

*"A WEE KEEK BACK"*

BY

JIM CAMPBELL

**"CENTRAL AND WEST FIFE LOCAL HISTORY  
PRESERVATION"**("The Present Preserving the Past for the Future")  
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GLIMPSES AT THE PARISH  
OF DALGETY.

The parish of Dalgety lies prettily on the shores of the Forth. A good deal of coal has been worked in the northern part of the parish, but the records of the population of the past century do not show the same changes as some of the adjoining parishes do. The following are the records of the population from 1801: -

1801	801	1871	1310
1811	816	1881	1277
1821	912	1891	1303
1831	1300	1901	1133
1861	1569		

The Islands of Inchcolme,

which is now joined to the parish, is the site of the monastery of St. Colme, which was founded in 1123 by Alexander I. The ancient name of the island was Aemonis, or Aemona, which is said to signify the Island of the Druids. Dr. Ross, the author of "Aberdour and Inchcolme" thus paraphrases the account of the foundation of the monastery as given by Walter Bower, Abbot of Inchcolme: -

*About the year 1123, the Monastery of St Columba, in the island of Aemonia, near to Inverkeithing, was founded in circumstances which were wonderful, nay, even miraculous. For when that noble and most Christian king, Alexander the First, was crossing from Queensferry on business of State, there suddenly arose a violent south-west wind, which drove the vessel down the Firth in the direction of the island of Aemonia, which the sailors managed to reach with the greatest difficulty. Now, on this island there lived at that time a hermit devoted to the service of St Columba; and content with the sustenance afforded by the milk of a single cow that pastured on the island, and such shell and other fish as the sea yielded, this hermit regularly performed the rites of worship in a little chapel on the island. On such poor fare as this the king and his attendants, who were not a few, lived contentedly for three whole days, during which the tempest raged with unabated fury. While he was yet at sea, shaken with the fury of the storm, in the midst of danger, and despairing even of life, the King made a vow to St Columba, to the effect that if the Saint would carry him and his attendants safely to the island, he would leave on it a memorial worthy of his protector, which should at the same time be an asylum and solace to the tempest-tossed and the shipwrecked. And this, says the chronicler, was the occasion of the King's building there a monastery for canons which is still to be seen.*

Amongst the ruins on the island remains of the oratory of the devout hermit may yet be identified. It was in the rude oratory when the hermit of St Colme's Inch entertained the King, and it was to commemorate the Royal visit that the monastery of St Colme was erected. The ruins of the monastery still remain, although during the

past three centuries they have often been used for other than religious purposes. In the reign of James I., the daughter of the Earl of Ross was imprisoned on the island, and after Patrick Graham, the Archbishop of St Andrews, had been denounced a heretic and deposed from office, his first place of confinement was Inchcolm. After the battle of Pinkie Cleugh in 1547, Protector Somerset seized on Inchcolm and garrisoned it, as a place which gave him complete "command of the Forth". Even in the nineteenth century, says Mr Millar in his "Pictorial Fife", the importance of the island as a fortified place was recognised, and Alexander Campbell who visited the place in 1802, in referring to the Corps of artillery stationed there, says that: - "In lieu of the pious desires of the holy monks, the orgies of the lesser deities are celebrated here by the sons of Mars." The Wester part of Aberdour, together with the lands and the barony of Beath, were acquired from an Abbot of Inchcolm by James, afterwards Sir James Stewart, second son of Andrew, Lord Evandale, grandfather by his daughter to the Admirable Crichton, and by his second son, Lord Doune, to Sir James Stewart, who married the daughter of the Regent Moray. Lord Doune was Commendator of the Monastery of Inchcolm at the Reformation. The island is still in the hands of the Moray family. In 1790 an attempt was made to cover the island with trees, but it failed.

#### The Old Church of Dalgety,

is situated in the centre of Dalgety Bay. In a bull of Pope Alexander III., which is dated 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1178, the church is referred to as belonging to the monastery of St. Colme. The building was reconstructed in 1244. The Rev. Peter Primrose writing of the building in 1794 says: - "*The church is very much out of repair, and not well adapted, either in respect of construction or situation, as a place of worship for the parish; the situation is peculiarly inconvenient, being upon the coast and the most populous part of the parish almost at the other extremity.*" A new church, giving accommodation for 500 people, was built in 1830. A new manse was also erected. When the new church was opened the roof was taken off the old building so that the elements might more quickly destroy it. Pre-Reformation relic in the shape of a bell hangs in the belfry. The inscription reads thus: - *O Mater Dei Momento Mei - "O Mother of God remember me."* A vault below two adjoining apartments is supposed to have been erected by Chancellor Seton towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The vault was opened in 1822, and six leaden coffins discovered. Three of the coffins were found to contain the bodies of Chancellor Seton, the First Earl of Dunfermline, of his widow, and of his grandson, the third Earl of Dunfermline.

#### How the lands Became Alienated.

Away back in the dim mists of ages it was the custom of the church to feu certain parts of their lands. Early in the sixteenth century, when the people were beginning to kick firmly against the monastic system, there was a big trade done in feuing. Dr. Ross, who made a special study of the feuing of the exciting period which led up to the Reformation, tells us that: -

*The lands of Prinlaws were set in feu to Sir John Melville of Raith, for twelve pounds yearly. The lands of Donibristle, Barnhill, and Grange, with nineteen acres lying near the same, and six acres called Caikinich, were set in feu to Andrew, Lord Stewart*

of Ochiltree, for fifty-nine pounds three shillings and fourpence yearly. The glebe of Kirkcroft of Dalgety was set into feu to Henry Stewart, for six pounds fourteen shillings and twopence yearly. The Isle of St Colme and Abbey thereof, with houses, ect., were set in feu to James Stewart of Doun, for three pounds six shillings and eight pence yearly. The half-lands of Whitehall, with the brew-house of Newton, were set to David Phin, for twelve pounds yearly. The lands of Cuttlehill, and Seaside were set to John Wemyss, for four pounds yearly. In addition to this sum, John Wemyss obliged himself to give, yearly, twelve capons, or eightpence for each; six days' work of a shearer, or fourpence for each; making his feu duty four pounds and ten shillings in all. Capons would be thought dead cheap at eightpence each, now-a-days; and a shearer would look askance at a groat dropped into the palm of his hands, as payment for a day's work in the harvest field. But the one statement throws light on the other, provisions being as much cheaper than they are now, as the wage was then smaller. The Kirklands of Auchtertool, and the meadow thereof, were set in the feu to Agnes Balmanno, and David Boswell, her spouse, for three pounds seven shillings and fourpence yearly, "with ane servand and ane horse, to lead the teinds of Ochtertule in hervest"; an two capons. From this statement you will see that "woman's rights" were not only recognised in the transaction, but the wife's name stands first. We also get a glimpse of the servant and horse conveying the teind-sheaves on some bright harvest day, to the teind-barns at Aberdour. There is no notice of a cart, and the likelihood is, as a hint a little further on will show, that the sheaves were piled on a "sled" or sledge, and so dragged to the teinds-barns. The lands of Kilrie were set in feu to James Stewart, son and heir to James Stewart of Doun, for thirteen pounds, thirteen shillings and fourpence yearly. The lands and barony of Beath were set in feu to James Stewart, brother of Andrew, Lord of Ochiltree, for forty pounds seven shillings yearly. The lands of Bowprrie, Inchbeardie, and wester part of Whitehill, were set in feu to James Burn, for twelve pounds five shillings yearly. The feuar of these lands was further bound to pay to the Convent fifteen shillings and twopence for "pittances"; twenty-four fowls; twelve shearers darg in Dunibristile Maynes, with two horses and two sleddis." He was also burdened with the carriage of "mill-stones and stuling, to the miln of Aberdour." The mill and mill lands of Aberdour Wester, with its astricted multures, were set to Walter Cant, for six pounds, six shillings and eightpence, and twelve capons. The Kirklands and glebe of Rosyth were set to Allan Coutts, for a sum that is illegible in the document. The lands of Balcliro and Kirk-croft of Leslie were set to George Oliphant, for four pounds five shillings yearly. The lands of Easter and Wester Boclavies (Buchlyvies) were set to James Stewart, son of Sir James Stewart of Doun, for twenty-five pounds, thirteen shillings and fourpence. The lands of Newton, Caikinsh, &c., were set to the said James Stewart, for twenty-four pounds four shillings yearly. The lands of Crofgarie and Brego were set to the said James Stewart, for twenty pounds seven shillings yearly. The lands of Dodyngston with Crammond Mill, and Pascar Mill, were set in feu to James Stewart, brother of Andrew, Lord Ochiltree, for twenty-six bolls of wheat, three chalders of bear (or three chalders and eight bolls of oats), with thirty-six capons, eighteen poultry, one sow, two geese, and thirteen pounds, eleven shillings and eightpence, in money. The lands of Coldside were set in feu to Robert Falside and Mary Maitland his spouse, for thirteen shillings and fourpence yearly. The lands of Carbertson were set in feu to James Forrester of Corstorphine, for forty shillings and six pence. And last of all, two riggs near Haddington were set in feu to James Oliphant, burgess of Edinburgh, for ten shillings and fourpence yearly. The whole annual income represented by these

*sums, without taking into account the payments in kind, is over two hundred and seventy pounds.*

To feu is not to alienate. The feu-duties may flow into the old exchequer. After the rush to feuing in the sixteenth century the church did not profit long by the feus in any part of the country, and alienation came. Here is the history of the lands of the spot of which we write, and what is the record of the alienation of the lands of West Fife is practically the history of the lands all over the country: -

*Sir James Stewart of Beath was the third son of Andrew, Lord Evandale, and brother of Andrew, Lord Ochiltree, to whom reference has already been made. Sir James was a man of considerable ability, and in great favour with King James the Fifth, who appointed him Constable of the Castle of Doune and Steward of Menteith. He had sufficient interest with Pope Paul the Third to get his son James appointed one of the Canons of St. Colme's Inch. This was effected by a Bull issued in August 1544; the object, no doubt, being to get him appointed Commendator of the Monastery by and by. At this time Richard Abercromby was Abbot, and not Henry, as Spotiswood says. Richard seems to have made up his mind to retire, with the view of making way for James Stewart; and the promotion of the latter, from the position of simple Canon to that of Commendator, was speedily accomplished. For in 1545, and again in 1546, letters were issued by Queen Mary, instructing the Sheriff of Fife to see to it, that the rights of James Stewart as Commendator of the Abbey were respected, and making reference to the Bull of Pope Paul the Third as carrying with it the force of Stewart's appointment to the benefice. It was in this way that Sir James Stewart, the younger, became Commendator of the Abbey. Richard, the former Abbot, lived for some years after this; for while I write I have lying before me an acknowledgement of his, signed at Donibristle, on the last day of January 1548. James, Lord Doune, the Commendator, died in 1590, having resigned his office into the hands of Henry, his second son. His eldest son, the brother of Henry, was the "Bonny Earl of Moray", who was so barbarously slain at Donibristle, by Gordon of Buckie. In 1611, King James erected the possessions of the dissolved Abbacy into a temporal lordship, in favour of Henry, with the title of Lord St. Colme. Henry was succeeded in his title and lordship by his son James; and he having died abroad, while fighting under the banner of Gustavus Adolphus, his title and possessions fell to his cousin James, Earl of Moray – the son of the Bonny Earl, on his mother's side, the grandson of the Good Regent; and in the hands of his descendants they continue to this present day.*

#### Donibristle House.

The prettily situated ruins of Donibristle House stand on the shore about midway between the Auld Kirk of Dalgety and the parish of Inverkeithing. The first castle on this site was in possession of Sir James Stewart, Commendator of Inchcolm, and it was the principal residence of his son, "The Bonnie Earl of Moray". The castle was burnt down when the "Bonnie Earl" was slain. A similar fate overtook the castle which replaced the first, and a third house was on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1858 wrecked by fire. A double staircase, richly decorated with wrought-iron railings and gateway, afford access from a plateau to the beach. A tradition still lingers in the locality to the effect that the iron work of the staircase was a gift by Anne of Denmark, Queen of James VI., to the Bonnie earl of Moray, but Mr Miller, in his "Fife Pictorial" tells us that this is a fallacy. The ironwork was the gift of William, Prince of Orange (William

III.) to Anne, the wife of Charles the Fifth Earl of Moray, Mr Miller is right. The Bonnie Earl was, it is true, often a visitor to Dunfermline Palace; but the ironwork of itself bears a repudiation of the popular fallacy. A monogram "A.C.M" – Anne, Countess of Moray – is wrought out in the design. No attempt has been made to rebuild the house since the unfortunate disaster of 1858.

