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***AND THE CHILDREN'S TEETH ARE SET ON EDGE***

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•CHAPTER 10•

## *Kitty Wilkinson Was Here*

Slowly ravel, threads of doom;  
Slowly lengthen fatal yarn;  
Death's inexorable gloom  
Stretches like the frozen tarn,  
Never thawed by sunbeams kind,  
Ruffled ne'er by wave or wind,  
Man beholds it, and is still,  
Daunted by its mortal chill;  
Thither haste my helpless feet  
While I spin my winding sheet!

**Mrs. Ogilvy**

From their beginnings in Liverpool in the early 1770's John and Thomas Hodgson had prospered. In about 1774, on the back of Thomas Hodgson's experience as the agent of Miles Barber, they began a small independent slave trading enterprise with premises at Number 25, North Side, Old Dock.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hodgson was living close by in Water Street, convenient for the Exchange and the warehouse and John lived in Temple Street also not far from the Exchange. Brookes, writing in 1853 of the Liverpool of the 18<sup>th</sup> century described the houses and shops in the streets of this area as dingy and brick built. Even Castle Street leading up to the Exchange was described as narrow and in places it was hard for two coaches to pass. The street was widened in 1786. Water Street itself was also described as narrow "*but contained some large houses inhabited by families of respectability.*"<sup>2</sup>

On the corner of Water Street and Fenwick Street was a large house belonging to John Tarleton, which was later converted into the Kings Arms, the site of Clarkson's impromptu anti slavery debates. By 1777 Thomas Hodgson seems to have moved further from the docks to 7, Drury Lane and by 1781 they had acquired new business premises at 2, Red Cross Street which they retained for about ten years.<sup>1</sup> Brookes says that Red-Cross street contained a mixture of houses; some rather large, the residences of respectable families and others of an inferior size. At the top of Red Cross St were the Fish Stones, which was the site of the Fish Market until it moved onto Goree in 1786, and also the butcher's shambles.<sup>2</sup>

### *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

After the end of the American Revolutionary War the Hodgsons' new found wealth enabled them to open new offices – a counting house – in Church Street whilst retaining their Warehouse on Red-Cross Street. Brookes says the north side of Church Street “*contained dwelling houses, several of which were of large size, and were occupied by the families of higher classes.*” This was where James Currie lived. Thomas Hodgson seems to have been living in Hanover Street. “*Hanover-street contained many large and handsome houses, inhabited by some of the most respectable families. Four of the houses ...near Peter's-lane, were built in a remarkable position, with large angles projecting towards Hanover-street, in which the windows were so placed as to face down the street, in order... to obtain a view of the Mersey, and of Cheshire, before the prospect was obstructed by the erection of buildings at the south side of the Old Dock...*”<sup>2</sup>

Following his marriage to Elizabeth Lightbody Thomas Hodgson moved to 1, Paradise Street which had been the Lightbody residence. Paradise Street was formerly called the Common Shore and “*contained some large dwelling houses, which were inhabited by most respectable families, but there were also some small houses and shops.*”<sup>2</sup> By 1790 Elizabeth Lightbody, Thomas Hodgson's mother-in-law had moved from Paradise Street to 7 Bold Street, where the houses had been newly laid out and built and John Hodgson had taken a house at No 19 Rodney Street which was also newly built. By 1794 Thomas had moved even further up town to No 1 Mount Pleasant – the prospect from which inspired an early poem by Roscoe.<sup>3</sup> “*Most of the upper portion of Mount-pleasant (formerly called Martindale-hill) was an unpaved country lane, with fields and hedge rows on each side. In consequence of its elevated and salubrious situation, there were a few large detached houses with extensive gardens on the south aide, and about half way up the hill; the largest of the houses was for several years occupied by Mr. James Dawson.*”<sup>2</sup> As late as 1796 they still retained their Church Street Counting House, John Hodgson was still in Rodney Street but by this time Mrs. Lightbody had moved to 65 Duke Street.

### ***Mrs Wilkinson and Mrs Lightbody.***

It is from this period that the story of Kitty Wilkinson's association with the family of Thomas Hodgson and the village of Caton stems. Accounts of her life were published by Winifrede Rathbone in 1910 and by Herbert Rathbone in 1927.<sup>4, 5</sup> Both of these accounts, particularly about her early life, drew on on manuscript papers prepared by Mrs William Rathbone about 1835. Catherine “Kitty” Wilkinson was born Catherine Seward in Derry, Ireland, in 1786. In 1795 she travelled with her Mother and Father and brother and sister to Liverpool perhaps as a result of the growing troubles. The ship was hit by a storm in the Mersey and from the ensuing wreck only Kitty and her mother and brother were rescued; her father and younger brother were drowned. She and her mother lived in Denison St in Liverpool and were employed by the elder Elizabeth Lightbody. Elizabeth Lightbody was blind but conducted charitable work among the poor whilst being carried around in a Sedan chair with Kitty Wilkinson as her assistant.<sup>6</sup>

## *And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*

Mrs Lightbody taught Kitty to read and took her on her visits to the poor of Liverpool. Kitty's reported speech is often given in the memorial accounts saying that she, "*used to take a little basket and walk by her side; then she would say to me, 'Kitty go into that cellar and see how the poor woman is today. Is there any fire in the grate? Has she any coals?' Then she would send me back to get what was wanted, and when I came back, if it was wet she would say, 'Now go and put your feet to the fire and tell me what you thought of so and so' and then she would say, 'Kitty, poverty will probably be your portion through life, but you will have one talent to exercise; you may be able to read for half an hour to a sick neighbour, or to run an errand for those who have no-one else to go for them. Promise me, child, that you will try to do what you can for others, and then we may meet again in another world, where I shall be thankful to see you above me.'*"

When Kitty was about 11 her mother's health deteriorated and she went into the infirmary and subsequently returned to Ireland leaving her two children behind.

*"Kitty was a delicate child, and Mrs Lightbody thought it would be very desirable for her to leave town and go and live in the country. It was with this view she sent the two children to a cotton mill at Caton, Lancaster (Which belonged to Mrs Hudson, a relative of hers, and which is a pleasant and healthy situation), to remain during their mother's absence."*<sup>5</sup>

Kitty Wilkinson's recent biographer, Michael Kelly, is sceptical, considering the story quite improbable, for the breakdown in her mother's health meant; "*It is more likely that it would have been the overseer at the workhouse, who would make arrangements for Kitty to be indentured and sent to Low Mill, Caton.*"<sup>6</sup>

However, Mrs Hudson was Elizabeth Hodgson, Thomas Hodgson's sister, whose husband was manager of Low Mill in Caton, and so the account is not wholly implausible. Two years after arriving in Liverpool, Kitty Wilkinson and her brother were sent to Caton as apprentices in the Hodgsons' mill. Kitty would have been aged about 11. The reasons for sending them to Caton are obviously no longer accessible, but if their mother had returned to Ireland, there was an obvious need to provide some care for the children, which Mrs Lightbody was unwilling or unable to do. Mrs Lightbody may have been becoming increasingly infirm; she was already blind. Apprenticeship in the "care" of her relatives in Caton was an obvious solution and self evidently preferable to the workhouse.

