

"A WEE KEEK BACK"

BY

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**"CENTRAL AND WEST FIFE LOCAL HISTORY
PRESERVATION"**

("The Present Preserving the Past for the Future")

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(Articles that appeared in local newspapers)

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DEVELOPMENT OF COWDENBEATH

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As an Edinburgh Visitor Sees the Town
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Cowdenbeath is just the Cowdenbeath of old (says a special correspondent of the “Edinburgh Evening News”). A visitor nowadays who was acquainted with the town a year ago will notice practically nothing new. There is slightly more activity in the streets than formerly, but the social features - familiar ones in Cowdenbeath - such as the passing to and fro of miners going to and returning from their shifts in the pits; the groups of miners and labourers at the street corners and round the new football ground, and “a certain liveliness” among many of the residents when the public-house are opened, are still in evidence. There are one or two structural items which have made changes in the town. The housing programme is almost completed; unemployment has decreased; and many municipal plans for improvement and betterment of conditions are being affected. Trade in the town, too, has taken a turn for the better, and all over the residents seem to be in a brighter frame of mind than some time ago.

Trade Activity.

The shops are busier than in some other centres, and even although the prices rule fairly high and the money for spending is not readily obtainable as formerly, the people flock to the shops for purchases. The tradesmen are well pleased with the present state of affairs, but one and all look somewhat pessimistically on the future. The Cowdenbeath shops are, of course, practically maintained by the mining class, and the future wages of these workers are not very certain. “If we were quite aware of what the miner’s wages would be for the next six months or so,” said a shopkeeper, “we would know how to fix our prices. But one can never tell whether there will be a rise or fall in their money, and the position is causing some anxiety, even although we are very well satisfied with the present state of affairs.”

There is one class of business, however, which will always pay in Cowdenbeath - the public-house. Day and evening these places are well patronised by miners who spend freely; but it is to their credit that very few are actually the worse of drink. The police authorities occasionally have a stray “drunk” or two, but, considering the number of men who frequent the public-houses and the amount of money which is spent, the crime-sheet is clean.

Improvement and Extension.

Cowdenbeath has never been what one would call an attractive place, but the municipal authorities, having taken account of the extensive improvements which have been effected in other towns near by, are taking steps to make alterations and improvements in many little ways. The final result will be considerably to improve the town as a whole, although some time must necessarily elapse before the authorities plans are carried out. Road-widening and levelling are, as in other districts, two of the principal improvements which are being made. By the time these reforms are effected the municipal engineers will be ready with plans for new thoroughfares. Lately there has been some talk of extending Cowdenbeath. The extensions would of course embrace Hill of Beath and Lumphinnans, but at present, considering deterioration in these places, the Cowdenbeath authorities are none too anxious to proceed with amalgamation. Coming under the control of Cowdenbeath would certainly assist Hill of Beath and Lumphinnans to a considerable extent both as regards trade and administration, but, as a municipal authority stated, "We want these place to improve first." Such improvement, it was stated, would not be completed for over five years, so that there is no immediate prospect of a "Greater Cowdenbeath."

The Miners And Housing.

When the housing problem in Cowdenbeath was last reviewed a general indication was made as to the number of houses which were to be erected, and an idea was given as to the time when they would be ready for occupation. The number has, however, been increased, and the time for completion shortened to a considerable extent. The result is that in less than a month from now over 80 dwellings will have been erected. As a matter of fact 50 are already occupied, and the tenants are well pleased. There seems to be only one complaint with reference to the housing scheme in the town, and that complaint is coming from the mining class - the class which has suffered the most in the matter of housing. The miners are at present only obtaining 8s 5p per shift, the majority putting in a full week's labour. From the miner's point of view it is impossible to expect a worker paid on such rates to meet a rent of twenty-one pounds (per annum) which is the amount being asked for occupancy of the new houses. The result is that many of the working classes are unable to better their housing conditions, and the new buildings are being occupied by people who, it is thought, were in some cases quite as well off where they were. Nothing in the meantime can, however, be done, but the miners are hopeful that the Labour Representatives on the Cowdenbeath Council will manage through time to effect some improvement, both as regards the rent and the disposition of the dwellings.

Unemployment Decreasing.

"A Wee Keek Back"

With the return to the pits of many of the Cowdenbeath miners, the figures for unemployment in the district have shown a substantial decrease. As a matter of fact, an Employment Exchange official stated that compared with a year ago there had been a reduction of over 50 per cent. At present over 400 unemployed men - mostly of the mining class - are on the Exchange lists, but there is every prospect that within the next month or two that figure will be cut in half. Two new pits are being opened at Kelty and Lochore, and the Kinglassie Pit, which was closed owing to the flooding during the strike, will shortly be in full working order again, so that as regards the men, the situation is rapidly improving. About 80 women are on the Unemployment lists, but as regards their future, there is little prospect of work for some time to come. This is due to the fact that there is no staple trade, such as in Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline, absorbing female employment to any extent. The majority of the women are shop assistants, cleaners, or in service, and the market is over-stocked with unemployed in these categories already. The position among the juveniles is similar to that of 12 months ago. Nearly 40 boys and girls are out of work, but, with the present trade activity in Cowdenbeath, there is always the chance that some will be engaged by tradesmen for work in business establishments. Taking everything into consideration, therefore, Cowdenbeath is in a better position as regards unemployment than many other provincial towns.

The Labour Council.

Cowdenbeath possesses an up-to-date and energetic Town Council, a Council whose chief objective is to improve the town. Labour possesses a majority in the Council; of eight to four, but it is stated that these members have sunk part policy in favour of civic interests. They certainly are taking every interest in the welfare and social conditions of the working classes, and in several directions small improvements have been carried out - improvements which might not at first glance be noticed by a visitor to the town, but which nevertheless have a great effect on the comfort of the people. The bulk of the voters in Cowdenbeath are of the mining class, and as such are solid for \labour principles. Fortunately, there is almost a total absence of the "extremist" element in the Council, and although one or two of the members may hold more advanced views than their colleagues, there is never any friction. "The Labour members," said a tradesman, "are unselfish and determined to give their best service to Cowdenbeath." The result of their work, however, will not be noticeable fully for four or five years yet, when their many schemes will have materialised.

September 1922

HOUSING CONDITIONS IN
COWDENBEATH.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT

In his annual report for the year 1922, Mr Crawford A. Alexander, Sanitary Inspector, says: -

Water Supply.

The water supply to the burgh, derived from two sources, is of good quality, coming from gathering grounds wholly hill pasture, and well removed from means of contamination.

The Loch Glow undertaking is now completed. The water is carried to a break pressure tank at Blairenbathie, thence through the patent pressure filters at Cantsdam, on to Craigbeath storage tank, which has a capacity of 500,000 gallons. The burgh is supplied from this tank. During the year this tank was roofed over so as to prevent contamination of the water by impurities from the air and through persons gaining access thereto. The pressure filters are of the "Paterson" type, and are cleansed by compressed air.

The water supplied from both sources is treated with Sulphate of Alumina owing to the discoloration from peaty matter. The standard of purity attained is high and is being maintained.

During the past year the work of improving house services has been actively pursued. In practically every case the lead piping was found to be corroded so badly as to prevent the passage of water. In all, 17 properties were dealt with successfully, and 7 other proprietors laid down larger piping to double storey tenements.

A few houses still exist in the burgh into which water has not been introduced. These houses are old and gradually becoming worn out, and I do not think it would be wise to ask the proprietors to introduce water and fit up sinks, when so soon as housing conditions permit, the general condition of the houses and dwellings will require to be dealt with.

Drainage.

The drainage of the burgh has its outfall to the east of the town. As previously reported, the purification works have suffered greatly by mining operations. The surface movement is still proceeding.

As stated in my last report negotiations were opened between the burgh of Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly and the Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy District Committee with a view to a joint scheme for the treatment of sewage. During the past year a report from the Mining Engineer was obtained and considered when it was found that no site was suitable in this district for the erection of purification works. The authorities concerned are now considering a scheme for carrying all the sewage direct to the sea.

House drainage continues to receive careful attention. All drains out of buildings are thoroughly inspected and tested before they are covered up. When complaints are received regarding foul smells emanating from house drains, these are tested and any defects found are remedied by the proprietors.

Cleansing.

