house with the following room arrangement: House, Parlour, Kitchen, "Taverne", Loft over the House, Wool Loft, Loft over ye Parlour, Kitchen Loft, Hay Loft and Stable.²² As we have seen, many a Kendal building was very close to the yeoman farmstead, and this also applied to the home of John Higgin, butcher, of the town (1696), who had with his main household a "New House" and a "Taverne"²³ — could it have been that he was already reacting vigorously to the droves from Scotland, and at the same time providing ale and chaff beds for the drovers?

Whatever the case, Kendal was becoming a transport centre of some importance, and one of its mercers, John Garnett of Stricklandgate, actually owned (1701/2) the White Lion in that thoroughfare.²⁴ According to a contemporary witness, the Reverend Thomas Machell, four Kendal carriers set out for London on Mondays "by turns", carrying the linseys and stockings for which the town was famous.²⁵ It is thus reasonable to suppose that the continued development of a national economy in textiles, small metalwares, assorted consumer goods and agricultural products assisted the growth of Kendal from the period under discussion.

Before going further into the matter of Kendal's growing economy, it will be well to round off the matter of its social geography and social structure at the end of the seventeenth century. The surveyors of 1695 recognised only three districts or thoroughfares,

²² Inventory of 30 August 1678.

²³ Inventory of 1 December 1696.

²⁴ *Vide* his will of 14 March 1701/2.

²⁵ This is not to suggest that the wide market was a new development, however; our member, Mr B. C. Jones, has given examples of the pack-horse trade to Southampton in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; CW2 lix 64-84. As regards the seventeenth century, the noted mercer, James Cock of Kendal, had people from the following places owing him money (1641): Dent, Heversham, Penrith, Cockermouth, Egremont and "Doblen". Cock himself owed money to several men in the City of London. (Inventory of 30 March 1641.) Miss Jane Ewbank's *Antiquary on Horseback*, editing the writings of Machell, is of course referred to in the text.

thus giving the impression that the town consisted of three streets. An examination of the parish registers shows that this was not in fact the case, and also gives a measure of the populousness of Kirkland, not encompassed in the 1695 enumeration. The registers of baptisms, burials and marriages,²⁶ then, give the following information:

Table 2.

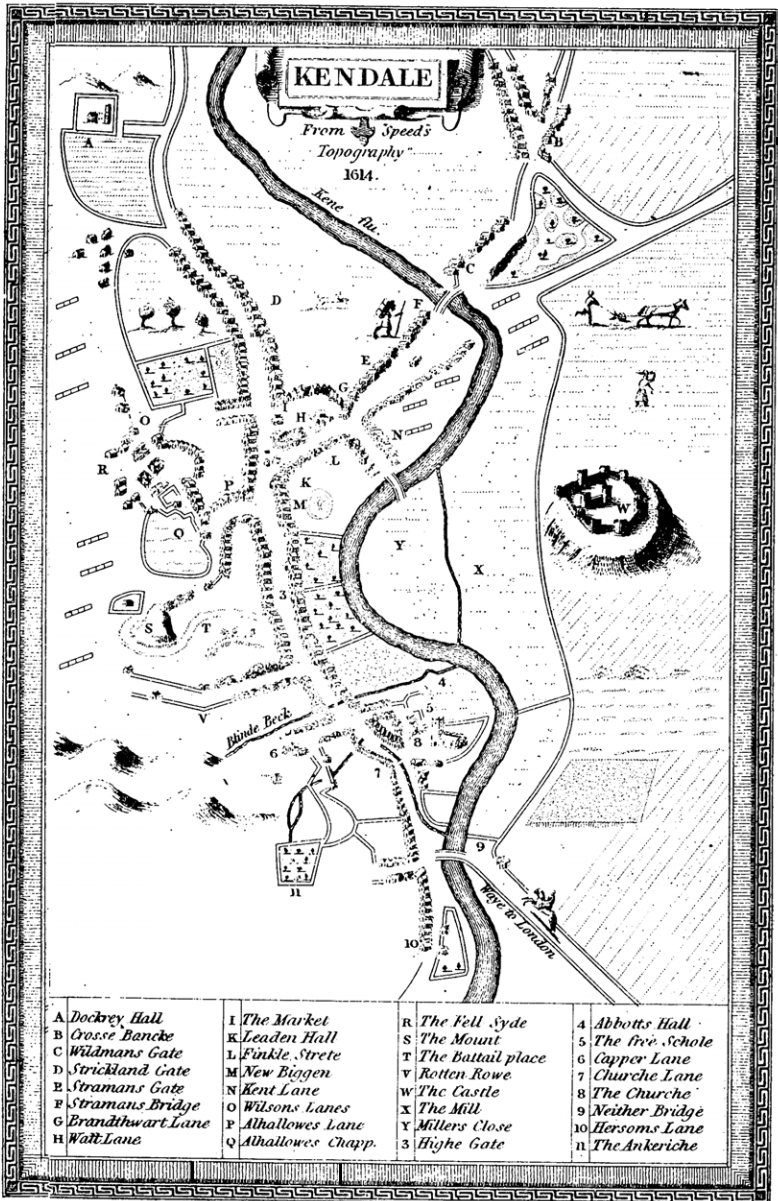
Period: 1691/5 (N.S.).

Locality named:	High-gate.	Stramongate.	Striland-gate.	Fell-side.	Far Cross Bank.	Market Place.	Finkle Street.	Kirkland.
Total bap.	130	62	74	24	20	19	8	101
Total bur.	106	88	66	26	17	8	7	75
Total marr.	17	10	23	2	3	2	1	19

These particulars are both confusing and illuminating. Wildman Street, which then existed and was known by that name, was apparently recognised as part of Stramongate for registration and counting. A single burial and a single baptism were attributed to Branthwaite Brow. An examination of the same registers for the seventeenth century as a whole suggests strongly that the town had grown very little in numbers during that time, and that it may have experienced periods of decline. Accordingly, the geography of the town, as represented here, could have been fossilised into this shape for many decades; its topographical details as left to us by Speed²⁷ (1614), suggest as much very strongly, and depict "Cross Bancke", "Wildmans Gate", "Brandthwart Lane", "Finkle Strete", and "Kent Lane". Indeed, when one considers eighteenth-century parish register place-names, it becomes clear that the general tendency of Kendal's physical growth was *inward*, economising on space by in-filling crofts and existing lanes, and this points to

²⁶ By courtesy of the Vicar of Kendal.

²⁷ Although this now well-known map by Speed is dated 1614, it was published in his *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* in 1611, and was probably prepared even earlier. For the relevant cartographical history, cf. R. A. Skelton, *County Atlases of the British Isles, 1579-1703* (London, 1970), 30-44, esp. 42, and 52-53.



the conclusion that the town's famous yards²⁸ are for the most part a product of modern and not mediaeval history, and that they have more to do with land use than with defence against Scots marauders. However, it is possible that some yards existed in rudimentary form in the seventeenth century, and this likelihood is indicated by the juxtaposition of very poor people and the affluent in both Highgate and Stricklandgate in 1695. The paupers — who in the case of Stricklandgate seem to have occupied a very distinct locality at that time — may have been given cottages on what was really Fellside, reached through yards or alleyways. However, the same census also included part of Fellside in Highgate, and indeed, the probate inventory of William Gruby, weaver of Kirkby Kendal (1688/9) refers to “fell side in Highgate”,²⁹ and William Fleming, husbandman of Fellside (1700), appears in the Highgate enumeration of five years earlier, although he is then described as “labourer”. Hence it is clear that the 1695 enumerators were working on a district basis, and this conclusion is strengthened in the will of John Forton, mercer, which writes (1690/1) of “the house in which I live, being on the north side of Finkell Street in Stramongate”.³⁰

We are, then, obliged to draw largely on the evidence of the parish registers for information on the relative rates of growth of smaller localities and streets.³¹ The rates are of more than passing interest, because they

²⁸ This subject calls for the attention of the expert morphologist of town growth, and has been neglected in the case of Kendal. There is little doubt that Kendal's yards have grown in the way indicated here, however; cf. the lovingly detailed and careful study of Alnwick by Professor M. R. G. Conzen in *Publications of the Institute of British Geographers*, no. 17, 1960, “Alnwick, Northumberland: a Study in Town Plan Analysis”, and especially his remarks on yard growth there, 66-67. I am grateful to Dr Alan Harris for drawing my attention to the possible parallel with Kendal.

²⁹ Inventory of 15 February 1688/9, in the Richmond Will Collection, as before.

³⁰ Will of 23 February 1690/1.

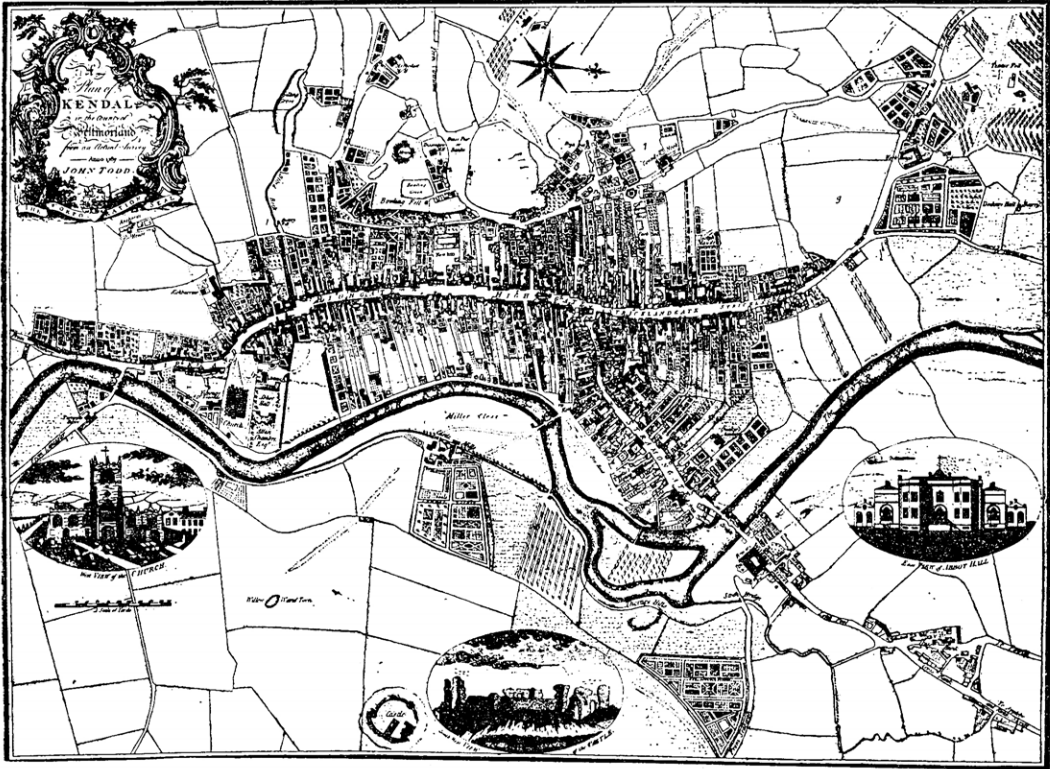
³¹ The wills and inventories, *in toto*, will probably tell us more even than Speed's map, nevertheless; hence, John Hartley, cordwainer (inventory of 23 March 1676/7) is of “Butcher's Row”, Kirkby Kendal.

have bearing on the deeper forces making for the growth of the town of Kendal. There is no doubt, then, that despite the infilling which has been mentioned, there was one area of free and unfettered growth into open if little-valued territory, namely Fellside. This was later to become Kendal's black spot, a place of grimy taverns, dangerous snickets and airless weavers' garrets and workshops, an area in which the young and protected were not permitted to wander. The eighteenth-century tendency was for the developing textile trades to encourage domestic workers to settle in the town rather than to stay in their villages to deal with a purely local demand, and, as a section of the agricultural community was able to produce for a wider and larger market, to release the husbandman from total dependence on by-industries in some social levels and districts. This, of course, is surmise; we do not know exactly what motivated country migrants, but it is certainly the case that in pastoral districts there was little demand for farm labour, but a growing demand for the products of the craftsman and the small rural industry. The probate inventories strongly indicate, for example, that the long-case clock was adorning the typical yeoman's house in the dales mainly after about 1700, and it was in the eighteenth century that clockmakers and their craftsmen flourished — and many of these were to be found in local market towns. Accordingly Fellside, and many of the Kendal yards and back-alleys, became points of concentration for every kind of skilled and semi-skilled craftsman encountered in a town of this character — card-makers, reed-makers, woolcombers, hosiers, dyers, bleachers, and leather-workers, and, of course, the ubiquitous weavers.

Hence, we cannot be surprised to find that Fellside, by any reasonable working estimate, roughly quadrupled in population between 1695 and 1784. In 1787,

an enumeration of Stricklandgate³² (which, again, must include some parcels of Fellside judging by the many and varied trades which are mentioned) refers to weavers (repeatedly), labourers, woolcombers, a millwright, a watchmaker, barbers, wallers, joiners, cloggers, tailors, blacksmith, shoemakers, a chairmaker, a horn comb maker and a carter or two. These, it is quite certain, were denizens of the yards behind the Stricklandgate frontage, and fairly typical Fellside inhabitants. Indeed, there is plenty of evidence that Stricklandgate expanded both laterally and lineally, moving from 728 (for the general enumeration district) in 1695 to about 1,540 in 1784. Here, however, there was room for expansion, in the direction of Fellside to the west, towards the river in the east, and also along the northerly exit to the town in the direction of House of Correction Hill. Highgate, too, was filling in its crofts and alleys, and, during the same period its population moved from about 800 to 1,618. This is partially explained by the growth of adjacent areas like Captain French Lane — a locality new in the eighteenth century, perhaps — Beast Banks, or Beast Fair, and Allhallows Lane. Stramongate, on the other hand, seems to have had much less room for expansion, and moved from about 660 in the late seventeenth century to 836 at the time of Garnett's count in 1784; in the case of adjacent Finkle Street, intensive yard-building took the population from an estimated 50 (1695) to 298 (1784). Towards the Kirkland end of the town, Capper Lane was becoming populous, and Kirkland itself seems to have expanded mainly along this thoroughfare or along the Milnthorpe road. Fortunately, we have John Todd's map of 1787 to give interest and some substance to these calculations, and despite these striking increases of population, it

³² 1787 Census for parts of Westmorland, the Record Office, Kendal, WQSP/C.



is significant that Kendal still had plenty of open spaces and unsullied gardens around its centres of congestion.