#### The Murder Of The Bonnie Earl.

The incidents connected with the murder of the Bonnie Earl of Moray are very touching and pathetic. In the stirring times connected with the Reformation the leader of the Roman Catholic party was George Gordon, the sixth Earl of Huntly, afterwards the Marquis of Huntly. Gordon suffered a good deal for the faith he professed. His grandfather had been slain by the Regent Moray in 1562, and his father was denounced as a traitor and sentenced to death, although afterwards pardoned by Queen Mary. The claim of Sir James Stewart to the title of the Earl of Moray was contested by Huntly. In 1544 Queen Mary conferred the title on Huntly's grandfather; but in 1561 the title was resumed by the Queen and granted to her half-brother, James Stewart, the Regent Moray. Huntly therefor looked upon the Stewart family as the usurper of the title. Huntly was cunning enough to watch his opportunity, and he soon found a pretext for avenging himself on the house of Stewart. Francis Stewart, the Earl of Bothwell, who gloried in his treasonable schemes, was a cousin of the Bonnie earl. Huntly conspired to connect the Bonnie earl with the treasonable work of the Earl of Bothwell. James VI. had an open ear to any charges against Moray, who was a favourite with Queen Anne at the Palace of Dunfermline, and in 1591-92 he granted a blank cheque to Huntly to apprehend Moray. On the 7<sup>th</sup> February 1592 Huntly, accompanied by a retinue, crossed the Forth at Queensferry and arrived at Donibristle House in the evening. Moray had just arrived from the North, intending to attend a meeting of the Privy Council at Edinburgh the following day. On the arrival of Huntly, the earl closed the doors of the castle, but the conspirator was not to be denied so easily. He procured a quantity of straw and set fire to the house, and Moray and the Sheriff of Morayshire were compelled to fly from the castle. The Earl and the Sheriff made their way from the interior towards the servants' apartments by a subterranean passage, intending to reach the shore and escape by boat. In the hurried flight the headgear of the Earl caught fire. The light, dim as it was, revealed the Earl to his enemies, and the fugitives were overtaken on the rocks to the east of the house. Gordon of Buckie shot down the Earl like a dog, and the Sheriff was dispatched by a soldier. While Moray lay bleeding Huntly appeared on the scene and drew his sword across the Earl's face, inflicting a disfiguring wound. "Ye have spoiled a better face than your own" were the words of the dying Earl, and the words linger about the district to this day. The murder created a terrible sensation throughout the country.

*May 1903*

## THE DEATH BELL OF DUNFERMLINE

### Old Funeral Customs.

In his book on "The Weaver's Craft", Mr Thomson makes some reference to the customs of days gone by under the heading of "Funerals and Brewing". There is no trade which during the past century has changed more than the brewing trade. In days gone by there were breweries in almost every town and village in Scotland, and the drinkers of the "nappy" ales, which were so popular, never so much as dreamt of a time when they would cease to manufacture their own ales and the trade would fall into the hands of the great companies which now exist. In 1701 for instance there were eight breweries in Dunfermline, despite the poverty which existed. It was then the old sang was more familiar to the people of Dunfermline than it is today:

*As I sat near the Spittal crosshead,  
Dumfarlin' I thocht on,  
An' o' its guid brown ale to sell,  
But siller I had none.*

When funerals took place the Dunfermline ales and sometimes whisky were much in evidence. Previous to the lifting of the coffin, crowds of people surrounded the door of the deceased. They were admitted in turns and provided with a glass of liquor. After the funeral the relatives returned and meat and drink were served without stint. The custom was a terrible tax upon the poor people. At this time when poor people taxed themselves beyond measure to make what was considered to be a "decent" show, in connection with the burial of relatives, the dead bell man was an important functionary in burghs and villages. The following is an extract from Dunfermline Burgh Records: -

*25<sup>th</sup> May 1695; Ordered that a new hand-bell be bought, a recommended John Chalmers to do It; and orders the bell to be kept for ordinar proclamations and allenerly for burials.*

No matter at what hour a death took place, the bell wringer was turned out, and he went round the streets of the burgh and announced the death. He made halts at various points, rang his bell, and, says Dr Henderson, spoke as follows: - "All ye brethren and sisters, I let ye be wot that Davit Meldrum departed this life at the pleasure of the Almighty at sax o'clock this morning, and all who can attend the burial from his house on Saturday, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the honour of their company is respectfully invited." When he pronounced the word "Almighty" the dead bell man made a low bow suggestive of the Calvinistic resignation of the times. The office of hand bell ringer was roused with the other customs, and it is apparent from the following entry in the Burgh records that the bailies were always anxious that the bell should be well taken care of: -

*30<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1699: - This day the Counsell ordained Katharen Gibrone to find new cantation for the hand bell, with certification y't if she fail so to doe betwixt this eight days, the bailies are hereby ordained to roup the bell with all haste.*

In 1757 the minds of the Councillors were much exercised over the fact that while many people could provide funds for ale and other drinks they did not pay the poor bell-ringer, and so the following minute was passed: -

*10<sup>th</sup> December: - This day the Council being informed by petition from the Tacksman of the two hand bells that the inhabitants very much impair the emoluments of the dead bell, and seldom pay anything of account of burials. The Council having taken this affair to their consideration, resolve to maintain and keep up the emoluments of the hand bells, and appoint and statute that the dues for the dead bell shall in time coming be one shilling sterling for an old person, and eight pence sterling for a young person; and that the Council bell shall be rung to no burial, but to the burials of such persons whose friends shall agree to pay the said dues.*

Dead bell intimations ceased in 1790, and it was then that people began to use funeral letters.

*July 1903*

## WINDFALL TO AUCHTERDERRAN PARISH.

### Overlooked Mineral Rights.

Something in the nature of a windfall is likely to accrue to Auchterderran Parish Council. At a recent meeting in the office in Lochgelly, the Clerk reported that he had occasion to refer to the title deeds of Bowhill Cemetery, and he was of the opinion that the minerals underneath the ground belonged to the Parish Council. The question was never previously thought of, and Bowhill Coal Company had been working the minerals for years.

The Chairman and the Clerk made further inquiry, and the matter was brought before the Council. The Clerk was instructed to write the Company and ask on what authority they had wrought the minerals. The Bowhill Colliery replied that they had leased the minerals from the late Mr Aytoun of Inchdairnie.

In further correspondence the Council pointed out to the Company that the latter sold the ground to the Council's predecessors, the Parochial Board, and that Mr Aytoun had no right to grant a lease of that portion.

A committee was appointed to meet the general manager of the Bowhill Company, who in an interview, it is alleged, that the minerals belonged to the Parish Council. The Company are now offering to pay for the coal they have worked since they purchased Inchdairnie estate two years ago, and offering to lease the minerals from the Parochial Board. The latter, however, hold that the Company are entitled to pay royalties on all the coal extracted for the last seven years. That money has already, of course, been paid by the Coal Company to the Inchdairnie trustees and this would mean that they would either have to recover the sums already paid or pay the royalties over again to the Parish Council.

Another special meeting of the Council was held on Friday last, when negotiations were advanced a step. The amount at stake runs into several thousands of pounds.

*July 1903.*

## ST LEONARD'S HOSPITAL, DUNFERMLINE.

In the days of Malcolm Canmore, and for many years afterwards, Scotland was nearly as much overrun with lepers as some eastern countries, and hospitals were erected by the Church. Pope Alexander III. in 1179, for instance, decreed as follows: - "*Seeing that it is very remote from Christian piety that those who seek their own and not the things of Jesus Christ, do not permit the lepers who cannot cohabit with the sound or meet in the church with others, to have churches or burial places of their own, nor to be assisted by the ministry of a priest of their own, we ordain that these lepers be permitted to have the same without any contradiction.*" As a rule chapels were connected with the hospitals. Just a little beyond the St Leonard's factory of to-day we come to the site of a

### Chapel and Hospital

which was dedicated to St. Leonards. It is difficult to say when the hospital was founded. It is the most ancient charitable institution in the parish of Dunfermline. The oldest of the records of the institution dates back to 1594, but in 1651 an entry appears which connects the Hospital with the days of Malcolm and Queen Margaret. Tradition says that the latter was the foundress, and the probability is that tradition is right. The object of the institution was the maintenance of eight widows, each of whom was entitled to four bolls of meal, four bolls of malt, eight loads of coal (worth 4d per load), eight lippies of fine wheat, eight lippies of groats, fourteen loads of turf yearly, with a chamber in the hospital. Pin-money to the extent of 2s a year was also at one time allowed.

### A Graveyard

adjoined the Hospital, and the last interment recorded was in 1799. In the year 1854 whilst some gravely soil was being removed in a corner in the north-east side of the old God's Acre, the skeleton of a man was found. It is generally believed that the Hospital and Chapel were wrecked in 1651 by Cromwell and his army, while on their way to Dunfermline after the battle of Pitreavie. It is quite possible that the Cromwellian victors may have done some wrecking work at St Leonards, but it is proved beyond doubt by documents that the Hospital and Chapel of St Leonards were in a dilapidated state before the battle of Pitreavie. The battle of Pitreavie took place on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1651, and it was on the 20<sup>th</sup> August that the Kirk Session of Dunfermline met to consider "the booreds and seats of the Session hous and the Kirk boxe being all broken, the hail money in the said boxe being all plunderit and taken away be Cromwell's men." Now at a meeting of the Provincial Assembly of the Synod of Fife, held in Dunfermline on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1651 – three months before the appearance of Cromwell's army in the district – Mr James Espline, the Elymosinar (almoner, or officer appointed by the patrons to look after the institutions,) presented an application for the re-edifying of the Hospital. The supplication read as follows: - "*Ane supplication being presentit by Mr James Espline, the Elymosinar of the Hospital of St Leonard's, situate beside the Burgh of Dunfermline, for himself, and in name of the widows thair of, desyring the charitie of the several Presbyteries for the re-edifying of the said Hospital. The assembly recommended him to the charities of*

*several Presbyteries.*” It will be noticed that in the supplication, Mr Espline does not mention the Chapel. The chances are that the Chapel suffered the fate of the Abbey in 1560, when the men of the Reformation banded themselves together to “ding the Abbeys doon.” In passing along St Leonard’s Place Cromwell’s army would almost undoubtedly fall foul of the ruined Chapel, and the Hospital would, of course, come in for the same attention at the same time – no attempt would be made to distinguish between chapel and hospital. Some old houses which appear to have been built with stones from the old Hospital and Chapel were to be seen on the left. Some of these houses disappeared a good many years ago, recently one which bore the date 1666 was demolished. Here is a copy of the “lintel-stane”: -

16 . D . C MI . 66.

How the funds became diverted from the hospitals after the Reformation will be apparent from the following supplication presented in 1581 by the poor people to the King and Parliament of Scotland: - *“That the present possessors of sundry benefices, under colour of the Reformation of Religion, have appropriated the whole living of the Hospitals, maison-diens, alms-houses, and bed-houses to their own uses, or have sold the lands and rents thereof for great sums of money in feu ferme. And further, they have demolished the goodly houses that were appointed for receiving and lodging the poor, and have applied the same to their own particular uses, minding that such things should never be in time coming . . . . . to the extreme undoing of great numbers of the poor people that were and ought to be sustained thereby”.* We quote the following from an article in the “*Scotsman*”: -

“From time to time grants in aid of the lepers were made by Acts of Parliament, and from these we gather that anything was thought good enough for the poor leper. Thus it was ordained that when a wild beast was found dead or wounded in the forest, its flesh was to be sent to the nearest leper house, and the same with corrupt or tainted pork or putrid salmon. “Gif ony man brings to the market, corrupt swine or salmond to be sauld, then they sall be taken by the Bailies, and incontinent, without ony question, sall be sent to the lepper folke.” Another perquisite to which Hospitals were entitled was “Evil Ale”, according to the Burgh laws of Scotland in the reign of David I., when “sound ale” could be readily obtained at a halfpenny a gallon. “And gif she makis ivil ale, and dois agane the custome of the toun and be conveykit of it, sche sall gif til het mercyment VIIIs., or than thole the lauch of the toun, that is to say, be put on the kukstule, and the ale sall be gyffen to the pure folk the twa part, and the thyr part sent to the Hospitale. And rycht sie dome sall be done of meide as of ale.” Pitiable indeed was the lot of those who suffered from this loathsome disease, for from the moment they were adjudged lepers they lost all privileges of citizenship, all political rights, and were held incapable of conducting their own family business, or even the disposal of their own property. By both the civil and ecclesiastical law, they were regarded as virtually dead. They were prohibited from entering Inns, Churches, mills, and bake-houses; even the water gushing out of the common fountain was forbidden them. There were other stringent regulations in force, such as those of the Magistrate of Glasgow, who ordained: - *“That the Lippers of the hospital sall gang onlie on the calsie syde near the gutter, ang sall haf clapperis, and ane claith upoun thair mouth and face, and sall stand afar off quhil they resaif almons &c.”* The necessity for rules such as these is apparent when we realise the shocking appearance of the people afflicted with this painful malady. The reason the poor leper was made

to “stand afar off” was that from the body of the leper spread the sickening odour of a corpse, as much of the body was dead long before the patient had reached the end of his days. In the “Testament of Cresseid,” written about 1500, by Robert Henryson, schoolmaster of Dunfermline, will be found a graphic description of the more striking symptoms of leprosy, as he must have frequently beheld them.”

*September 1903.*

## GLENCRAIG AND LOCHORE NEW

### UNITED FREE CHURCH

#### Laying The Memorial Stone

Glencraig and Lochore are two villages stretching along either side of the highway half-a-mile to the north of Lochgelly Railway Station. Their growth has been of the mushroom order, and dates from the opening up of the rich coal seams which underlie that district. Because of the extraordinary mineral developments which will take place in the immediate future, consequent upon the almost inexhaustible wealth of the strata, the two places which are practically conjoined have great possibilities before them.

Invaded by shopkeepers and co-operative societies, the village possesses some handsome shops, not to speak of a "Gothenburg" public-house, and now their prosperity has led to the erection of a church – a building which, when finished, will afford a pleasing contrast to the rather bald style of architecture which surrounds it.

Of this unfinished structure, which is to bear the name of the Glencraig and Lochore New United Free Church, the memorial stone was laid on Wednesday. Its erection, brought about chiefly through the exertions of the Rev. James Brown, Lochgelly, will doubtless do much to quicken the spiritual life of the district, because, while the workers have been willing, the want of a proper meeting place has been decidedly felt. The district is part of Portmoak and Flockhouse, and is under the pastorage of the Rev. Charles Mason.