The cleansing is carried out by the burgh workmen, and except in a few instances, the daily removal system is in operation. The refuse is carted to a coup to the east of the town, five horses and carts being employed for that purpose. The quantity of house and street refuse removed averages sixteen tons per day or approximately one ton per thousand of the population. A man is employed to level down and top dress the coup. Waste paper, formerly sold to a Leith firm, is now collected and destroyed.

The work of the cleansing department has continued as in former years, but the work of the general public is worthy of note. Last year, I remarked on the apathy shown by the public to such matters as cleanliness of streets and courts. In the majority of cases, I have to report a marked change. It is pleasing to observe an increased interest in matters of cleansing. I need not say that no matter how well a town is scavenged, the public can make it appear as if it had never been touched. It seems that a high standard has been set and it is now to be maintained by the Cleansing Department and public alike.

During the year additional wire waste paper baskets were erected on the High Street. Here again, the public deserves credit for the conscientious manner in which they have observed the existence of those baskets. It relieves the work of the Cleansing Department to a great extent and keeps the main streets clean looking.

Nuisances.

The work of inspection for the detection of nuisances was continued as in former years. Nothing in the way of drastic action was necessary, the nuisances found being of minor consequence and little difficulty was experienced in securing their abatement. Sixty complaints were received and action taken where found necessary. The number of nuisances dealt with was 185, and in connection with these 21 intimation notices were issued. In seventeen instances it was found expedient to issue statutory notices and these had the desired effect. The nuisances dealt with were: - Choked and defective drains, 46; defective sanitary fittings, 12; excessive accumulation, 5; unsanitary areas, 19; structural defects, 64; water supplies, 8; unsanitary footpaths, 30; and excessive effusion of smoke, 1.

The work of improving the housing conditions was continued with renewed vigour, but progress was slow, so slow in fact that little difference is being felt in the congestion which exists in the burgh. Congestion certainly exists to a large extent as evidenced by the statement embodied in my last report, and it is increasing almost daily. Several features are worthy of note. Cases have been encountered where a whole family of eight persons, four adults and four children, were occupying one apartment, and where young married men and women were sleeping together in the same bed; three separate families occupying a two apartment house - two families utilising one apartment between them; a family of five living in a scullery; a family of twelve, nine adults and three children, in a two apartment house; and a family of sixteen, eleven adults and five children, in another two apartment house. Those are typical examples of the housing conditions. Cases have also been encountered where the overcrowding was so great as to warrant the arrangement of having different shifts for the male adults so that each individual might get a share of the bedding accommodation. So soon as one got up there was another ready to lie down. A situation such as this is not without humour but nevertheless it is a serious matter and only those experiencing it at the present moment can know of the heavy price that must assuredly be paid. It is, therefore, absolutely essential that steps be taken at once to solve the problem, but a change of procedure and of ideas must be considered. The Local Authority have been doing their utmost to have existing property put in order, but much remains to be done. The difficulty is that no alternative accommodation is available wherein to house the people affected. If such accommodation was available, several properties presently in a bad state could be dealt with.

The first development of 84 houses under the State-aided housing scheme is now completed and all the houses occupied. The houses completed and occupied comprise: - 60 three apartment and 24 four apartment. An additional 16 houses have been sanctioned and are presently being built. These consist of 4 three apartment, 8 four apartment, and 4 five apartment houses. A further 10 have also been granted and a site together with other matters are presently under consideration.

It is a pity that the houses are being sanctioned in such small numbers. The site at Stevensonsbeath is an ideal one for building, and up to the present there is evidence of improved health in quite a number of persons who have been fortunate enough to get one of the houses. No expense has been incurred in the laying out of the streets, sewers, water mains, etc., but advantage had now been taken to the fullest possible capacity of those existing services. If further development is to take place, as it must, the Board will require to authorise the laying out of new streets and sewers. It should also be mentioned here that more houses would have been applied for had it not been for the action of the Board in restricting building operations to the existing portion of Stenhouse Street. The Local Authority gave way to the wishes of the Board with the result that to-day the local authority is denied the building of houses which would have been built had not the Board put forward their suggestion. It would, therefore, appear that Cowdenbeath has suffered for its willingness to work in conjunction with the Board, and that the Board were therefore, under an obligation to give Cowdenbeath first consideration, whereas only 26 additional houses have been granted.

Housing Scheme A Failure.

I would remind you that the acute shortage of houses still exists, and it would require the whole scheme of 300 houses to make any appreciable difference on the shortage, but one point should be borne in mind. The types of dwelling erected are certainly good, although the apartments are on the small side, thereby reducing the quantity of furniture that is usually found in an average dwelling. I believe the majority of the people would be prepared to do with less furniture if they could only afford the rent, and it is to this point I would direct attention. The people for whom the houses were primarily meant are not getting them solely because of the prohibitive rents. I have experienced scores of cases where the desire for better housing conditions was the principle objective, and where sacrifice was to be undertaken, so that the rent could be paid, but in most cases the task was too great. The average householder in Cowdenbeath simply cannot do it through no fault of his own. It is, therefore, necessary that a house should be built which will come within the reach of cases like that. The housing scheme must therefore be written down as a failure in not having achieved its original object. Many people have undoubtedly benefited, but the majority of the present occupants of the new houses come from fairly respectable houses and could afford the rent. Not that I blame the Housing Committee, their task of house-letting has been a difficult and thankless one, and the worst cases of those able to pay were always given preference.

A house is required which will let at a rent acceptable to the majority of the working people, and to attain this, I see no reason why two apartment houses should not be sanctioned, and if the costs are to be kept down, delete the bathroom. I am of opinion that in the majority of cases the bath is never used, and it is therefore unnecessary. If, however, the cost allowed it, I would advocate the retention of the bathroom, as an incentive to better habits.

It appears to me that if Local Authorities, when housing schemes were first commenced, had been given powers as to the purchase of materials, and the type of houses necessary for their own particular districts, cheaper houses would have been got, and the Government would have had no reason to suspend operations.

I would also mention that overtures have been made to the Fife Coal Company, Limited, as to the provision of houses for their workers. This company is presently erecting new engineering workshops, etc., so as to centralise the whole of their engineering activities. This will result in the drafting of men into the burgh from other districts. The company have the matter in hand and I understand that a proposal has been formulated to erect a substantial number of houses if a suitable site can be found.

Inspections.

During the period under review each of the four wards of the burgh was overtaken by regular inspection for the detection of nuisances, also inspections in connection with the sweeping and washing of common stairs and passages, lime-washing or painting of common staircases, dairies, lodging-houses and workshops.

Slaughter-House.

One slaughter-house exists within the burgh, and being a public one under the control of the Local Authority, is at all times well conducted. The buildings, although suffering somewhat from underground workings, are maintained in a satisfactory condition, and the premises at all times are kept thoroughly clean and free from complaint.

Food Inspection.

Periodical inspections were made in terms of section 43 of the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897, for the detection of unsound food. In all 67 inspections were made when 6 stones of haddock were seized, condemned, and destroyed. During the year, the attention of the medical practitioners in the burgh and the general public was directed to the arrangements made for dealing with suspected cases of botulism.

Schools.

The schools in the burgh now number six and the Drill Hall is also used for pupils. The schools are: - Broad Street, Moss-side Road, Higher Grade, Foulford, R.C. School, and R.C. Supplementary School. All the schools with the exception of Broad Street are of modern construction.

Factories And Workshops.

The whole of the factories and workshops within the burgh were visited periodically and on occasion I accompanied the Medical Officer of Health. Two names have been removed from the register, leaving a total of forty-eight. Fifty-nine inspections in all were made and nothing of any importance falls to be recorded. The workplaces generally were well maintained, the proprietors apparently having regard for the safety and comfort of their workers.

Houses Let In Lodgings.

Two houses are registered as houses let in lodgings with accommodation for 216 male lodgers. There is no accommodation for females, the nearest being Dunfermline. Thirty-five visits of inspection were made to those houses and the same were found to be properly conducted and in keeping with the bye-laws.

Dairies, Cowsheds, And Milk shops.

There is one person registered as a cow keeper. There are no milk shops in the burgh, the bulk of the milk supply is from carts from the surrounding districts. The above premises were inspected on nineteen occasions and were found to be fairly well kept and in accordance with regulations. The udders and teats of the milch cows on several occasions were found to be neglected and the attention of the owner was directed thereto.

Rats And Mice Destruction Act.