And so, "*Mrs Lightbody gave her as a parting remembrance, a copy of Wyatt's Hymns for Children, desiring her to learn those which pleased most, and to send word of those to her she chose. In this manner she hoped, though far away, to influence her little charge for good.*"<sup>5</sup>

Kitty Wilkinson served her apprenticeship in Caton from age 11 to age 18 and in the meantime, in 1801, Elizabeth Lightbody died. Kitty Wilkinson is reported to have said; "*I never saw her again after I went to Caton; but every word she said is precious, and is graven deep in my heart.*" Kitty Wilkinson is also reported to have said about her time in the Caton apprentice house, "*If ever there was a heaven on earth it was that apprentice house, where we were brought up in such ignorance of evil.*" According to Herbert Rathbone; "*Mr Hudson, the manager of the mill, was like a father to the children under his care, not only watching over their mental and*

## *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

*moral progress, but frequently devoting his evenings to their amusement, by teaching them and playing with them a variety of games”<sup>5</sup>*

At 18 Kitty Wilkinson left the Apprentice House and took lodgings in the village, but within a couple of years she returned to Liverpool apparently because her mother, who was now blind and deranged, had returned from Ireland. She worked as a domestic for Colonel and Mrs Maxwell for a year and for Mrs Richard Heywood for about three years where she received training in domestic chores. In 1812 at the age of 27 she married Emmanuel Demontée who was probably a French prisoner of war and a merchant seaman by trade. Demontée drowned at sea in 1815. Kitty was meanwhile working variously as a nail maker, manure collector and domestic.<sup>6</sup>

On December 1st 1823 she married Thomas Wilkinson at Holy Trinity Church. Thomas was also a former Caton apprentice and is said to have been either a cotton porter for the Rathbones, or a gardener on their estate at Greenbank. Like the Rathbones he was a Unitarian. He was nine years younger than Kitty and it seems unlikely they would have met as apprentices, nevertheless Winifrede Rathbone wrote; *“Perhaps you will remember the name of Thomas Wilkinson the boy she had known in the long ago days when she was a little girl working in the cotton mill at Caton. He had not forgotten Kitty, and there is a pretty story of how they met one another again in the grimy Liverpool streets. It was through the old Lancashire songs that Kitty had learned as a village child, and which she still sang in her dark town dwelling. Perhaps he too was feeling lonely and sad when, one day when he was walking through the streets, he suddenly heard someone singing the old songs he remembered so well.”<sup>5</sup>*

During the Liverpool Cholera Epidemic of 1832 Kitty performed charitable work and set up a washroom in her kitchen. She was supported in this by William and Elizabeth Rathbone and Rector Campbell of Holy Trinity Church. She helped numerous orphans; her biographer gives details of about 30, some of whom were placed as apprentices at *“Mr. Greg’s Cotton Mill.”* It is not clear whether this refers to Styal or Caton. Around 1833/4 she became involved in the formation of a seaman’s mission inspired by the work of the Boston Unitarian Joseph Tuckerman.<sup>6</sup> She was involved in the establishment and operation of a public wash house in Upper Frederick Street which was the subject of an appeal for funds written by Mrs. Rathbone in 1837 for the newly formed District Provident Society. The appeal described the operation of the wash house and the need for it. The *“Labouring Classes”* often lived in single rooms, or cellars, with inadequate ventilation. They slept several to a bed, often with two or three beds to a room. Few used sheets, and they wore *“the same linen night and day through the week.”* They could not adequately wash and dry their clothes with just a small fire. The District Provident Society had hired a cellar at 162, Upper Frederick Street, where seventy to ninety families each week washed their clothes and bed-clothes, which were dried in a small room with a stove and returned aired. To prevent the spread of disease any infected linen was washed free of charge and a change of sheets lent out. Few of the sick had any but the sheets lent them. To improve and expand these facilities about £20 was required with additional expenses for coal and rent.

## *And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*

In 1842 the Liverpool Corporation established the first public baths and wash houses in Upper Frederick Street which were opened on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May.<sup>7</sup> The baths were thought by many to be too expensive for the poor but the wash houses seem to have been more reasonably priced. In 1846 a new washhouse was completed in Paul Street to which the Frederick Street superintendents transferred and William Rathbone strongly supported the appointment of the Wilkinsons as the superintendants at Frederick Street.<sup>6</sup> He appealed to the Corporation asking whether the origin of the Institution which owed much to her *benevolent and self denying activity, and its prosperity, and the subsequent adoption by the Corporation, to her clever management, does not give her claim over other applicants...*

Although now 56 he believed she was still strong enough for the task and her husband was familiar with the washing machinery that had recently been installed. Rathbone said their benevolence and fearlessness of infection were quite uncommon and the washing of infected clothes would be properly carried out. He also spoke of their having taken in orphaned children at no cost to the parish except the remission of their poor rates. The origin of the South Corporation School stemmed from the number of children who had congregated with them during the Cholera epidemic. Finally he said; *"I need not, I am sure, after this statement, press upon your attention the importance of showing our estimation of such conduct, by letting Mrs Wilkinson reap its natural reward in the management of the institution which owes its beginning to her, and for which she has proved herself so well qualified nor the discouragement which its refusal will be to such independence, and fearless self denying benevolence."*

In a postscript Rathbone added; *"Mr. Campbell and Mr. Lawrence, and the members of the committee of the Provident District Society, from 1832 to 1837, when the low estate of the funds obliged them to discontinue their assistance to the washing cellar, can bear testimony to the truth of this statement, as can any of the medical men appointed to that district of the town. There are in the Town Hall strong testimonials from some of them, and from Mr. Alan Hodgson, who has known her most of her life, and numerous others."*

The allusion to Alan Hodgson must be an orthographical error. This is Adam Hodgson, Thomas Hodgson's second son, a strong supporter of the District Provident Society, and who certainly would have known her all his life. She had, after all been his grandmother's "maid." His testimonial would have carried considerable weight.

It is said that Kitty Wilkinson was presented to Queen Victoria at Carnatic Hall, Woolton, and given a silver tea-service with teapot engraved; *"The Queen the Queen Dowager and the ladies of Liverpool to Catherine Wilkinson 1846."*<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, Queen Victoria did not visit Liverpool until 1851. However Prince Albert visited the town in 1846 and stayed with George Hall Lawrence at Mosley Hall, otherwise known as Carnatic Hall.<sup>8</sup> Thomas Wilkinson died in 1849 and was buried in St. James' cemetery. Kitty Wilkinson retired in 1852 without a pension but in 1854 the Council proposed to pay a pension of 12s per week. The town clerk ruled that the council had no power to make such a vote and it was proposed that some employment be found for her, and no objection was raised. Kitty Wilkinson

### *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

died on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1860 aged 73 and was buried in St James' cemetery. She was one of very few people of her class to merit an obituary in the press.<sup>9</sup>

*"It maybe well for those of small means, as well as for those more largely endowed, occasionally to review the respective responsibilities of the position in which they are placed and to take note of what might be accomplished with very small means but with a very large heart"*

*"This was eminently the case in the humble individual whose death this day we record. The good seed was sown at a very early age by her attendance upon an infirm old lady while going her rounds to relieve the sickness and sorrows of the poor. The seed fell upon the ground and produced an abundant harvest through her long and useful life, during which her poor neighbours were always sure of her sympathy and advice and such aid as her small means but self-sacrificing energy could make available."*

*"During the eventful season of the cholera in this town her efforts (fearless of risk to herself) were unceasing both by day and by night and they were rendered the more valuable by her practical knowledge and inventive power to meet emergencies as they arose. It was during this period that she originated, in her own cellar, the plan for wash-houses for the poor, which have been so generally adopted. Though labouring for her daily bread, yet she and her husband ... at different times received many orphans into her dwelling with no claim among them but their destitution, taking charge of them with parental care until able to support themselves, or otherwise provided for. In a truly Samaritan and Christian spirit her efforts to relieve knew no limit but in her power to serve. The widow's mite was not infrequently all of this world's wealth she had to give."*

At about the time Kitty was sent apprentice to Caton, Elizabeth Lightbody moved from a house in Bold Street to one in Duke Street, perhaps she was becoming increasingly infirm and could no longer get about in the way that required Kitty Wilkinson's assistance. Whatever the case may be a few years later on August 21<sup>st</sup> 1799 Elizabeth Lightbody made or updated her will. It was drawn up by William Roscoe who also signed as a witness.<sup>10</sup> It was a complex affair running to almost 6 pages. She appointed as her executors first the Rev. John Yates, minister of the Paradise Street Unitarian Chapel and friend of Currie and Roscoe, whom she described as late of Toxteth Park but now of Liverpool. The other executors were her nephews John Lightbody and John Lightbody the younger, the son of her brother Robert Lightbody, and her two remaining daughters Agnes Pares and Hannah Greg. She left each executor a bequest of £100.