Having been granted a site and a subscription from Wilson & Clyde Coal Company and a subscription of £200 from the Fife Coal Company, the work of the building was begun, and other gifts of money flowed in until the sum in aid of the fund now reaches the total of £1050. It is expected that the church will cost £1500 before it is completed, thus leaving a considerable margin to be made up.

Designed by Mr Robert Brown, Scotland Wells, the style of architecture is Gothic. Built of brick, the church is stone fronted. The seating capacity of the area is 370, and it is believed at present that this will meet all the wants, although provision has been wisely made for the erection of a gallery to hold 200 when that addition becomes necessary. A hall is being built at the back of the church to contain 100 people. It is expected that the building will be ready for occupation early in the spring.

The weather being delightful a large crowd of villagers and others assembled to witness the ceremony of laying the stone, which was performed by Mr John Wilson, M.P. Unfortunately Mr Thomas Aitken of Nivingstone was not able to be present to preside, and the duties in this respect fell upon the Rev. James Brown, who was supported by a large number of the Presbytery. On the platform were also a number of ladies. The proceedings were opened by

The CHAIRMAN intimating a letter of apology from Mr Aitken. In the letter Mr Aitken said – “I had arranged to be here on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup>, but I regret to say I caught a cold yesterday, which I am very subject to, and in weather such as this I am afraid to venture out. I need not tell you how greatly disappointed I have been, as I was looking forward with pleasure to take part in the interesting ceremony. I trust that all will go well on Wednesday, and that the church will prove a blessing to the neighbourhood.” – a hope, added Mr Brown, in which he thought they would all agree.

The 100<sup>th</sup> Psalm was sung, after which the Rev. A.T. Miller, Townhill, offered a prayer of invocation.

The CHAIRMAN next intimated apologies from the Rev. David Jamie, Ballingry. Who hoped that the church would be a great blessing to the neighbourhood and said that there was much work to be done and many labourers needed in the harvest to be reaped; from the rev. Mr Macainsh who was spoken of as the “grandfather of the Presbytery”; Mr Duncan, Balgeddie; Mr Begg, Crossgates, and Mr Imrie, Dunfermline; from Mr Carlow, who, said Mr Brown, had been a warm friend of the undertaking from the first time he had approached him; and from Mr Telfer, father of the manager of the Glencraig Colliery. The Chairman, in introducing Mr Wilson, proceeded to say that not only had Mr Wilson given them large help in starting the building, but he had presented them with the splendid site which the church occupied, and it was because of the great interest he had shown in the work and the gift of the site that they had decided to proceed. The site was admirably fitted for its purpose. It was perfectly central to the new population to come and to that round about them. It one of two sites which he (Mr Brown) had his eye on when he wrote to Mr Wilson, and he did not think they could be sufficiently grateful for it. Mr Wilson had travelled a long way in order to be present at the ceremony, and as he had many engagements that week he (Mr Brown) thought he could not be sufficiently thanked for coming to do the work. The architect had provided Mr Wilson with a square and a plumb and a level, and he had brought them there in order that they might be made use of in the laying of the stone. He (Mr Brown) had also brought a silver trowel with him, which Mr Wilson would take home. (Applause.)

After the stone had been dropped into position, Mr Wilson placed a level along its length, and gave it a tap with a mallet, Mr Brown thereafter declaring it to be well and truly laid, and saying that the jar inserted in the stone contained that days *Scotsman* and *Herald*, the two local papers – the *Times* and *News* – the *Dunfermline Journal*, various documents relating to that day’s proceedings, the programme and names of the architect and the various contractors, some coins with King Edward’s effigy, and one or two with their late good Queen’s as well. (Applause.)

A prayer of dedication was next offered by the Rev. Charles Mason, after which the assemblage joined in singing a hymn.

#### Speech by Mr Wilson.

Mr Wilson, who was now called upon to speak, said that they had met to celebrate the beginning of the United Free Glencraig and Lochore Church. It gave him very great pleasure to be amongst them, not only as a member of the United Free Church, but as

a proprietor of the place, as Chairman of the Company which had been instrumental in bringing a large population to the district, and which had therefore incurred the responsibility of providing for that population spiritually. (Applause.) Like himself, Mr Aitken felt he had a responsibility to fulfil, and he (Mr Wilson) only wished that a consultation might have taken place that day between them, in order that they might have been able to announced something. (Applause.) In Mr Aitken's absence he would take upon himself the responsibility of intimating that he had the privilege of assisting still further than he had done in the church project. (Applause.) The district in which the church was placed was an interesting one historically, besides being beautiful and picturesque, although there were those who might think the beauty was rather spoiled by the mineral workings. When he came there ten or twelve years ago it was a rural parish. Now it was a busy hive of industry, just as it was in the time of the Romans nearly two thousand years ago. Coming to later times, they had in the vicinity, as predecessors possibly of the U.F. Church Presbytery of Kinross, the Culdees, those holy missionaries who did so much in a Christian way, and whose headquarters at Lochleven and also at Kirkness, were almost within sight of where he stood. He was also reminded that they were on the ground not very far removed from that upon which was erected the monument to Ebenezer Erskine, the founder of the United Presbyterian Church, now united with the Free. (Applause.) The United Free Church Presbytery of Dunfermline and Kinross had felt themselves warranted in sanctioning the erection of a church in the locality, and he thought he might express the opinion that they were amply justified in doing so.

He had some experience on mining districts in other localities where the seams of coal were thin and in course of time became exhausted, and where the centre of population, for which churches had been erected, was removed elsewhere. There was no fear of such a contingency in that district, which was one of the riches coal basins in Scotland. For the purposes of a recent Royal Commission it was calculated that the coal basin in Glenraig and Crosshill extended to almost seven hundred acres, and it came out that there was sufficient coal, based on the present output of over a thousand tons per day, to last for one hundred and thirty years. (Hear, hear, and applause.) There was much necessity for an active living church in that vicinity. There was a large population who had scarcely any facilities for church worship. There had been rather too great an attraction hitherto in "that place" at the other end of the village – he referred to what was called the "Gothenburg" public-house, which one might describe as a necessary evil. In all his experience, and all the experience of his father before him, they never until lately had a public-house in connection with any of their collieries. There would not have been one at Glenraig had the directors not been compelled to ask for a licence because of the number of applications which were being constantly made by outsiders. At first he refused, as proprietor, to sanction the establishment of any public-house licence, but it was found impossible to resist longer, and the directors ultimately came to be of opinion that the better plan would be to place the licence under the management of the East of Scotland Trust. He was told there was now a considerable surplus of profit in connection with the house. Probably it might be a matter of regret that the surplus was so large, but it was intended to apply the money in the way of elevating the masses, and there was in contemplation the building of a public library and reading room, both of which would be admirable institutions for the locality. (Applause.) He would earnestly urge upon the miners – and the Fife miners were a step considerably in advance of their brethren in the West, and were a very good class generally – to spend less of their wages in

strong drink. Theirs was a dangerous employment in which they took their lives in their hands, and it became them to take a thought and so far as possible abstain from the evils of strong drink. (Applause.) The Scottish peasantry of olden times were famous for their attention to duties of religion, and especially the duty of attending church. He regretted to hear that that could not now be said in the case of the neighbourhood of Glenraig. Probably they were not altogether to blame, because, although there was a service in the evening, there was none during the day. Now they would have in their midst a church of their own, so that there would be no excuse for them not attending. He trusted they would consider it their duty and their great privilege to attend to the ministrations of a pastor, who, he believed in course of time would be placed there, moving about amongst them, partaking of their joys and sorrows, entering into their everyday living, and in that way he hoped they would ultimately become a strong and united Free Church congregation. (Applause.)

On the motion of the Rev. Duncan Brown, Mr Wilson was thanked for his service.

The Rev. Robert Smith, Kinross, proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, to whose thoughtfulness and energy, he said, that church had reached the point to which they now found it. (Applause.)

The contractors for the church are: - Builder, Mr Andrew Wilson, Cowdenbeath; joiner, Mr Alex Waddel, Burntisland; plumber, Mr Robert Ritchie, Leslie; slater, Mr Isaac Schoolbred, Leslie; plasterer, Mr Hutchison, Kinross.

*September 1903*

## THE WAY AND WORK OF REFORM

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### The Village of Crossgates.

Crossgates has signs of modern civilisation which Halbeath lacks. It has not one church but two, and two policemen are stationed in the village. The people, too, have fuller opportunities of developing the responsibilities of citizenship. Having more to do for themselves than their neighbours at Halbeath, they should be more self-reliant, more resourceful, more skilled in turning to account the opportunities for self-government. Yet the characteristics of the two places are closely similar.

Crossgates, Springhill, and Mossgreen, are practically one village, and while Fordell is an isolated place lying fully a quarter of a mile to the south-east of Mossgreen, it is, by being included in the Crossgates special water district, connected with all three. The population of Crossgates and Springhill in 1899 was 1500. Since then it must have increased, because, in the interval, a considerable amount of building by feuars has taken place on the Dunfermline Road. Yet the school attendance has been stationary for several years. With its numerous shops on both sides of the spacious street, the place gives one the impression of being a market town rather than a country village. The principal occupation is mining. Though there are not many coal-getting concerns close to the village, the miners find outlet for their labour in the gigantic collieries of the Fife Coal Company at Hill of Beath and Kelty. While there are numerous modern houses in the village, the greater proportion of the housing accommodation is generations old although, in justice be it said, not by any means insanitary or uninhabitable, but in good repair, and of fair appearance. The majority of the houses, like those in most colliery villages, are of the room and kitchen or "but and ben" type; yet many of the newer dwellings have more apartments, and are characterised by the evident attention which has been paid to the laws of hygiene in the course of their erection.

On the whole the place is healthy, although occasionally there are epidemics among the children. Last year the outbreak took the form of measles, and this year whooping cough and mumps are prevalent. There are 350 children in attendance at the school, which is under Dunfermline Parish School Board, and is successfully conducted by the headmaster, Mr Wallace. The absentees rarely exceed five per cent. A water supply is got from a reservoir at Cullalo, but it can scarcely be said to be sufficient in quantity or of unimpeachable purity. It forms a village grievance. Dr Nasmyth, the Medical Officer of Health, says that it contains too much organic matter to be an ideal water for consumption. Recently, since the enlargement of the reservoir, it has been almost milky in colour. The drainage system is fragmentary and incomplete. To the north of the bridge crossing the stream which intersects the village highway there is no drainage other than natural by channels.

The United Free Church has a membership of about 200. The Rev. Robert Begg, the pastor, is most attentive in his ministrations. Besides conducting the two services each Sunday, Mr Begg superintends the mission in Hill of Beath. During his ministry he has done a great deal to quicken and brighten religious life in the historical church in which the light of the pure evangel has so long been faithfully maintained. A flourishing Sunday School, well-attended Bible class, and an excellent choir are among the signs of a vigorous congregational vitality. Nor is the good influence confined to the congregation; the example of the minister and members is felt throughout the whole community, with whose best interests they actively concern themselves. A considerable proportion of the villagers attend Mossgreen Parish Church, where the Rev. John Clarke courageously enforces the claims of Christian service and responsibility, and commands the respect of all – even of workmen whose transgressions chiefly in the way of intemperance he rebukes. It is pleasing to hear from time to time as one mingles with the miners, testimonies to Mr Clarke's fearlessness in his exhortations alike in the homes and in the pulpit to the higher life, even although the laudations are sometimes mingled with sad confessions and shortcomings.

On the whole it cannot be truthfully said that the people are constant in their church going; indeed, there is a large percentage attached to no church. But, on the other hand, they can be safely termed law-abiding, as crime is not common. The two policemen stationed in the burgh would have a life of ease were their patrol ground to extend no further than the village boundaries. Temperance work is spasmodic, and thus comparatively ineffectual. Continuity of effort would do a vast amount of good in that direction. One hotel and two public-houses supply the public drinking needs of the village; but besides these there are four licensed grocers in the place. An offshoot of the Dunfermline Co-operative Society does an enormous trade in most of the departments covered by the "Store". Friendly Societies are numerous, and are largely taken advantage of. Free masons, Gardeners, Foresters, and Shepherds, press their rival claims for patronage. The Gardeners are an exceedingly healthy body. The masons are the oldest institution of the kind, and the Shepherds the youngest in the village. Recently the once famous brass band, which succumbed to internal dissension for several years, has been resuscitated under the conductorship of Mr Robert Gilles. Who has carried it to victory many a time, and is very likely to do so again provided that the members, who are excellent bandsmen, seek to promote harmony. The village used to be famous for its music, and the remnant of the old enthusiasm is still to be found in the children, who are keen to learn the old notation.

No public library or reading room exists in the village, but there is a large and flourishing school library, which was established by the efforts of the children, and is also kept up by them from the profits of their kinderspiels. It contains 330 volumes, which are doubtlessly read by the parents as well as their offspring. Some years ago a recreation park was provided by the children also. The movement was begun with the idea of taking the children off the streets in good weather, because of the dangers of passing vehicles. Successful games, promoted by the amalgamated friendly societies are held in the park annually. A male voice choir taught by Mr James Potter is another of the musical institutions, and violin classes are taught by Mr James Cook, who is an enthusiast. A Draughts Club provides pleasant recreation for a number of people, a Burn's Club celebrates the Poet's birth annually, and the Free Mason's Hall

usually houses some form of entertainment during the winter months. There are no local committees, the resident Parish Councillors – Messrs Bett, Wallace and Kilgour – doing all the needful work in that respect. The roads in and out of the village are kept in grand condition, but the District Committee are not credited with being too generous in their treatment of those inside the village. Necessarily, the lighting is primitive, but with the glare of the shops the deficiency in the Main Street is not much felt. Arrangements are being made to get a special lighting district formed.