Only on two instances within the burgh has there been any call for action with regard to destruction of rats. The burgh is remarkably free from vermin and no special measures have been found necessary. The public slaughter-house is a place where rats are usually found and an effort was made to reduce, if not entirely exterminate the vermin. Over a period of ten days, fifty-eight rats of varying size were caught by means of "Dak" rat lime. It is, however, interesting to mention that this preparation, although so successful at the slaughter-house, was found to be unsuccessful in private premises where only one or two rats were in existence.

Infectious Diseases.

The year 1922 was a light one except for the month of January, when an outbreak of influenza occurred. This outbreak brought out 47 cases, which is practically a quarter of the years total notification. The number of cases notified was 182 as compared with 249 for the previous year, a decrease of 67. The numbers show an all round decrease except in the case of diphtheria, where an increase of 20 cases falls to be recorded. A minor outbreak occurred during September and October and despite diligent enquiry, nothing was discovered to which cause could be attached.

The number of phthisical cases notified during the year was 20, being a decrease of 8 on the previous year. Of these 8 received sanatorium treatment. The admission of patients to the sanatorium is in all cases aimed at, but not always accomplished, principally through the disinclination of the patients themselves to undergo treatment. This in a way is not surprising and the reasons are not far to seek. Patients do not desire treatment if, as I have been informed, they are to return to the conditions which were responsible for their ill-health. A period at Glenlalmund is generally beneficial to a great extent, but this is counteracted as soon as the patient returns home, partly because of the patient's own neglect, but principally because of the utter unsuitability of their housing conditions. It is, therefore, not surprising that the successful treatment of tuberculosis is not progressing to any great extent. The present day housing conditions are the root cause of the evil and, so soon as this is remedied, then and not till then, can any progress be made.

April 1913

HEALTH VISITORS AND MINERS CHILDREN

—
Protest By Mr John Bird.

At the monthly meeting of Kirkcaldy District Committee held of Thursday, Mr John Bird, Cardenden, protested against certain references to conditions in the mining areas contained in the annual report of the Health Visitors.

The Report.

An extract from the report is as follows: -

“The health of the children from one to five years is fairly good considering the feeding that is given them. When a large family is being brought up, as is generally the case among the mining class, the physical standard of the children is frequently poor, whereas among the agricultural class children are very robust and enjoy good health as a rule Vaccination is not very much in favour among the mining population, due to ignorance on the part of parents, and no amount of persuasion has had any good effects..”

Feeding and Home Conditions.

“The feeding of the child from one to five years is very varied. In mining areas especially, the child gets whatever is on the table, along with a liberal supply of bread and tea. Other districts show better habits, and a greater supply of milk and milk diet is provided . . . For the first year the infants are well clothed and in most cases almost smothered in blankets and shawls. After they start to walk, however, the clothing becomes scanty, and from the age of eighteen months to three and four years they run in and out in all weathers very indifferently clothed . . . In most houses there is a cradle for the infant to sleep in, which looks very comfortable and warm. After the first year or so, the infant sleeps in bed with the parents, and later on shares a bed with others in the family.”

Mr Bird said that the nurse would have to learn that she was there only to report on facts, and not to make observations from her own personal viewpoint. Some of her statements, Mr Bird continued, were most uncalled for, and were in fact untrue.

Dr. G. Pratt Yule, M.O.H. of the County, said there was some truth in what the nurse said. It was a fact that 40 per cent. of the infants were not vaccinated under the conscientious objectors certificates, but when there was an epidemic nearly all of these were vaccinated.

April, 1928.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT OF LOCAL CHILDREN.

Some interesting records are kept in the schools. In the annual report of the Chief Medical Officer, tables are given showing the average height of a given number of boys and girls.

Taking the age of 13 and 14 years, we find that Auchterderran boys are the tallest, with an average of 58 and a half inches; Lochgelly come next with 57 and a quarter inches; Beath shows the average height as 55 and a half inches; Kelty, 56 and a half; and Glenraig 56 and a half.

With regard to girls of that age, Kelty is a good first, with just over 60 inches; Lochgelly follows with 58 and a half; Beath, 57 and a quarter, and Glenraig, 57 and three quarters.

In weight at the same age, Auchterderran boys top the scale at close to 88 lbs.; Lochgelly works out at nearly 83 lbs.; Glenraig at 79 and three quarter lbs.; while Beath is slightly under 77 lbs.

Girls, on the other hand, are heaviest at Lochgelly, showing an average weight between 13 and 14 years of age of 86 and three quarter lbs.; Glenraig come second in bulk, nearly 85 lbs.; Auchterderran lassies weigh 83 and a half lbs.; and Beath 81 and three quarter lbs.

It might be added that the average heights for the whole of Fife at the age instanced are - boys 58 inches; girls 58 and a half inches, while the weights work out at - boys 83 and a quarter lbs.; girls 85 and a quarter lbs. It will therefore be seen that the girls are both bigger and heavier than the boys of the same age.

April 1928

THE FRINGES OF FIFE.

--:--

(By the Rev. Wm. Dunlop, M.A., Buckhaven.)

Kirkcaldy is the largest of the coast Royal burghs, if not the oldest. It dates at least from 1450. It is known all the world over as the “lang toon”, and also for its linoleum. Many famous men have been born in it or been connected with it. Sir Michael Scott, of Balwearie, was known as the “Wizard”, and was famous in Oxford and Paris and Toledo in mediaeval times, and died in 1290. George Gillespie, once our own parish minister, was the son of John Gillespie, “the thundering preacher of Kirkcaldy. He was also a member of the Westminster Assembly, and tradition says that when the divines were about to answer the question, “What is God?” they asked Gillespie to pray for the guidance of the Spirit, and Gillespie in prayer uttered the familiar answer, “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice goodness and truth,” and afterwards the divines, being greatly impressed, adopted this as the answer.

Adam Smith, the author of “The Wealth of Nations,” and other works, was born in Kirkcaldy in 1723, and died after a brilliant career in 1790. Robert Adam, the famous architect, was another native. Thomas Carlyle was a teacher in the High School for three years. His fellow countryman, Edward Irvine, was an assistant minister in Kirkcaldy, and on one occasion when he was preaching in the Parish Church, so great was the crowd, the gallery fell and 28 were killed.

Locally, an even more famous minister was Robert Shirra of Bethelfield. He prayed Paul Jones out of the Firth of Forth. He was very unconventional, and it is said that he once prayed that the Lord would have pity on the puir farmers of Lochgelly, for their corn was grown as leeks, and that he would give the weaver buddies o’ Pathhead less siller or mair sense. On another occasion, after reading the words, “I said in my haste, all men are liars,” he added, “Aye, David, had ye been in the Lang Toon ye micht ha’e said it at your leisure.” Other sayings current in the Lang Toon are familiar: -

“Some say the de’ils dead,
And buried in Kirkcaldy.
Some say he’s up again
To play the Hieland laddie.”

“You’ll come doon the hill yet, like Pathhead folk.” is a very appropriate way of speaking to very proud people,

Dysart is not only a Royal burgh, but is one of the oldest towns in Scotland. It is a place of hoary antiquity, its history beginning with the half mystical St. Serf, who is said to have held his famous discussion with Satan in a cave above the old church, and whose cell “desertum,” or solitude, is supposed to have given the town its name. St Serf means Sanctus Servanus, or holy servant; Dysart was the centre from which he preached in 440 A.D. Ravenscraig was given to the Sinclairs, Earls of Rosslyn, by James III. in exchange for lands in Orkney in 1470. Oliver St Clair was the unfortunate leader at the battle of Solway Moss in 1542, the result of which broke the heart of James V., and led him to say on his death-bed, “It cam’ wi’ a lass and gangs wi’ a lass.” His widow, Mary of Guise, garrisoned Dysart with French soldiers on behalf of Mary Queen of Scots. The Earl of Dysart is a descendant of a former minister, Wm. Murray. On one occasion, James VI. interdicted the Synod of Fife from meeting, and the Synod met on the sea-shore. The best known proverb connected with Dysart is “Taking saut to Dysart,” the Scotch equivalent of “taking coals to Newcastle.” But Dysart occupies an important place in the coal industry. For more than 400 years coal has been wrought in Dysart. The Dysart coal is a famous sea. It has often been on fire, and as long ago as 1578 it is recorded in the burgh records “an evil air interit the main heuch, the door being then at the West entrie of the town.” This evil air set the coal on fire. Again and again combustion has taken place - in 1622, 1741, 1790, and also in our own day. But: -

“Up wi’ the carles o’ Dysart,
And the lads o’ Buckhaven,
And the kimmers o’ Largo,
And the lassies o’ Leve.”