Elizabeth Lightbody possessed a considerable estate including the manor of Mouldsworth in Cheshire consisting of 'messuages, tenements, lands, rents, Woodlands, and hereditaments, in Mouldsworth and in the parish of Tarvin.'" There was also property in Shropshire at Tilstock and Alkinton, and in Worcester. Her house in Bold Street was leased from the Corporation. All this estate was to be realized for the benefit of her daughters and grandchildren as the executors saw fit. She provided the sum of five thousand pounds to be invested in public funds for the children of her daughter Elizabeth's children, the children of Thomas Hodgson, to be divided between them at age 21 but in the mean time the interest to be used for their maintenance and education.

## *And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*

To each of her surviving daughters, Agnes Pares and Hannah Greg, she left £200 in shares in the River Dee Navigation Company. To each of her sons-in-law, Thomas Hodgson, Samuel Greg and John Pares, she left £100 "*with grateful thanks for their kindness to me and mine.*" There were a large number of smaller bequests including; £50 to her servant Martha Buckley, to Elizabeth Elton, wife of John Elton, Cooper, £10, to the trustees of the Liverpool infirmary £50, to the trustees of the Blue Coat Hospital £20, to the trustees of the Blind Asylum £20, to "*the society in London for teaching poor deaf and dumb children to read*" £20. She gave £100 to the trustees of the Meeting house in Crooks Lane, Chester, in trust, to pay the interest to the minister. To the trustees of Benn's Garden Meeting House £50, in trust for the minister. She also gave Sarah Ainsworth 1 guinea every month during her life. To Mrs. Taylor she gave three shillings every month and 1 guinea every Christmas during her life. She gave her seat, "*next before Mrs. Fletcher's seat,*" in the Paradise Street Meeting House to the trustees of that meeting, in trust, to pay the rent to the minister.

The remainder of her estate was divided into three parts for the benefit of her daughters. Agnes Pares and Hannah Greg were left the estate "*for their own sole and separate uses and use respectively and not .. subject ...to the control debts or engagements of their present or any future husband or husbands...*" This stipulation was contravened by her executors. The remaining one third of her estate was to be equally divided between the children of her late daughter Elizabeth. However she attached a proviso to this bequest. If Isaac Hodgson, or Adam Hodgson, by virtue of Isaac's death under the age of 21, became possessed of the "*lands hereditaments and real estate*" comprising their mother's marriage settlement to the exclusion of their brothers and sisters they could not inherit under the terms of this will but their share would revert to the other siblings. They had 6 months after coming into this estate on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday to make the necessary division of this settled property. For Isaac this would have arisen in 1804.

Unfortunately for her executors on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1800, a year after she made her will, Elizabeth Lightbody decided the bequest of £5000 to each of her daughters or their children was too large and changed it to £3000. Perhaps there was some diminution in the value of her estate during these lean years of war with France. She probably got the idea of doing this from the document itself where three words missing from the copy had been interlined and the witnesses had attested to the alteration. Elizabeth Lightbody made her changes similarly and stated the changes she had made at the foot of the will and added her signature. Two of the witnesses James Taylor and William Roscoe had to swear a document at the Consistory Court, shortly after her death in August 1801, to say they "*verily and in their consciences believed*" the various changes to have been made by the testator. It was supposed she simply didn't want the trouble and expense of having the whole thing drawn up again for what must have appeared trivial changes.<sup>10</sup>

Although Roscoe had to involve himself, as one of the witnesses, in order to prove the will, he was no longer involved in the law and the estate was handled by Joshua Lace, of Lace and Hassal, son of Ambrose Lace, slave-ship captain. By July 1802 Lace was dealing with the sales of Elizabeth Lightbody's various properties and wrote to John Pares with the details. John Lightbody had bought the house in Paradise Street for £2,057. The Corporation had paid £900 for the house at the

### *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

corner of Dale St. of which Lace thought £300 was Mrs. Lightbody's life interest to be distributed according to her directions. Joshua Lace also raised the issue of a tenant who claimed a verbal agreement with Mrs. Lightbody to continue his tenancy. John Pares acknowledged receipt to Lace in early July and raised a number of issues as to where the various monies should be paid and with respect to the tenant he seemed to remember an application being made which Mrs. Lightbody was disinclined to.<sup>11</sup> He thought Miss Hodgson might shed some light on the matter which implies, perhaps, that Adam Hodgson's unmarried sister, Agnes, had been living with Mrs. Lightbody.

### *Into the Hands of the Creditors*

Elizabeth Lightbody's estate took a long time to disentangle and in the meantime on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1804 the Cotton Spinning business in Caton run by the Hodgson brothers fell into the hands of their creditors. The cause of the collapse is not precisely known. In February of 1802 Addington replaced Pitt as Prime Minister and the Treaty of Amiens was signed after successes by Nelson in Egypt and Copenhagen whilst the continental allies had collapsed. One result of the brief peace was a great rush of tourists to France to see at first hand the effects of ten years of revolution. One of these was the Reverend William Shepherd, composer of Elizabeth Hodgson's epitaph. He was accompanied on his overland coach trip to Paris by a Mr. B.R. and a Miss R, probably members of the Rathbone family. He returned to Paris again with the peace of 1814 when he published impressions of both visits.<sup>12</sup> One of the attractions for Shepherd was seeing the spoils of vanquished Italy then on display in the Louvre. They left Gateacre on June 15<sup>th</sup> and departed Calais on their return on July 12<sup>th</sup>. They traveled at a fortunate time, early enough to avoid the fate of many later tourists caught up in the renewed war.

After the Treaty of Amiens, Bonaparte quickly began to renege on the terms of the treaty. He had himself installed as president of the Cisalpine Republic in Italy which he renamed the Republic of Italy making his intentions absolutely clear to everyone. Addington protested at his threats to Switzerland but could do nothing. His threats to the Turkish Empire and thereby Egypt lead the British to resist the return of Malta which had been promised in the treaty in return for respect for the status quo in Europe which Bonaparte ignored. Bonaparte persuaded the Russians to mediate over Malta and proposed a ten year lease in exchange for Otranto. Having failed to protect Switzerland, Napoleon's right to dispose of an independent state was perhaps the last straw in a dawning realization that war was inevitable.<sup>13</sup>

On May 18<sup>th</sup> war was declared. Napoleon ordered the arrest of all British Travelers in France and some ten thousand were seized. At the same time he ordered the continent closed to British trade and ships. British merchant property was seized at Leghorn, and a major port in Italy was closed to British trade. The same happened to Brindisi and Taranto. Hanover was invaded and Hamburg and Bremen occupied. The other continental nations, unable to resist, simply acquiesced. The resulting downturn in trade probably lay behind the collapse of the Hodgsons' cotton spinning and finishing operations in Caton. Samuel Greg's company at Quarry Bank suffered from bad debts during this period largely based

## *And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*

on the American trade which accounted for over 50% of their business.<sup>14</sup> Similar effects on the Hodgson's business seem likely but in addition it probably also restricted Samuel Greg and John Pare's ability to help or even to capitalize upon the Hodgsons' problems and so they fell into the hands of their creditors.

The immediate collapse may have been precipitated because the repayment on a mortgage of a significant piece of property was about to become due. In August 1784 John and Thomas Hodgson had purchased for £52. 10s about 6 acres of land from William Leyfield, formerly resident in Caton, but then living in Burton in Kendal in Westmoreland. William Leyfield was the son of John Layfield, deceased. His mother, Jennet had since married John Derbyshire, a Cabinet Maker who lived in Wardour Street in Middlesex. John Leyfield had at one time owned a significant amount of land in Caton. As well as the land roughly known as Broadacre today and the site of the Rumble Row Mill he also had significant other holdings. The land was described in the deed of transfer which gave the Hodgsons title.<sup>15</sup> "*All that Cottage or dwelling House called or commonly know by the name of Kendal House ... And Also all the Close Inclosure or Parcel of Land adjoining on the East side of the lane leading to Brookhouse called or commonly known by the name of the Croft by estimation half an acre or thereabouts ....*"

At the same time they agreed to be bound in the sum of £139 to pay to Jennett Layfield an annuity during her life time of £6. 10s per annum, presumably in compensation for her life interest in the estate. These two purchases, when combined with Forge Mill and Low Mill were crucial to a project, surprisingly grandiose in scale, to drive a single mill stream through the village with its beginnings at the Grassyard Hall damn, through Forge Mill across the existing stream of Artlebeck, through the land on which Rumble Row would be built, down to the top of The Croft where Willow Mill was to be built, through the village and finally down to Low Mill on the banks of the Lune. On the Croft, Hodgson built Silver Street with its back to the mill race as a tenement for his workers, and there were other cottages for Low Mill, Damn Bank cottages, and for Willow Mill along with an apprentice house for each mill. The purchase of the Broadacre land and the Croft took place in August of 1784 and February 1785 respectively, which probably dates the construction of the mill race. Silver Street was demolished in the 1960's and the rubble used as infill on the Broadacre estate.