*June 8 1904.*

## THE WAY AND WORK OF REFORM.

### DONIBRISTLE

If not exactly a model village, Donibristle is a quiet, healthy place to reside in. Its inhabitants number 500, form a settled, sober, law-abiding community, contented and peace-loving. The population is almost stationary. Lying a mile to the east of Fordell, the village is the natural outcome of the mining operations of the Messrs Nasmyth, who own Donibristle Colliery. While the houses are not new, they have been modernised, and brought into line with up-to-date requirements, so far as these can be given effect to. The walls have been heightened, new roofs have been constructed, and the old flagstones have been substituted by a floor of wood. Like those of most colliery villages, the houses are the property of the mine-owners and are of the simple room and kitchen order.

The village is fortunate in having a supply of good pure water, which is got from a spring in the Cullallos, the late Mr Nasmyth having built a storage pond for it near Bucklyvie Farm. There is no drainage system in the village and no lighting, but the situation of the village and the presence of a convenient stream, which is kept in constant flow by water from the pits, combine to make the removal of the sewage an easy and safe matter. Nor does the village have a church or a policeman. It is entitled to a tithing of the latter, and as to the former, Mossgreen Parish Church (of which many are members) is the nearest place of worship. There is no religious bodies in the village, and not even a Good Templars lodge could maintain an existence. Spasmodic attempts are made to interest the people in things spiritual. For a time a series of meetings was held in the old school, ministers from Cowdenbeath and Mossgreen taking part, and in the winter time a Dunfermline Missionary does good work.

There is one licensed grocer in the village but no public house, and the place has attained to the dignity of having its own Post Office, where telegraph, money order, and other forms of postal business are transacted. Of Friendly Societies there are none, but the villagers provide the Forester's Court in Fordell with the greater number of its members. There are one or two yearly societies, and many of the people contribute to the Hallbeath Funeral Society. A Horticultural Society has been in existence for twenty years, and interest in gardening remains unabated. The annual exhibition is spoken of as one of the most meritorious in Fife. Mr P. Williamson, the headmaster, has been the secretary of the society since its inception, and his clever growing has been a source of inspiration to many others. Cut bloom and vegetable could find places at much more pretentious exhibitions, leeks, in particular, having been grown in the village which would not hame a national exhibition. Pot plants are not brought to the same state of perfection because of the want of proper rearing glass, but a few of the villagers who have small green houses, make a credible display.

There is no doubt as to the refining and elevating influence which this widespread practice of the art of horticulturist has had in the village. Influenced by the headmaster, the scholars have always attended to the ground in front of the school. The plot is kept tastefully laid out with flowers. At the present time the boys in the supplementary class were each supplied with a packet of grass or clover seed from the

County Council, and being allocated about a square yard of soil they are rivalling each other in producing the best crop. There are 150 scholars in average attendance at the school, and as illustrating the tendency on the part of the people to “root”, the most of the children are the offspring of pupils whom Mr Williamson has had through his hands. There is no village library, but the children have come to the rescue, as they do in other villages, by furnishing themselves, through the medium of their musical entertainments, with a school library. Good sound literature is provided – the writings of such standard authors for children as Ballantyne, Cooper, and Henty, being supplied. Biography and book of travel are also much read. Many years ago the headmaster conducted a musical society having seventy members, but the organisation fell into desuetude, and no musical institution exists now. But a large and flourishing Sunday School is conducted by Mr Seath, the village grocer, who is a zealous worker in all departments of church life.

Donibristle is a very healthy place, this being greatly due to the disposition of the houses. These are not crowded together, row by row, but are widely spread, thus causing a free play of air; Epidemics are consequently rare and slight. While fevers may be raging in neighbouring villages only isolated cases are heard of in Donibristle.

*June 15, 1904*

## THE WAY AND WORK OF REFORM.

### HILL OF BEATH.

If there is a general similarity between Hill of Beath and some of the places already treated in this series of articles, there are also points of considerable difference. In one way at least is it unique from the others. It was the pioneer of the "Gothenburg" public-house movement, started in 1896; at the present time, with its 1200 inhabitants, there is not one public-house in it. Few villages in Scotland of its dimensions can boast of having no tavern. The "Gothenburg" still exists, but it has been relegated to a gusset on the public highway, where it is housed in a prominent building, which now belies the undignified appellation of the "White Elephant", bestowed upon it in the law courts at one time. Initiated in a small place in the centre of the village, it was deemed advisable to remove it to its present stance, which being a considerable distance from the heart of the community, offers less temptation to the villagers, and is more convenient for the wayfarer who may feel the need of a refreshment.

There are those who doubt whether the new system of public-house keeping is, by providing weapons to fight itself with, an agency for social betterment. Opinion in Hill of Beath seems to have no misgivings whatever on the point. Drunkenness and its corollary – peace-breaking – exist in a much lesser degree than they formerly did. Sheriff Gillespie having borne testimony to the better behaviour in the village after the introduction of the system. The share capital of the company, £1000, is entirely paid up, and not a penny of it in the hands of outsiders. From its profits the great movement for social elevation are upheld. The reading-room is now the village meeting-place instead of the public-house. There the men gather and enjoy each other's company in friendly game and congenial conversation. It is provided with a regular supply of the best daily papers, magazines, and periodicals. Assisting in its work of enlightenment and education is its adjunct library, containing 500 volumes. A refreshment bar on temperance principles is also attached to the institute. Recreation for adults is amply provided in the winter season by the two billiard tables in the reading-room, and by the bowling-green in the summer months. All these benefits may be participated in for the sum of 1s 6d. The humble sixpence admits one to the privileges of the reading-room and library, which has a membership of over 100, two pence per game being charged for the use of the billiard tables, and a shilling annually covers the cost of the summer bowling. Moreover the shillings are afterwards spent on prizes. A football park is provided for the younger people, and a field is set specially aside as a playground for the children, also out of the profits. But the privilege most appreciated of all is the lighting of the village by electricity, the supply being derived from one of the Fife Coal Company pits in the neighbourhood. This is a great boon in the winter months, as one would know who has had the experience of wandering through some of the neighbouring villages on a dark and dirty night.

With the exception of probably one house, the village is entirely owned by the Fife Coal Company, who bought the estate of Hill of Beath from the late Mr Ord Adams in 1888. The dwellings, which generally comprise room, kitchen, and scullery, are built entirely of brick, which the Company manufactures themselves in the village. They

are very habitable, as colliery houses go. The population be stationary, no additions have recently been made to the housing accommodation.

An excellent supply of pure water is enjoyed by the villagers. The supply comes from the Roscobie reservoir, belonging to the Cowdenbeath Corporation. Until within a short time ago, the Company paid for the water by meter; since the enlargement of the reservoir and the consequent increased capital expenditure, Cowdenbeath Council were compelled to charge on rental as they do in the burgh.

Nor can fault be found with the drainage, which is capable of overtaking any rush of surface water which may come from time to time. The sewage is filtered by the septic tank process (the works which are all but completed, being recently described in the "Dunfermline Journal").

There is no church in the village, but services are conducted in the Mission Hall every Sunday under the auspices of the Crossgates United Free Church. The services are well attended, but the people do not, on the whole, give serious attention to religious matters. Yet, they are a respectable, well-behaved class.

A strong Rechabites' Lodge exists, as does also a Lodge of Good Templars. With the approach of the summer months, however, there is usually a waning of enthusiasm on the part of the Templars. A penny savings bank, open every pay Friday, and conducted by Mr William Kerr, is well taken advantage of. For some time a singing class existed, but although receiving financial assistance from the "Gothenburg", it became defunct. Co-operation has a strong hold in the place, Dunfermline Co-operative Society recently converting the Hill of Beath Society into one of its branches.

Many attempts have been made to introduce a grocer's license into the village, but every effort was negated by the Licensing Justices, the Fife Coal Company offering strong opposition in order to allow of the "Gothenburg" having a fair trial.

Standing on high ground, and being surrounded by open country, the village is very healthy. There are few gardens attached to the houses, but those that do exist are fairly well cultivated, the soil not being of the most fertile kind.

Nearly 500 people are employed at the Fife Coal Company's four pits, in one of which an unfortunate white damp disaster, resulting in the loss of several brave lives, occurred a few years ago. Two of the pits are situated on the Company's own land, the two others being on the estate of Dalbeath, belonging to Mt L. Dalgliesh. Many of those employed in the pits, however, are not resident in the village, some travelling by tram from Dunfermline and Halbeath, others coming from Crossgates, while a few travel from Cowdenbeath and Kelty.

At the village school, which is successfully conducted by Mr Hunter, and is under the control of Beath School Board, 360 children are on the roll, with an average attendance of about 300. In the supplementary classes, special attention is devoted to teaching geology and the qualities and effects of gasses, particularly those met with underground.

A branch Post Office was established in the place some time ago. The village is policed by the Crossgates officers.

*June 22, 1904*

## THE WAY AND WORK OF REFORM.

### THE BURGH OF LOCHGELLY.

Probably there is less need to indicate the directions of reform in Lochgelly than in any other of the places treated in this series of articles. By virtue of its being a burgh, having had control of its own affairs for nearly 25 years, the municipal side of civic life is well and wisely attended to. Nor may one point the finger of scorn at the educational authority, in their efforts to provide for the children the best investment they can have in life. Still, as will be gathered, there are ways in which reform may profitably be hinted at or pointed to.

#### A Growing Population.

With a population of 6500 in 1900 the number has increased by 1000 since last census, and because of the greater developments in the surrounding coalfields, it is expected that the increase will be more rapid in the immediate future. The High Street presents a fine array of shops, whose appearance would have been enhanced had the street been a half wider. In the more modern part of the town, in the direction of the railway station, the facilitating of traffic and the safety and health of the public provided by wider streets have been kept in view.

#### A Healthy Situation.

*Lochgelly stands on a hill, its altitude being nearly the highest in Fife. Its natural situation makes it a healthy place, and as the town is provided with numerous breathing spaces nature is assisted in her work of providing pure air. The original houses of the place are fast disappearing, and the dwellings being erected by the Lochgelly Iron and Coal Company for their workmen are thoroughly up-to-date, and fitted with all the modern conveniences. The Company own six pits – Mary, Jenny Gray, Nellie, Minto, Melgund, and the Newton, but a number of the miners resident in the burgh find employment at the Bowhill and Glenraig Collieries. Lord Minto is the superior of the greater part of the land which the burgh is built, only a small portion at the west end being under the superiorship of Lord Zetland.*

#### *The Water Supply and Drainage*

*Lochgelly is fortunate in having a good water supply of medium hardness. The reservoir is situated on Blairadam estate, and the supply was introduced when the burgh was formed. Several additions have been made, as necessity demanded, to the original works, and a further addition, costing over £17,000, will be completed within a few months. Coming from mossy ground the water has a slightly brownish hue, but it is thoroughly pure, and commends itself favourably to analysts. There is a proper system of drainage in the burgh, but the sewage finds outlets into the Ore. With a view of putting an end to this undesirable practice, a scheme prepared by Messrs Buchanan & Bennett, C.E., Edinburgh, has recently had the serious consideration of the Council. The scheme provides for a series of septic tanks, and its planning was a matter requiring clever engineering skills, the lie of the land making it extremely difficult to get the whole of the sewage diverted into one outfall. By deep cutting,*

*however, it is believed this difficulty will be successfully overcome, and the cry of superiors along the stream side for the protection of the Rivers Pollution Act will soon probably be stilled for ever so far as it applies to Lochgelly.*

#### *The Street and Lighting.*

*The highways in the burgh are under the jurisdiction of the Kirkcaldy District Committee, and as that body does not keep them to the satisfaction of the Town Council, a representation will probably be made before long. Street lighting is done by gas. The Council pay for the illuminant to the gas company, whose principal shareholders are local men, but superintend the public lighting themselves. Two years ago a few incandescent lamps were fitted up, and these have proved satisfactory, a general installation in the principal streets has been made. About 130 lamps are utilised in relieving darkness. Some time ago a granolithic paving scheme was entered upon, and the work is being done in sections, each of which can be completed in a season. The people find the new paving a great boon, as the former dilapidated footways were neither conducive to comfort nor cleanliness.*

#### *The Church and The Public-House.*

*An Established Church (quoad sacra), two United Free Churches, an R.C. Chapel, and a Mission Hall, comprise the places of worship in Lochgelly. Some of the churches could be better attended, and there is a large non-church going population in the place. The Roman Catholics are a considerable body, and they set an example to their Protestant brethren in the way of regularity in their devotions. The burgh is certainly not under licensed. Temperance agencies would hail with joy a further diminution of the drinking facilities. Recently the question of a municipal public-house was broached, a member of Council suggesting that the Council should purchase a property, then in the market, for the purpose, but it was found that the Council had no power to embark upon any such undertaking. Most of the prominent societies have Lodges in Lochgelly, and they are well supported, the population being strong believers in the benefits derivable. Funeral societies also receive good countenance from the people.*

#### *Gardening.*

*Gardens are attached to the majority of the houses, but as the land is much exposed, produce is a little later than in the more favourably situated districts. But the miners are enthusiastic growers, and the annual exhibition provides a display of really meritorious specimens, vegetables in particular.*