“Hey ca’ thro’, ca’ thro’,
For we ha’e muckle to do,
Hey ca’ thro’, ca’ thro’,
For we ha’e muckle to do.”

We now leave Royal burgh for a space and meander around the shores of oft sung Largo Bay. Wemyss, meaning cave, need not detain us long. West Wemyss was raised into a burgh of Barony, an inferior type of burgh, deriving its privileges from the local Baron, not from the king. These have practically disappeared. The former picturesque harbour and quaint tower made the little port quite romantic, and the sailing ships from Norwegian and other ports gave it a continental appearance. Its most ancient glory is now its only glory. Wemyss Castle is one of the oldest inhabited and habitable castles in Britain. The family of Wemyss claims descent from MacDuff, Earl of Fife, and can trace its origin back to the 12th century. As already stated, Eric, King of Norway, presented a silver basin to Sir Michael in the year 1290, a basin still preserved.

East Wemyss, or Kirkton of Wemyss, is the seat of the ancient parish church, and on a nearby Buff stands the ruin of what is popularly called MacDuff Castle. But this weather worn castle is not as old as Wemyss castle. It is built above a series of sea-worn caves of great extent. Romance and history are hidden in the caves. In the glass Cave, to the west of East Wemyss, glass was first made in Scotland in the year 1610. In the Court Cave, the first to the east of East Wemyss, James V., the gaberlunzie king, who loved to roam in disguise through his domains, when on a hunting expedition from Falkland, held court with a band of gypsies who would not believe that he was the King of Scotland, till some of his courtiers found him. The furrows in the rocks, worn out by the ropes of smugglers hauling contraband goods to the high level, have been pointed out to me. The well cave beneath the castle provided its inmates with a water supply when besieged by foes, and an underground passage to the castle a means of escape. The round picturesque doocot reminds one of the typical Fife Laird and the doocots peppered all over the Kingdom. The most famous ministers of Wemyss parish were George Gillespie and Harry Spens, the latter the first to maintain that no sooner had a slave to set foot on British soil than he became a free man.

Buckhaven, a fishing village from time immemorial, is now the centre of the mining industry in East Fife. The inhabitants are said to be descendants of a ship-wrecked crew from Brabant, who asked and received permission to settle in Wemyss-shire, and who took to themselves wives and settled to the calling of fishermen. Defoe tell us: "It is inhabited by fishermen, who are employed wholly in catching fresh fish every day in the Firth and carrying them to Leith and Edinburgh markets. The buildings are but a miserable row of cottages; yet there is scarce a poor man in it; but they are in general so very clownish that to be of the College of Buckhaven has become a proverb. Here we saw the shore of the sea covered with shrimps like thin snow, and as you rode amongst them they would rise like a kind of dust, and hop like grass-hoppers, being scared by the footing of the horse. The fishermen of this town have a great many boats of all sizes which lie upon the beach, ready to be fitted out every year for the herring season, in which they have a great share." But, alas the glory of the fishing has departed.

Methil, now with Buckhaven and Innerleven, formed into a big burgh, has been a seaport of importance since the days of Earl David Wemyss in the 17th century. But it has had many ups and downs during its history. It is now the largest coal shipping port in Scotland. At the beginning of the 19th Century, when it was proposed to build a church, it was said by one man that it was a gallows they should build. But Methil people also had opinions about their neighbours. They could rouse Buckhaven folk by asking them, "Who buried the clock?" or by describing it as a place full of "shells, smells, and bairns." One indeed, declared he had got three things in Buckhaven - he bought a horse in it, and it turned out ill; he bought a boat in it; and it turned out ill; and he got a wife in it, and she also turned out ill. But now Buckhaven and Methil have taken one another for good and ill.

Innerleven, or Dubbieside, at the mouth of the Leven, once belonged to Markinch parish, which stretched down to the sea along the bank of the river Leven, to give it is said the monks of Markinch right of access to the Forth for fishing. Once it was famous for its golf links, but the docks and sidings now occupy the links, although the name has been preserved in the Innerleven Club, which plays over Leven Links.

Leven, at the mouth of Leven, the river where the elms grow, was once a thriving seaport and the river a famous salmon stream. Now it is a shopping and banking centre with the popular attraction of a good golf course.

Largo (Upper and Lower) - Ludin Links and Largo Bay bring us into the region of song and story. The Standing Stones at Ludin Links take us back to the dim times of the Druids. Upper Largo recalls the name of Sir Andrew Wood, our greatest Scottish Admiral. In the Yellow Kervel in 1480 he attacked and defeated a hostile English squadron sailing into the Forth, and received the lands of Largo as a reward from James III. Lower Largo is forever associated with Alexander Selkirk (1676 - 1723), the original of Robinson Crusoe. In 1704 he was punished for mutinous conduct by being set ashore on the small island of Jaun Fernandez, where he lived all alone for four years and four months before he was relieved. Later he entered the Royal Navy, and died on board H.M.S. Weymouth in 1723. Largo Bay has been immortalised in the popular song, "O, Weel may the boatie row."

From Largo to Earlsferry and Elie there is a long stretch of links, and neither village nor Royal burgh. The links end at the bold headland of Kincaig. Kin is the Gaelic for head and craig for rock. The headland is pierced by a splendid cave, into which a boat can enter at high water, and it is reputed to have been the hiding place of MacDuff in his flight from MacBeth. Earlsferry, erected into a Royal burgh by Malcolm Canmore, and claiming to be the oldest in the Kingdom, was named Earlsferry because it was from this point that MacDuff crossed in his light to Dunbar. But these claims are legendary.

Elie, adjoining Earlsferry, once bore the name of Ardross, "ard" meaning promontory, and "ross" also meaning promontory. It is now a fashionable watering-place with good golf links, and Elie rubies are still reckoned precious stones.

St Monans, a prosperous fishing town, is famous on account of its ancient church. It is said to have been erected by David II. in gratitude. When praying at the tomb of St Monans, he was freed miraculously from a barbed arrow. This was in 1362. St Monans, according to the legend, was born in Hungary, and preached the gospel at Abercrombie or St Monans, and, after martyrdom was there enshrined. Others say he was the Bishop of Clonfert in Ireland, and died in 571, and his relics were brought about 845 to Fife and deposited in a church, erected to his honour. Newark Castle, the ruins of which stand near St Monans, was the mansion of Sir David Leslie, the victorious general in the battle of Philiphaugh. It was burned, but, according to a prophecy of Thomas the Rhymer, it has yet "to blink a third time on the Bass."

Pittenweem. The town of the cave was made a Royal burgh by James V. In ancient times its well and cave were associated with St Fillan, and the priory dates from about 1114. James VI. granted the “great house or lodging of the monastery of Pittenweem” to the town, and the inhabitants showed their gratitude by entertaining the King to dinner on his way to Anstruther House, where he spent a night. He was received by the magistrates, councillors, and minister “in their best apparel,” and arrived with partisans; and besides these there were “other twenty-four with muskets.” Substantial provision was made for the Royal appetite at a table spread at “Robert Smith’s yeet” where, for the entertainment of the King and his train, there were provided “sundrie great buns of fine flour and other wheat bread of the best order, baked with sugar, cannell, and other spicesfitting, as also ten gallons of ale, with canary, sack, Rhenish wine, tent, white and claret wines,” and when his majesty departed there was a salute of “thirty-six cannons, all shot at once.” Surely a great day for Pittenweem!

A more widely known incident happened in Pittenweem in 1736. There the custom collector was robbed by Wilson and Robertson, an incident which led to the Porteous Riots in Edinburgh, and thus aided in the invention of the plot of Scott’s “Heart of Midlothian”.

West Anstruther or Anstruther Wester was created a Royal burgh in 1587 by James VI. and is divided from Anstruther Easter by the little stream Dreel. In an old castle on the East side of the Dreel, Charles II. was entertained, and said; “Eh! What a fine supper. I’ve gotten in a crow’s nest.” Anstruther Easter is also a Royal burgh. In Anstruther in June 1559, Knox preached on his way to Crail and St Andrews at the beginning of the Reformation. Thomas Chalmers; the leader of the Disruption movement, which led to the formation of the Free Church in 1843, was born in Anstruther Easter. Also William Tennant, the author of “Anster Fair”. The heroine of the song is said to have lived on Anstruther East Green.