So much, in brief, for the general historical geography of the town. Its social development is an equally important topic, as well as a closely related one, and the formation of a more or less affluent employing group, with wealth for investment and a need for labour, is an essential ingredient in the story. This group, based on the textile industry, eventually emerged during the middle years of the eighteenth century, to replace an older and more conventional community of shearmen and merchants, and, with the onset of a modest prosperity in some fields of regional agriculture, Kendal also became a centre of agriculturally-based trades and local commerce, both of much greater variety than hitherto. Indeed, one cannot examine satisfactorily the economic history of a town of this character without looking at the related development of its market area. A greater affluence on the part of a section of the latter's tenant farmers and yeomen could unquestionably lead to a significant growth in effective consumer demand and trade in agricultural products, and so important is this consideration that it is better to pass beyond the merely speculative — for economic development, town growth and population increase are intimately interrelated, and some factual evidence is therefore called for.

The object of the following table is to indicate the general level of local farming wealth, in stock, moveables and money, in two distinct periods — the thirty years following the Restoration, and the same period of years following 1720. The latter period was chosen because it partially coincides with known population increases in parts of the Lake Counties, and the presumption of a connection is thereby strengthened if it can be shown that a section of the rural population

was becoming more wealthy. The method used was that of adding together the total values of yeoman probate inventories taken from the thirty-year periods, but fairly evenly scattered through the individual years of those periods, to make adequate allowance for phases of prosperity and depression; two hundred inventories, equally sampled from highland and lowland districts, were taken within each thirty-year period, and the social distribution of wealth broadly indicated:

Table 3.

Kendal Deanery only; sample yeoman inventories with total values.

	Total values			Total invs.	£ Total gross values	£ Total values of all farm goods	£ Total credits in bills bonds, etc.	£ Total moneys owing
	Under £40	£40-100	Over £100					
<i>1661-1690.</i>								
*Highland	47	33	20	100	8,343	4,549	3,794	2,177
Lowland	31	41	28	100	9,712	5,739	3,973	1,486
Totals				200	18,055	10,288	7,767	3,663
<i>1721-50.</i>								
*Highland	22	36	42	100	12,686	6,587	5,472	5,149
Lowland	28	23	49	100	16,387	7,688	8,698	2,769
Totals				200	29,073	14,275	14,170	8,918

* Districts averaging roughly 400 feet above sea level.

Although the second of these samples gives striking evidence that a section of the rural population was indeed becoming somewhat wealthier, whether in hill country or in the lowlands, it should be borne in mind that rather fewer persons submitted detailed probate inventories in this later period, and that the sample may be to that extent accidentally or socially biased. This objection, a serious one, is not necessarily fatal in samples connected with this region, for the Lake Counties (and especially the Diocese of Carlisle) went on supplying large flows of inventories until the seventeen-forties, and there is no certain proof that the latter are not in fact socially indicative in a large sample.

As in the country, so in the town. There are distinct indications that sections of the Kendal craft and trading community were, in the second of these two periods, becoming wealthier also, not an incredible proposition if one bears in mind that the countryman, as we can now suspect, had more money to spare, or to invest or to loan. The yeomanry, however, are and were an identifiable social group, if not a homogeneous one, and our problem in taking town samples was one of following, if only broadly, social and occupational structures. This was done by reference to the 1695 census enumeration already discussed. It proved to be extremely difficult to obtain two town groups which were even roughly comparable in terms of social structure and economic status, but the effort was well worthwhile, and the comparison obtained was not useless. (Table 4.) The first part of this table, (a), shows the distribution of each sample as regards occupations, and it will also be seen that the periods used are slightly shorter than in the case of the foregoing table, a point of little significance in this instance, in that the sample inventories were still taken from widely scattered years — with the important qualification that 15 of the later group represent years in the late and middle twenties of the eighteenth century, when trade was either average or poor, and health and harvests were alike bad.³³ In the first group, the inventories belong to 16 separate years in the 25 of the period, and in the second group, 20 separate years. In neither sample of 50 was there any single inventory of a great enough gross value to distort, demonstrably, the final totals given in section (b).

As can be seen, the striking feature of these summations lies in the fact that a second group rather strongly based in the middling or lower groups of Kendal

³³ Cf. J. D. Marshall (ed.), *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster* (Manchester, 1967), 189-204. See also p. 31 below.

industry or business could yet dispose of so much more wealth than the group which preceded it:

Table 4 (a).

Occupation.	Nos. of inventories in the period 1662-86.	Total trades in 1695.	Do. for 1722-47.
Gentleman	1	(7)	1
Shearman (dyer)	4	(41)	1
Mercer	1	(20)	—
Wooldealer, stapler	1	(3)	1
Chapman	1	(4)	—
Shopkeeper, grocer	1	(—)	1
Surgeon, barber, surgeon	2	(10)	1
Schoolmaster	1	(1)	—
Clergyman	—	(1)	2
Innkeeper	1	(9)	7
Wiredrawer	1	(1)	—
Cardmaker	1	(2)	—
Tanner	2	(9)	—
Waller	—	(5)	1
Maltster	2	(3)	—
Fellmonger	—	(—)	2
Farrier	—	(1)	1
Clogger	1	(—)	—
Weaver	3	(48)	8
Glover	2	(11)	1
Joiner	2	(4)	—
Blacksmith	1	(8)	3
Tallow chandler	1	(1)	1
Butcher	1	(4)	1
Yeoman	3	(13)	6
Tailor	3	(10)	1
Cordwainer, shoemaker	3	(34)	2
Not stated	8	—	9
	50		50

(b).

(b) Total moveable assets of the same groups, 50 inventories each.

	Total household and trading or work gear.	Total moneys on bond, or speciality.	Total debts owed by deceased.
	£	£	£
1662-86	2,740	834	1,694
1722-47	7,538	4,145	1,868

On the other hand, it should be stressed that the accumulation of moneys for investment is to be connected with a minority of the two samples; only 17 persons in the earlier sample had moneys on loan, and 25 in the second. As in the rural samples given above, there were greater variations of wealth in the early eighteenth century, with the qualification that the wealth was not restricted to the superior social or commercial groups; George Knipe, weaver, of Wildman Street (1738) had household effects valued at £404. 7s. 5d. and moneys on loan to the value of £282. 6s. 1d.,³⁴ and John Crewdson, stuffweaver, of a noted Quaker family, was considerably wealthier³⁵ at his death in 1718. Several other persons within the sample, including three yeomen and a cordwainer, had total effects, as well as other assets, well above the mean figure. Henry Gibson, weaver of Stramongate (1730), had household effects valued at £175. 7s. 3d. and other assets worth £400.³⁶

But, before considering any special industry, we shall do well to examine the structure of the town's occupations and trades, and to look at other evidence which indicates those of a leading character. As the town's industries waxed, so did its trading and service sectors, and as the new settlers arrived, so were houses converted or erected and so did the building trades grow. This general growth in the economy and functions of the town is usefully exemplified in a comparison of the occupations within the district of Stricklandgate in 1695 and 1787 respectively. The total numbers of occupations (under the stated designations) in the town in 1965 are again given (see Table 5 below):

Although the building trades show the most spectacular increase in this district of Kendal, the most striking industrial growth is manifested by the textile

³⁴ Lancs. R.O., inventory of 26 June 1738.

³⁵ Lancs. R.O., inventory of 5 July 1718.

³⁶ Lancs. R.O., inventory of 29 May 1730.

Table 5.

Occupations in Stricklandgate, Kendal, in 1695 and 1787

(Total 1695 occupations in the town given in brackets).

1. *Textile occupations* (excluding servants and apprentices).

	1695.	1787.
Weaver, stuffweaver	9 (48)	88
Shearman	24 (41)	26
Woolcomber	— (3)	21
Hosier	— —	8
*Dyer	— (5)	3
Thrower	— —	1
†Spinner	— —	1
Reedmaker	— —	1
Cardmaker	3 (3)	2
Woolstapler	1 (3)	—
Drysalter	— —	1
	— —	—
	37 (103)	152

*Dyeing had hitherto been done by shearmen.

†This man was presumably a jenny spinner.

2. *General tradesmen* (including former gild occupations).

Mercer	14 (20)	1
Tailor	5 (10)	17
Haberdasher	2 (2)	—
Hatter	— (2)	2
Ropemaker	— —	5
Glover	2 (11)	—
Draper	— —	5
Innkeeper	6 (9)	5
Barber	1 (6)	5
	— —	—
	30 (70)	40

3. *Agriculturally based trades.*

Tanner	— (9)	1
Currier	1 (3)	1
Saddler	1 (3)	7
Butcher	1 (4)	4
Maltster	— (3)	1
Grain dealer	— —	1
Cooper	— (2)	4
Shoemaker	8 (34)	10
Limeburner	— (2)	4
Baker	— (1)	3
Wheelwright	— —	3
	— —	—
	11 (61)	39

4. *Building trades.*

Waller	1	(5)	16
Carpenter & joiner	—	(4)	6
Woodmonger	—	—	1
	—	—	—
	1	(9)	23

5. *Metal-using trades.*

Blacksmith, smith	—	(8)	4
Nailor	—	—	3
Tinman	1	(1)	—
Pewterer	1	(4)	—
Hookmaker	1	(1)	2
Wiredrawer	—	—	2
Ironmonger	—	—	4
	—	—	—
	3	(14)	15

6. *Service occupations or designations apparently new in the eighteenth century, i.e. appearing for the first time in the 1787 enumeration, Stricklandgate only.*

Banker (2), clock or watchmaker (5), staymaker (2), horn comb maker (1), clogger (2), grocer (5), millwright (1), wright (8), bookkeeper (1), brandy merchant (1), wine merchant (1), ostler (1), doctor (1), clerk (1), chaise driver (1), gardener (2), chairmaker (3), earthenware dealer (1).

There were, of course, apothecaries or surgeons earlier; shoemakers made clogs at an earlier period; and clock-making was not a new occupation in the area.

workers, and there can be little doubt that the textile trades accounted for a substantial number of the Kendal working population, a conclusion which is strongly supported by the contemporary evidence set out below. In one major respect, however, the town's industrial development was not a direct outgrowth of those textile trades which had been rooted in earlier centuries, and one branch, that of stocking knitting, had risen to more notable importance only after the 1695 enumeration, which does not contain a single reference to a "hosier", although James Dixon, "stockiner", then lived in Highgate with his wife, servant and five children.

This is not to suggest that the knitting trade was unknown in the locality; the Rev. Thomas Machell makes clear that it was important in Kendal in the 1690's, but it was on the upgrade during this period, when textiles as a whole were developing in Kendal.

That there was a clear growth of the stocking trade in the early eighteenth century is evident from the appearance, in a list of Kendal trade guilds kept by the Corporation,³⁷ of a new body, the "Hosiers, Serge-weavers and Combers of Wool", in and after 1732. This guild's title is indicative of a group of associated trades, and is certainly not mentioned in the *Kendal Book Off Recorde* for the two preceding centuries. The combers were brought into employment because the industry could not, or did not, use the short-stapled coarse native wool of the Lake Counties, but medium or longstapled wool imported from Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Northumberland. After combing, a long-fibred yarn was then spun in the vicinity of the town and made available to a large corps of domestic knitters, men, women and children. Arthur Young visited Kendal in the course of the compilation of his *Tour of the North*, published in 1770, and seems to have consulted, however briefly, an exceedingly well-informed citizen who provided him with data for a most succinct account of local industry:³⁸

"They reckon one hundred and twenty woolcombers, each employing five spinners, and each spinner four or five knitters . . . They make two hundred and fifty dozen (stockings) a week the year round, or twenty eight thousand six hundred dozen annually. The price *per* pair is from 22d. to 6s., but in general from 22d. to 4s. . . . They send all the manufacture to *London* by land carriage, which is said to be the longest, for broad wheel waggons, of any stage in *England*. The earnings of the manufacturers in this branch are as follows:

³⁷ Kendal Corporation MSS., *Court of Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses : Order Book, 1696 to 1764, passim*, by courtesy of the Town Clerk.

³⁸ A. Young, *A Six Months' Tour Through the North of England*, vol. III (2nd edn., London, 1771), 133-134. See also Hartley and Ingilby, *The Old Hand-Knitters of the Dales* (Clapham, 1951), 60.

	s.	d.
The combers, <i>per week</i>	10.	6.
The spinners, women	3.	0.
Ditto, children of ten or twelve years	2.	0.
The knitters	2.	6.
Ditto, children of ten or twelve years	2.	0."

This industry, described by Young as the "chief" of Kendal's "several manufacturers", had the advantage that it could call on great reserves of unskilled family labour, whose equipment was restricted to knitting needles, sticks and sheaths, or to the simple Saxony wheel of the farmhouse.