In 1789 the Hodgsons signed a 21 year lease with James Noble for an "*intended Silk Mill and farm at the bottom end of Caton.*" The rent was £40 per year and the lease was to expire on May 13<sup>th</sup> 1810.<sup>15</sup> James Nobel is supposed then to have developed the mill as a Silk Works but the terms of the lease suggest that Hodgson capital was used to develop the site, since Noble was to insure the buildings against fire and keep the wheel and going gear in good repair. At the same time John and Thomas Hodgson were developing Willow Mill apparently in a partnership as Hodgson and Cooper of Liverpool about which nothing seems to be known. The mill came up for sale in 1795 and consisted of a four storey mill built of stone and slated, containing 36 mules carrying 5296 spindles along with drawing and roving frames and carding engines. There were two weaving factories, 27 cottages, a warehouse and a joiners shop. There was a 5feet 7in wide, 15 foot diameter wheel, which from a fourteen foot fall produced 20 hp. The detail of what happened in 1795 when the mill was put up for sale is unknown. In any event the

### *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

operation was continued by Hodgson's and Co, presumably with capital provided by John and Thomas Hodgson and Isaac Capstick in a partnership which managed to continue trading for almost nine years.

Prior to the collapse of Hodgson & Cooper the Hodgsons had raised the sum of £1000 by mortgaging the Rumble Row property to John Armstrong of Everton.<sup>15</sup> The agreement was drawn up by William Roscoe and executed on November 19<sup>th</sup> 1792 and made the mortgage interest payable on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Payments were made until May 1803 and the next fell due on May 19<sup>th</sup> 1804, if they did not make the payment the property would be forfeit.

The payment was not made and on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1804 John Hodgson, Thomas Hodgson and Isaac Capstick were forced to assign all their property to their creditors to be held in trust by the assignees until their debts were paid. The assignees were, James Lees, a Manchester Cotton Dealer, James Thorley, a Lancaster Ironmonger, and George Danson, a merchant of Lancaster.<sup>15</sup> James Lees was in partnership with Robert Lees and John Watkin of Manchester as Cotton Dealers which was dissolved on November 4 1806.<sup>16</sup> George Danson, on his own account, and in partnership with John Walmsley of Liverpool was bankrupt himself by 1808.<sup>17</sup> Danson and Walmsley seem to have been in the West India trade operating vessels out of Liverpool but also taking freights from Lancaster.<sup>18</sup>

The partners in Hodgson & Co. were indebted to a large number of creditors; *"...in divers Sums of Money which Sums they are from Losses and divers unfortunate circumstances and the stagnate situation of Trade rendered unable wholly to pay and discharge as the same became due."*

The agreement transferred, for the term of one year in the first instance, all their property to the assignees. This consisted of; the Willow Cotton Mill and all its adjoining buildings and land, occupied by John and Thomas Hodgson and Isaac Capstick and their various tenants, the Forge Mill occupied by the same and all its associated buildings including four cottages and a smithy and machinery shop, and also Rumble Row mill occupied by James Noble and all its associated buildings and land. For some reason they could only seize one fourth part of Thomas Hodgson's Escowbeck Estate. In addition they had to sign over Lower Mill, occupied by Hodgson's, Capstick and Co and all its buildings in the occupation of Mary Hudson along with a one third share of a dyehouse in Manchester occupied Philip Withington.<sup>15</sup>

Their total indebtedness is not clear but about £520 was outstanding on bills drawn on Samuel Marsden's bank in London whose present holders had not been identified. In addition there were debts owed to three classes of creditors; those owed money by Hodgson's and Co, those owed money by J & T Hodgson, and those owed money by John and Thomas Hodgson and Isaac Capstick as individuals. The estate was to be realized and the creditors paid dividends on their debts in that order to the limit of 20s in the pound.

There were about 70 creditors to whom Hodgsons' & Co were indebted. The major creditors were the assignees but they also owed money to Henry Gardner, a Liverpool millwright, to Burrow and Mason, to West India Merchants like George Danson which may reflect debts from consigning freights for sale in the West Indies. They owed money to The Halton Iron Company and the Lancaster Union Co probably for structural work and machinery parts for the mills. There were also

## *And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*

debts to Robert Benson merchant of Liverpool and to Tattersall, Holgate & Co, cotton brokers, probably reflecting the import of raw materials.

There were about thirty creditors to whom John and Thomas Hodgson were jointly indebted including Lees, Watkins and Danson. They were also indebted to a number of members of the family either through their business or the result of loans; these included Gardom and Pares – the owners and operators of the Calver Mills, John Lightbody and John Price who were holding some mortgages in trust (upon what is unclear) and to Samuel Greg – the owner of Quarry Bank. There was a curious debt to Joshua Lace, the Liverpool solicitor, simply described as “*on an African Bill.*” Isaac Capstick, among his nearly 40 creditors, also had some debts to Joshua Lace and one of these took similar form; an African Bill. It is far from clear what these were and why they were not paid. Were they repudiated bills of the Sierra Leone Company? The Company was foundering and debts were mounting by this time but Henry Thornton did not succeed in having the Company taken over by the government until 1807.<sup>19</sup> Were the Hodgson’s and Capstick still involved in the African Trade? The bills were completely negotiable and do not constitute evidence. However, John and Thomas Hodgson were listed as members of the Liverpool Company of Merchants Trading to Africa in 1807 but beyond that there is no evidence of their being active in the slave trade. Both Hodgsons and Co and Isaac Capstick had debts to John Brockbank the Lancaster shipbuilder but that is not evidence of involvement with ships for the slave trade. No doubt Brockbank’s could turn a hand to all kinds of carpentry and joinery of use in mill construction and maintenance. Similarly debts owed to the Lancaster furniture makers Robert Gillow and Company are not necessarily for fine furniture but for the construction of machinery and frames for use in the mills. Perhaps the African bills were accepted in exchange for cotton goods; a major commodity in the slave trade and where the Hodgsons’ experience was no doubt useful in securing an outlet for their goods to merchants still engaged in the trade. Accepting these bills in payment they then passed them on to Lace.

As an individual John Hodgson was only indebted to Marsden’s bank to which Thomas Hodgson and Isaac Capstick were also indebted as individuals. The Mills were put up for sale a few months later. According to the Kitty Wilkinson story Kitty left Caton not long after the end of her apprenticeship to look after her infirm mother but the collapse of the cotton industry in Caton and its subsequent re-organization cannot be discounted as a possible cause. One principle reason for using apprentices from distant parishes in the cotton mills was that they could not become a burden on the parish relief system but in the event of being thrown out of work were returned to their parish of origin. The Hodgsons used children from the Liverpool Workhouse and from other Workhouses as well.<sup>20</sup> The Kitty Wilkinson story may be somewhat embellished by the Rathbones who were supporters of social and municipal reform in Liverpool and great promoters of Kitty Wilkinson. They were also relatives of the Hodgsons. The idea that Kitty Wilkinson was educated and developed into a moral person during her mill apprenticeship, and returned to Liverpool to look after her infirm parent, is much more heart warming than to say she was thrown out of work. On the other hand the Hodgsons, about 1798, had a non-conformist preacher to conduct services in the mills for their

## *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

workforce, which seems to represent the foundation of a non-conformist tradition in Caton.<sup>14</sup>

By the end of October 1804 the mills and lands of the Hodgson empire were up for sale.<sup>21, 22</sup> They included Willow Mill along with 25 cottages, a warehouse, counting house, grocery shop and haberdashery shop. Seven of the cottages were for weavers with thirteen pairs of looms. It was claimed that the yarn for 200 to 250 pieces of Calico were regularly put out to the weavers of the village. The smaller Forge Mill was also put up for sale and although both mills had similar facilities for preparing the yarn, with carding and roving engines in Willow Mill and Carding engines and Billies in Forge Mill, the final yarn seems to have been spun on Mules at Willow Mill and on Jennies at Forge Mill. Perhaps they produced thread of different qualities co-operating and combining in the putting out of this yarn for the finished product.