#### *Co-operation.*

*Co-operation has taken a firm hold of the district. The Lochgelly Society turns over £35,000 a quarter. Its Educational Committee conducts the library (formed from the nucleus of an old public-subscription library) and institute. The library is a representative one for a small burgh. It contains the work of most of the best authors, past and present, and its shelves are constantly being added to. Attached to it, there is a reading-room and a billiard-room, every section of the institute being strongly supported.*

*Music.*

*The Choral Union, which has had one or two breaks in its existence since it was established forty years ago, is now a flourishing institution, with a membership of nearly 100. Annually during the past ten years its musical status has grown increasingly, and the concerts have been correspondingly successful. Two years ago a bazaar provided it with a financial foundation which will serve it well for years to come.*

*Other Agencies.*

*Lochgelly carries on a Savings Bank conjointly with Cowdenbeath. A movement is at present on foot to provide the burgh with a public park, £1000 having been left by the late Mr Landale to help the project. Volunteering is strong in Lochgelly, and L Company has long been noted for its shooting men, a first-class range being a great inducement for beginners to practice. A branch of the Boys Brigade recently inaugurated in connection with Churchmount U.F. Church has more than its complement of members.*

*Educational.*

*There are two Board Schools and an R.C. School within the burgh, two schools in the neighbouring district being also under the jurisdiction of Lochgelly Board. The number of children on the roll of these schools is 2300. Evening classes are well attended by young men and women, the former being coached in mining and the latter encouraged in and trained to do plain and fancy sewing and the art of cooking.*

*June 20, 1904*

## THE WAY AND WORK OF REFORM.

### LASSODIE.

With its population of 1250, Lassodie forms a considerable unit of the parish of Beath. The village lies at the foot of the beautiful policies of Colonel Dewar, on whose estate it is. Although the village is situated with a slope towards the south and with plenty of open land in the vicinity, opportunity is not taken of its naturally advantageous position to make it attractive and pretty. But in saying so, one must always bear in mind that where a mineral line intersects a village and where huge pits are in operation close by the houses, attractiveness and beauty are ideals not easily attainable. Like many other mining villages in West Fife appearance has been sacrificed for utility.

Houses built of brick, as those of Lassodie are for the most part, do not tend to improve the outlook. Yet they are comfortable. The majority of them having only two apartments, but some of more recent construction contain four. Mining is, of course, the principal industry but agricultural grazing is also carried on to some extent.

Springs on Thornton and Lassodie estates provide an excellent supply of water, especially for drinking purposes, containing a considerable percentage of iron and lime. There is no drainage system in the village all sewage finding a natural outlet in the streams. Lassodie is the property of the colliery proprietors (Messrs T. Spowart & Coy.) Mr Dewar holding the home farms. Recently the village earned an unenviable notoriety in regard to some its roads. H.M. Inspector threatened to withdraw the grant provided the School Board (Beath) did not see that the children had a dry footway to the school in winter time. It is believed, however, that that breeze has blown past. The educational examiner saw the road at its worst, and possibly wrote with more sting than he would have done had his carriage not stuck in the road. His comments, however, have not been useless, as the roadway has since undergone considerable improvement. Taken all over the roads in the village are in a fair condition. At present they are either suffering from a superabundance of metal, or it has been badly rolled in, because loose stones are scattered all over the surface. The footways are firm, but have a switchback surface, and it is difficult to define the line separating them from the roads.

There is only one church in the place – a United Free – the minister being the Rev. Jas. F. Duncan. Services are held twice each Sunday in summer, but only once in winter. The congregation numbers between 300 and 400. This does not represent the population of the village and outlying houses. The congregational organisation, however, is complete, and under Mr Duncan's direction not a little is done to promote the higher social as well as religious culture. Mr Brownlie and his family are generous alike in service and support.

There is one public-house in the place, but the Co-operative Society, which is a thriving institution, excites a certain amount of prejudice among neighbouring societies by carrying on the business of a licensed grocer. Temperance work is represented by a Good Templar Lodge, some earnest workers devoting much time in

the propagation of ant-liquor ideas. A Lodge of Rechabites is also in process of formation. The Friendly Society in connection with the Colliery is a boon to the miners, many of whom safeguard their income in sickness by being connected with the Shepherds, Foresters, Oddfellows, Gardeners, or other societies. Nor is Free Masonry without representation in the village.

Ornithology and horticulture are strong pursuits with the miners, exhibitions of poultry and flowers being held annually. The gardens, some of them spacious, are well cultivated, and the produce horticulturally in the way of vegetables, roses and pansies is fit to be seen in a more pretentious exhibitions than that of the village. Pot plants are also strongly reared. The soil is a little cold, and consequently maturity is later in being arrived at.

There is no library or reading-room in the village, which consequently has few attractions on a winter night, when darkness reigns supreme there being no public lighting. Nor does any musical association exist, except the church choir, which deserves commendation for its efforts to brighten the life of the community. The advantages of a Penny Bank are not known, but small saving are deposited in the Post Office, in which the whole gamut of money order, telegraph, telephone, and other business may be covered.

The local gentry – Mr Dewar and Mr Brownlie – are kind to the villagers, and Mr Dewar and Mr Brownlie give encouragement to the school children in the way of prizes for sewing and knitting. About 300 pupils are in attendance at the school, which has for over twenty years been successfully conducted by Mr Drysdale. Evening classes are well taken advantage of in the winter season.

Recently a new technical department was added to the school building, and the industrial supplementary course is taken up with a special reference for mining.

Possibly the most felt want in the village is that of a railway, the only means of covering the five miles between the place and Dunfermline being either by foot or by bus. The operations of the Fife Electric Power Company may remedy this state of matters, however, and bring luxuries within the easier reach of a law-abiding, contented, and settled community.

*July 13, 1904*

## THE FIFESHIRE MINER.

Mining Fifeshire is peculiar in this – the great majority of the thousands who labour in the pits are natives of the “Kingdom”. They are clannish, the Fife pitmen, and they are mostly settlers. The great bulk of them belong to families who have resided in the mining villages for generations, and whose forebears have all been pitmen. They do not encourage importations. A few wander into Fifeshire from Lanarkshire, and once a Pole, greatly daring, descended upon Kelty – a sort of pioneer of his race in the mines of Fifeshire. He did good work in the Kelty coalfields, but the strange speech of the Kelty “Raws” oppressed him, and he is believed to have gone to Carfin, where he will not find himself among an alien people.

### Kelty and its Institutions.

The cause of the growing prosperity of West Fifeshire is to be sought not in Dunfermline nor Kirkcaldy, but in the greyer mining towns of the county, and, as the worthy postmaster of Kelty would say, “the capital thereof is Kelty.” It already possesses in the Aitken Pit the largest coal mine in Scotland, employing 1100 men and having a daily output of 2200 tons, and the Mary Pit, which is not far from it, when fully developed will be one of even greater capacity. With these and other pits in the vicinity the Kelty coalfields have a daily output of some 4000 tons. Naturally, therefore, Kelty is a considerable town. The length of its main street would make a Kirkcaldy man envious. The Postmaster is proud of Kelty, and Kelty is not likely to suffer so long as the Postmaster lives and rules. A veteran in years and service, he remains marvellously clear-headed. He is somewhat of a precisian in speech. He is a man of many parts, a sort of Poo-Bah with a Fifeshire accent. Among other things, he is clerk to the School Board, a ruler in local administration – in fact, the mainspring, one feels, in the communal life of Kelty. Industrial Kelty is busy. It cannot afford to be otherwise. Socially it has known more picturesque days. About the only social event nowadays is when the brass band returns with fresh laurels. The Kelty band is the Champion Band, and the natives are prouder of that fact than of their huge output of coal. But Kelty has had its days of social greatness, when the old inn stood on the Great North Road, mine host bearing the historic name of Charles Stuart; and the Blairadam Club flourished. It is interesting to note that mine host retired from inn-keeping to control the Kelty Post Office, which was one of the earliest post offices in Scotland. The present admirable Postmaster cherishes the history of the Blairadam Club, nor does he forget to tell you that Sir Walter Scott was a member. He produces a heavy tome wherein you may read that “the Blairadam Club met on Fridays; spent Saturdays in visiting places of historical interest; while on Sundays they duly attended devine worship at the Kirk of Cleish”. “A great book that,” says the Postmaster, handling it lovingly, “man, it tells ye a’ thing.”

### The Hen and the Chickens.

Blairadam was an intellectually and spiritually improving club, unlike the “Hen and Chicken”, which the still tell you of in Crossgates. It flourished in the days when the coaches rumbled along the Great North Road. It was rather an exclusive club, and the Earl of Wemyss was the president. It is not recorded that the gentlemen of the “Hen and Chicken” burdened themselves with historical lore, or that they were regular in their habits of worship. But they had great “nichts.” Motorcars now speed along the Great North Road, and ther old inn, scene of many glorious “Hen and Chicken” revels, has disappeared long ago. But Crossgates retains the old-world flavour, and it is still a haunt of the festively inclined. It is a favourite walk from Dunfermline on a Sunday; the journey bringing the traveller “within the meaning of the Act.”

### Fordell and Donibristle.

There are many pleasant roads besides the one to Crossgates in the mining country of Fifeshire. The colliery town, like Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly, are cheerless enough to make a man who knows the black country of Lanarkshire feel as though he were at home. But the roads that lead to these forbidding capitals of toil are dotted with fair villages, the likes of which you will seek in vain for in mining Lanarkshire. And most charming of all are Fordell and Donibristle. They look anything but mining villages. Donibristle is perched on a hill; Fordell nestles in a hollow; and both are surrounded by a spacious extent of smiling pasture land. If the pits which are the source of the life of both places are conspicuous also, the tiny houses with their dainty-curtained windows that line the trim rows are gay with flowers as though they were the abode of gardeners rather than colliers. Fordell is a place of renown in mining annals. It was the scene of the old Parade (which did not make for clear heads), by which the miners celebrated the freedom conferred upon their forefathers by Sir John Henderson. The Parade has been dropped. These days the miners of Fordell no longer go a-marching or a-dancing; they cultivate their flower-beds. And perhaps their love for flowers is due in large measure to the worthy schoolmaster of Donibristle. He has taught the young there for over thirty years, and while succeeding generations of children may have forgotten much they read in the text books, the smiling gardens seem to bear witness that their admirable teacher instilled into them something of his own passion for the beautiful in nature which abides with them. In Donibristle there are three buildings, almost in a row, which form, as it were, an epitome in stone of its educational development. There is the original Parochial Schoolhouse; near it a larger building which served as the school in the earlier days of compulsory education; and there is the present Seminary, large and stately, dominating the others.

### Method in Drinking.

Pit life would be agreeable enough if all the miners’ dwellings were as picturesque as these of Donibristle and Fordell. All over the Fifeshire miner is perhaps better off than his brethren in Lanarkshire. His house is rarely less than of three apartments. He is a lover of music as well as of flowers, and if his room is not always adorned with a piano, be sure that in his kitchen there is a melodeon. On the whole he is a thrifty man, and if occasionally he indulges in a mild spree, and enters public-houses open and un-ashamed, need he be specially blamed? Moreover, as a Cowdenbeath worthy

remarked, there is method in his drinking. Already out of the profits of his sprees a district nurse has been provided, a hall erected, and Saturday evening concerts established during the winter months. "And", explained the worthy, who must also be a humourist, "the concerts, ye ken, are a coonter attraction to the public-house, but I canna say that the public-house trade suffers frae them; but that, ye ken, would never dae or we would no be able tae provide mair coonter attractions." After all, let it be remembered, that if on Saturday nights, three hundred and odd miners seek the cosy gleam of the tavern bar, on every day of the week 4000 tons of coal are produced from the neighbouring pits.

*May 22, 1907*

## THE PASSING OF THE OLD TOLL

### (COWDENBEATH)

The few remaining links in Cowdenbeath that bind it to the past, which remind the present generation that it was not always the busy little town it is now, are slowly but surely passing out of sight. In a few more weeks one of the most outstanding landmarks which more than a hundred years ago was one of the principal buildings, will have been demolished; the old toll house, which, in the words of the Chief Constable, was “a rendezvous for loafers,” will have passed out of existence. Built over 200 years ago, it did duty as a toll house till 28 years ago, when the tolls were abolished. Since then it has served as a cellar, a fishmonger’s shop, a boot shop, a butcher’s shop, and lastly as a barber’s shop. Its present tenant, Mr James Murray, has occupied it for over 16 years. For a long time the place will certainly look strange without Jamie Murray and “his wee barber’s shop at the toll”.

(Tune – “Tam Glen”)

In a wee little shop at the Fountain.  
 An auld freen’ o’ mone works within;  
 He’s a hert near as big as a mountain.  
 And it seems like he’ll never gang dune.  
 Though his hair’s getting grey with life’s worry,  
 In his hand there is never a shake –  
 He’s a sanny auld chap, Jamie Murray,  
 And as guid as the young yins they make.

#### Chorus

He’ll tell ye a story, he’ll sing ye a sang,  
 And his razors they’re aye in guid trim;  
 Ye shuid slip in and see him, it’ll no take him lang  
 Tae wipe a’ the oo aff yer chin.  
 There’s some fascination in his conversation,  
 There’s something about him that’s droll –  
 May he journey through life, free of worry and strife,  
 In his wee barber shop at the toll.

Thomas McCue.