Significantly, this branch found its labour supplies not in the traditional wool-raising and spinning areas of the Furness Fells and southern Lakeland, but in the rather bleak hills and valleys of the Westmorland-Yorkshire border, and especially in the Dent and Kirkby Stephen areas. The coarse Herdwick wool of the inner Lakeland fells was used in the more traditional textile manufactures of the locality, and it left an abiding influence on Kendal industry which even the knitting trade did not eradicate. Remarkably the hindrances to transport of the pre-turnpike era had not prevented the establishment of a London market for local knitted goods. Meanwhile, a profound stimulus to the knitting industry administered by the economic conditions of the Seven Years' War³⁹ undoubtedly assisted the rise to eminence of a number of Kendal families, and it is worthy of mention that at least three of the original Kendal Fell Trustees of 1767, Christopher Wilson, Samuel Gawthrop and Thomas Wilson junior, were hosiers.⁴⁰

The coarse fell wool, alluded to in the previous paragraph, was utilised in at least two other branches of the Kendal textile industries, in the weaving of the

³⁹ Young, *op. cit.*, 134.

⁴⁰ Kendal Corporation MSS.: *Kendal Fell Trust, Minute Book, 1767-1793*. Confirmation of occupations is in *Bailey's Northern Directory, 1781, s.v. Kendal*.

traditionally-named Kendal *cottons*, and in the linsey-woolsey manufacture. Whereas the knitting industry was stated to give employment to some five thousand men, women and children, the making of cottons employed "three or four hundred hands, particularly shearmen, weavers and spinners".⁴¹ The "cottons" or rough woollen webs were used in making sailors' jackets, and seem to have been a form of duffel; this product, interestingly enough, remained a Kendal speciality during the nineteenth century also, and it outlasted the knitting trade. The weavers of this coarse cloth were "chiefly women", who could earn some 4s. 3d. a week in 1770. The linsey-woolsey manufacture was likewise an old-established one, and it combined two fibres produced in different areas of the southern Lakeland countryside, the rough wool of the fells and the flax of the lowlands.

Both the "cotton" and the linsey-woolsey branches, then, were deeply rooted in the countryside, a fact acknowledged by Arthur Young in 1770:⁴²

The farmers and labourers spin their own wool, and bring the yarn to market every week. There are about five hundred weavers employed, and from a thousand to thirteen hundred spinners in town and country. The business during the war was better than it has been since . . .

Although both spinning and weaving gave additional employment in local hamlets, it may be significant that comparatively affluent weavers appear, in scattered instances, in the town of Kendal rather than in country districts. The professional or highly skilled weaver, capable of producing a variety of patterns and cloths, was a town phenomenon, like George Knipe of Wildman Street, Kendal (1738), who had in his store programs, whits, blews and other items,⁴³ or Edward Curwen (1724), also a Kendal weaver, who had check and "blew lin cloth" as well as harden and

⁴¹ Young, *loc. cit.*

⁴² *Op. cit.*, 135.

⁴³ Richmond Wills, inventory of 26 June 1738.

tick material listed in his inventory.⁴⁴ There is nothing to suggest that there was more than a limited production of these rather basic materials, but it may be significant that where modest wealth appeared, the townsman was likely to be the recipient; Knipe had £282. 6s. 1d. owing to him as "credit by things to contract", and, most interesting example of all, the Quaker stuffweaver John Crewdson (1718) had £420. 10s. 6d. due to him in the form of "book debts".⁴⁵ Crewdson's establishment in Stramongate shows that the linsey-woolsey trade could be pursued with striking success even at that stage, when town and population growth were yet to be seen:

In the Fore Room Lincys	192. 12. 0.
Woolen Yarn	37. 0. 0.
Linn Yarn	15. 16. 0.
In ye Warping Room Woolen Yarn	40. 0. 0.
and Linn Yarn & c.	23. 0. 0.

Business on this scale helped to lay the economic foundations of a group of interlinked Quaker dynasties which was to play a great part in the later history of the town.⁴⁶

Country weavers were on the whole much less likely to be as successful as this, although Thomas Rawlinson, linsey weaver of Undermillbeck (1735) had moveable effects to the value of £322 — a far above average figure in that countryside — and some £127 owing to him, with £14 worth of linseys in his store.⁴⁷ John Suart, linsey weaver, of the same place (1747) who was also, like Rawlinson, a yeoman customaryholder, with rather over £100 in moveables and "linsies", woolen and lin yarn" to the value of £17. 2s. od., was nearer to the norm.⁴⁸ Not many yeomen in the

⁴⁴ Richmond Wills, inventory of 16 June 1724.

⁴⁵ Richmond Wills, inventory of 3 July 1718; also Somervell, *op. cit.*, 45 ff, for a general commentary on the Crewdsons, and for information bearing on their pedigree.

⁴⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁷ Lancs. R.O., Richmond Wills, inventory of 12 August 1735.

⁴⁸ Richmond Wills, inventory of 26 January 1747.

parishes near Kendal, out of a sample of 150 for Kendal Deanery (1661-1750), had large stocks of wool at their decease, and only a small minority had linen yarn or cloth; it is clear, therefore, that the trade was widely and perhaps very thinly diffused. It should also be remembered that Arthur Young was writing after the marked boom of the Seven Years' War; in those years, it was possible for a country weaver like Thomas Postlethwaite of Underbarrow (1758), to have total credits to the appraised value of over £340.⁴⁹ He, too, had had both "lin" and woollen yarn in his store. John Swainson of Winster, also a linen weaver (1757), had credits of £252. 16s. od., and hemp yarn valued at the large sum of £27. os. od.⁵⁰ Even a coarse and uncomfortable material like harden — hemp shirting — could bring in much business.

Both hemp and flax were of course grown locally — George Preston, linen weaver, of Holme Bottom in south Westmorland (1750) had a "hempland" as part of his possessions⁵¹ — and the flax was chiefly a product of the lowland and coastal territories, especially west Cumberland.⁵² The probate inventories indicate that the woollen yarn came from all over Westmorland, Furness and the southern Lake District, with a special emphasis on the Furness area. Indeed, the Kendal woollen yarn market had an outlier at Hawkshead, which acted as a collecting centre for yarn spun in the Furness Fells.⁵³ Isaac Wilson, shearman dyer, of Kendal, one of the estimable Quakers to whom allusion has been made, records that he was buying packs of yarn or wool at Broughton-in-Furness in August 1768,⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Richmond Wills, inventory of 1 June 1758.

⁵⁰ Richmond Wills, inventory of 15 June 1957.

⁵¹ Richmond Wills, will of 4 November 1750.

⁵² For the later connection of this crop distribution with the nineteenth-century factory flax-spinning industry, *vide* Marshall and Davies-Shiel, *The Industrial Archaeology of the Lake Counties* (1969), 98-99.

⁵³ T. W. Thompson, (ed. R. Woof), *Wordsworth's Hawkshead* (1970), 171.

⁵⁴ John Somervell, *Isaac and Rachel Wilson, Quakers of Kendal, 1714-85* (1924), 96.

while the late T. W. Thompson quoted from a now missing diary kept by John Ireland, Kendal manufacturer, to show that⁵⁵

Hawkshead market was at its most important during the second half of the eighteenth century . . . woollen yarn was offered for sale there that had been brought from near and far, even from the Duddon Valley and over Dunmail Raise . . . the handloom weavers on Kendal Fellside, who normally got their yarn from the wool-badgers, "went to Hawkshead with a sled to get a supply . . .".

this last journey taking place during the great frost of 1785. It is worth noting that Ireland himself, only a few years later, was classed as a linsey manufacturer,⁵⁶ as were several of Kendal's leading employers and citizens, Atkinsons, Crewdsons, Wilsons and Whitwells. It may be significant that Ireland, a former poor boy apprenticed to a Hawkshead weaver named Addison,⁵⁷ had migrated to Kendal and established an important firm there. Most of those who came to lead the town's industries seem to have been Quakers; but not all were, and Ireland was not of Quaker persuasion. However, there is also little doubt that the "cotton" or rough woollen and the linsey-woolsey trades played a considerable part in establishing Quaker wealth and status in the locality, and an early account ledger (1767-) of Isaac Wilson, shearman dyer and drysalter,⁵⁸ gives a useful indication of the existence of a number of thriving businesses, some of them run by Friends and operative between 1767 and 1781, when *Bailey's Northern Directory* was published. John Whitwell, one of the largest of Wilson's customers, was a linsey manufacturer and, of course, a Friend and the forbear and namesake of one of Westmorland's most prominent Victorian M.P.s and businessmen, John Whitwell (1811-80). Yet

⁵⁵ Thompson, *op. cit.*, 171.

⁵⁶ *Universal British Directory*, 1790, s.v. Kendal.

⁵⁷ Thompson, *op. cit.*, 155.

⁵⁸ Kendal R.O., WDB/12.

another Quaker was Thomas Wilson, also styled linsey manufacturer in 1781; Whitwells, Crewdsons and Wilsons all intermarried.

Not all ties in trade, however, were religious ones, and Kendal industries were closely bound up with the products of its surrounding area. As a local rhymer put it:⁵⁹

Hawkshead and Kendal are bound up together
Firstly by Wool and Lastly by Leather.

As we have seen, tanning was a long-established trade in Kendal, and the 1695 survey showed six tanners in Highgate, including Thomas Wilson, of a prominent Quaker family originally of Firbank, Sedbergh,⁶⁰ and there were several tanyards still in that thoroughfare at the time of the land tax assessment of 1773.⁶¹ Arthur Young saw tanning as Kendal's fourth manufacture after knitted stockings, linsey-woolsey cloth and "cottons".⁶² However, it is important to bear in mind that this rather noisome industry had widespread country roots,⁶³ which in turn received sustenance from an extensive cattle trade regularly stimulated by droves from Scotland.⁶⁴ A more general stimulus to wheeled and packhorse transport widened the market for leather

There was at least one other textile trade in the town which must have burgeoned, if only on a small scale, with the increasing opulence of some of its commercially and industrially occupied citizens. One of the latter was Robert Green, "Silk Man", whose probate inventory of 1769⁶⁵ came to a gross amount of £1,817. 11s. 9d., of which £1,238 was credit. Green

⁵⁹ Thompson, *op. cit.*, 170. The versifier was one Isaac Swainson (1784).

⁶⁰ Somervell, *op. cit.*, 8-9.

⁶¹ Kendal R.O. Land Tax Assessment, of 12 June 1773, s.v. Highgate.

⁶² Young, *op. cit.*, 135.

⁶³ There are scattered but indicative examples of tanners in High Furness, like the Satterthwaites of Colthouse (collection of Richmond Wills), who were also Quakers.

⁶⁴ *Vide* the present writer's *Old Lakeland* (Newton Abbot, 1971), 76-91.

⁶⁵ Inventory of 20 June 1769, Lancs. R.O., Richmond Wills.

owned a farm and considerable livestock but some £399 in his inventory represented the appraised value of trade goods and stock; plainly, this was a man of substance, and few of the richest local seventeenth-century merchants died in such comfortable circumstances.

It is clear that each of these industries persisted for a considerable period, and Dibdin's *Observations on a Tour*, etc. (n.d. but c. 1801; vol. I, 297) has this to say about the town: "About a hundred hands . . . employed as tanners; and about a hundred more, who receive waste silk from London, boil it in soap, comb it, spin it and dress it, and then send it back again." (I owe this highly apposite quotation to our member, Professor G. P. Jones.)

In the cases of at least two other locally-established industries, Kendal's connections with its neighbouring countryside were to bring benefit to the town during the eighteenth century. This is, once more, a most important consideration, for Kendal was not well placed to receive a supply of that most crucial of all sources of energy at that stage, coal. The industries concerned were those of iron manufacture and gunpowder.

A supply of coal naturally benefited the woollen, tanning and dyeing industries of the area, but the domestic heating of seventeenth and early eighteenth century Kendal was provided by the peat obtained from the Brigsteer and other mosses within a few miles of the town; this much is clear from the numbers of references in wills to moss dales, especially in Brigsteer,⁶⁶ owned by local citizens and bequeathed to members of their families. By 1729, however, an alleged shortage of coal fuel had become so acute that,

⁶⁶ Brigsteer is in the Lyth Valley, about 3 m. SW. of Kendal. Examples of dales or tenements held in that locality are in the wills of Allan Willson of Highgate, 3 May 1675; William Wallas of the Market Place, Kendal, 17 June 1665; and George Wilkinson of Kirkland, 5 May 1679 (Richmond Wills).

it was affirmed, the town was losing its trades of weaving and tanning.⁶⁷ It is highly likely that a *non sequitur* lurks within this conclusion, for the 1720's were years of population (and probably trade) stagnation.⁶⁸ The Board of Customs asked for an account of all coals landed at Milnthorpe, that small port representing Westmorland's point of contact with the sea, and it was found that the delivery of 308 chaldrons in five years, or about 700 tons, had been recorded there.⁶⁹ Much greater quantities had been landed at Grange and Penny Bridge, and some of the Grange coal may well have creaked along the muddy tracks to Kendal; but the totals recorded indicate very clearly that both industrial and domestic needs could not have been adequately met, and that the trade was a small one.

Westmorland was without a cheap and satisfactory supply of coal until the opening of the Lancaster Canal extension to Kendal in 1819; but this deprivation did not unduly hinder the economic development of the locality, which remained, during the eighteenth century, capable of sustaining a very marked population growth in the case of Kendal itself, and an appreciable one in the town's environs. For the truth of the matter is that Kendal (and perhaps many regional centres like it) could somehow manage to do without the vital "sea-coal" in quantity, as long as local traders and manufacturers could receive and despatch raw materials and other goods of limited bulk and high value in relation to weight or bulk. In the case of the regional charcoal iron industry, the availability of transport by sea and lake was a positive advantage, and the fuel could be prepared in the local

⁶⁷ R. C. Jarvis, "Ports in N. Lancs., Cumberland and Westmorland", CW2 xlvii 145.

⁶⁸ J. D. Marshall (ed.), *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster* (Manchester, 1967), 182-183, 189, 193-194, 196, 201-202, 204. See also the parish register figures given on p. 36 *infra*.