At the same time the Rumble Row silk mill was put up for sale, however, being on a twenty one years lease to Noble it could not be purchased outright. The assignees appointed Isaac Capstick to show buyers around the premises. At the November sale John Edmondson was the highest bidder for the estate offering £1156 pounds.<sup>15</sup> It took almost a year for the sale to go through and indentures were signed on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1805. Even though the interest on the mortgage had been paid the capital sum of £1000 would go to John Armstrong to pay off the mortgage and just £156 less costs would be available for the relief of the creditors.

John Edmondson would see a return of 3½% from the lease, not staggering, but perhaps not bad for those lean wartime years and in 5 years time the lease would be up for renegotiation when perhaps he could hope to secure 5%. The Rumble Row silk works seems to have been run from then on by a partnership involving John Armstrong and William Thompson who also owned the Silk Mill in nearby Galgate.<sup>23</sup> At the same sale the Willow and Forge Mills were disposed of. It is thought that both were bought by John Edmondson based perhaps on the presence of the Layfield property titles among his papers. However the much later title map of 1843 shows both the Forge Paddock alongside Forge Mill and the whole of the area known as The Croft in the hands of Samuel Gregson of the Willows, Bryan Paget Gregson's father.<sup>24</sup> At that time Willow Mill itself was owned by John Greg following a later reorganization of Greg & Co when Samuel Greg's Company was divided amongst his children. Perhaps a large part of the various lands cottages and mills were bought by Gregson at this time, they were related to both the Hodgsons and the Capsticks. In any event the Mill operations were quickly re-organized.

Two days after the sale of Hodgsons & Co's main mills, a weaving operation in the village of Brookhouse was put up for sale at the Ship Inn in Caton, whose name, incidentally, seems to predate the manufacture of sailcloth in the village.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps it was actually named after a ship. As well as the two slave ships named *Caton* that John and Thomas Hodgson had operated, there was also a well known Royal Navy vessel of the same name. It had been a French 64 named *La Caton* which was part of the Comte de Grasse's West India fleet during the American Revolutionary War; Caton being the diminutive of Catherine. The ship was taken by Hood on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1782 following the Battle of the Saintes. Unlike many vessels it was not laid-up in ordinary but entered service in the Royal Navy and was

## *And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*

converted to a Hospital ship in 1790 at Hamaoze in Plymouth Sound. In 1799 it became a prison ship stationed at Hamaoze.<sup>26, 27</sup>

Ten days after the sale virtually all the spinning machinery from Willow Mill was sold, including all the cleaning machinery, the carding engines the mules and sixty pairs of weaving looms, along with all the sundry items and spares that had been used in their operation.<sup>28</sup> Thus the Willow Mill and Forge Mill cotton spinning operations seem to have been re-organized for the spinning of flax and tow for use in sail making. Probably a partnership was formed to run Willow Mill involving William Townson , a yeoman farmer of Caton, Robert Hadwen, a flax spinner and sailcloth maker of Lancaster and Thomas & John Hodgson based on the dissolution of this partnership in 1814.<sup>29</sup>

Forge Mill also went over to flax spinning with Isaac Capstick entering into partnership with James Bradshaw, a merchant of Lancaster and Luke Eastwood, which was not dissolved until April 1823 shortly after Isaac Capstick's death.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand neither Low Mill nor Thomas Hodgson's Escowbeck estate ever seem to have come under the hammer. Low Mill continued as a cotton spinning operation and eventually Thomas Hodgson's eldest son, Isaac, took over the management. It is not clear when the creditors were paid off, or if they were paid in full, before the next 're-organization' but that had certainly not been done by April 1810 when John Hodgson wrote his will.<sup>31</sup> Describing himself as a Tow and Flax spinner he mentioned that all their effects had be signed over to the 1804 assignees and in passing mentioned the origin of his partnership with Thomas Hodgson.

*"And whereas my Dear Brother Thomas Hodgson brought in to the Partnership concern of us John & Thomas Hodgson a large sum of Money and I John Hodgson did not bring anything into it Therefore if anything should remain of the Estate and Effects to be so Re-conveyed to us by the said James Lees James Thorley and George Danson after all our Debts joint and Separate are Paid I give and bequeath whatever may be to my share of the same to my ever dear Brother Thomas Hodgson and his Heirs Executors or Administrators."*

It is curious that he considered he had never contributed any capital to the partnership even by added value. Perhaps he was just being pessimistic about what would be left to be distributed and thus could help his beneficiaries best by not entangling them with it. It also seems to be implicit that when their partnership was launched before the American Revolutionary War the money that was used to get it off the ground was derived from Thomas Hodgson's employment with Miles Barber.

Of the money that John Hodgson had managed to make since the fatal day in 1804 he left £100 to his sister Mary Hudson, the wife of the manager of Low Mill, and the woman who seems to have run the apprentice house, *"in gratitude for Her unwearied loving kindness and attention to me in various severe fits of the Gout and other disorders."* Of the remainder of his estate he left one third to Thomas Hodgson, one third to Mary Hudson, and one third to Isaac Capstick and his sisters and heirs. He had a one fifth share in the Tow and Flax Spinning concern of Townson, Hadwen & Co., which he left one half as a life interest to Mary Hudson, reverting to Thomas Hodgson and the remainder to Thomas Hodgson. Thus he appears to have no further concern in the Low Mill cotton operation except what remained in the hands of the creditors. What Thomas Hodgson's share was in the

### *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

Hadwen, Townson business is not known, probably it was again a fifth, perhaps the fifth shareholder was Samuel Greg. It is not clear what was happening at Low Mill but its operations as a cotton spinning business continued. Some of the money to finance their continued activities seems to have come from Elizabeth Lightbody's estate and this complicated and slowed down its resolution. Not only that, but Joshua Lace considered what was happening to be highly improper.

In September 1806 John Yates wrote to John Pares about the latest accounts which made no mention of the sale of stock purchased for Mrs Hodgson's children except a payment of £1,600 to Isaac Hodgson.<sup>11</sup> John Lightbody knew nothing about it except it was sold by the Pares and Heygate bank. Yates asked Pares to look into it and get him details of the payments making up the £4,000 lent to Isaac Hodgson. He hoped they would soon sell the Worcestershire estate for £15,000 and he could then look forward to closing the executorship and have only the trusteeship to perform.

By February 1807 things were still dragging on, John Lightbody wrote to John Pares to congratulate him on the marriage of his daughter Ann to Thomas Paget.<sup>11</sup> He had heard from John Fletcher, who was married to Thomas Hodgson's daughter, that he intended to visit Liverpool and he asked John Pares to try and persuade the Gregs to visit too saying, "*do therefore my dear Sir favour us with your company for independent of the pleasure that circumstance would afford us it appears the only probable means of drawing Mrs Greg to Liverpool. She used to say that was always of service to her if she could be prevailed on to come amongst her friends. I should hope both her health and spirits would be improved.*" He said he had just been to see Mr. King, the accountant, about Elizabeth Lightbody's estate and that John Fletcher too had been to see him following a visit to Caton. John Yates added a note asking for the accounts of the estate at the Pares and Heygate bank.