I’ve lived in Fife, baith maid and wife,
 These ten years and a quarter;
 Gin ye should come to Anster Fair
 Spier ye for Maggie Lauder.

The Lint Fair was famous throughout Europe. Now the chief industry is the fishing, most of the fishermen living in the adjoining town of Cellardyke. Kilrenny is another of this little nest of Royal burghs, and at one time sent a member to the Scottish Parliament.

Five or six miles from the shore about this point lies the Isle of May, guarding the entrance to the Firth of Forth, and guiding the fishermen and sailors by its lighthouse. It is about one mile long and a quarter of a mile broad. It contains a spring of good water

and a little lake, and at one time a few fishermen with their families lived on it. It contains also the ruins of a 13th century chapel, dedicated to St Adrian of Hungary, who was killed by the Danes about 870 and buried here.

Crail is the last of the Royal burgh in the East Nuek, and received its charter from Robert the Bruce in 1306. Before that early date it was a seat of commerce and trade with the Netherlands as far back as the 9th century. It was also the seat of a Royal Castle, and David I. occasionally resided in it (1124-1153). The parish church is an ancient building. In it John Knox preached his famous sermon in June, 1559, which led to the Reformation. Later, James Sharp, the Archbishop who was murdered at Magus Muir, was minister in 1649. Never a fishing community like that of St Monans, &c., "Crail Capons," or sun-dried haddocks, were once famous, and its crate fishing is the most important on the coast.

At Fife Ness there is the Danes' Dyke, supposed to have been built in the 9th century as a defence against the Danes. Also Balcormie Castle, in which Mary of Guise was entertained when she came from France and landed here on her way to St Andrews to marry James V. Off Fife Ness is the dangerous reef named the Carr. This has been the scene of frequent shipwrecks, but the lightship and foghorn have greatly reduced the danger. The following couplet refers to the danger: -

"Between the Oxcar and the May,
Many a ship has been cast away."

Passing Kingsbarns and Boarhills, we come to St Andrews, the most famous of the towns and burgh on the fringes of Fife. This old, grey, wind-swept town would require a lecture all its own. The University was founded by Bishop Wardlaw in 1411, and is the oldest in Scotland. The castle was at first a Bishop's residence, and has had a chequered and gruesome history. In 1546 Cardinal Beaton was murdered in it, and afterwards John Knox, among others, was besieged in it, and from it carried off to France and sent to the galleys. But time does not permit me to give a detailed history of the City or its famous men. In our day it has become famous all over the world as the Mecca or headquarters of golf.

August, 1928.

DEVELOPMENT OF BURNTISLAND

And as a Holiday Centre.

The "Kingdom of Fife" (says "W.E." in the "Edinburgh Evening News"), contains many names, the nomenclature of which is a puzzle in philology. From the east to the west, and even in the north - the south being only a watery border - they keep cropping up and almost defy the learned to furnish a satisfactory explanation as to why or how they came to be designated as they are. An instance of this is to be found in the name of Burntisland. No one knows exactly the derivation of it. It has been changed in the course of time to its present name from Bertiland and Brentland, from Brintlandt to Brintilun, and nearly 400 years ago to Brynt Yland, and it has in the latter days come to be known by its present name, and yet the reason why has not been precisely determined. That it may be re-christened by any other name does not seem probable. It has "grown up" now to the standard of maturity, and its present denizens are rather proud of the name, and would probably resent any attempt being made to transform it to anything else.

The town, however, prides itself upon being a Royal Burgh or "Burgh of Regality." It became so over 400 years ago, when it was under the sway of the monks of Dunfermline, and had its dignity confirmed by King James the Fifth some 34 years later. The good King James seems to have taken a fancy to the town, his Majesty having had "piers, bulwarks, a graving dock, and ships" erected or built there, it having been discovered then that the place was naturally endowed with advantages sufficient to qualify it for becoming a naval base. This was found to be so in the days of Cromwell, who found it necessary to cut off the supplies of Charles at Stirling, and that the possession of Burntisland was indispensable, and he accordingly compelled the town to capitulate.

A Period of Unrest.

The Burgh, however, survived after Cromwell captured it, although it had some difficulty in carrying on. A fit of unrest developed itself. Even those who were set aside as Magistrates declined to act, and one of the Town Clerks ran off to Aberdour and declined to return unless he was to be exempt from "quartering, watching, and wording," and his request was granted. Unrest was not confined to things "temporal"; it encroached upon the "spiritual," and in the battle of the "Presbytery" against "Episcopacy" some of the valiants came in for a rough time. It is recorded that one who was sent by the "Synod" to preach at Burntisland, on landing at the pier, was "opposed in a very tumultuous manner by a mob," who laid hands upon him and tried to get him to mount a horse they had ready for him, and leave the town "by the back side." He refused, and attempted to delay matters by begging "libertie to get a drink of ale!": but he was ultimately got hold of and subjected to some rough experience.

The generation that followed the times of good King James, who convoyed the General Assembly on the Kirk for the purpose of getting a new version of the Scriptures, has evidently imbibed the spirit of bigotry to a large extent, and local historical records show that even ministers and magistrates were not held in high esteem. The new history of Burntisland, which is being issued by Mr Andrew Young, an enthusiast on historical lore, contains much that is both edifying and amusing.

The Town Becomes Bankrupt.

After all the turmoil and strife, and notwithstanding the "riches" of the Burgh's ancient guilderies, a crisis occurred which led to the Old Kirk being left in a state of partial decay. The harbour being brought into a state of neglect, it was deemed necessary to approach the Barons of his Majesty's Court of Exchequer in Scotland to find ways and means to effect repairs. It was thus that the Kirk and harbour were saved from decay, and gradually the Burgh's finances got placed on a better footing.

The more modern history of the Burgh is scarcely less interesting than its ancient records, of which the forgoing is but a brief epitome. The old guilds - the "Hammermen," "The Cordiners," or shoemakers, "The Talyears," "The Baxters," and "Fleshers," "The Prime Gilt," the "Hivers," the "Maltmen", and "Wivers," have all gone. Pioneers as they were in trade and thrift, it is open to question whether the newer methods are better than the old. That, however, may be left aside, even as the modern broom of civilised (?) times has brushed them into obscurity.

The Burntisland of to-day has marched with its neighbours in an onward way. Its old history, however, is being largely forgotten - the successive generations have fallen into line with the progressive sections, whose practice, if not their cry, is "Let the dead bury its dead." Within the past 50 years it has advanced materially, if not intellectually. It could boast of having at one time a Mary Somerville as a resident; it had the great Dr. Chalmers as a frequent visitor, and on its borders there arose a Dr. Pryde. The vision which presented itself to the mind of a Cromwell, of being an excellent site for a naval base, has not materialised, although it can boast of its docks and mourn the breaking up of its links and the separation of them from the sea, by the highway for the "iron horse". It rose from being a haven for fishing smacks and the curing of herrings, to be the leading port in the "Kingdom" for the export of coal, but it has had to take a back seat and be content with second place. Its links were set apart for the special work of providing green pastures for the inhabitant's cows, for the drying of the fishermen's nets, and for the playing of "gowf." Now the grass grows rank with a lawn-like patch in the centre for the playing of cricket; the fishers' nets are hardly ever seen, and the golfer has taken to higher heights and more extensive fields. The olden days when a Ferguson and a Morris or a Kirkcaldy would tramp the links in their scarlet coats, followed by a crowd that had to be roped in and who betted on their favourite with a recklessness beyond their means, have passed away, and the devotees of the driver and the cleek shed their brightness elsewhere.

A Lively Picture.

Within 50 years Burntisland's civic rule has changed. Its municipal rulers of former days are in oblivion; its former legal heads are lying low. New men have arisen, of whom the former generation never heard, to carry on the work of keeping the Burgh with its head above the water. A dozen of Provosts have come and gone, some into retirement and other into "rest". Its taxes have not only risen, but seem to be ever rising; but the boast of the men who have gone, that they've seen grass growing on the streets, cannot now be repeated. The reign of tar has come, it oozes out through the broken metal while the sun shines, and darkens the colour of the streets. And this because the "petrol fiends" has taken possession. Motor cars, charabancs, motor cycles, and push-bikes, along with commercial vans and road rolling machines have taken the place of horse-drawn cars and carts, and Sunday has become a day of noise.