⁶⁹ Jarvis, *op. cit.*, 149-150.

woods. Meanwhile, both the overseas and the coastal shipping trades developed in considerable measure during the eighteenth century, and goods were in any case trans-shipped or redirected from the larger ports of the north-west. There was some degree of trade with Liverpool, and a local (Milnthorpe) dealer's account book records a voyage of one of the regularly used iron-carrying vessels, *The Happy Return*, to that port in 1734 with some £123 worth of bar iron, evidently sent through Milnthorpe. Norway Tar, too, was imported at the latter place, and consignments of tobacco sugar, cloth and cider are mentioned.⁷⁰ The extent of an even earlier trade is indicated in a list of possessions of the Quaker merchant and distiller, Joseph Grigg of Milnthorpe (1701), who had a warehouse at that port and shares in several vessels, one of which was trading with Barbados at that date.⁷¹ There are indications meanwhile, that a developing trade pattern encouraged a variety of small dealers, as an advertisement in the *Kendal Weekly Mercury* for 30 May 1741 makes clear:

This Is To Give Notice

THAT the VINE, Wm Bare Master, bound for London, is now taking Goods at Know Hill near *Leighton Furnace*; and designs to sail in ten Days. If any Tradesmen have a mind to ship the said Bottom, they may this Day apply to Mr. JOHN AYREY at the Iron Warehouse under New Biggin in Kendal, who will give Attendance on any Person for that purpose, till 5 o'clock in the Afternoon of the same Day.

Leighton Furnace⁷² was the property of the Backbarrow Company, "Gentlemen Ironmasters" in Furness, and they had early established friendly

⁷⁰ Kendal R.O., WD/MN, Milne, Moser MSS., "Norway Tarr Book, 1734" and "An Account of the Iron, 1733", probably kept by one Robert Dickinson. For earlier coastal trade, see Willan, *The English Coasting Trade, 1600-1750, 184-187*.

⁷¹ Somervell, *op. cit.*, 14. Luxuries were, of course, brought through tiny ports like Milnthorpe with ease, and the Lutwidge papers (letter of 1 July 1748, by courtesy of Mrs Nancy Eaglesham) show the Kendal agent of Walter Lutwidge of Whitehaven carrying on a trade in wine through Milnthorpe.

⁷² Know Hill is near Silverdale, about 3 m. SW. of the former Leighton Furnace site.

contact with the Mayor and Corporation of Kendal, sending the latter a gift of cider in 1715.⁷³ The Backbarrow Company, too, was probably responsible for the "Iron Warehouse under New Biggin", and is known to have established such a store in the town early in the century.⁷⁴ It is not surprising to find that, later, the Corporation of Kendal had £800 at four and a half per cent in the hands of the Newland Company, ironmasters near Ulverston (1782).⁷⁵ Nor were the iron-makers and dealers all to be found outside the town; Joseph Maude, one of Kendal's most influential merchants and pioneer bankers, married into the Holme family, who in turn provided mayors of Kendal on five occasions between 1722 and 1800, and who operated an iron forge at Levens on the River Kent.⁷⁶

The port of Milnthorpe was also used by Isaac Wilson (1774), the Kendal Quaker dyer and drysalter, as was the port of Lancaster:

There is a vessel which sails from our creek of Milnthorp to Symon's Wharf that is now on her passage to London, named Westmorland, if she arrives in a couple of weeks, we could like to have it by her, if not by Lancaster if a vessel for that port is loading, one of these we hope may suit . . .⁷⁷

The Wilson firm, like other local enterprises in the same field, imported relatively light dyewoods and dyes like indigo dust, and journeys from Lancaster would not have been prohibitively costly in relation to the value of the freight carried. The gunpowder industry was enabled to flourish by precisely similar factors; its prosecution entailed the import of sulphur

⁷³ MS. *Day Book and Grand Ledger of the Backbarrow Co.*, 1713-15 (transcript at Barrow Public Library), fol. 154.

⁷⁴ Alfred Fell, *The Early Iron Industry of Furness* (Ulverston, 1908), 300.

⁷⁵ Fell, *op. cit.*, 334.

⁷⁶ G. Chandler, *Four Centuries of Banking : vol. II, The Northern Constituent Banks* (1970), 40; Kendal R.O., Land Tax Assessment, Levens, 1773.

⁷⁷ Kendal R.O., WDK/Unnumbered : Letter Book of Isaac Wilson & Son, letter copied by W. Reynolds, 14th of 3rd M* 1774.

and saltpetre, the third constituent, charcoal, being made in the immediate locality in the widespread and widely cultivated coppice woods of south Westmorland and High Furness, and the additional factors of abundant water power and cheap riverside land, together with proximity to quarries and mines which used the black blasting powder from the local powder mills, ensured its expansion and continuing success.

To these factors may be added another, that of skilful entrepreneurism. John Wakefield I, the original gunpowder manufacturer, set up the first of the regional mills at Sedgwick, south of Kendal, in 1764. Somervell, a historian of Westmorland Quakerism, commented that this John Wakefield "must have had a great aptitude for business — probably inherited from his grandfather and his mother", from whom he probably learnt much.⁷⁸ He carried on a family woollen business in partnership with her before he commenced the gunpowder manufacture, his bills were circulating widely in the north and north-east in the 1770's, and he promoted turnpikes and invested in Liverpool shipping. He imported sugar from Jamaica, and sought outlets for Kendal cottons through Liverpool.⁷⁹ Locally, he became a partner in the brewery of Wakefield, Wilson and Noble, and in 1788 became a pioneer of regional banking by opening a private bank at his Stricklandgate house.⁸⁰

The middle decades of the century seem to have been conducive to such developments, and numerous items of evidence combine to support this view. In the region as a whole, the 1740's and 1750's saw a boom in the iron trade,⁸¹ an increase in shipping tonnages

⁷⁸ Somervell, *op. cit.*, 93. For the early gunpowder industry, see Paul N. Wilson, "The Gunpowder Mills of Westmorland and Furness", *Trans. Newcomen Soc.*, xxxvi 1963/4.

⁷⁹ Chandler, *op. cit.*, 32, 41-42.

⁸⁰ Somervell, *loc. cit.*

⁸¹ Marshall, *Furness and the Industrial Revolution*, 31.

belonging to local ports,⁸² and, after 1750, a wave of turnpike promotion.⁸³ Although the onset of the Seven Years' War seems to have affected the Furness iron industry unfavourably,⁸⁴ that phenomenon, taken as a whole, apparently brought little but benefit to the Kendal textile industries, and Arthur Young, who was plainly retailing local information at the end of the 1760's, reported that "During the late war business was exceedingly brisk, very dull after the peace, but now as great as ever known"; this in the case of hand-knitting, which was of course a regional industry. Of the Kendal coarse woollens or "cottons" he wrote that "during the war the manufacture was more brisk than ever, very dull after the peace, and has continued but indifferent ever since".⁸⁵

After noting such evidence of heightened activity during the war period, it is hardly astonishing to find the establishment of the gunpowder industry near the ending of hostilities.

With such examples of development in trade and industry in mind, we cannot be surprised to discover that the population of Kendal increased during the course of the eighteenth century. The following table gives both baptism and burial averages in successive quinquennia. These produce the customary difficulties, since Kendal had a fairly large Quaker population which kept its separate and beautifully entered registers from 1762, but a few members of which strayed intermittently into the parish registers.⁸⁶ As is shown in another table, the remaining dissenting (or Catholic) groups were of negligible size, and the averages for

⁸² *Op. cit.*, 32.

⁸³ L. A. Williams, *Road Transport in Cumbria in the Nineteenth Century* (1975), 30.

⁸⁴ Marshall, *op. cit.*, 31.

⁸⁵ Young, *op. cit.*, 34-35.

⁸⁶ MS. registers by courtesy of the Vicar of Kendal; Bishops' Transcripts at the Kendal R.O. The Kendal Quakers registered under the supervision of the Westmorland Meeting before 1762. "Strays" occur as follows: Kendal baptisms 14 October 1731, "Jn^o son of Joshua Suart a Quaker". There are also references to "Presbiterians" and "Papists".

the Anglican registers give convincing corroboration of the proportionate increase as demonstrated by the enumerations before 1801:

Table 6.

Quinquennium.	Kendal only.		Enumerated population (Kendal alone).	Kirkland.
	baptisms (mean).	burials (do.).		
1691-5	68	64	2,159 (1695)	c. 500
1721-5	66	64		
1731-5	96	75		
1741-5	100	71		
1756-60	127	105	c. 4,000	
1782-6	185 (205*)	166 (182*)	6,775 (1784)	796
1791-5	163 (186*)	176 (192*)	7,144 (1793) 6,892 (1801) 7,505 (1811)	935

* With inclusion of dissenters.

Besides Quakers, the town contained Unitarians, Inghamites, Presbyterians, Catholics and Methodists. Joseph Garnett's counts of "Dissenters and Quakers" in the town in the later eighteenth century suggests a total population, of all these denominations, of about 700 persons, with an average of just over 23 baptisms for the quinquennium 1783-7, and 16 burials. This is about one-eleventh of the 1783 enumerated total including Kirkland. Of the dissenting groups, the Quakers numbered at least 400 in the town and its immediate vicinity.⁸⁷ A substantial number of the Methodists may have worshipped at the parish church, and Wesley himself broke with the established church

⁸⁷ Average baptisms and burials in Anglican and dissenting registers respectively, for the period 1782-6, are calculated as follows:

(Mean).	Baptisms.	Burials.	(Kendal only).
Anglican	185	166	
Quakers	10.5	8.2	
Unitarians	5.0	5.2	
Inghamites	1.4	2.0	
Catholics	1.0	—	

The dissenting registers are held at the P.R.O. under (Quaker) RG 6/1077-8; (Inghamite) RG 4/2246, 4494; (Catholic) RG 4/3928. The Unitarian registers have been published in Nicholson and Axon, *The Older Nonconformity in Kendal* (1916), 446 ff.

only in 1784. Both the Quakers and the Unitarians were of much more moment in the evolution of Kendal at this stage than the Methodists or the Catholics.

The purely demographic data provided by the registers (Anglican and dissenting together) are mainly of technical interest, and suggest, for example, that the town was experiencing high death rates in the closing two decades of the eighteenth century. Joseph Garnett's calculation of the average crude death rate for Kendal and Kirkland between 1783 and 1792 (inclusive) gives a figure of 27.6 in the thousand persons living, while a calculation for Kendal alone in the quinquennium 1782-6 gives a death rate of just about 27, as does a similar calculation for the period 1791-5.⁸⁸ By contrast, the baptisms were tending, especially in the final decade, to lag behind total burials. As Garnett showed in his detailed enumerations for the town (1784 and 1793) females far outnumbered males in the town, and it may be that some years of privation had caused the younger males to emigrate in fairly large numbers, leaving behind older people to swell the death rate.

The Rickman parish register abstracts for Westmorland townships⁸⁹ for what they are worth, give a marked impression of healthy natural increase regularly "skimmed off" by steady migration from the countryside, and to that extent they confirm that Westmorland as a whole was a population-supplying county. Outside the unhealthy, rather fetid yards and alleys of Kendal, however, it was healthy enough to sustain robust natural replenishment. The story of Kendal's own

⁸⁸ These figures, of course, include dissenters, but exclude Kirkland. Garnett's second enumeration was set out in *An Account of the Number of Inhabitants of Kendal and Kirkland Taken July 1793* (at the Kendal Record Office), and contains some useful observations.

⁸⁹ Rickman's figures are in *Census of 1801*, vol. 1, 321. They exclude Kendal, and some data for Grayrigg, Hugill and Burneside are missing, although 16 townships are accounted for. For a recent and easily accessible critique of these Abstracts, see M. W. Flinn, *British Population Growth, 1700-1850* (Studies in Economic History pamphlet, 1970).

growth will appear as a plausible enough construction; local people at first moved into the town from their nearby hamlets and village bases, and helped to maintain a high rate of natural increase. The improvement of communications, and the vast development of trade and industry in Lancashire and other areas to the south, however, caused a marked drain from the town itself, which ceased to grow rapidly after about 1780. Country people went farther afield for jobs.

While the parish registers contain much to interest the demographer, they also tell an intriguing story to the local historian interested in the changing shapes of town growth at successive stages, and it is on this source of material that some previous observations are based.

In general, as we have seen, Kendal built around or along existing thoroughfares, although Lowther Street and New Road, between the older town thoroughfares and the River Kent, were largely new constructions of the late eighteenth century.

Some of these developments, needless to say, have significance in the more basic story of the town, and the Kendal Fell Trust, as an agency of local government concerned with the development of public territory on Fellside, was of much import in the administrative history of Kendal between *c.* 1770 and 1835. Its social classes remained to some extent intermingled, as they had been at the time of the enumeration of 1695, but close proximity of elegant to very poor dwellings could only serve to emphasize their stark differences in status. The poor or working population of Kendal plied their trades, and lived in sometimes highly oppressive circumstances, in narrow yards behind the main frontages, whereas the more important or stylish residences had enclosed gardens behind their rear quarters, like the homes of the Maudes and Wakefields on Stricklandgate. The juxtaposition

of rich and poor, elegant and squalid, did not result in social amorphousness; just the contrary. On the other hand, the mixing had a dual effect; it ensured that any sense of community was often strengthened by a sense of deference, and it ensured that Kendal never carried the *cachet* of Appleby, or even tiny (but exclusive) Temple Sowerby as a meeting and residential centre for the gentry.

Stricklandgate nevertheless retained a certain social distinctiveness, as it had done in 1695. It then contained a greater than average proportion of mercers, shearmen and household servants, and the main or frontage housing never entirely lost this air of superiority. *Per contra*, Highgate and Stramongate contained most of the lesser or more plebeian trades of the town, but even in 1695, Stricklandgate had had some weavers, and the proximity of this thoroughfare to Fellside ensured that on the westerly side adjoining the fell there was a diversification of industrial occupations among the dwellers there. Indeed, it is by no means clear how much of Fellside was included in the 1695 survey, and the impression of marked change may be a partially false one. But the impression of transformation is not totally misleading, as will be made clear by a list of occupations as they appear, in order, in the 1787 survey of Stricklandgate.