In March 1807 John Yates wrote to John Pares expressing sorrow that John Pares and his wife were dismayed at how long the winding up of the estate was taking.<sup>11</sup> He had waited several months whilst a correspondence between Mr. King and Isaac Hodgson took place. Then he had been ill with rheumatism for several weeks and now Mr. King had gone off to Northamptonshire. King however had told him that there were matters he needed to see in the executors accounts at Pares and Heygates Bank. He went on to discuss a bond drawn by the Hodgsons on the estate;

*"With respect to the bond from Messrs. Hodgsons, Mr. Lace says that it would be in the highest degree improper for the trustees of Mrs. Hodgson's children to take it as part of their share and there is no doubt that it is directly contrary to the will that it should remain in that state but if Mrs. Greg does not take it as part of her share I suppose it will be best for the executors to prove upon the estate of Mr. Hodgson and then settle the balance with you. But I wish Mrs. Greg would take it. All that I can say upon this subject is that I am individually disposed to comply with your wishes."*

The letters also reveal something of the value of the Lightbody Estate, but it is not clear whether the accounts are complete or simply a record of part of the estate as it was being gathered together. Nevertheless one document from May 1<sup>st</sup> 1807 shows that a portion of the estate had been divided.

## *And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*

Mrs Pares	1/3	£4,296
Mrs Greg	1/3	£4,296
Mrs Fletcher	1/15	£859
Agnes Hodgson	1/15	£859
Mary, Adam, Anna	3/15	£2,577
		£12,887

Mrs. Pares was Elizabeth Lightbody's daughter Agnes, Mrs. Greg her daughter Hannah. Mrs. Fletcher was Thomas Hodgson's daughter Elizabeth. Of Thomas Hodgson's remaining children Agnes had clearly come of age but was not yet married, indeed she remained a lifelong spinster. Mary, Adam and Anna were not yet twenty-one and their shares were lumped together. Isaac, the eldest son clearly did not relinquish his mother's marriage settlement in accordance with his grandmother's wishes. Thus his estate was quite independent of his siblings and he was free to invest it as he saw fit. From the bonds drawn on the Lightbody estate it seems likely he was investing in the cotton business.

A breakdown of part of the estate was also given.

Worcestershire Estate	£1,429
Bond J&TH etc	£860
Bond TH&JP	£400
Money @ Pares & Heygate	£8,625
Money @ Isaac Hodgson	£1,706
Mouldsworth Purchase Money	£10,000
	£23,020

The first Bond for £860 held by the estate was in the names of John & Thomas Hodgson, John Pares, Thomas Gardom and Isaac Capstick. Clearly this was money borrowed from Elizabeth Lightbody's estate to fund the Cotton Spinning concerns at Calver and Caton. It seems implicit that their interests in these operations were entangled or the businesses were operated jointly. The second bond for £400 was in the names of Thomas Hodgson and John Pares and was likely borrowed for a similar purpose. Pares and Heygate was John Pares Leicestershire Banking company, which partnered with William Heygate to give it a London clearing arm. The £1,706 with Isaac Hodgson was in the form of a mortgage with interest but it is not known on what security. It all seems rather questionable practice, risking the legacies of other family members on loans to the family businesses. Most of the Hodgsons' assets in Caton were controlled by the assignees of their creditors and they were probably running the business in an effort to clear the debts.

The outside world, however, was under the impression that Caton Mill belonged to Isaac Hodgson. The Liverpool Mercury, writing many years later, had this to say on the death, in 1849, of Kitty Wilkinson's husband Tom.<sup>32</sup>

*“Our obituary of this day records the death of Thomas Wilkinson, superintendent of the Corporation Baths, Frederick-street. It would be a treason to the cause of humanity to allow such an instance of humble, self denying, and preserving charity, to pass away unnoticed, as the proof and the example of what the desire to do good can accomplish, and as the preacher, more eloquent than words, saying to both rich and poor, ‘Go thou and do likewise.’ He and his wife*

## *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

*Catherine Wilkinson, whose history is not unknown to many of our readers, were apprentices in the cotton mill of Isaac Hodgson, Esq., Caton, near Lancaster, and had the advantage of his conscientious care."*

It seems mistaken to imagine that Isaac Hodgson was running the Caton Mills when Kitty Wilkinson was an apprentice, however a report from the Board of Agriculture, printed in 1815, on farming methods in Lancashire largely collected some years before, shows that he was in charge of their management from about 1805 onwards.<sup>33</sup> Isaac Hodgson was not only operating the Mills but also a considerable farm and garden. He was growing oats and grinding them, and carefully determining the yields as well as growing a wide variety of turnips including stone turnips and Swedish turnips. These were probably for winter livestock feed as well as for sale as food and for the apprentices. He was also growing carrots and potatoes. Potatoes were grown by the garden method, i.e. by hand digging and planting and this was done "*in connection with a large manufactory where many children are kept and fed.*"

Isaac Hodgson prepared careful accounts of the whole operation. The author of the report also described Isaac Hodgson's Hay making activities and gave accounts for the mowing of 18½ acres saying; "*For the following very correct and interesting statement I am indebted to the attention and kindness of Mr. Isaac Hodgson of Caton, whose active mind is constantly engaged in inquiries which have a tendency to prove useful to mankind. He pays the mower 3s per day for 22 days plus 2 quarts of beer, costing 2p and bread and cheese costing 6p. He then needs ten haymakers at 2s per day with 3 pints of beer at 1d. The result is 72 cartloads of hay costing £14 12s 2d.*"

The purpose of the hay, as the turnips, was to feed the stock in winter. The editor obligingly recorded that "*Mr. Isaac Hodgson, who has a large cotton work at Caton, near Lancaster, and who keeps a stock of cows for the purpose of supplying the children employed in it with milk*". He gave accounts for the years 1806-8 when Isaac Hodgson had some six or seven cows, chiefly short horns, which produced 8 or 9 quarts per day with a retail value of 4d to 6d the quart. It appears to be no more than narrowly sufficient, with some 70 apprentices in a work force of 150. The report described the manufactory and gave an idea of the profound effect these mills had on life in the township. From a quarter to a third of the total inhabitants, including children, were employed in the mills not counting those who depended on them indirectly. The editor remarked that in 1787 there were about 40 factories in Manchester but now there were infinitely more and that the cotton trade had diffused out into most of the neighbouring and northern parts of the district. He noted the disturbances that took place on account of the perception that they would reduce the demand for labour, which he dismissed as patently false. He then listed the places involved including, Burnley, Blackburn, Colne, Hasslingden, Chowbent and Tiddley.

*"Of this manufactory in Lancashire, more interesting information, because more minute and particular, will be furnished by the following observations, communicated by the proprietor of the cotton-mill.*

*Caton contains from 1000 to 1200 inhabitants, of all ages, 300 to 350 of whom at least are employed in the manufacture of cotton, flax, and silk. During the last 20 years, 60 to 80 apprentices have constantly been in the employ of the manufactories,*

## *And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*

*and have thereby acquired settlements. The value of property in the township, according to a late valuation, is 4950l. per annum, and the amount collected for the relief of the poor, has for the last three years averaged 19½d. in the pound per annum.*

*Caton cotton-mill, belonging to Isaac Hodgson, employs about 150 persons; 70 of whom are his apprentices, wholly maintained by him; the remainder are men, women and children, at weekly wages. This mill spins; about 3000lb. weight of twist per week, 20 hanks, of 840 yards each to the pound, which is used in the manufacture of callicoes, nankeens, cotton and linen, checks and sheetings, &c. &c.*

*A schoolmaster is kept for the daily instruction of the apprentices, and a Sunday-school is established for them, which is also open to the children of the neighbouring poor. Prayers, and a short sermon, are read every Sunday evening in the school-room.*

*The house, in which the apprentices live, is near the mill.*

*Their meals are, breakfast at eight, dinner at 12, supper at seven in summer, and half-past seven in winter. The breakfasts and suppers are of milk-porridge and bread and the dinners -- Sunday, meat and potatoe-pies -- Monday, broth beef and cabbage -- Tuesday, lobscouse (meat and potatoes) -- Wednesday, rice-pudding -- Thursday, lobscouse -- Friday, salt-herrings and potatoes -- Saturday, potatoes and onions.*

*The bread used here, and by the lower class in this part of the county, is made of Oatmeal, and of the kind called riddle-bread, or oat-cake.*

A detailed apprentice housekeeping account for a typical week was given as shown below. Conditions in the Apprentice House, and the effect of the frequent fluctuations in trade and wages of the factory workers were mentioned.