Industrially, Burntisland of to-day is rearing its head. Sail boats, or rather the building of them, have had their day, and monsters of the deep are being, of late, launched once a month. The "select" from other places have found a dwelling-place, and their melodious accents are drowning out the native Doric. The branch of the British Aluminium Company works has got firmly established and is providing work for labour, while labour in other parts is scarce. The old "round house" where engineering instruction was at one time given to large numbers is falling from high estate, due chiefly to the operation of the "Geddes axe," workers being transferred to other parts. The "dew" which flows from Dunearn Hill is still be distilled, as the natives from near and far have not yet become "dry", but the old proprietorship has passed away, and limited liability "carries on."

The Burntisland of to-day is not what it was. Its colour remains unaltered, because Nature is its own preserver. The hills and rocks have settled down after their heavy volcanic shaking in the long past ages, but men come and go, while these go on for ever. And yet the place is ever attractive, which is demonstrated by the large numbers who in summer draw health from the ozone of the waters and delight in the summer breezes. Its proximity to Edinburgh make it easily accessible by boat and rail, and while its administrators do something periodically to improve its amenities, there remains the hope that its future may be even better than its past.

July 23, 1924.

THE QUEENSFERRY PASSAGE.

Its Long History.

The Queensferry ferry or “passage” must rank as one of the oldest services of its kind in the world. Being first instituted in the 11th century it formed, from these early days down to the advent of the Forth Bridge, part of the great line of communication between the South and the North and North-East of Scotland. Tradition has it that the ferry takes its name from Margaret, Queen of Malcolm Canmore, and the mother of three Kings - Edgar I., after whom Port Edgar is named; Alexander I., who founded the Abbey on Inchcolm; and David I., the patron saint of Scots Cathedral builders, and founder of Dunfermline, Holyrood, Melrose and other Scottish Abbeys.

Margaret arrived in the Firth of Forth in 1068, landing at St. Margaret’s Hope, and subsequently taking up residence at Dunfermline, from whence she made frequent visits to Edinburgh, crossing the Forth in the neighbourhood of the route of the existing ferry. Mr T. Ratcliffe tells us in “Border Byways and Lothian Lore” she instituted “a free ferry for pilgrims who desired to travel to the shrine of St Andrew in Fife.”

David I. is stated to have placed the ferry under the custody of the Abbots of Dunfermline, who became bound to provide the necessary craft, by which they were entitled to “every forth penny.” To-day we might express this in more matter of fact terms as 25 per cent. In 1275 certain boatmen (seven in number), appointed by ecclesiastical fathers, were vested with a monopoly in that it was stipulated that the rights to ply would belong to them and their heirs for all time coming, so that no-one could become a ferry boatman unless by hereditary succession. The natural effect of this was that the number of boatmen multiplied with the generations, and at one time there were stated to be from forty to fifty oarsmen on the ferry. It was not until 1786 that the hereditary rights of these boatmen were set aside, but after an outcry on the part of the travelling public as to the incapacity of the men who had been substituted, the hereditary boatmen were re-instated.

Down the centuries the regulations of this ancient ferry has involved the passing of many Acts of Parliament, and even before the “Union” the Parliament of Scotland passed several Acts relating to it, the earliest being in the reign of James III. of Scotland.

About the beginning of the 19th century, before the steamboat existed or a railway was contemplated, the right of running ferry boats between North and South Queensferry was let at a yearly rental of two thousand pounds, and in Parliamentary evidence it was stated that the revenue then derived by those who ran goods and passengers across in ferrys and small boats amounted to over five thousand pounds per annum. In the year 1809, in the

reign of George III., an Act was passed entitled “An Act for the Improvement of the Passage across the Firth of Forth called the Queensferry.”, under which a body of trustees was incorporated for the carrying on of the ferry. Five years later a further Act was passed entitled “An Act to enable the Trustees appointed by an Act of the Forty-ninth year of His present Majesty for the Improvement of the Passage across the Firth of Forth called Queensferry, to carry the same into execution.”

In 1821 the first steamer placed on the passage, the “Queen Margaret,” commenced sailing. By the year 1830 the powers contained in the Acts of 1809 and 1814 had nearly expired, and in that year, 1830, yet another Act was entitled “An Act in that further Improvement and Support of the Passage across the Firth of Forth called Queensferry.” received Royal assent. By this Act the whole undertaking was vested in a new body of Trustees. A new table of rates was introduced, further improvements were authorised, and the limits of the ferry were defined.

The ferry was purchased by the North British Railway Company in 1867, under powers contained in the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway (Queensferry) Act. 1863. The vicissitudes which took place prior to this purchase are interesting and convey the importance attached by the local Railway Companies to the ferry as a link in the great chain of communication. In 1863 both the North British Railway and the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway had bills before Parliament promoting new lines diverging on the passage, the N.B. Company’s proposed line being inter alia. between North Queensferry and Dunfermline, and the E & G Company’s from Ratho to South Queensferry. Each sought to purchase or otherwise acquire the ferry. By Section 36 of their Edinburgh, Dunfermline and Perth Act, 1863, the N.B. Company obtained the necessary sanction for the purchase, owing, no doubt, to their stronger claim.

Parliament, at the same time, seems to have seen the desirability, or rather the urgency, of a railway company owning the ferry; and the sanction granted to the N.B. Company was given subject to the purchase being completed within two years of the passing of the Act, failing which the Edinburgh and Glasgow Company would step in and purchase. It happened that the N.B. did not fulfil their obligation within the stipulated time, and in 1865, Section 50 of the N.B. Company’s 1863 Act and Section 51 of the E. & G. Company’s Act of the same year (which in default of the N.B. Company empowered the E. & G. Company to purchase the ferry) became operative. But the position did not long remain thus, as in that year, (1865) the E. & G. Company was amalgamated with the N.B. Company, and the power to purchase the ferry reverted to the amalgamated Company, viz., the N.B., who implemented their statutory powers in 1867, the price paid being four thousand, five hundred pound, plus two hundred pound expenses.

The N.B. Company became owners of the ferry on 19th September, 1867, and worked the same themselves down to the year 1893. In that year they entered an agreement with Messrs David Wilson & Sons, Bo'ness, under which the firm, with the assistance of a subsidy, undertook the working on behalf of the Company as from the 30th September, 1893. This arrangement continued until 1919, when, on the death of Mr John S. Wilson, the sole partner of the firm, the obligations to work the ferry were transferred to Messrs Wilson's successors - the Leith Salvage & Towage Company.

As from the 15th November, 1920, the Railway Company resumed the working of the ferry, purchasing for the purpose the vessel which now sails daily between the two Queensferrys, viz., the P.S. "Dundee", which has a gross tonnage of 264 tons and can carry 997 passengers on a No. 5 Certificate. The principal trade of to-day is, of course, the conveyance of motor vehicles, both commercial and private, although there is also a considerable passenger and parcels traffic. The advantages of the route for vehicular traffic, into and out of Fife and the North, are obvious, as the alternative road route is via Stirling, involving considerable additional mileage.

The ferry, which plies under the shadow of the gigantic spans of the Forth Bridge, where the Forth estuary narrows down to about one and a half miles in width, makes use of the Hawes Pier, South Queensferry, and the Railway Pier, North Queensferry, and the rapid development in road traffic in the past few years has earned for the ferry a significance and importance which it was thought by many the advent of the Forth Bridge had for all time dispelled; so much so that the Company is at the moment undertaking certain improvements in the service to cope with present day requirements.

The sailing of the ferry are at the present time dependant on the tides, and for this reason are given at different hours each day, the sailing's being regulated by the depth of the water available. This, of course, is calculated in advance, and fixed time tables are prepared and issued. The aims of the improvements now taking place, which include the extension of the existing piers, is to admit of a continuous service being given at the same times each day independent of the state of the tide, which should prove a boon to the users of the ferry

December 1926

COWDENBEATH'S HEALTH.

Sanitary Inspector's Report.

In his report for 1926, Mr C.A. Alexander, the Sanitary Inspector, states:-

The year under review was a most trying one for local authorities and the general public alike. So trying and so serious, in fact, that it will take some considerable time before the effects are left behind. In common with kindred authorities in the area, the Public Health Department had its fair share of the difficulties which arose with the situation in the coal mining industry. Practically every landlord in the Burgh was affected, with a consequential bad effect on the normal work of the Department. The various services were maintained at their usual standard, although the improvement of dwelling-house property was seriously interfered with.

Water Supply.