Taking the order of occupations as they appear in the enumeration from the George and Dragon Inn on the east side of Kendal Market Place,⁹⁰ and then in order along the north side of that open space and down the east side of Stricklandgate (towards the present Post Office), the following list appears. Some occupational clustering is noticeable, but diversity is more so: Innkeeper, Officer of Excise, saddler, weaver, waller, weaver, gardener, barber, labourer, Minister, Recorder,⁹¹ shearman,

⁹⁰ This was located by identifying the next door parsonage house of "the Revrand Callab Rotheram"; see also Curwen, 307, 309.

⁹¹ The "Recorder" was Miles Harrison, Esq., at No 73, Stricklandgate; see Curwen, 347.

shearman, Gent., Ironmonger, shearman, weaver, butcher, labourer, ironmonger, shearman, woolcomber, weaver, supervisor, woolcomber, shearman, ironmonger, shearman, millwright, labourer, grocer, watchmaker, mercer, barber, labourer, waller, joiner, innkeeper, barber, breadbaker, weaver, clogger, labourer, labourer, attorney, draper, tailor, labourer, shearman.

The last-mentioned shearman was Mr James Gandy, occupying No. 97 Stricklandgate,⁹² well down the hill on the east side and somewhere near what is now Sandes Avenue. The Gandys were already becoming one of the most important families in Kendal, yet Mr James had three labourers for his near neighbours. This juxtaposition, and similar examples elsewhere, may be explained by the growth of rear premises and yards which were already taking incipient form in Jeffreys' map of the town, published in 1770. There were ten houses on the Stricklandgate frontage between the house of the Recorder (Miles Harrison) at No. 73 and that of James Gandy; but there were no fewer than 50 families in the intervening section of the enumerator's list. The labourers and weavers were in the rear, the shearman and the attorney and the gentleman at the front. The whole of Kendal was developing in yards, corners and alleys in this manner.

Social separation could be made complete not by the mere degree of proximity or distance, but by the barrier of a simple house wall surrounding a different way of life. Yet such a heterogeneous mixture could no doubt carry distinctive social effects across a wider urban unit. About the social character of Fellside there is less doubt. For long a place of refuge or concentration for the poorer elements, unpopular even to many artisans because it faced bleakly to the east from its exposed height, Fellside was already on the way to becoming a place notable for its turbulence and political unreliability. Another section of the 1787 enumeration sheets, detailing the inhabitants of the

⁹² Curwen, 351.

yards running uphill towards Fellside (after listing a group of the more comfortable inhabitants on the west side of Stricklandgate), shows the expected social homogeneity:

Carpenter, weaver, cobbler, weaver, waller, weaver, horn comb maker, weaver, tailor, woolcomber, waller, doctor, cooper, staymaker, tailor, currier, weaver, draper, labourer, chair maker.

Here is a fairly typical congregation of workpeople in a Kendal yard; an artisan concentration of handloom weaver and handicraftsmen and labourers, a scattering of domestic workers with their cottages under or over a workshop; the literally face-to-face group, the makers of opinion, the banner-bearers of independence and, occasionally and sometimes blindly, revolt. Bread-and-butter Kendal was to be made aware of its social and political currents and movements, and here was a community of interest and activity, a meeting ground for the political man and a place of interchange of critical ideas.

Horizontal or geographical separation is one aspect of the social analysis of an urban community; what of Kendal's social structure, the vertical aspect? A comparison of the enumeration of 1695, or the gentry and middle-class families indicated therein, with that of 1787, reveals that the upper or leader groups in Kendal society had not become appreciably more numerous. The occupational analysis on pp. 21-22 above shows that the artisan groups and the tradesmen or service employees had swelled very considerably. Much higher up the scale, Kendal's gentry families had multiplied, although it would be unwise to argue that the town was becoming a gentry centre or a focal point for county social life. Inevitably, as leader families prospered in trade and industry, so their aspirations led them towards minor gentry status, and it should be borne in mind that a good many commercial families of the seventeenth and early

eighteenth centuries were now, in 1787, minor gentry outside the town itself:

Table 7.

Gentry and middle-class families in Kendal (1695) and in Stricklandgate division (1787).

Designation or occupational head.	Kendal 1695.	Stricklandgate 1787.
Gentleman	2	12
Banker	—	2
Mercer	20	1
Shearman	41	26
Hosier	—	8
Clothier	—	1
Doctor	1	1
Attorney	2	2
Clergyman	1	2
Apothecary	3	—
Schoolmaster	1	—
Wine merchant	—	1
Brandy merchant	—	1
Public official	2	1
Excise Officer	—	3
	—	—
	73	61
Total households:	555	448

The households are given here purely as a working basis for comparative purposes. If the number of leader-households in the 1695 instance is taken as a percentage of all households, then the relevant figure is slightly over 13 per cent. The individuals listed in 1787 examples are, in a few cases, occupants of the same household, and with some allowance for this discrepancy, the figure is once more almost exactly 13 per cent. There are inevitably difficulties of classification, especially near the lower social borderline, as well as of nomenclature. To the 1695 list could be added rather over a dozen yeomen who were living in the town, some of them, as their probate inventories show, of some affluence; and a few men of substance

have undoubtedly failed to find their way into the 1787 column. Since too many arbitrary acts by the social analyst are to be avoided, it seemed appropriate to appeal to contemporary forms of address, and to measure leadership in terms of accorded status-designations; who was called *Mr*, who given the suffixed title of *Esq.*?

This experiment, unfortunately, had to be limited to the eighteenth-century examples; for the earlier enumeration was certainly not as free in its use of designations of this kind, and in the later one, the title of *Mr* was used with a broadness of application that is intriguing if not surprising. In other eighteenth-century lists, *Gentleman* was used with some freedom also, and with little consistency as between one list and another⁹³ in the cases of individuals of some substance. In the 1787 list, the local constable, Edward Braithwaite, accorded the title of *Mr* to Officers of Excise, a "Supervisor", an Ironmonger, and to senior shearmen and merchants almost as a matter of course, unless they were Gentlemen or Esquires. The socially respected and weighty are generally recognisable in forms of address or designation: Mr William Petty, innkeeper in 1787, was an alderman and had been mayor in 1783. He died in that office in 1793. Mr David Jackson, drysalter, had been mayor in the previous year, 1786, and it is fairly clear that an alderman was almost invariably given this title whatever his occupation. The occupations of such senior citizens have not all been accounted for in the foregoing table,⁹⁴ and if they are added to the 1787 list, they help to counterbalance the missing yeomen of 1695. Generally, however, the number of persons addressed as *Mr* was small, fewer than the 13 per cent

⁹³ E.g., as between the jury lists and the land tax assessment lists. See below, p. 47.

⁹⁴ Another example from this period is that of Mr Batty Hodgson, Grocer in the Market Place, who was mayor in 1790.

of heads and leader-households indicated by the table above.

In general, however, the according of titles, although often significant, is inconsistent because subjective or prejudiced, Matthew Rodick, the weighty Unitarian linen draper and mercer, received no title in 1787, yet *Mr* George Benson, the Quaker grocer, did receive the indicated form of address.⁹⁵

One aspect of Kendal's eighteenth century history is, however, tolerably clear; the town was led by a small number of men of considerable influence and some standing, very few of whom were "genuine" gentry in the sense that they would have carried much weight in elevated landed society, even in the world of small landowners which was the north-western countryside. Kendal's links with the surrounding rural districts remained significant, in that the most successful of these pseudo-gentry acquired estates (in addition to their former lands) in the vicinity of the town, and sooner or later retired to them, or developed such an interest in farming or rural life that their involvement in town affairs became weakened. Some of this group formed alliances with "genuine" gentry, one of the most interesting examples in this respect being that of the Cock family, aldermen and mercers of Birkhagg in Kendal Park, with an active record in town and gild affairs spanning much of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. They had, in the former century, formed a marriage alliance with the Shepherds of Shaw End, who became substantial county gentry. The Thomas Cock who cemented this alliance had three sons, each of whom inherited estates near Kendal, at Skelsmergh, Selside and Strickland Roger. Individual members of the family went to London during the eighteenth century, but one of the Cocks, William, retained the Skelsmergh lands and

⁹⁵ Benson appears in the Quaker register of Births for 1780; P.R.O., RG 6/1077 (parochial registers).

continued to occupy a Kendal town house in the 1770's. The last member to hold the office of mayor did so, however, in 1711, and this member, William Cock, died an alderman in 1724.⁹⁶

During the eighteenth century, perhaps because greater economic activity and wealth-accumulation led to higher aspirations, very few families continued to hold office for more than a few decades. As will be seen, and as is indicated by the following table, the rate of turnover of members of the aldermanic bench increased quite markedly in the first half of the eighteenth century,⁹⁷ although, throughout the whole of that century, a few families continued to give service for longer periods. Having regard to the number of would-be minor gentry and of persons successful in trade, therefore, Kendal did not experience the formation of a solidly established and substantial ruling caste. Its leading citizens looked to the leading county gentry, and to aristocratic rulers like the Lowthers, for leadership in broad issues.

In the table set out below, the recurrence of the names of Kendal aldermen can be ascertained by reading downwards, and the relative rates of loss can be simply compared:

Table 8.

Members of the Kendal Aldermanic Bench, 1700-45; Recurrence of the Names of Aldermen in 5-Yearly Periods.

	1700	1705	1710	1715	1720	1725	1730	1735	1740	1745	1750
1700	14										
1705	8	14									
1710	7	10	14								
1715	7	7	9	14							
1720	5	3	7	8	14						
1725	3	2	3	5	11	14					
1730	2	1	3	4	7	7	14				
1735	2	—	2	4	4	5	8	14			
1740	—	—	1	2	3	3	4	9	14		
1745	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	5	8	14	
1750	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	6	—
								(2)			

⁹⁶ Richmond Wills; *Corp. MSS.*, Court of Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses, Order Book 1696-1764; Land Tax Assmts. for Westmorland, 1773, at the Kendal R.O.: information by courtesy of Dr T. G. Fahy, who helpfully pointed out that the Birkhagg Cocks became dissenters, which would explain the family withdrawal from municipal affairs.

⁹⁷ *Corp. MSS.*, Order Book already cited, which gives annual lists of aldermen and mayor, with the gilds and their wardens.

Of the several dozens of family names represented here, only half a dozen appear in both 25-year periods of the whole time-span, those of Archer, Lowry, Symson, Hadwen, Holme and Herbert. Of these, the families represented by the first three surnames had deep seventeenth-century roots in Kendal; and, like the Cocks, the Archers (who were also the relatives of the former) settled down as minor country gentry, in this instance at Oxenholme. They, too, had a dissenting branch.⁹⁸ The Archers, like the Cocks, once more succeeded in making at least one alliance with the elevated county gentry, and the last John Archer to occupy the aldermanic bench was also on the Commission of the Peace for Westmorland until his death at Oxenholme in 1735.⁹⁹

Three-generation associations with the corporation leadership became less and less common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Another association of the earlier type was that of the Redmans, whose Egidius Redman, haberdasher, had been Mayor and Justice of the town in 1649,¹⁰⁰ and whose Christopher Redman was mayor in 1761, at an interval of four generations. This family had a base in an estate at Strickland Ketel.¹⁰¹ The Drinkell, Fenton, Scarisbrick, Rutson and Wilson families were to carry similar weight and almost equal durability in town affairs during the course of the eighteenth century, while the Gurnells were associated with John Wakefield I in the promotion of the gunpowder industry at Sedgwick in 1763. As might be expected, the majority of influential families in the corporation were connected

⁹⁸ Richmond Wills; *vide esp.* the will of John Archer, 18 May 1682; Myles Archer also of Oxenholme, 12 August 1679; John Archer, yeoman of Kendal, 15 March 1695/6.

⁹⁹ *Infmn.*, courtesy of Dr T. G. Fahy; one marriage alliance of the Archers was with the Penningtons of Muncaster, leading Cumberland gentry.

¹⁰⁰ *Kendal Boke Off Recorde*, 24; Richmond Wills, will of Egidius Redman, 23 February 1669/70.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

with the textile industries; the Rutsons¹⁰² and Gurnells¹⁰³ were shearmen, the Drinkells were hosiers,¹⁰⁴ and the Scarisbricks¹⁰⁵ drysalters, dyers and hosiers. The Wilsons, formerly of Beathwaite Green, Heversham, were also hosiers.¹⁰⁶ What is striking about these families in general, however, is that few of them reached the status even of minor gentry without considerable delay, and in this respect the recording of differing but significant forms of address provides interesting incidental evidence.

The 1773 land tax lists for the main Kendal thoroughfares, Stricklandgate and Highgate, are useful in this matter because the assessors, local men, were both grudging and apparently distinctly discriminatory in the way they awarded degrees of rank to leading local inhabitants. They were both measuring and valuing house and industrial property,¹⁰⁷ and were not, of course, taking into account the landed wealth of some of their subjects, situated as it was a few miles from the town. Their street lists may therefore provide a test case, in giving the genuinely accorded status of the town's wealthier citizens. It is interesting that the land tax lists for surrounding townships accorded superior status much more readily than did the town specimens, so that *Mr* Christopher Wilson, with land in Natland, received this mark of position in that township, but was plain Christopher Wilson in the list for Highgate, Kendal.

Only three members of old-established aldermanic families received the title of *Esq.* in the Kendal 1773 lists; William Symson, William Rutson and Thomas

¹⁰² Curwen, 331; *Corp. MSS.*, Order Book cited.

¹⁰³ Order Book.

¹⁰⁴ Curwen, 105.