*“The whole of the apprentice children who work in this manufactory, have a remarkably healthy appearance; but the eating-room, kitchen, and the dormitory in which they sleep are kept remarkably neat and clean, as well as well-aired and ventilated, being frequently scoured and lime-whited. This is also the case in the rooms of the manufactory in which the work is carried on: the male and female children eat as well as sleep in separate houses.*

*The very fluctuating nature of this manufacture renders it frequently injurious to the agriculture of the districts, by the great number of persons which are so often thrown out of employment.*

*The wages which are paid to the workers in the different branches of the cotton manufacture, are very different: in the inferior kinds, they are commonly from 10s. to 12s. and 16s. or 18s.; and in the higher sorts, from a guinea to 30s.*

Very little is known in detail about where the apprentices in Isaac Hodgson's mill and before him in Hodgsons & Co's mills came from. There is evidence that in the early days John and Thomas Hodgson sought indentured apprentices in Liverpool.<sup>20</sup> In 1790 about 25 girls and 25 boys were obtained from the Liverpool workhouse, but as early as 1792, 14 boys came from St Martin in the Fields in London. In 1803, 3 boys came from St George by St Paul, in 1807, 8 girls came from St George the Martyr in Southwark, in 1814, 5 girls and 13 boys came from St Pancras and in 1816, 4 girls and 8 boys came from the same place. Under the factories act of 1802 the mills were supposed to be inspected and reported upon, but this was generally only done in a desultory fashion. Conditions in the Hodgsons'

### *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

mill have been said to be slightly below average, in contrast to Samuel Greg's Quarry Bank operation.<sup>20</sup> However this conclusion was based upon the hours being long at 14 per day and a single report of a runaway apprentice in 1823, when it was in fact operated by Greg & Co. In 1818 Isaac Hodgson gave testimony before the House of Lords enquiry into the conditions of children employed in factories.<sup>34</sup>

<i>Account of the Maintenance of a Family of Seventy-five Persons, Thirty of whom are under Fourteen Years of Age. One week, 15th October 1808.</i>			
	£	s.	d.
<i>Oatmeal, 570 lb .....</i>	4	17	2½
<i>Beef, 631b .....</i>	1	4	4½
<i>Milk, 545½ quarts, .....</i>	2	1	6
<i>Flour, 21½ lbs. ....</i>	0	5	4½
<i>Rice, 7 lb. ....</i>	0	2	7½
<i>Potatoes, 448 lb. ....</i>	0	10	6
<i>Salt-herrings, 42 .....</i>	0	2	7½
<i>Salt, 24 lb .....</i>	0	7	4
<i>Beer, 11½ gallons, .....</i>	0	4	9½
<i>Tea, 2½ ounces, Sugar 3 lbs. } Treacle, 41/2 lb. pepper, &amp;c. 9d. }</i>	0	5	9
<i>Onions and Cabbage, .....</i>	0	1	6
<i>75 persons, at 2s. 8½d. each, .....</i>	<u>£ 10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>
<i>For one Year, .....</i>	£520	6	4
<i>Clothing 70 apprentices, master: and mistress's salary; three ser-: vants' wages, schoolmasters sa-: lary, books, &amp;c. coals, candles, : soap, starch, furniture, house- : rent, medical attendance, and : other incidental expenses, :</i>	471	17	0
<i>Total expense of maintaining 70 apprentices one year, (5s. 6d. each per week) .....</i>	<u>£ 1001</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>

The scale of the operation at Low Mill was probably comparable to Samuel Greg's Mill at Quarry Bank at this time, which by 1816 was producing about 7000 lb. of yarn per week using 230 employees, but it was gradually falling behind and in 1824 Samuel Greg expanded production by developing a new mill in Lancaster, the Moor Lane Mill.<sup>14</sup> Of the other mills in Caton the Board of Agriculture report has little to say but gives some idea of the scale of the operation at Willow Mill in the years before 1810;

*"There are at the village of Caton two flax mills, one under the management of Messrs. Townson, Hadwin and Co. and the other under that of Isaac Capstick and Co. In the former they card, rove, spin, reel, and warp the taw for the making of sail-cloth, hardings, sacking, and sheeting, &c.; and they work up about 5000 pounds weight of taw in the course of the week. They prepare all the machinery upon the spot."*<sup>33</sup>

*And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*  
*Into the hands of the creditors once more.*

In February 1814 a notice appeared in the Lancaster Gazette announcing the dissolution of the partnership between John and Thomas Hodgson, William Townson and Robert Hadwen, the operators of Willow Mill.<sup>30</sup> It was followed in March by a notice announcing the sale of not only Willow Mill and its associated Weaving shop, cottages etc. but of Caton, Low Mill as well.<sup>35</sup>

It appears the mills were no longer encumbered with the demands of the original creditors from the 1804 crisis, some of whom had gone into liquidation. The major stakeholders were Greg and Ewart, Samuel Greg's partnership with Peter Ewart established in 1796. Ewart was a former Boulton and Watt engineer brought in by Samuel Greg to assist in the mechanical modernization of the Styall mill.<sup>14</sup> There had been a modernization program at Low Mill as well, which now had two water wheels exploiting the large 40foot fall and a 10 h.p. steam engine.

Precisely what precipitated the sale of the mills is not known, but at the same time Mr. Burrow at nearby Ingleton Mill was also giving up and selling his machinery. The years after 1807 had been difficult in the cotton trade with the continental embargo enforced by Napoleon. By the end of the year the United States had imposed its own embargo thereby restricting imports of raw material. The markets then expanded rapidly in 1809 with a temporary relaxation of the American embargo, and improved trade to the Baltic, the Adriatic and to South America. The South American trade proved highly speculative, goods piled up, prices fell and merchants went unpaid. By the end of 1810 bankruptcies and short time working were on the increase. Then in 1811 the Americans passed the non-importation act and, although the continental blockade had collapsed by 1812, Britain was now at war with America. Many factories were on short time.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps the revival that began in late 1812, as Bonaparte's power began to wane with the retreat from Moscow, came too late. On the other hand Samuel Greg had been running profitably at Quarry Bank making an average profit in of over £3000 p.a. in the period 1808-1813.<sup>20</sup>

John Hodgson died in May 1813 and his will was proved on May 28<sup>th</sup> on an estate amounting to just £600. What remained of his interests with Hodgson's & Co passed to his brother Thomas and his interest in Willow Mill to his sister. The latter probably explains the dissolution of the Willow Mill partnership. Whether Greg & Ewart were applying pressure to Thomas Hodgson by the Mill sale or simply wanted to retrench is unclear but another buyer cannot have been found for the mills remained in their hands from this time forward until finally sold by John Greg in 1865.<sup>20</sup>

Isaac Hodgson held a half share in the capital of Caton Mill and also entered the mercantile arm of Greg's firm in 1813.<sup>20</sup> Adam Hodgson may have been involved as well but if so he quickly withdrew entering into partnership with William and Richard Rathbone in Liverpool in 1814. He may have begun working for the Rathbones even before this as there is evidence to place him in Liverpool as early as 1811. William and Richard Rathbone were the grandchildren of William Rathbone III, the Liverpool Abolitionist, who died in 1789. William Rathbone IV established Rathbones as commission merchants and shippers specializing in the

### *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

American trade. The firm briefly traded as Rathbone, Benson & Co in partnership with his brother in law Robert Benson. It was this firm which the abolitionist James Cropper joined and who later traded with Benson's son in Cropper Benson & Co. William Rathbone IV died in 1809 and his sons William V and Richard Rathbone took over establishing a thriving cotton commission trade and line of fast packets. It was for this firm that Adam Hodgson traveled to America.<sup>37</sup>