How old the toll house is, is a matter of conjecture, though there seems to be some truth in the statement that it was built shortly before or after the Great North Road was made. Some interesting details and statements were got through an interview with one of the late toll keepers, in regard to the old toll days of Cowdenbeath, and some of the experiences and vicissitudes this house has experienced.

One hundred years ago the toll was in charge of a Mrs Webster. Since then the various tax-masters have been, Mr J. Stevenson, Mr George Linton, Mr Thomas Carmichael, and Mr H. Birrell. Of these gentlemen Mr Linton was also tax-master for the toll house at Stewart’s Arms, and at that one near Crossgates Station. In these

days the different toll houses were put up for auction, and so it happened that Mr G. Linton was responsible for three, he of course engaging toll keepers to keep the different places for him. The charges for the different kinds of traffic were fixed by the Government. For carriages, nine-pence was charged for each horse, and merchandise was charged by weight, a steelyard being kept for that purpose, on that site where now stands Dick's Co-operative Institution. Sheep and cattle were charged at so much a score, and through the fact that at some time the drovers cheated the toll keepers, one toll keeper resorted to rather a bright idea, and after this the passer-by were treated to the humorous sight of an old woman holding a stick, over which the sheep jumped one at a time, being counted as they did this novel hurdle. Across the road from the toll was the inn known for a long time after as the Old Inn, a part of which still stands, and forms part of that property owned by the late Mr G. Bickerton. There the late Queen stayed for a night when on her way to Balmoral. Some of the inhabitants still remember that inn, and one lady tells with delight of how in her mischievous school days she used to trick the ostler and steal his beans. In these days Cowdenbeath was a beautiful country village, with nice rural cottages, green fields and clear running streams, with a population of less than 500. so spake one who had the pleasure of knowing the present town in this blissful state. Everybody went to church then, either to Beath or to that church in the factory grounds kept now as a store-house. When a marriage was celebrated, the marriage party walked to and from the church in a procession, two abreast, the bride and the best man taking the lead going, and when, of course, coming back, the bridegroom took the best man's place. Stage coaches, too, were much in evidence. One ran daily from Kinross, but after the Old Station was opened, it stopped at the inn, taking passengers to and from the further inland towns, which before the Perth railway was opened had to fall back on Cowdenbeath for the nearest railway facilities.

*May, 1907*

## THE MORAL OF THE SOUP KITCHEN

The establishment of Soup Kitchens in Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly has caused no little surprise in the non-colliery districts of Fifeshire. In Dunfermline, for example, it was generally assumed that during last year, while short time prevailed in the linen factories, the miners had abundance of employment and good wages. During the depression which afflicted the linen trade, no suggestion was ever made of the need or propriety of establishing a public soup kitchen. Of course, it was well known that the incomes of many families had been seriously reduced, and no doubt was entertained in many hundreds of households, either the reserves were being slowly eaten away or that the outlays on dress or food or luxuries that were considered permissible in happier times, were severely restricted. No proposal for an appeal to public benevolence was, however, made, - even although the suffering was appreciably extended and accentuated by the fullness of the building and labouring trades. How is it a few weeks slackness of employment in the colliery districts should produce such an amount and such keenness of destitution as to make public soup kitchens indispensable?

It is true that a time of comparative leanness for the working miner preceded the period of plenty. During the quieter years, it may be admitted that even in many households, where thrift and prudence were practiced, it was hard enough to make ends meet, and that the full employment and high wages enjoyed in 1908 were needed in the case of many honest, industrious workmen to enable them to "gather their feet". Still it cannot be disputed that the conditions were highly favourable to the working miners. As an illustration of the fullness and profitableness of labour in the mining districts before the depression made itself felt at the beginning of the year, we are able to give a few figures affecting the Cowdenbeath collieries of the Fife Coal Company, including No. 7, 9, and No. 10, Foulford, Mossbeath, Workshops, Washery, Labourers, etc. For the fortnight ended December 21<sup>st</sup> to 1367 men and boys in full employment underground were paid not less than £441318s 8d, or an average per person of £3 4s 6d for the fortnight.

After house rent, fire-coal, and all the off-takes had been deducted; while for 380 men, boys and girls employed on the surface the wages bill amounted to £1004 5s 2d, or an average of £2 12s 10d per person for the fortnight. The total amount of wages paid to 1947 persons employed underground or on surface during the fortnight named in the district described was nearly £5500. One would have thought that the distribution of such a large sum, fortnight after fortnight, for a considerable period would have ensured for the miners such a material enrichment as would have protected them against want for many a day.

Happily in the great majority of cases it has. The substantial increase in deposits in the Savings Bank is most pleasing evidence of the growth of provident habits. There are good and thrifty, just as there are foolish and improvident miners, and the proportion of the latter is much greater in some districts than it is in Cowdenbeath. There are households in which the laws of domestic economy are neither understood nor practiced, and while in times of plenty waste abounds. There are men who make themselves wastrels by indulgence in drink and in betting. From these classes of people spring the men who are at once a weakness to the Miners' Union, an anxiety to

the employers, and a disgrace to the community. The virtues of the sober and industrious workmen and of the loyal and intelligent unionists, notwithstanding the number of such is steadily increasing, are overshadowed by the follies and vices of the improvident and of the criminal. The good name of the miners, therefore, requires the exercise of a healthy corrective public opinion among the workmen, the discouragement of all kinds of impoverishing and discrediting behaviour, the enforcement of protective and melioratory discipline, such as men in earnest know best how to apply among their own class. As was pointed out in the "Journal" on Saturday, the executives of the Football Club, Dog Races, and other forms of sport, might and should do a great deal to disassociate their recreations from betting and gambling, and should shut their premises against the predatory book-makers. The churches and the various forms of temperance organisations must apply themselves to the task of social and moral reclamation with greater vigour and wisdom. The Ornithological and Horticultural Societies deserve more encouragement, while evening classes, literary societies, and musical associations should be persistently be commended. In these varied reforming efforts, the Coal Companies may rightly be expected to co-operate, while they charge themselves with the provision of improved house accommodation and other aids to the raising of the standard of life, morally and materially. If such a combination of reforming efforts were called into play intemperance and gambling would be checked, home life would be sweetened and elevated, the dignity of labour would be vindicated, the Miners' Union would soon be made so strong financially and otherwise that it might become a partner in ownership. Accidents, too, in the mines would become rarer, and the Coal Companies would be saved from a large proportion of the Compensation claims yearly made against them, which in Fife alone probably amount to nearly £30.000.

For the moment, however, the need for help in many districts is urgent. For destitution widely prevails, and innocent women and children are suffering.

*February 10, 1909*

## HOUSING OF MINERS IN FIFESHIRE.

### Dr. Dewar on Sanitary Defects

The Medical Officer of Health for the County of Fife in his last annual report on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of the County and Districts devotes a special appendix to a report on the Housing of Miners, prepared on the instruction of the Local Government Board. Dr Dewar estimates the coal strata area of Fifeshire at 125 square miles, or about one fourth of the whole county. Within this area there are 62 coal mines giving employment to fully 23,000 male persons and to 900 females. He states the total mining population of Fifeshire at between 102,000 and 105,000.

#### Difficulties and Responsibilities.

He acknowledges the difficulties in the way of the provision of adequate house accommodation in mining districts which are being rapidly developed, but pressing home responsibility for overcrowding to some extent to the miners themselves, he takes note of the relatively small proportion of his total earnings that the typical miner is willing or wont or considers it proper to spend in rent. He is aware of deductions for rent and taxes for coals and light, and in some cases for medical attendance which are made from the earned wage, and the frequency with which working time is broken, but he points to the testimony of the managing director of the Fife Coal Company that the average annual wage paid to the underground workers in the employment of his Company, including boys, was in 1901 £105. quoting from the same authoritative source he mentions that during March 1909 "When the shortest time was being worked the average earnings of the underground employees, men and boy, old and young, 9000 workers in all in the service of the Fife Coal Company, was £2 11s 6d. by way of explanation of the comparatively small amount spent on rent by the miners, he points to the conditions of tenure which prevail and the difficulty in obtaining prompt remedies for insanitary and other discomforts. He proceeds:

"In a large proportion of cases the coal company who employ the miner is also his landlord. Excluding the miners who live within the burghs, and excluding the unmarried men (and a few of the married men) who are lodgers, either with their parents or with strangers, I believe that this statement applies to at least 90 per cent. of the miners in Fifeshire, namely, that they reside in houses owned by the coalmasters. The system has advantages. A rent has not to be collected; it is subtracted from the fortnightly payments and so is scarcely missed. But the system has also disadvantages, of which two are especially grievous. The first is that the worker is completely in the employer's power. No matter though the window fall in from the effects of subsidence, no matter though the roof admit the daylight as well as the rain and snow, the tenant cannot leave the house or take active steps to rectify his grievance, since either step would entail the loss of his work. The tenant's other difficulty is associated with the magnitude of some of the coal companies' interests. (It will be remembered that one such company controls practically half the mining in Fifeshire, and, since the recent amalgamation, five-sixths of the miners are in the employment of three companies.) the fact that a drain whose existence was unknown has given way and is pouring out its contents under a kitchen floor, though an urgent

enough matter to the tenant, is of but slight and remote interest to the gigantic company which owns the property. Procedure under the Public Health Act requires time; even apart from that, the companies are so large and so influential that it is not easy to bring even moderate and reasonable pressure to bear upon them. A managing director recently expressed surprise at the insanitary state of certain houses, the property of his company, which he was good enough to visit along with me; yet many letters had been addressed to him on the subject before the visit took place. It is clear that much discomfort may have to be borne by tenants who live under a system by which such things are possible.”

#### Bad Name Due to Defaulting Few.

When a dog gets a bad name it has many revilers, and the housing accommodation of the Fife miners has long suffered from the evil reputation arising from the condition of a comparatively small minority of the dwelling houses. Dr Dewar’s testimony is that so far as actual house construction is concerned – that is disregarding for the moment the sanitary accommodation such as privies, closets, ash-pits, washhouses – the proportion of the miners’ houses in Fifeshire to which serious exception could be taken is small, certainly not over 8 to 12 per cent. He wishes, therefore, to emphasise the fact that the terms of criticism and disapproval of which he makes use apply only to a small proportion of the housing accommodation provided for the coal miners of Fifeshire.

#### Four Main Causes of Evil.

He mentions four main causes; (1) initial faulty construction of the dwelling, (2) disrepair more or less associated with indifference or carelessness on the part of the proprietors, (3) disrepair directly and principally due to the tenants, and (4) the effect of subsidence – as illustrations of the mischief produced by the last mentioned of these causes he specifies the subsidence’s at Parkneuk on the outskirts of Dunfermline, Little Raith, about a mile south of Cowdenbeath on the Great North Road and Thornton. Describing in detail the internal conditions which operate against healthy, physical and moral life, Dr Dewar remarks that the great majority of the dwellings are houses of 2 or 3 rooms, and then proceeds:-

“Until the eldest members of the miner’s family reaches the age when employment is commenced, the ordinary house is of two rooms. The kitchen is paved with square brick tiles, or, if of more modern construction, is floored with wood. The beds, usually two in number, are in recesses with a partition of wood or brick. The old-fashioned and abominable box-bed of the burghs and the agricultural districts as very rarely met with. All the family sleep in the kitchen, the mother explaining, in countless cases, that though there is a bed in the ‘room’, the children will not sleep in it since the kitchen is warmer. The ‘room’, smaller in area, is almost invariably wood floored. As a rule it contains a bed, but unless lodgers are kept or the eldest members of the family have reached adolescence, it is not habitually used. The ‘room’ is generally found to contain one or two bicycles, the perambulator, a trunk or two, or the like. It is not made use of as part of the habitual living accommodation of the house. The ceiling are fairly high, 8 ½ to 9 feet being an average height. The floors are generally at a height of one or two steps above the level of the street or adjacent ground. This diminishes the tendency to dampness, and also proves convenient by

preventing the casual passenger from seeing what is happening within, maintaining the privacy of the home. The opposite condition, however, when the floor is from 3 to 6 inches below the level of the street or road, is to be seen in quite a number of 'rows'. It is difficult to conceive the motive which led the original builders of these houses to perpetrate this condition. In wet weather, especially, the inconvenience is sometimes very great.

“Take the average house of this description inhabited by a couple with three young children. The wife and mother, let us say, is tidy and thrifty, the husband sober and steady; an outhouse for coals is provided behind the house; the house has the use, one day a week, of a boiler or tub in the common wash-house. All the element of health, comfort, and happiness are present. Close at hand is an identical house, it may be, except that there is neither coal-house nor wash-house so that the coals and firewood have to be stored beneath the bed, and the kitchen is converted once a week into a reeking, steaming place of clammy discomfort. Here the family of five or six in number, none yet attained the wage-earning age; the breadwinner drinks a third part of his earnings; the wife, disheartened and dispirited by the unending and futile struggle, has given up trying to keep her house in order, and no longer cares that things are not as once she would once have fain have had them. All the elements of misery, of squalor, of disease are there. Thus, important as well-constructed houses may be, it is clear that there are other factors – the due provision of accessories to the dwellings, temperance, thrift, and an initial high standard of cleanliness – which are all of greater importance in the attainment of good domestic sanitation in the broadest sense of the phrase.”