¹⁰⁵ Kendal R.O., WDX/263/T5, Particulars and Conditions of Sale of the Estate of Thomas Scarisbrick, 20 November 1767; WDX/273/T1, "Thomas Scarisbrick, drysalter".

¹⁰⁶ Chandler, *op. cit.*, 51.

¹⁰⁷ "House" and "Trade" were separately calculated for the majority of the relevant cases in the lists.

Holme. Yet others hardly less weighty at that particular time, if of less protracted standing in individual instances, received no such mark of rank; Christopher Redman, William Petty, Christopher Fenton, Thomas Scarisbrick, William Gurnell, and Thomas Gandy. It was hardly to be expected that the Quakers John Wakefield and Thomas and Jonathan Whitwell would be given any rank, or that the Unitarian Matthew Rodick should be so distinguished. William Petty's landownership in Watercrock, Natland, helped to earn him a *Mr* from the assessor there, and the Unitarian James Greenhow was similarly *Mr* in the township of Stainton, where his family had held land for decades.¹⁰⁸

Yet these grudging and rather inconsistent Kendal listings carry other and significant information; they show respect for a number of known wielders of influence and probably much power, the town's senior men of the law. Myles Harrison Esq., Recorder of Kendal from 1777, Thomas Fenwick Esq., Recorder from 1766, James Dowker Esq., the owner of the Kendal Castle lands and a leading attorney, as well as the agent to the Levens Hall estate, James Wilson, attorney-at-law, and Thomas Harrison, attorney. Fenwick, an M.P. for the county, was one of the most influential men in the entire district, with a seat at Burrow Hall, and a considerable involvement in the more important commercial transactions of the time and place.¹⁰⁹ James Dowker, meanwhile, had risen to a position of substance through his association with the Wilsons, attorneys of Stricklandgate. Thomas Wilson had been legal agent for the Company of Mercers, in Kendal, from c. 1730, and

¹⁰⁸ Nicholson and Axon, *op. cit.*, 525-526. The Greenhows "of Stainton and Kendal" and originally from Horwich, were among those responsible for the building of the Unitarian Chapel in Kendal in 1720.

¹⁰⁹ Revealed, for example, in the MS. *Letter Books of Joseph Maude* (from 1761) at the Kendal R.O. Maude had lent (1768) £2,000 to Fenwick, who persistently refused payment.

Dowker, his young assistant, had originated in a yeoman family of Beetham. The Wilson practice was an extensive one, reaching as far away as Barnard Castle and Workington, although most of the business transacted was, of course, local. Dowker safeguarded and ensured his own future by marrying Wilson's daughter, and William Richardson Esq. (also recorded in the land tax list of 1773 for Kirkland) subsequently carried on the firm, and duly performed similar rites by marrying Dowker's daughter!¹¹⁰ There are distinct signs of the emergence of a legal caste in eighteenth-century Kendal; the Kendal of 1695, by contrast, reveals few lawyers.

Inevitably, the law and commerce went hand in hand, and it seems not purely accidental that Joseph Maude of Sunderland together with two partners created Kendal's first country bank, when such bank formation was so often within the province of firms of attorneys.¹¹¹ Maude, as has been noted, was soon occupying a pinnacle of Kendal society, notwithstanding his late arrival in the town (1776) after a long experience as a coalsetter at Sunnyside, Sunderland, and he became established as a billbroker and money-lender.¹¹² His marriage to a member of the Holme family reinforced his already shining prospects, and his father-in-law Thomas Holme, as we have seen, had extensive iron-dealing connections. When his son Thomas Holme Maude became mayor of Kendal in 1800, the family stood in a position of near-dominance of Kendal trading circles, having formed the country bank of Maude, Wilson and Crewdson in 1788, one of the partners, Thomas Crewdson being a Quaker.

We now come to the Quaker group and its high

¹¹⁰ Kendal R.O., Day Book (MS.) of Thomas Wilson and James Dowker from 1729 to 1747; Letter Book of William Richardson, 1777-86, in Milne, Moser MSS., WD/MN.

¹¹¹ R. W. Robson, *The Eighteenth Century Attorney*, *passim*.

¹¹² MS. Letter Books, *cit.*, and Cash Book, 1776-1788, which shows him buying lands in the southern Lake District.

significance. Most of the dignitaries so far described had rank and position (some of it rather ambiguous); but position and real influence may not be exact equivalents, and the Kendal Quakers may have enjoyed positive advantages through their virtual exclusion from the ceremonials and the privileges of the corporation and church establishment. John Wakefield I, a leading member of the local Friends, had, as we have seen, developed extraordinarily extensive trading connections.¹¹³ By 1788, he, too, had created a Kendal country bank at his house in Stricklandgate, and only a year or two later the Backbarrow Company of Ironmasters in Furness was making use of its services. Dr Chandler remarks, in his history of these banks, that the Quaker-Anglican alliance represented by Maude's bank "led to a sharp increase in the fluidity of credit between Kendal and other towns";¹¹⁴ but the extension of market connections was without doubt very largely a Quaker achievement, an impression that is reinforced by other evidence.

One of the weightiest of Friends in Kendal business circles, Isaac Wilson, drysalter, dyer and dealer in rough woollens or "cottons", had customers all over the West Midlands in 1767,¹¹⁵ and a few years later, in 1774, was trading with individuals or firms in Norwich, Beverley, Hull, Pocklington and York.¹¹⁶ Such contacts were not built up without much patient work and travel, but the existing system of business intelligence constructed by the Friends undoubtedly aided its working.¹¹⁷ The movements of Kendal Friends are reflected in the successive places of origin recorded for Quaker brides and grooms in the marriage registers

¹¹³ See p. 34 above.

¹¹⁴ Chandler, *op. cit.*, 56.

¹¹⁵ Kendal R.O., WDB/12, Ledger of Isaac Wilson, drysalter and dyer, 1767-88, *passim*.

¹¹⁶ Kendal R.O., WDK/Unnumbered, Isaac Wilson Letter Book, 1774.

¹¹⁷ For another locally-based example, Marshall, *Furness and the Industrial Revolution*, 24-27; Marshall (ed.), *The Autobiography of William Stout*, 13 and *passim*.

of Kendal Monthly Meeting. Out of 56 marriages registered between 1762, when the Meeting commenced its recording for the first time, and 1784, only twelve were those of couples who were both Kendalians. Fifty of the brides, however, hailed from somewhere in the Lake Counties, and usually from Kendal and its vicinity. Thirty-seven of the grooms had been born or raised in the same general area, but two were from London, one was from Leicestershire, two were from Manchester and several from other towns to the south. Such wide marriage horizons were, of course, hardly likely to occur in a sample of similar magnitude in any local parish register, and it must be acknowledged that the Quakers were in many ways a highly individual sect with strongly marked characteristics. Yet an examination of the occupations of a further sample of 43 Friends, from the birth and burial registers of the Kendal Meeting (Kendal men only), indicates that the occupational structure of the group was not greatly dissimilar from that of a sample of more widely representative Kendal citizens.¹¹⁸ The Society inevitably contained more business men, and, by this time, more affluent people than a more general sample of Kendalians, and one is inclined to ask whether the upper section of the Quaker group were not in themselves an aristocracy of wealth, whose material as well as spiritual influence more than compensated for any exclusion from public office or loss of conventional esteem. Isaac Wilson himself was evidently sceptical on this point, and he wrote in June 1774 that¹¹⁹ we have none of that stamp or class in our County; there being

¹¹⁸ This sample is divided into three social groups for convenience: *upper*, shearman dyers (3), hosiers (3), mercers (2) and a dyer; *middle or intermediate*, schoolmasters (2), grocers (5), yeomen (2), tanners (2), woolcombers (3), linen drapers, ironmonger, butcher, maltster, soap boiler, farrier; *lower*, carpenter, weavers (5), labourers (5), husbandmen (3). It will be noticed that the lower social groups are surprisingly well represented. P.R.O., Non-parochial registers, RG 6/1077.

¹¹⁹ Letter of 4 June 1774 ("4th mo.") in Kendal R.O., WDK/Un-numbered, Letter Book of Isaac Wilson, *cited*.

not one friend in the County worth ten thousand & very few one half that amount.

Locally, the Friends combined above-average mobility in a geographical sense with an equally strong tendency to intermarry at the most influential level in terms of time and place. There are many examples,¹²⁰ and a number drawn direct from the Kendal Meeting registers will serve to illustrate the point. In 1765, John Whitwell, weaver, son of John Whitwell, married Dorothy, daughter of Isaac and Rachel Wilson. Two years later, George Braithwaite, shearman dyer, married Deborah, another daughter of Isaac and Rachel Wilson, and two years after that George Benson, Quaker grocer, married a daughter of Roger Wakefield.¹²¹ This building of alliances and relationships went on continually, and it is not a negligible factor in Kendal social history. No mere sketch of social structure, no bald generalisation, can hope fully to convey its reality as a constant background fact.

Nicolson and Burn, the historians and antiquarians of Cumberland and Westmorland (1777), commented on the Quaker element in Kendal in such a way as to indicate the more general consciousness of this fact: there was¹²²

a large *quaker meeting house*, several of the considerable tradesmen of the town being of that persuasion. The quakers also have lately built an elegant school-house for the instruction of youth.

The Unitarians, as is indicated by their chapel registers, were markedly less numerous than the Quakers in the town, but they were, and remained, a force in Kendal society. Like the Quakers, they appear

¹²⁰ See on this point, Foster, *Wilson of High Wray and Kendal*, a detailed Quaker pedigree work.

¹²¹ Kendal Mthly. Mtg. Reg., vol. 134; marriages. Whitwell & Wilson, 4th of 2nd mo. 1765; Braithwaite & Wilson, 13th of 5 mo. 1767; Benson & Wakefield, 6 of 3rd mo. 1769.

¹²² Nicolson & Burn, *The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland* (London, 1777), I 66.

to have suffered from few serious disabilities, especially in matters of trade and industry,¹²³ and like the former, they entertained both very humble and comparatively affluent occupational groups within their ranks. If not a cross-section of Kendal society, they at least had some roots in many aspects of the latter; and the Unitarian chapel in the yard off the Market Place was of long establishment as a religious meeting place, associated as it was with the "Kendal Academy" of Dr Caleb Rotheram, operative between 1733 and 1752, which is famous for its part in John Wilkinson's education, but which trained the intellects of dissenting clergy from many parts of the north.¹²⁴

The Unitarian registers of baptisms for the period 1753 to 1775, reveal the occupations of some 40 members of the congregation. The *upper* or leader group contained four shearmen, a linen draper (Thomas Rodick), a dyer (James Cookson) and drysalter (Isaac Steele) and a hosier (William Mawson), in addition to a merchant. The *intermediate* group included a surgeon, a grocer, three tanners, three innkeepers, a barber, a cardmaker, a reedmaker, a woolcomber and two watchmakers; and the *lower* group a smith, a journeyman stocking weaver, five other weavers, two pedlars, and no fewer than five gardeners (an interesting commentary on the growing household establishments of some townsmen).¹²⁵ Chief among the Unitarian élite in the town were the "Gowthorp" or Gawthrop family, originally of Underbarrow, hosiers and latterly cotton twist manufacturers; Robert Gawthrop of this family (1754-1844) went into partnership with Christopher Wilson of Abbot Hall and James Waite to spin cotton at the Barley Bridge Mill, Staveley,

¹²³ "Roger Wakefield, Quaker" was already a warden of the Shearmen's Company by 1720, and known Friends in the Tanners, Shearmen and Glovers merely had *affirmavit* entered by their names.

¹²⁴ Nicholson and Axon, *The Older Nonconformity of Kendal* (Kendal, 1915), 319-329.

¹²⁵ This group of gardeners may have anthropological significance; or was this an incipient horticultural society, a meeting of like minds?

at the end of the century, and was to that extent a pioneer in factory textiles in the Kendal district.¹²⁶ Together with the Rodicks, linen drapers and merchants, and the Greenhows, the Gawthrops helped to form a tight group in the Unitarian and dissenting leadership of Kendal. It is clear that they felt themselves to be part of the reigning establishment of property owners, if not of conventional civic leaders, and Gawthrops and Rodicks enrolled as special constables to assist in the quelling of the "tumultuous meetings" of journeymen weavers endeavouring to improve their earnings in 1786.¹²⁷

There remains only one other dissenting group (of the older type) for examination. The "Inghamites", a small sect of little significance, had some 43 members in 1780-4, including 14 single women or widows. An even smaller sample of 16 persons (1797-1825) for whom occupations are known, showed a marked leaning to tanning or skinning (five out of the 16), and two weavers, two joiners and a labourer.¹²⁸ These details, although of little weight in themselves, are relevant, because the larger dissenting groups showed a heavy bias, especially in their leading elements, towards the textile industries of the locality. Men in the same trade might be drawn together for other reasons than commercial business, and the preoccupation with business might also cement a like religious faith. In addition, the dissenting groups contained a significantly high proportion of hosiers, the comparatively new occupational group which had arisen in time, indeed, to form a trade company or guild, but at the beginning of the end of the old guild régime. Even the Inghamites had two hosiers.

¹²⁶ Curwen, 106; Nicholson and Axon, *op. cit.*, 520-521.

¹²⁷ Nicholson and Axon, 352-353.

¹²⁸ P.R.O., RG 4/4494, vol. II, Kendal Inghamite Chapel Registers, Baptisms, 1757-82; RG 4/2246, Register of Baptisms, 1781-1837, and burials, 1781-1801. These records were extensively kept by Christopher Batty, elder or minister. The 1780-4 "census" is on pp. 26-27 of vol. I of 4494 cited here.