The Mercantile trading arm of Greg & Co proved more or less disastrous for Isaac Hodgson. During this period there were large fluctuations in the exchange rate between Britain and America which caused considerable losses and many merchants also made premature investments in the Spanish market. Wellington's victory at Vitoria on June 21<sup>st</sup> 1813 led to a perception that the Spanish peninsula was open to British trade. Despite the closing of the American trade by Madison in May 1814 it looked as though the treaties with Spain and France would allow freedom of trade. Not everyone was pleased. Wilberforce denounced aspects of the treaties which allowed the Spanish slave trade to continue, saying that the last slave factory at Sierra Leone had closed and that the coast for 1000 miles had been free of the traffic.<sup>38</sup>

Peace also produced a downturn in many trades which had been supplying the wherewithal to prosecute the war. By the summer of 1814 the first avalanche of a widespread wave of bank failures began. William Roscoe, who was by now a banker, in the firm of Roscoe, Clarke and Roscoe failed in February of 1816.<sup>39</sup> Even the hopes of improved trade to France and Spain proved illusory. Although French and foreign vessels were allowed to enter French ports their cargoes were only admitted if they conformed to customs regulations. Baron Louis declared that "*no act of government....has yet taken off any of the existing prohibitions and the continuance of that relative to cotton yarn and manufactured goods has on the contrary been particularly recommended*".<sup>40</sup> In Spain with the restoration of Ferdinand VII in December 1813 cotton imports into Spain would no longer be allowed but it did not seem to be realized at home that the importation allowed by the Cortes had been discontinued by its abolition in May 1814. In July the morning Chronicle reported;

*"During the invasion of Spain by the French, a law was passed under which it was permitted to export British Cotton Manufactures to the Spanish Colonies in South America, on the conditions that they touched in the voyage at some port of the parent country. This law was originally enacted for six months, but ... it has uniformly been renewed, so as to give it all the effect of a permanent regulation. Those who now hold the supreme authority have not thought fit to prolong the operation of this law, and it being now extinct, the market of New Spain is closed upon us for these commodities, ..."*<sup>41</sup>

By August 13th there was uncertainty about the application of these exclusions to the Spanish market itself.<sup>42</sup>

*We have ground for believing that, up to the 1<sup>st</sup> of that month cottons were admitted into Cadiz and other ports of Spain, although the Act of the Cortes by which the importation was allowed expired in May.*

By October the arrest and trial of members of the Cortes was being reported and orders were given that all cottons on hand in Spain had to be sold to the Philippine Company within four months or be re-exported.<sup>44</sup> Re-exportation was

## *And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge*

hardly an option as goods were now encumbered with duties and would incur further transport costs. The merchants in Cadiz had petitioned Henry Wellesley, the British Ambassador and Arthur Wellesley's brother, to make representations against the measure in July.<sup>44</sup> By September in the knowledge that they must give up their goods to a Spanish monopoly they made a further appeal.<sup>45</sup> But it was all to no avail. Isaac Hodgson and Robert Hyde Greg were dispatched to Spain to see what they could do but the end result of these debacles in the American and Spanish markets were losses in excess of £30,000.<sup>14</sup>

<b>Low Mill Profit and Loss Account 1816-1822</b>		
	<b>Profit £</b>	<b>Loss £</b>
<b>1816</b>		1481
<b>1817</b>		2905
<b>1818</b>		180
<b>1819</b>	743	
<b>1820</b>	352	
<b>1821</b>		1616
<b>1822</b>		1380

Data from ref. 14.

Not only were there losses on the marketing side, but Caton Mill was running at a loss in almost every year from 1816 to 1822. Although the operation began to be modernized after 1817 with a new 20 h.p. Boulton and Watt steam engine and a new mill in Moor Lane Lancaster acquired in 1822, Isaac Hodgson seems to have been eager to get out. In 1821 he formed a short lived cotton brokerage, Cooke, Comer and Hodgson in Liverpool. He soon left to found another, Sands and Hodgson, which was continued into the 1830's. He seems to have finally parted company with Samuel Greg about 1823 when he joined the bank belonging to his uncle and cousin, which became Pares & Heygate & Hodgson.

From about this period comes the only description of the old slave trader Thomas Hodgson. There is no portrait of him so far as is known, just a verbal description left by a native of the village where he grew up, spent his last years, and is buried. It was left by Miss Isabella Greenbank Dobson a resident of Caton Green in a brief reminiscence of Caton village life which she seems to have begun in 1853.<sup>46</sup> Isabella Dobson was born in 1806 and died in 1865, thus she was little more than 11 years old when Thomas Hodgson died. She first gave a colourful impression of Richard Kendall, a Liverpool guinea captain between 1783 and 1798 as well as an investor in the trade between 1787 and 1797. He made two voyages in command of vessels in which John and Thomas Hodgson owned a share, *Matty and Betty* in 1785 and *Fisher*, in 1787. He seems to have learned the trade with Ralph Fisher and John Kewley before attracting investors to his own voyages.<sup>47</sup>

*“Captain Kendall was a specimen of what the frightful trade in human creatures can make a man, but it left him the virtues of uprightness and truthfulness. Though I believe, had needs been, he would have cared little for taking the life of a man, he would not have said anything that was not true and nor done anything that*

## *Kitty Wilkinson was Here*

*was dishonest. Sailing, as he had done many times, with a daredevil crew of desperate ruffians, with his pistols near his hand as he slept and the companion strewn with peas that he might hear if anyone approached to assassinate him, he must have been courageous in the extreme. When I knew him, he was a martyr to gout and took a great deal of laudanum to ease his pains. This he made himself. He had a black dog, Wag, and an old gardener and labourer Tom Procter, and a grey parrot, most wonderful of birds! It used to call Wag and Tom in its master's voice and they would come when they were called. When Tom began to scold and swear at it, it used to shake with laughter. Capt. Kendall was a small wiry but handsome man, and when I first knew him must have been 70 or near it. He was more than 80 when he died in 1826. I have often dined there, and after dinner he brewed an immense bowl of punch. What a ceremony it was! – now a little more lime, now sugar, now over-proof Jamaica rum, of the best, now a little more water, till the bowl was filled.”*

She then gave her impressions of Thomas Hodgson.

*“That the Slave Trade did not always harden the character was proved by Mr. Tom Hodgson, father of Isaac and Adam Hodgson He had been engaged in it in his youth and early manhood, and it had laid the foundations of his rise in life, but it had never brutalised or injured a heart of great natural tenderness and refinement. I remember, when about 8 or 9 years of age, receiving from him my first impressions that there was such a thing as beauty in scenery. It was at the gate at the top, or nearly the top, of Kirk Beck Brow -- he stopped his pony, after walking up the hill, and remarked on the beauty of the picturesque windings of the river.”*

And so, on December 13<sup>th</sup> 1817, the old patriarch, Thomas Hodgson, died, aged 80, and was buried like his parents and brother in the churchyard on the south side of Caton Chapel. His will had not been updated in twenty years. His executors remained John Pares and Samuel Greg and John Hodgson. John Hodgson was dead and no doubt Thomas Hodgson owed money to John Pares, or he held securities for loans, and his business and estates were in the hands of Samuel Greg who had terminated his partnership with Peter Ewart in 1815. They could hardly act as his executors with any propriety, especially as Isaac, the eldest son and Samuel Greg's business partner, was effectively excluded from the will with a legacy of just £100.

Whether the family insisted that they could not act is unclear but it was not until September of 1819 that they formally declined to act and that only two weeks before Adam was due to sail for America. John Pares renounced his executorship on September 16<sup>th</sup> 1819, witnessed by Adam Hodgson and his cousin Thomas Pares. Samuel Greg also stood down, his signature witnessed by one Robert Barber and John Yates. Adam Hodgson left Liverpool for America on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1819 and after this Thomas Hodgson's estate was quickly wound up. On February 20<sup>th</sup> 1820 his sister Agnes, John Fletcher, a broker of Liverpool and her brother-in-law, along with Isaac Hodgson, also describing himself as a broker of Liverpool, bound themselves to administer and prove Thomas Hodgson's will. They declared that the estate did not amount to more than £4,000. The bulk of this sum would be divided between the children Eliza, Agnes, Mary Tylston, Adam, & Anna.<sup>48</sup>

Less than £800 pounds each; such were the enormous profits that accrued to those who had involved themselves in the slave trade.