#### Objectionable Accessories.

Speaking next of objectionable accessories he illustrated the discomfort and danger arising from the ubiquitous ashpit or privy midden. When this convenience is absent, as it is in some hamlets of the worst type, ashes and vegetable refuse and filth of all sorts are deposited at random on the ground beside the house, and foul water is simply thrown out from the front door. “It will be agreed,” he says, “by all that every house in a village or township should be provided with a place for deposit of waste matters, solid, and liquid, and a penalty imposed on those who fail to make use of the provision made. More important even than construction of ashpit is its proper use and frequent emptying and cleansing. It requires but an elementary grasp of socialism to perceive that she who deposits dead animals or putrid fish in the open ashpits in the middle of the square is not achieving the greatest good of the greatest number. But when the retort was made “How otherwise can I dispose of them?” I confess I had no answer, for in many of these mining villages there is no available ground wherein such extremely offensive could be disposed of by burial. The Medical Officer noted with satisfaction that in certain communities, such as Bowhill and Kelty, water closets are general, but in the great majority of the mining centres the sanitary accommodation consists of privies, rarely or never containing pails, all but invariably of the privy-midden type. The ideal remedy (he says) in all centres of population is to replace the privies by water closets. When this is not feasible, or until it becomes so, a privy should be provided for every two or at most three, households and a key retained by each.

### The Things Required.

As two elementary requirements of domestic hygiene the Medical Officer recommends the provision of a coal shed for every dwelling and a common wash-house with a boiler and a tub for every five families to be used alternatively by arrangement, one day each week, such as is provided in the village of Oakley and elsewhere. The arrangement and distribution of the houses he regards as forming a question of the first magnitude in sanitation. He notes with disappointment that in this respect the recently formed and recently extended mining centres show least favourable. He proceeds:-

“At Kelty, Bowhill, Lochore, and other communities of similarly rapid and recent growth, not only are there no features of the garden city; there is not even a trace of a desire or a yearning for it! Most of the new houses in these centres have no patch, no single square yard, of private ground. The houses are not unduly approximated; the areas could scarcely be called crowded. But the cottages are placed in bare streets, with equally bare spaces between the rows. There is no growth of grass or vegetable, flower or shrub; though, it is true, it usually happens by way of compensation that the children can reach the open country without having to go any great distance. The average miner’s satisfaction with those conditions is all the more surprising in view of the fact that his wages are almost always sufficiently high to allow him to purchase some luxury in the form of a garden plot, and that there is no insuperable geographical difficulty to hinder the fulfilment of such a demand if it existed, the mining communities of Fifeshire being divided by stretches of open and sparsely inhabited country.”

Dr Dewar next discusses the subject of rivers pollution. He states that the dirty ditches, streams, and rivers flowing through and by the mining villages and towns of Fife, not only rob the people the people, and especially the children, of a natural advantage of no little value, but substitutes therefore and offensive feature in the environment of the community. The Ore and its tributaries he described as little better than sewers in parts of their courses. He notes that certain communities, such as Kelty, Crossgates, Bowhill, and Thornton, have excellent drainage systems. Very few, however, have attained to great success in the purification of their sewage. In Lassodie and Wellwood, where waste waters are merely thrown out upon the road or into the street gutters, one, he remarks, cannot feel that the drainage is in a satisfactory condition. He notes as a very suggestive fact “that the highest infantile mortality rates in Fifeshire are found in areas of high wages and great prosperity.”

### Testimony To Steady Progress.

While an ardent reformer who sees much to cause him disappointment, the Doctor, however, is not by any means a pessimist. He recognises that the great majority of the houses inhabited by miners in Fifeshire attain to a fair standard, and that a perusal of the public health records for the past 18 years shows a steady and continuous progress. He concludes: -

“Every year witnesses the renovation, closure, or demolition of numbers of unsatisfactory dwellings and the erection of a still larger number of houses of modern, and, as a rule, of a satisfactory type. The ordinary process of renovation is as follows: - The old uneven floor of stone or tiles is removed and replaced by boarding, the ground below having been excavated so as to allow of efficient through ventilation. The walls are raised; the windows are enlarged, constructed so as to open, and counter-weighted. The walls are lined with wood or with lathe and plaster. A roof of slates is substituted for one of tiles, and provided with rhones and rain-water conductors. The surrounding ground is lowered, if necessary, and drained. If the soil is of suitable nature and the site reasonably dry, a house so improved cannot but be regarded as a satisfactory dwelling. If, in addition, a closet, or suitable privy, and wash-house and coal-house accommodation be provided, it remains with the tenants to determine whether domestic comfort shall or shall not be secured.”

*June, 1910*

## IS COWDENBEATH UNDER POLICED?

Considerable attention has been drawn recently to Cowdenbeath, its rapidly increasing population as proved by the census, its importance as a centre for the populous surrounding mining district, and its need for an increased police staff, as was suggested at a recent standing joint committee meeting.

For the purpose of giving information on the point a representative of the "West Fife Echo" has collected the following statistics: -

Cowdenbeath has a population of 14,000; Lumphinnans, 300; Hill of Beath, 1224; and Kirkford, outwith the burgh, including the rural districts, nearly 500. Leaving out Hill of Beath, which although policed from Crossgates yet is under the jurisdiction of Cowdenbeath police Court, the resident population of the district under Cowdenbeath and Lumphinnans police control is 18,000. With the statement by Mr James Terris at hand that there are 20,000 in Cowdenbeath on a Saturday night, our representative gleaned the following particulars: - On Saturday, notwithstanding the inclement weather, there were three thousand persons at the football match in the North End Park, there were over (including both houses) four thousand at the Music Hall, and yet all the evening the High Street was crowded on both the side-walks, while a large number paraded on the street itself. All the public-houses were exceptionally busy, and in many the space seemed to be taxed to its utmost. Special cars were run from Kelty and a special train from Arniston, while all the afternoon and evening those from the outside districts flocked into the town. The number of people who were in Cowdenbeath on Saturday was certainly not less than 30,000. what was the strength of the police? As far as our representative could make out, there are 1 sergeant (one being ill), five police constables, and two drawn from the outside district. Last month the Cowdenbeath Police Court was a record, 113 persons appearing before the Magistrates. On one Monday morning there were 25 prisoners, and of that number over 20 had been arrested on the previous Saturday, and the police stations are a mile apart, namely at Park Street and the office at Morayfield. When an arrest was made, it was thus clear that two policemen were required to convey a drunk and incapable person to a police station, for that time a portion of the town was not under police control.

With a view of seeing the police supervision of the town during the night, our representative walked up the High Street between eleven and twelve o'clock. In the vicinity of the Fountain he met two police constables trying the doors on properties there. Proceeding further, a very bad breach of the peace was going on at the New Station, the language of a young man to a female being disgusting in the extreme, his cries of "blood for blood" being easily heard a hundred yards away. Not far off a man in a state of intoxication was lurching in front of a car, and was dragged aside by a passer-by. Near Foulford Street, while two men and a female was passing, a man was committing a disgusting nuisance at a newsagent's door. The first sign our representative saw of policemen was two officers in the Lumphinnans district at the corner of Lochgelly Road. On inquiry it was learned that the Lumphinnans police quit work at one o'clock in the morning, and that the two officers at Fountain are therefore the full night staff.

That night what might have been a very disastrous fire took place at Kirford Pit. With the now large amount of valuable property in Cowdenbeath a fire might take place in Cowdenbeath with great loss of life and property in the early morning which a better police staffing might have prevented. Surely the time has now arrived for an addition being made to the staff of the Cowdenbeath police, and a substantial addition at that. Cowdenbeath is now reckoned to be the third most populous place in Fife. Surely it should be policed as such.

*April 1911*

## THE LATE MR MUNGALL

On Saturday afternoon there passed away at his residence in Edinburgh, in his 67<sup>th</sup> year, Mr Henry Mungall, one of the best known of Scottish coalmasters. With Cowdenbeath Mr Mungall's name must forever be associated. He lived at Woodside House for the long period of 32 years, and during that time devoted himself to the welfare of the town and parish in the offices of member of the Parochial Board, member of Beath School Board, Provost of the Burgh, and representative of Cowdenbeath (South) at the County Council.

The son of Mr William Mungall, owner of Townhill and Whitefield Collieries, Henry came to Cowdenbeath in 1870 as a manager to the Cowdenbeath Coal Company. He early made his appearance in public work, for in August 1872 he took his seat on the Parochial Board of the parish, a month previous to his marriage with Miss Margaret Elder, daughter of Mr Elder, banker, Leslie. He remained on the Board until the year 1894, the year of the institution of the Parish Councils, when he did not seek re-election, feeling, no doubt that his hands were more than filled otherwise. During his term of office he acted as Chairman for many years.

At the formation of Beath School Board in 1872 Mr Mungall was a member, and, with the exception of a very short period, he remained a member until 1902, when the family removed to Edinburgh, and succeeded Mr Landale of Lochgelly, as Chairman. Along with Mrs Mungall, he made many generous gifts to the children, which were heartily appreciated.

As is well known, Mr Mungall took a very active part in the formation of Cowdenbeath into a Burgh in 1890, and from the first occupied the position of Provost, or, as it was then called, Chief Magistrate, which position he maintained until his removal to Edinburgh and the United Collieries. During his term as Provost, many important works were carried out, including the enlarging of the reservoir at Roscobie in 1887, in which work Mr Mungall was the prime mover. The sewage purification works claimed his earnest supervision, although he was not present when they were completed. He was also instrumental in introducing the electric light into Cowdenbeath when no town of its size had thought of such a system of street lighting. Many other public works and improvements in the town were brought about through his initiative, and his removal to Edinburgh in 1902 was very much regretted. No time was lost in presenting him with handsome testimonials for his long and faithful services to the town and parish.

Through his energies the Cowdenbeath Coal Company prospered, and Mr Mungall was soon taken into partnership. A few years later, on the amalgamation of the Company with the Fife Coal Company, Mr Mungall was retained as a director in the much larger concern. The phenomenal success of the coal industry of Cowdenbeath, as well as that of the other districts, is due largely to his untiring energies. In the year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee he presented to the town the Jubilee Fountain erected at the Cross.

His death is keenly regretted by his many friends in Cowdenbeath, and many messages of sympathy have been forwarded to Mrs Mungall.

On Monday morning, at a special meeting of the Town Council, it was agreed to telegraph a message of sympathy in the following terms: - "The Town Council and the Community of the burgh of Cowdenbeath are deeply grieved to hear of the death of your beloved husband, and desire to express their deepest sympathy with you and your family in your bereavement. – (Signed) John Marshall. Provost."

The Rev. John Sinclair, on Sunday at Beath Church, made a short reference to Mr Mungall's death, saying that Mr Mungall had always been a friend of the church. He did not know, he said, of any person who had taken a greater interest in the town and parish than the deceased. The funeral takes place to-day (Tuesday), when the body will be laid to rest in the burial ground of the church.

*December 1911*

## TOO MUCH COAL

### The Miner and the Machine

The difficulties confronting our coal industry are in a great measure a legacy from the war, said Dr Joseph Parker, principal of the Fife Mining School, Cowdenbeath, in an address to Dundee Rotary Club on Thursday.

Agriculture and Mining are, said Dr. Parker, the primary industries of civilisation, and mining may be said to have given a name to each successive epoch in the history of humanity. The art of mining, in its broadest sense, consists in the processes by which the useful minerals are obtained from the earth's crust. The first miner obtained his minerals from "open works," and that is to say, from excavations open to the sky; and the minerals he searched for were hard stones of suitable shapes; which formed his rudimentary implements. His industry inaugurated the "Stone Age". Then, as the art of mining progressed, metals were discovered, and the "Bronze Age" followed. In search of metals "leaders" or "lodes", which passed downwards into the ground, were discovered, and it was the pursuit of these "lodes" which gave mining its name. The word "mine", is derived from a low-Latin word meaning "to lead," and is equivalent to "ducere." The French word "mener" is derived from the same source. The original deposit was itself called the "mine" or "lead," and this meaning still persists, as when the word "mine" is used as a synonym for "seam" in the case of coal or iron-stone. Later the progress of mining led men out of the "Bronze Age" into the "Iron Age", and then, in our own times into the "Coal Age".

#### Inauguration of the Coal Age.

Though the use of coal was known to man since before the Christian era, and tho coal has been mined in Great Britain for more than 1,00 years, it was during the past 150 years that the mining of coal advanced to that stage of importance which has inaugurated the "Coal Age." At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the output of coal in Great Britain was about ten million tons.

In the years preceding the Great War, the output had risen to over 287 million tons. The world output is now over 1400 million tons. The increase in the coal output of Great Britain over the period named, followed approximately a growth-curve having a growth factor of 2 ½ per cent. per annum.

With its ever expending use of metals, the great industrial revolution of the early nineteenth century led to a great expansion in the output of coal. The coal mined to smelt metals, also supplied the power to drive the machinery made, and led to its extended use. Then, being itself a most complex chemical substance, coal has supplied the raw materials for the manufacture of a great many chemical substances used in the arts and in the practice of medicine.

In Great Britain numerous coal seams of excellent quality are found in the stratified rocks of the carboniferous formation. The strata are often bent due to earth movements, and the coal is generally found in synclinal folds or basins, while the anticlinal folds or domes have often been denuded away. On this account, coal seams

are often found out-cropping at the surface; and especially along the sides of ravines, the discovery of coal seams was an easy task. In the early days of coal mining, it was from those out-crops that coal was obtained. The methods of excavation were primitive and the small output was carried away in baskets or “creels”. As the out-crop coal was exhausted it became necessary to follow the “seam” or “mine” to greater depth and soon the drainage difficulty began to tax the ingenuity of the miner.