Industrial leadership, however, may be social leadership in many manifestations and senses, but the latter, especially in a country town situated in a district dominated by great landowners, was likely to be modified and adjusted by the requirements of a deferential society, a so-called ceremonial régime¹²⁹ with its magistrates, great houses, tenants' gatherings, military leaders and vastly powerful influence at election times. The dissenters escaped, in considerable measure, involvement in this social nexus, just as they were spared the expensive ceremonial of corporation gatherings and public offices; but certain ways of advancement were closed to them nevertheless. Their own leaders had to become a local aristocracy of wealth, a minor plutocracy unified by religious principle, before they could become leaders in a more general sense. As Isaac Wilson had implied, they were not yet wealthy enough to achieve this.

That Kendal's leading dissenters were on the way is indicated by the composition of the Kendal Fell Trust in 1767. This was a body formed to carry out the provisions of the Kendal Fell Act of that year, "for enclosing a piece of waste ground in the Burgh and Township of Kirkby-in-Kendal. For the benefit of the poor and for cleansing and enlightening the streets of the said town". Some 160 acres of Kendal Fellside were directly affected, but the Trust itself became a form of alternative local government body for the town, and at least three of its twelve members were prominent dissenters; John Wakefield I, Samuel Gawthrop and George Braithwaite, the dyer and dry-salter, a Quaker. In this instance, they suffered no legal disability and were enabled to take part in town administration. The Fellside area concerned was enclosed and let out to rent in order to defray the cost of cleansing and lighting.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ A useful phrase employed by E. W. Martin in his study of a country ruling class, *The Shearers and the Shorn* (1965).

¹³⁰ *Corp. MSS.*, Kendal Fell Trust, Minute Book 1767-1793.

Let us now consider Kendal as a social and cultural centre.

The town of Lancaster, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was enabled to become a social as well as an administrative centre because it was an assize town; the grim ritual of the assizes was accompanied by racing on the Lancaster Marsh and general jollification.¹³¹ This in turn stimulated other kinds of foregathering, and Lancaster, like its more important neighbour, Preston, became a centre for the legal profession as well as a meeting place in quarter and petty sessions for those leaders of the gentry and rulers of rural society, the magistracy. Kendal's position was by contrast an ambiguous one, and it came only slowly to establish its position as the chief town of its area. It shared administrative pride of place in Westmorland with the much smaller town of Appleby, which remained the assize town for the county, and which, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, dealt with administrative business in quarter sessions for the so-called "Bottom" of Westmorland, the East and West Wards (which in fact embraced the higher ground to the north of the county). Kendal very appropriately administered the territory of the old Barony of Kendale, also through the magistrates in quarter sessions.¹³² Yet, even here, there was not quite parity. Until 1830, the sessions for the Kendal and Lonsdale Wards, which together constituted the old Barony, were held at Kendal by adjournment from Appleby four times a year. Only after 1830 was genuine parity of esteem made evident, when quarter sessions were held alternately at Appleby and Kendal, twice

¹³¹ As indicated by handbills and announcements kept by the Lancaster City Library, Local Collection.

¹³² This is very evident in the documents of Quarter Sessions, Kendal R.O., QSP, WQ/SR, for the third and fourth decade of the eighteenth century.

annually in each place, except at Epiphany, when they were held at Appleby on the Monday and adjourned to Kendal on the Friday following.¹³³

Notwithstanding this slow climb to local leading status, Kendal had a very considerable equipment of judicial institutions and persons to manage them, even in the eighteenth century. The mayor, the recorder and the two senior aldermen were justices of the peace, and had the power to hold local sessions. In addition, the town had a court of record, a court leet, and a court of requests.¹³⁴ The two first-mentioned institutions were abolished by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, and the Kendal Fell Trust was probably a much more effective town administrator, in the sphere of essentials, than the court leet or the old corporation had ever been; yet these older bodies seem to symbolise the almost mediaeval sense of self-sufficiency and isolation which characterised much of the town's life and activity before the nineteenth century.¹³⁵ As we have seen, there were many forces at work tending to break down this isolation, and, paradoxically, it may well be true that Kendal's self-esteem was burgeoning as rapidly as it had ever done in the first major bound of growth in population and trade before the middle of the eighteenth century.

This last-mentioned phenomenon may go far to explain the remarkably early establishment of Kendal's first newspapers: *The Kendal Weekly Courant* (1731) died an early death, as did *The Kendal Weekly Mercury* (1734). Each was an attempt by a local bookseller to produce the simple newsheet of the period, based on the London sheets but containing a few local

¹³³ Cf. Nicholson, 179-181; but General Sessions were to be held alternately at Kendal and Appleby according to an Order of October 1676; Curwen, *Records of Kendale*, III (Kendal, 1926), 24.

¹³⁴ Rev. J. Hodgson, *Top and Hist. Descrn of Westmorland* (London, c. 1820), 192; Nicholson, 179-181.

¹³⁵ The inward-looking view is well exemplified in Stephen Witton's diary, see p. 67 below. See also the present writer's *Old Lakeland* (1971), chap. 5, using the same source.

advertisements. Their respective circulations are unknown, but the latter cannot have been large, and the public was evidently severely limited over a fairly large area. Judging by its advertisements, the *Mercury* circulated in southern and eastern Westmorland and in the southern Lake District; Sedbergh, Hawkshead and Windermere are mentioned,¹³⁶ and from the rudimentary information available, a rough sketch of Kendal's area of influence can be executed. The *Courant's* one surviving copy at the Westmorland Record Office contains only one regional advertisement, significantly relating to an Ulverston subject,¹³⁷ and another for the business of the publisher himself, Thomas Cotton, bookseller of Highgate, who

sold Bibles, Common Prayer, School-Books, History-Books and the Valuable Books, Doctor Bracken's Pocket Farrier, Directions for the Surveyors of the Highways, Sealing Wax, Paper, Ink and other Stationery Ware, Song Books and Ballads. Also Dr DAFNEY's right Cordial Elixir, truly prepar'd, he having receiv'd a fresh Parcel.

Cotton had a printing business in the town as early as 1731, then, and only three years later, Thomas Ashburner, "Bookseller in the Fish-Market", was printing the *Mercury*. The general high level of literacy in the Lake Counties has been remarked upon,¹³⁸ but it did not afford sufficient support for these sheets to ensure their survival. The probate inventory of the regional yeoman was typically and notoriously lacking in many books beyond the Holy Bible, and was usually marked by the isolation of the latter. Newspaper-reading was evidently confined to the professional classes and gentry, and no further newspaper-promotion took place in Kendal until the publication of the *Kendal Chronicle* in 1811.

¹³⁶ Kendal R.O., *Kendal Weekly Mercury*, copies for 6 October 1739, 17 November 1739, 12 April 1740.

¹³⁷ *The Kendal Weekly Courant containing the Most Material Advices Both Foreign and Domestick*, from Saturday 3^d April to Saturday the 10th 1736 (copy at Kendal R.O.).

¹³⁸ *Vide*, C. M. L. Bouch and G. P. Jones, *The Lake Counties, 1500-1830* (Manchester, 1961), 189-202.

What little is known about the cultural history of Kendal raises some interesting questions. The period of early newspaper-promotion coincides roughly with that of the nationally famous dissenting academy of Caleb Rotherham, which conceivably reflected some of the spirit of local Unitarian thought. However, Kendal did not acquire a book club until 1762, although in May 1749, Thomas Ashburner published a small magazine in the town entitled *The Agreeable Miscellany*.¹³⁹ Such events could signify much or little, and they are indeed diminished somewhat in their implication by the discovery that at Backbarrow, about ten miles from Kendal in the southern Lake District near Newby Bridge, the local gentry had a book club also (1775):¹⁴⁰

(April) 29 Club. very hot day. took out 1 and 2 vols. of Goldsmith — had the 7th from Backbarrow club.

It may indeed be argued that Kendal was only stimulating the spread of cultural interests of this kind. But was it? As we shall see, Kendal was very far from being a social centre for the regional gentry, and was therefore “short” of custom for this kind of activity. Typically, the writer of the foregoing diary entry, a clergyman of some intellectual and social pretensions, found little to attract him in Kendal (which was near enough physically to enable him to ride there twice in the winter darkness over a period of months), and instead visited the playhouse or carded in Ulverston, five miles away.¹⁴¹ Subsequently, in November 1794, Kendal acquired its subscription library; but by that time, Ulverston had had a semi-private subscription library for at least twenty years.¹⁴² Both institutions

¹³⁹ Nicholson, 290; Green, *Guide to the Lakes*, I (1819), 135, suggests that the Kendal book club was founded “about 1756”.

¹⁴⁰ CW2 xl 10. Edward Jackson of Colton, the diarist quoted here, gives many revealing items.

¹⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, 2, 3 and *passim*.

¹⁴² As revealed in the MS. Diary of William Fleming of Rowe Head, Pennington, Furness (microfilm at the University of Lancaster), vol. 9, 2958; Ulverston Subscription Library Papers in Ulverston parish documents at Lancs. C.R.O.

had annual dinners, and were supported by local gentry, as was the original Kendal book club.¹⁴³

Similar doubts and reservations are prompted by the somewhat vague and ill-documented history of the theatre in Kendal. Cornelius Nicholson reveals that Kendal had a theatre before 1777, built "on the north side of the market place",¹⁴⁴ and that another was built in Woolpack Yard in that year. The latter, Nicholson tells us, was "on the plan of the metropolitan theatres", and at the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a decline in the support for the drama in the town. So far did this go that by the year 1823 "the proprietor of the theatre was glad to let it go for another purpose, and it was converted into a Meeting-house for the Presbyterians".¹⁴⁵ Nicholson was writing about 1832, and the then nature of the ruling group in the town may have caused him to omit some particulars from this description. Another Kendal writer blamed the failure of at least two theatre promotion attempts upon religious opposition, including that of the Quakers.¹⁴⁶

All that can reasonably be inferred from these tantalisingly sparse details is that the trading, dissenting middle-class elements which dominated the town tended to have somewhat narrow cultural interests, and that Kendal did not play a leading part in the wider propagation of such interests. The mundane truth seems to be that there was, at first, simply no sustained public support for a regional newspaper or a well-run theatre or a library, outside the ranks of the small gentry who had settled in the town or its environs.

¹⁴³ Green, *loc. cit.*; Nicholson, 292.

¹⁴⁴ Nicholson, 291. In fact, there was a playhouse in 1758; Curwen, 319.

¹⁴⁵ Nicholson, 157. See also *Lancaster Gazette*, 9 November 1804, which shows the theatre as a venue for concerts.

¹⁴⁶ "D.K.K.", *Reminiscences of Persons and Places in Kendal Sixty Years Ago* (Kendal, 1890), quoted in Bouch and Jones, *The Lake Counties*, 210.

In the eighteenth century, the preservation of the means of transmitting culture, books and documents or scientific specimens, was often the prerogative of the landed gentry almost alone.¹⁴⁷ The degree of gentry influence is therefore a topic of some moment as regards the standards and conduct of affairs in the town itself. These "standards" would, of course, be reflected in the longer-term attributes of a cultured way of life, like the creation of gracious dwellings and architectural styles. Here the mute evidence of Kendal's silvery limestone, in its buildings, has some interesting and revealing features. Only one really handsome town house, the gracious Abbot Hall (1759), was built in Kendal by neighbouring gentry, the Wilsons of Dallam Tower. One other fairly substantial residence, that of the Maudes, Stricklandgate House, belongs to the late eighteenth century.¹⁴⁸ There were others, a mere scattering, sometimes built before the eighteenth century, like the former town residence or dower house of the Leyburnes of Cunswick Hall, standing in the area of what is now Gillinggate,¹⁴⁹ and the building which ante-dated the present Whitwell Mark Brewery, also built by the Wilsons of Dallam Tower.¹⁵⁰ On both sides of Highgate were a number of other substantial residences; what became known as No. 71, the town house of the Matsons of Tytup Hall in Furness,¹⁵¹ who had made their fortunes in the iron ore trade of that area,¹⁵² and No. 100 in that thoroughfare, which according to an advertisement of 1766 was "one of the largest houses in Town, fit for a family in genteel life".¹⁵³ During the later eighteenth century, however,

¹⁴⁷ There are some qualifications; the Rev. William Crosby, Vicar of Kendal (d. 1733) had a library worth £80, and the Rotheram academy had some valuable books.

¹⁴⁸ Curwen, 103, 331-332.

¹⁴⁹ Curwen, 150.

¹⁵⁰ Curwen, 146.

¹⁵¹ Curwen, 103.

¹⁵² Cf., for example, Fell, *Early Iron Industry of Furness* (Ulverston, 1908), 32 ff.

¹⁵³ Curwen, 141.

it was still possible for a leading local family like that of the Whitwells to live in a house (in Stricklandgate) with warehouse and shop attached. There are other, more gracious buildings, especially those in Highgate between Captain French Lane and the Sandes Hospital, which contained local lesser gentry divorced from the immediate odour of trade.¹⁵⁴

On the whole, however, the interests of these gentry were local and non-rural, and great-house or great-family influence was not directed into the town through their sycophancies. Such influence was certainly felt, and wielded, from time to time, and the Wilsons of Dallam Tower, the Stricklands of Sizergh, and the Bellinghams (and, in the eighteenth century, the Lords Suffolk) of Levens Hall stood in some kind of paternalistic and administrative relation to the town. This emerges very plainly in the case of a recoinage riot of 1696, wherein aggrieved alehouse keepers from Kendal "sallied out to Sizergh, Levens and Dallam Tower and on their return they assaulted the town guard . . .".¹⁵⁵ One could, indeed, seek out gentle magistrates for redress, but any paternalistic example or activity was distant and limited, and only the Wilsons had a more or less intimate relationship with town society. Even so, they were out of key with much in local political thought and loyalty, a point made clear below.

Kendal, then, was hardly a foregathering place for the regional gentry or the rulers of the county. In this connection, it is interesting to compare, by using broadly relevant data, the numbers of the gentry and professional classes in Kendal and other regional towns or centres. This comparison is made possible by the fairly copious and probably indicative entries in *The*

¹⁵⁴ These are shown with ornamental gardens in Todd's Kendal map of 1787, and were occupied by gentry in Wood's plan of 1833; the latter gives the names of occupiers or owners.