The Burgh might lack many things which might or might not be held as essentials, but one thing it does possess, and without which no town could exist, and that is a good water supply. As each year passes one has more and more reason to be grateful to those men who spared no effort to place the burgh in an independent position regarding a water supply. The cost was heavy and is now being felt more heavily, when in the majority of the cases it is least able to be borne. But look on the other side of the picture. The average ratepayer pays something like twenty-six shillings per annum for water. I wonder what he would be willing to pay if water was as scarce as it once was! Sixpence per week per family for sufficient water to meet the needs of the most aquatic of householders! It is available when one wants it, and what is of more consequence, it is available when one needs it, pure and sound, for six pence per week. Is it worth it? A water famine would supply the best answer.

One is tempted to compare the cost of water to the money spent on other liquids humans consume, which is never grudged, but I have said sufficient to indicate the importance of a good water supply as compared with the comparatively negligible cost. I am led to wonder if this blessing is really appreciated as it ought to be. As a beverage pure water is second to none. One finds lemonade more in demand by the younger generation. Then again, judging by the high-water marks one sees on some children's necks, and on some adults too, one is left wondering at man's ingratitude for the precious gifts nature and an enthusiastic Town Council give it. The total quantity of water in storage is usually 335,000,000 gallons. The total quantity taken from the reservoirs during 1926 was 732,833,200 gallons. No complaint was received regarding the purity of the water and no analysis was made.

No alteration took place on the system of filtration during the year. After filtration the water passed into covered sewage tanks for aeration and settlement. Consequent to the growing demands of the burgh, the filtration plant at Cantsdam, through which passes the water from loch Glow, the larger of the two reservoirs, and which is responsible for 72 per cent. of the burgh's requirements, became overtaxed. A report by the Burgh Surveyor was prepared and was submitted, recommending that two additional shells be installed and alteration to the existing chemical plant, at a cost of over nine hundred pounds. The work was approved and is now in hand. When the two new shells are installed, bringing the total battery up to six, the plant will be capable of filtering 75,000 gallons per hour at a safe working pressure and a satisfactory and not-too-rapid rate of filtration. The distributing system is, on the whole, very satisfactory. The pressure at the west end of Stenhouse Street, and over a portion of Old Perth Road, is not quite satisfactory, however, due to the area being in close proximity to the fountain well and almost at a similar level. It might be possible for the Water Committee to take the matter under consideration at some early date.

Drainage.

The drainage system in the newer part of the town is adequate and in good order. The system to the centre is as formerly, but the system to the south-west and north, or Arthur Place, Woodend, and Perth Road, are far from being satisfactory. The Arthur Place sewer has suffered, and is still suffering from subsidence. The Woodend sewer discharges into an open stream, and that in Perth Road into an open ditch. The purification works are entirely out of use and crude sewage is being discharged into the adjoining stream. Negotiations are still proceeding regarding the purchase of the remaining minerals underlying the site in order to insure the safety of the proposed new works. I regret that serious pollution is occurring, all of which cannot be avoided. I would, however, urge the council to expedite the consideration of the whole problem.

Two representative meetings were held with neighbouring authorities during the year in order to consider the question of river pollution. A small committee was set up to go into the matter and report. The various streams flowing through the burgh were all dealt with during the year as follows, viz: -

Foulford Burn - scoured by abutting proprietors - not polluted.

Kirkford Burn - scoured by abutting proprietors - not polluted.

Middle Stream - Scoured.

Lochgelly Burn - Scoured, and joint meeting held regarding proposal to pipe. Alternative schemes now being prepared.

A communication was addressed to the Dunfermline District Committee on our Water and Drainage Committee becoming aware that an extension of the Dunfermline sewer was proposed in the direction of this burgh. The reply to the suggestion that it might be possible to link this burgh's system with the new sewer was to the effect that the suggestion was not practicable, owing to the fact that no provision had been made in the size of the pipes laid down for such a contingency.

The usual attention was given to house drainage as formerly. I regret, however, that little attention is given to the cleansing of traps by owners and occupiers. Obviously the purpose of the trap is not apparent or known to many, otherwise it would not be so neglected as it is usually found to be. It would seem that the elimination of the traps would obviate a whole heap of trouble as well as being non-injurious to the efficiency of any system. Perhaps the Board might consider the matter in the light of past experience and issue a recommendation or regulations for a uniform system of house drainage. With so many experts available, it ought not to be a difficult matter, and I am certain would be acted upon by those in authority.

Scavenging And Cleansing

The cleansing services are carried out by the burgh's own workmen. Horse haulage is in use and no mechanical transport is utilised. Refuse collection is bi-daily over the greater portion of the burgh, the remaining portion having a daily collection. Refuse disposal is by tipping and land reclamation, two tips being presently in use, one in Church Street to the south-east and the other in Kirkford to the north-west. The Church Street ground is being reclaimed for future building purposes, and the Kirkford portion for a playground. The question of refuse disposal has been one of engrossing interest. The writer has had an opportunity of seeing the various methods of disposal in operation, and it is at once admitted that success is attending most of the efforts being made. One had usually the feeling of being behind the times and old-fashioned after viewing such endeavours, particularly those of a mechanical nature, and while it is allowed that no two areas have identical conditions to contend with, this conclusion rules out the possibility of uniformity of method. I have become convinced that for this burgh our present system of tipping is far and away the best and most economical method. There exists, fortunately or unfortunately, large areas of ground, splendidly situated, waiting to be reclaimed, and I see no reason whatever to prevent the reclaiming of such ground by dumping refuse to continue for many a year to come. Provided the work is carried out in a sane and workmanlike manner, with due regard to the amenity of neighbours, no complaint can possibly arise.

The tip in Kirkford already referred to is situated within 50 yards of dwelling-house property, and alongside a public highway. The best indication of how the work is being conducted is that no complaint has been received. A representative of the Board visited the locus and expressed himself as being satisfied with the operations. The point to be made is this - what can be done in one part of the burgh can be done in other parts.

Now that the two tips in use are being conducted on satisfactory lines, entire success will never be achieved at the Church Street dump until some means is devised for the proper destruction of waste paper, straw, etc., collected from the shop premises three times weekly. A small incinerator or destructor could easily and economically be constructed for this purpose either at the Cleansing depot or at the tip. Or maybe some old furnace and flue could be found and utilised.

The Cleansing department is greatly handicapped owing to the muddy condition of the roads and streets during the winter months. It appears that no great improvement in the cleanliness of certain streets can be looked for until the same are reconstructed and surfaced with waterproof surfaces, smooth and capable of satisfactory cleansing.

The method adopted by the majority of ratepayers in the choice of ashbin is one which is causing the department serious inconvenience and heavy expense. In nine cases out of ten, a wooden box without a cover is put out. I need not explain or describe what happens even on clam days. The earlier work of the street sweeper is rendered useless. Bye-laws are in existence which demand covered receptacles. What about a pull altogether? The Public, the Public Health Committee, the police, the school children, all together with the slogan - "A Bin with a lid saves many a quid." A bin with a lid would also improve the appearance of many of our streets. The private householder is not the only sinner in this respect. Shop-keepers are not blameless, and some of them are culpably negligent.

The following figures might be of interest: -

9 and a quarter miles of streets are cleansed; 1643 tons of house refuse was handled for the year ending 15th May, 1926; 373 tons of trade refuse; 1592 tons of street sweepings, and 1500 tons of snow were also handled during the same period; a total of 8203 tons. The average tonnage collected per 1000 of population was 455 tons. There are no ashpits in the burgh.

The total costs were as follows: - Street cleansing - 1,110 pounds 8 shilling, or 1s 3d per head of population per annum; collection of refuse, 123 pound 15 shillings, or 1d per head of population, or 3d per ton of refuse; Public Conveniences, 174 pounds 2 shillings, or 2d per head of population. The total cost of all cleansing services was 2503 pounds 4 shillings, or two shillings eight and a half pence per head of population.

Nuisances.

The four wards of the burgh were regularly visited for the detection and abatement of nuisances. Nothing of a serious nature was encountered and no serious difficulty was experienced in obtaining the necessary remedies to nuisances detected. As always, a great many of the nuisances met with were caused through negligence. The number of complaints received was 59. All were investigated and action taken where found to be bona fide. 81 nuisances were dealt with and 13 notices in terms of Section 19 of the

Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897, were issued. Only in two instances were Section 20 notices issued. No prosecutions took place. The practice of advising landlords and factors by verbal communication or telephone as to the existence of nuisances was continued and found to be successful. All closets within the burgh are on the water-carriage system. There are no privies, earth closets or privy middens.