#### Early Difficulties in Coal Mining Gave us the Steam Engine.

To the miner perhaps more than to most men, a “difficulty” is merely something to test his mettle; difficulties exist only to be overcome. How productively the miner overcame his early difficulties can be seen in the use of steam appliances of a steadily increasing efficiency as represented by the Worcester, the Savery, the Newcombe, and the James Watt pumping engines. Further, the locomotive was introduced by George Stephenson, who, as a boy, worked as a pump attendant; and the earliest applications of electricity for power purposes, were made at collieries. I have mentioned these facts to remind you that coal mining can afford to hold its head erect among many industries followed by men.

#### Slavery in Early Coal Mining.

Among the ancients, coal mining was not considered honourable toil, and therefore had to be performed by slaves. A nation thus had to become a conqueror before it could set up as a mine-owner. The idea that mining was dishonourable work persisted till modern times, and perhaps has not quite died out even now with some people. Our coal miners were formerly serfs and the liberating acts which finally abolished slavery in the coal mines of Scotland was passed as late as 1799. It is well known that slavery was not an economic success, for it secured neither a cheap nor an abundant supply of coal.

When the liberating act was enacted, the immediate effect was a rush away from the old servile conditions. Men spurned to do the work of a miner, preferring the work of an ordinary labourer, even at half the pay. If our modern miner sometimes shows a rather aggressive devotion to freedom, the roots of that attitude lie buried in the remembrance of a former state of servility.

#### Craftsmanship Versus Machinery.

Coal is a wasting asset, and when the best and more readily accessible seams are worked out, the miner must prosecute his task under ever-increasing difficulties. This leads to a rise in the cost and a rise produces attempts to reduce the cost by the introduction of machinery. On this account, coal mining has now become a highly complex business, which more and more enlists the co-operation of engineers and scientists. A modern colliery is an organisation of complex appliances such as can be found in few industries.

In the early days the coal was hewn by the miner, who was proud of his art. Today most of the coal digging is done by machinery; hewing is fast becoming a lost art and the miner tends to become a mere slave to the machine. Where craftsmanship confers upon an article its principal value, the man remains the paramount factor in production. But in highly industrialised eras the supremacy of the craftsman is swamped and industry is placed upon an entirely new basis by the introduction of power driven machinery, invented and produced in ever-increasing variety for the mass production of commodities. The triumph of the machine over the man gives rise to great evils. In the transition period before these evils are properly recognised great hardship is often endured. If it were remembered that it is the well-being of the man that is of primary importance, every endeavour would be made to mitigate the hardship.

The miner, as a rule has not welcomed the extensive application of machinery to coal getting, for he has felt that the machine was assailing his rights. But the increasing use of machines for a generation past has manned our pits with men who are largely dependent upon the machine, and who would not undertake the arduous work of hewing coal.

The advances of machinery are inevitable. Just as the Bronze Age displaced the Stone Age, so must mass-production by the aid of power-driven machinery supplant production by un-aided manual labour. If the coal mining were deprived of all coal getting machinery, most of the seams of coal now being worked in Scotland would have been abandoned, and work for the miner would be further curtailed.

The coal mining industry is at present very much impoverished and the difficulty of securing satisfactory economic results has intensified efforts of re-organisation. Enormous sums of money have been expended to enable coal to be mined at a lesser cost, and mining engineers have been busy devising more intensive and improved methods of extraction. Low wages are, unfortunately, one of the obstacles in the path towards a more extensive use of power-driven machinery. For when wages are low, manual labour, in many cases met with in mining, can compete successfully with the machine.

#### Difficulties Of The Coal Mining Industry.

The best and more easily accessible of our coal seams, have quite naturally been attacked by our predecessors, and to an ever-increasing extent we are forced to obtain our coal supplies from seams, which, either from meriority of quality, thinness of deposit or difficulty of access, have been allowed to remain. This would not be a matter of primary importance, so long as we had ample supplies in reserve, if industry could afford to pay a price corresponding to the increased difficulties of mining.

Like all our basic industries, however, the coal industry is an unsheltered one, and must face fierce world competition. Nor is the struggle made less difficult by the inequality which still persists between the cost of services rendered by the sheltered industries and those unsheltered.

The increasing natural difficulties under which coal must now be mined have been largely off-set by the progress of mining. The more far-seeing of our mining engineers believe that progress will yet overcome our present trouble. If natural difficulties increase at a more rapid rate than progress, we shall be faced with a cost which must correspondingly increase.

#### Hardship of the Miners.

The coal miner does not follow an easy calling. His work is of the strenuous order, and he works away from the brightness of the sunlight, and from the ozone of the atmosphere. Besides all this, he works amidst dangers, and suffers a high accident rate. Labour enters into the cost of coal somewhat between 60 and 70 per cent., and when the cost must be cut, a slice of that big percentage offers the more obvious way out. Indeed for generations that has been the way followed, even when the reductions imposed have reduced the miners' lot to a condition as bad as slavery.

In an industry like coal mining, which has been so subject to recurring periods of depression, the only way in which the extreme hardship of the miner could have been mitigated, would have been for the industry to build up in periods of prosperity, a special reserve fund for evil days. But, business men and shareholders were not prone to question the size of the dividend received in prosperous times. In dull times, qualms of conscience could always be relieved by the reflection that a coal mine could not be run as a philanthropic institution for - , "business is business". Too much money was thus taken out of the industry by the shareholders in the days before the war, and the miner, on his part, concentrated upon the upbuilding of a powerful federation to increase his bargaining power. Whether the power thus obtained has been used to the best advantage is open to serious doubt.

#### The Miner as a Class.

If one takes a cross-section of the miners as a class, he will find that it does not differ from a cross-section of any other class of the community. The general distribution of intelligence and the intelligence quota are the same; saints and sinners are distributed in the same proportion; and what is more, you will find among the miners sensitive and delicate souls, unspotted by the blight of their surroundings. You may find ladies among the wives and daughters of the miners, the compeers of the best ladies of the land.

In a community so numerous as the miners, there is a large number of people whose natural ability would fit them for any position in the land. A goodly number of the children of the miners pass annually into various professions. Lately, we have seen some of them rise to cabinet rank. The management of mines, which demands marked capacity and a liberal acquaintance with general science and engineering, is mainly recruited from the ranks of the miner.

Coal, however, must be mined where it is found, and in many cases there are few industries except mining in the neighbourhood where the miner resides, and boys, as they grow up, naturally take the only work available for them. So long as we are able to dispose of an ever-increasing output of coal, the greater part of the increase in the mining population was absorbed in this way; and when an occupation is once taken

up, it often requires considerable effort to get out of it. This explains why many well-informed and highly intelligent men remain in the mines, working either as miners, or as under-mining officials.

As a class, the miner generally holds an opinion with strong conviction. When he becomes accustomed to his work, he finds that much can be done quite mechanically, leaving the mind free to ponder over problems of interest. The general gloom of his surroundings and the few objects in view to cause distraction, foster concentration. Problems are resolved in the mind over and over again, and should a flaw in the chain of reasoning lead to the formation of a false conclusion, the miner is apt to hold a very definite view, which is not easily changed.

A hard worker himself, he gives services which are full value for the wages received. He has a keen sense of unity with all manual workers. But he has no need for "the idle rich", and is apt to include in this category many whose labours he does not understand. Even when of the rougher sort and none to scrupulous he often shows a remarkable sense of fairplay. And if he is considerately treated, he will, in general, serve with the loyalty of true devotion. When an accident befalls his fellow, the miner forgets himself in heroic endeavour to rescue the injured. Cases of heroism are so common as to be trite, and should a real miner-poet arise, he will have no lack of material to construct a moving epic.

#### Miners' Rally to the Colours.

When the Great War broke out, miners flocked to the Standard, and stood in the breach between us and the foe. Thus from the Fife Mining School alone over 100 joined up during the first few months of the war, and these were followed early in 1915 by a company of 240 men, who proved to be a very efficient corps of the M.T., A.S.C. As the war lingered on, so many able miners had enlisted that a large influx of poorer labour flowed into the mines in order to enable the necessary minimum of coal to be mined, and a limit had to be put to the number of skilled miners taken from the coalfields.

Such are the men of our great coal mining industry, just a representative section of the best of our British stock, and these are the men, who with their wives and families, and the industry which gives them employment have been enduring for years the hardship of an unparalled trade depression.

#### The Problems Confronting Us.

The difficulties confronting our coal mining industry are in a great measure a legacy from the war. The coal famine towards the end of, and following the war gave great impetus to foreign coal mining and greatly accelerated the rate at which coal mines were opened up. The problem was further aggravated by the severance of the Upper Silesian coalfields from Germany, leading to the advent of Poland as a competitor in the European coal market. The net result of all the causes at work, is that the potential output of coal in Europe is some 100 million tons per annum above requirements, and we find it impossible to export more than two-thirds of the coal we exported before the war. Then the difficulties in which our heavy industries find themselves do not conduce to an increased home demand, and the output of coal is static at about 40

million tons per annum below the output of 1913. The difficulties of the coal trade are two-fold. There is the inadequacy of the selling price to meet the cost of production, and there is the inadequacy of the demand to maintain the industry in full employment. The reduced demand for coal seriously affects the worker by under-employment and by unemployment, as well as by a reduced rate of wages, and its reaction upon the cost is disastrous by the increase it makes in the establishment charges.

In view of the world situation, there is great need for the co-operation of all our people to enable us to secure and retain that share of the export trade in coal that is so vital to us all. Our serious position demands not passion, but vision on the part of the miners' leaders, the coal-owners, and the public generally. It is now abundantly clear that the immense bargaining power of the Miners' Federation, backed by the Triple Alliance, was badly used in permitting the disastrous stoppages in coal mining during the past nine years. But it is difficult to see how the struggle could have been avoided.

We have lived in an age when men worshipped force. In Europe a very young empire, commanding the most powerful army the world had ever known, great in science and commerce, eagerly sought its place in the sun. It had not learned restraint in proportion as it became great, but delighted in rattling the sabre; and at length it unleashed the dogs of war. Its force has been met and conquered by force. But the great conflict had demoralised us all, and men still believed in force. Is it to be wondered then, that in such times the leaders of new and powerful combinations of labour should have wished to test the efficiency of the new machine?

The results we know. But if our difficulties have been increased, we must patiently labour to repair and reconstruct.

#### Rationalisation.

In making our reconstruction, there is practically universal assent that we must eliminate all waste and so reduce cost to the minimum. May I suggest that the process of rationalisation may be carried too far. In the quest for lower costs there is a tendency for industry to find a man too old at 50. Are we to scrap men over that age? If we do, shall we increase our overall efficiency? Why, even in coal mining, where intensive methods of mechanical production calls for men only in their prime "to attend the machines", and affords few opening for either boys or for the older man – in this industry, where brawn is so much in demand, not infrequently the older and better skilled miner is indispensable in emergencies where superior skill is demanded.

Any true rationalisation is incomplete until the greatest productivity for all human effort has been secured. But we must not blindly worship rationalisation; we must remember that rationalisation is for man, not man for rationalisation.

At the present time, coal mining is faced with a further decline in wages, and prices on the Continent. What is to be done? We possess advantages over most of our competitors in the better quality of our coal and in the proximity of our coalfields to the seaboard. Than the British collier there is no better miner in the world, and our skill in mining technology is unsurpassed. The output per man per shift in British mines is the highest in Europe. But our competitors pay wages which range from one half to two-thirds of those paid to the British miner. The cost of transporting coal over 250 miles by rail to Dantzic and shipping it to Aberdeen is less than the railway rate for conveying coal from Fife to Aberdeen; and British industry is the most highly taxed in the world.

There are not a few among the coalowners who would reply that the only cure is a further reduction in the miners' wages. But does salvation lie in that direction? Already wages are at starvation limit, and in purely mining districts money is so scarce that many business men are finding the greatest difficulty in carrying on. We have already undergone great sacrifices and have made strenuous efforts to re-capture lost markets, but with indifferent success. Can we now hope for better results? The only hope lies in some form of international agreement on the coal question. The Coal Mines Act is a necessary step, preliminary to such agreement, and whatever be its defects, may it work well.

#### Business Statesmanship.

The problem confronting the coal industry is only a part of a great problem which now persistently demands the attention of humanity. We may carry out schemes of rationalisation so far that we shall have secured the maximum of production for the minimum of labour, and for the smallest number of hands and the smallest pay roll. Research, invention, and new machinery may enable us to displace a great many hands, but, the problem we must face, and which will not be denied is, "what is to become of the products of industry, when the workers are too impoverished to buy?" Has industry any concerns for the hands displaced? Or is business just business, and employment none of our concern?

Are our great business men responsible only for the increase of profit, engrossed only in the making of money, or have they a larger responsibility? Are they to go on affirming that what business wants is greater stability, and blaming agitators and politicians for creating instability? Surely not.

At any rate, our times will not allow them. The most clamant need of our time is for scientific arrangements to reduce cut-throat rivalry, and were we to find men better fitted to lead in this direction than our first rate men of business. If these men could only be fired with the glory of the vision of the great adventure that now beckons them, none could lead us more surely to our goal. If they fail us, events must still march onwards, and less able men will lead us along a more painful and tortuous path to a solution to our problem.

The extensive use of machinery has in great measure solved for us the problem of production. The problem of distribution now knocks loudly at the door. Business statesmanship can solve this problem. Instead of scientific achievements being thrown idly into the scales of competition, our problem is to use it to provide for greater leisure and an improved scale of living for the workers. Why should we strive to fill our barns with grain, and our warehouses with merchandise, only to find when this is done that we are unemployed and forbidden to enjoy the fruits of our labour.

*June 1930*