¹⁵⁵ Curwen, *Records of Kendale*, III (Kendal), 87, quoting H.M.C. 12th Rept.

Universal British Directory (1790):**Table 9.**

Numbers listed in:

	KENDAL	Kirkby Lonsdale	Burton in Kendal	Appleby	Kirkby Stephen	Brough	Ambleside
Gentry	29	10	7	19	1	15	12
Clergy	6	1	1	1	2	2	—
Physic	10	3	3	3	2	1	1
Law	9	1	1	3	2	1	—
Excise	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Traders	316	52	34	82	13	81	43
Population in 1801	7,978	1,283	548	1,631	1,141	694	538
Ratio of gentry to population							
One in	275	128	78	86	1,141	96	44

It will be seen that (allowing for the statistical accident at Kirkby Stephen) all the smaller centres of Westmorland had, *pro rata*, far more gentry than Kendal in 1790. In addition, it appears that Kendal had more lawyers than all the rest of Westmorland put together, a substantial number of the county's surgeons and doctors, all the excise officers and a very handsome proportion of the region's traders and shopkeepers. Accordingly, then, the town had a fairly strong professional class, a powerful trading and commercial section, and very little reliance on county or rural gentry leadership.

Other sources, interestingly enough, tend to support these proportions of gentry as suggested above. A Jurors' Book for the county, compiled from petty constables' lists for the period 1775-1805,¹⁵⁶ gives Kendal 26 instead of 29 resident gentry, Appleby with Bongate 20 instead of 19, and Kirkby Stephen three instead of one. However, another and evidently static list of jurors for October 1783, compiled by a former Clerk of the Peace for Westmorland, George Wheatley,¹⁵⁷ tends to swell very greatly the number

¹⁵⁶ Kendal R.O., WQR/J.

¹⁵⁷ Clerk of the Peace between 1778 and 1780; *vide* Sir E. Stephens, *The Clerks of the Counties* (1961), 176. Wheatley's handwriting was identified in this Jurors' List.

of Kendalian gentry by including a wide cross-section of freeholders, bringing the total to over 40. Of these, more than a score held land in surrounding townships in the countryside.

This strengthening of separate, town-nourished roots by Kendal leaders has much bearing on the politics of freeholders in and around the town, i.e. in Kendal Ward of the county of Westmorland. Mr Brian Bonsall, in his study *Sir James Lowther and Cumberland and Westmorland Elections, 1754-1775*,¹⁵⁸ shows that opposition to the powerful family of county rulers, the Lowthers, was at its most marked in Kendal Ward during Westmorland elections, the other three wards (East, West and Lonsdale) producing a much smaller anti-Lowther vote in 1768. The vigorously supported opposition candidate, who was backed by Brougham, Lord Suffolk and the Earl of Derby, was Thomas Fenwick, the Recorder of Kendal from 1766 to 1777. He was successful, and was a county M.P. from 1768 to 1774. That is one side of the story; Fenwick himself was not especially popular in the county at large, and the degree of Lowther hold over the administration of the county is to be judged by the frequency of appearance of Clerks of the Peace who were agents, stewards or attorneys, connected with the Earls or Viscounts Lonsdale.¹⁵⁹ Anti-Lowther (or anti-Lonsdale) sentiment became firmly established in Kendal, and received its fullest expression in the stormy county election of 1818, when the town was in uproar.

Such encounters tended to enhance the town's sense of identity and separateness. Meanwhile, it is significant that Kendal's surrounding area, in which the extent of economic influence is to some extent measureable, was also politically oriented or influenced in what was roughly that same area. As Mr Bonsall

¹⁵⁸ Pub. Manchester, 1960, 117-119.

¹⁵⁹ Stephens, *loc. cit.* It would be more true to say that the influence of attorneys was paramount, whether on the Tufton or Lowther sides.

suggests, aristocratic and gentry patronage were always major factors in the harnessing of political expression.¹⁶⁰

There is the further point that a good many country families (i.e. those of yeomen and husbandmen) probably identified themselves with the nearby town, having relatives or friends there, and as we have already seen, many Kendal families had a "base" on an estate in the countryside. Other kinds of social contact must also be considered; fairs and farmers' gatherings, services and amenities other than the cultural ones briefly surveyed above, semi-luxury retail trades which provided unique service in the town's market area and which drew people townward. The services could also be of a kind more or less directly cultural. Daye Barker, gunpowder manufacturer of Lowwood near Haverthwaite, and a man with pretensions to gentility, had his sons educated in Kendal after the end of the eighteenth century; and their teacher, Mr Sampson, was "a very desirable and valuable man and in the Classical Line will give very great satisfaction — He is also a good Mathematician".¹⁶¹ Barker's daughters were also sent to school in Kendal, run by a Miss Richards, which an adviser thought was "the best in the North of England".¹⁶² There were numerous private academies, doubtless good, bad and indifferent, in the vicinity of the town at this period, although the extensive provision of school premises was a nineteenth-century phenomenon.¹⁶³

The economic status of Kendal can be tested in

¹⁶⁰ The Earl of Suffolk, at Levens, wielded much anti-Lowther influence in the elections of this period, as did the Earl of Derby, and Brougham in north Westmorland. But smaller freeholders may have resisted pressure.

¹⁶¹ Letter, Christopher Wilson to Daye Barker, 24 June 1805, quoted by Alice Palmer, *The Lowwood Gunpowder Company* (unpub. dissertation of Chorley College of Education, 1970), 32.

¹⁶² Letter, Wilson to Barker, 29 March 1808, quoted by Miss Palmer in the place cited.

¹⁶³ See, e.g., Nicholson, 209.

other ways, notably by an assessment of the importance of its market, and, to a lesser extent, of its fairs. *The Universal British Directory* reported (1790) that "There is a very large market on Saturday, and two fairs annually, viz. April the 27th and November the 8th and 9th." Andrew Pringle's *Agriculture of Westmorland* (1794), is much more explicit, and remarks: "There are weekly markets at eight different towns in Westmorland; but the only one of any note, is held at Kendal. The next in point of consequence is held at Appleby, the county town." Sir Frederick Morton Eden (1797), writing on the subject of the parish of Orton, fourteen miles north-east of Kendal, remarked that "The price of provisions is regulated by the Kendal market."¹⁶⁴ Orton is slightly nearer Kendal than the market town of Penrith, and according to Eden, the womenfolk there were "mostly employed in knitting worsted stockings for the Kendal manufacturers".¹⁶⁵ It would seem that a circle of fourteen to twenty miles' radius round the town gives a fair indication of its range of market influence, having regard to the pull of Lancaster to the south and that of Penrith to the north.

The patterns of routes and journeys followed in 1790 by local carriers show a very wide range of trade and carriage connections with other towns in the north — with Whitehaven (a twice-weekly wagon service), Carlisle (the same), Hawick, Newcastle, Hawes and York (one wagon a week each), as well as Manchester (twice a week). However, the inner circle of wagon destinations is perhaps a useful indicator of market influence, and the services to Bowness and Hawkshead on the west, and Dent and Sedbergh on the east, are useful guides to the extent of the market area and are corroborative of the radius suggested.

¹⁶⁴ Sir F. M. Eden, *The State of the Poor*, vol. III (1797), 776.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

The great fairs of the region tends to be specialised occasions dealing largely with livestock — horses, sheep and cattle — and the annual events at Brough Hill and Appleby, synchronised as they were with the movement of droves from Scotland,¹⁶⁶ have little bearing on the more intimate sphere of influence of a regional market centre. Kendal's own twice-yearly fairs were, it is now clear, social occasions of some magnitude:¹⁶⁷

April 29th. The Fair a very throng Day Peters Troop Hunts Troop and Powles Grand ground and lofty tumbling a peep show of Wellington Blucher &c picking of pockets &c &c.

As the town grew in importance, and as its manufactures became more extensive, so social cleavages and tensions seem to have appeared more readily. Although Kendal's leader-class had remained a comparatively small one, a fairly prosperous substratum of trading and professional people was appearing in the town, which was in turn still small enough to represent almost a face-to-face community, in which most families and most persons were readily identifiable one to the other. This emerges very plainly in the pages of an early nineteenth-century Kendalian's diary.¹⁶⁸ The growth of industry, however, seems to have destroyed any incipient community of interest that existed, and class conflicts and tensions grew with insecurity and poverty in another section of the population, the inhabitants of the yards and the Fellside.

A table of annual disbursements from the Poor Rate in Kendal, between 1764 and 1795, discloses that expenditure under this head rose at least three times, with some fluctuations, as between the first quinquennium and the last of the period. This far exceeds

¹⁶⁶ A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland* (1952), 178.

¹⁶⁷ An entry from the MS. Diary of Stephen Witton, a remarkable journal in two notebook volumes, by courtesy of Mr R. G. Plint of Kendal. This entry relates to the fair of April 1816, but is clearly relevant.

¹⁶⁸ Cited above.

any presumed population increase that can be discerned in the data available.¹⁶⁹ Peak years of expenditure were 1780 (when £1,000 was exceeded for the first time), 1783-5, 1789, and 1791-5, a new high figure being reached in 1794. The last group of years experienced a sharp price increase, but charges to militiamen's families had also become swollen.¹⁷⁰ Most of the payments, however, were shared between poor persons on regular out-relief, and weekly payments, of very small sums varying from 6d. to 3s., to casual poor persons. In April 1795 there were 93 of these on the books, of whom no fewer than 54 were women or widows, a good many of them with children.¹⁷¹ What in fact was happening was that population and industrial growth, together with trade and price fluctuations, increased movement of people and unhealthier conditions in the poorer quarters, had created a body of people with intensified need for some kind of welfare or charity. Husbands had died, decamped or become separated from wives, ill health had incapacitated others, and two or three hundred of the poorer population, with their families, or a fifth to a quarter of the population, had become in varying degrees dependent upon the Poor Rate.

Eden had seen visible evidence of the state of poverty indicated, and he remarked that "The insides of cottages, near the town, exhibit every appearance of misery".¹⁷² However, it would be wrong to give too mechanical or simplistic an account of the state of affairs in this field, and elsewhere, Eden observed that "The war has not much affected the manufactures of Kendal".¹⁷³ It is plainly not enough to look for purely economic explanations of the poverty that was to be found in the locality.

¹⁶⁹ Eden, *op. cit.*, 760; see also p. 36 above.

¹⁷⁰ *Op. cit.*, 761.

¹⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, 758-759. A workhouse was established in 1769.

¹⁷² Eden., *op. cit.*, 754.

¹⁷³ *Op. cit.*, 752.

The general sense of insecurity led to two interesting phenomena; an efflorescence of friendly societies, of which there were no fewer than twenty in the town at the time of Eden's visit, and a growth of charitable patronage of the poor. The friendly societies were for the most part of a general kind, although seven of them were restricted to one trade only, and may have been disguised unions.¹⁷⁴ A few years later, in 1802/3, the membership of the 21 societies in Kendal Ward (nearly all of them in the town itself) amounted to 2,918 persons, a remarkably high proportion of the working population.¹⁷⁵ The sick poor were also dealt with by the Kendal Dispensary, "chiefly intended to supply the poor inhabitants of Kendal, and Kirkland, with medicines", and founded under the leadership of a Unitarian group in 1782. But, as Eden observed, poor persons using the dispensary had to produce "a recommendation from a subscriber, or from an Overseer of the Poor",¹⁷⁶ and paternalism of a self-gratifying kind was not far away. Likewise, he remarked that the labouring population of the town "generally purchase cloaths at second-hand"¹⁷⁷ and it is highly likely that yet others were given clothes, or cast-offs, as acts of charity by the tradesmen and small gentry.

The workman, as distinct from the largely passive and incapable person receiving poor relief, was by no means always satisfied with his lot. He, too, did not necessarily react mindlessly to economic stimuli, although his inclination to strike or riot in relatively "good" years for trade and industry may indeed have economic as well as deep psychological roots.

¹⁷⁴ *Op. cit.*, 766.

¹⁷⁵ B.P.P., *Abstract of Answers and Returns Relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, 1803/4, XIII, s.v. Westmorland.

¹⁷⁶ *Op. cit.*, 762.

¹⁷⁷ *Op. cit.*, 753. A Kendal weaver of c. 1795, who earned with the assistance of his wife and daughter only £29. 5s. a year, received "cloaths from his employer", but was also supported by his friendly society in sickness; Eden, 768.

Here we must distinguish between the riots which were a traditional form of expression in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and industrial strikes. There is evidence of both forms of action in the Kendal of this age; not only does J. C. Curwen refer to a corn riot which took place in New Inn Yard, Highgate, in August 1775,¹⁷⁸ but Stephen Witton, the artisan diarist, records several food riots early in the following century. One of these, a potato riot in March 1812, may well have originated in desperate privation.

As has been noticed, the journeymen weavers had engaged in "tumultuous meetings" in 1786,¹⁷⁹ and the magistrate Christopher Wilson junior (hosier, cotton spinner and gunpowder maker) refers, in June 1799, to a "turn out & riot amongst the Kendal Cotton weavers which has sufficiently engaged my attention."¹⁸⁰ These few references do not amount to a satisfying record of labour history in the town, and they serve only to stress our point that this town community, however tight, closely-knit, face-to-face and intermingled from a social standpoint, yet suffered sharp economic and social cleavages. The nineteenth century was to see some interesting reactions to these cleavages, and a blurring of their edges and a mollifying of some of their effects through the heavy application of a determined paternalism.

¹⁷⁸ Curwen, 139, quoting *Carlisle Pacquet*, 4 August 1775.

¹⁷⁹ See p. 54 above.

¹⁸⁰ Palmer, *op. cit.*, 36.

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