The number of common water-closets in use within the burgh is as follows: - Ward 1 - Total houses, 662; families using, 2; 81, 3; 23, 4; 1, 5; 0, 6; 0, 7 0; total 105. Ward 2 - Total houses, 914; families using 2 33, 3 20, 4 0, 5 1, 6 0, 7 0; total 54. Ward 3, - Total houses, 639; families using, 2 78, 3 26, 4 1, 5 0, 6 0, 7 0; total 105. Ward 4 - Total houses, 710; families using, 2 84, 3 18, 4 18, 5 1, 6 0, 7 0; total 121. Fifteen houses are without sinks or water supply. These, as previously reported, are not worth the installation of modern sanitary arrangements and are earmarked for early condemnation.

Slaughter Houses.

One slaughter house is situated within the burgh, belonging to the Local Authority. The inspection of meat is rigorously carried out in accordance with the meat regulations. The actual examination of diseased meat is, however, carried out under difficulties, particularly in the public booth. The allocation of the booths is that there are three firms who rent a booth each, two who share one booth between them, and the public booth which is used by over half a dozen butchers. Sometimes this booth becomes very congested and oftener than not it is when congestion is acute that a diseased carcass crops up. A meat inspection chamber adjoining the public booth would certainly be a great advantage, as well as a means of safeguarding the sound carcasses hanging in the same booth. The pole-axe method of slaughter is still in use. There are no offensive trades. All the schools are visited and attention given to the lavatory accommodation. No complaint was made during the year.

Factories And Workshops.

All factories and workshops were visited periodically, particular attention being paid to cleanliness, ventilation, and sanitary conveniences. In a few instances attention was drawn to the uncleanly state of the workshops. The sanitary conveniences were found sufficient and in order.

There are two houses licensed as house-let-in-lodgings owing to the charges. These were regularly visited and usually found to be clean and well kept. On one occasion complaint was made regarding two minor defects. The accommodation is ample for the persons seeking such accommodation as a decided falling off in the number of lodgers has been noticed for a number of years back.

Under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts, ect., the duties of Sampling Officer and other duties under the Food and Drugs Acts are carried out by the County Authorities. One certificate was granted for the sale of pasteurised milk. This milk is prepared and bottled in another area and brought to the burgh for sale. It is noticed that a steady and increasing market is being obtained.

A report on operation of the Milk and Dairies Act has been approved by the Board and will soon be in operation. Two Cowsheds in the burgh are registered, and the approximate number of cows is 12. No cowshed is exempt. Three milk stores exist, and 28 vans are provisionally registered.

One dairy is old and unsuited for a modern dairy. The proprietor has expressed his willingness to meet the requirements of the new bye-laws. In his dairy little attention has been given to cleanliness and grooming of animals. The other dairy is usually found in a satisfactory state, being much smaller than the first one mentioned. Here again grooming is sometimes neglected.

In last year's report I called attention to various aspects of the pure food problem, to which I can add but little. I have read with interest various observations by brother inspectors on the subject, and the reports all appear much alike.

I would again draw attention to the menace of the chip potato cart and ice cream cart. It has been observed by the writer that such vehicles, when not in use, are usually left out in the open or in some old shed, where fowls and all sorts of animals are free to gain access to them. It has been no uncommon sight to see these carts being utilised as hen roosts. I suppose it will be known how prolific fowls are in defecating, and consequently it will be realised what the cart is like after the fowls have gone back to their coops. If I am not mistaken avian tuberculosis is very common. I need say no more but remark that a real danger lurks here. I am of opinion that all premises where food is either manufactured, stored or sold, should have a highly polished hard floor. Wood should be prohibited. The use of sawdust on the floors of shops is to be condemned. Two persons are registered under the Meat Regulations as vendors of meat. There are no cold stores.

Proceedings Under The Public Health And Other Acts.

Nuisances. - Complaints received, 81; intimations served under Sec. 19. 59; Notices served under Sec. 20. 15

Workshops. - Inspections, 30

Houses Let In Lodgings. - On Register at 31st December, 1926. 2; inspections, 25

Infectious Diseases. - Visits of inquiry, etc., 290; patients removed to hospital. 152; notices served under Sec. 50 (2), and notices served under Sec. 53 (2), 122; Intimation to Education Authorities, teachers, etc., 197; Houses or premises disinfected and sets of clothing, bedding, etc., disinfected or destroyed, 184.

Slaughter Houses and Offensive Trades - Public Slaughter houses belonging to Local Authority. - 1; Inspections of slaughter houses, 90; Inspections of other offensive businesses at 31st December, 1926, 1.

Inspections carrying out bye-laws relating to pig-sty's, 13; Public Conveniences, 20.

10,069 lbs. of meat and mutton were found to be unsound.

Working-Class Dwellings.

A survey was made at the latter end of 1926, and the information obtained is herewith given in tabular form: -

Ward	Total H'Ses	One Apt.	Two Apt.	Three Apt.	Four Apt.	Over	
						Five Apt.	Five Apt.
1.	662	39	365	126	35	21	22
2.	858	47	439	308	35	12	17
3.	639	110	367	125	22	9	6
4.	710	79	482	117	18	9	5
Totals	2869	329	1653	676	110	51	50
P.C'ts.	100	12	56	24	4	2	2

1st Ward - Houses 660; one apartment, 91; two apartments, 345; three apartments, 117; four apartments, 35; five apartments and over, 42; sub-lets, 31.

2nd Ward - Houses 852; one apartment, 46; two apartments, 403; three apartments, 287; four apartments, 34; five apartments and over, 29; sub-lets, 55

3rd Ward - Houses 631; one apartment, 109; two apartments, 346; three apartments, 110; four apartments, 20; five apartments and over, 14; sub-lets, 33.

4th Ward - Houses, 704; one apartment, 109; two apartments, 346; three apartments, 104; four apartments, 18; five apartments and over, 14; sub-lets, 42.

Totals - Houses, 2847; one apartment, 325; two apartments, 1543; three apartments, 619; four apartments, 107; five apartments and over, 99; sub-lets, 161.

From the foregoing statements it will be observed that 161 families are living in rooms or attics sub-let to them by other tenants.

The following statement shows the number of dwelling-houses existing at 31st December, 1926, which ought to be closed, and also the number requiring to be demolished, and the number capable of reconstruction.

Ward	All Sizes	Capable of Reconstruction	Nett Condemned
1	29	15	14
2	5	...	5
3	22	4	18
4	138	72	66
Totals	<u>194</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>103</u>

The houses are old and sadly lacking in standards demanded by modern requirements. It is the intention of the Local Authority to issue Closing Orders on most of the houses as soon as alternative accommodation is available. This is now becoming possible owing to the number of houses, which can be rendered habitable without entire reconstruction.

Two closing orders were issued on two houses which were rendered vacant by tenants who found accommodation under the Local Authority. The necessary alterations were carried out by the proprietor, and the order has since been determined. Two houses, upon which a closing order existed, were vacated by tenants who found accommodation under the Local Authority. These houses, together with four others previously vacated, are presently under reconstruction.

The five houses in Broad Street previously reported on have now been vacated and demolished. A villa is now being erected on the site.

A large amount of changing has been going on during the year owing to the Local Authority's scheme being available. In every case where a change took place the proprietor was communicated with where the vacated house required repair. A request was made not to re-let until certain repairs were executed. A good deal of necessary work was carried out in this manner. In several cases and particularly in the case of single apartment dwellings, the proprietor was asked to take steps to insure that no overcrowding was created in re-letting, giving the size of family suitable to that particular house, and also suggesting that a family in distinct need of a house be given a chance. It is in this was that it is hoped to abolish sub-letting, overcrowding, and defective dwellings.

A commencement has been made with the closing of the houses in School Street previously reported on.

No schemes have been formulated or are under contemplation by the Local Authority for the improvement of sanitary areas. The Local Authority have been very active during recent years with housing schemes, and a large number of families resident in insanitary houses have been successful in obtaining a new house or a house vacated by some other family who were granted a new house. The need for a slum clearance scheme in this burgh has never arisen.

The majority of insanitary dwellings are owned by a large colliery company, and I see no reason why the Local Authority should relieve such companies of their obligations. The majority of the defective houses are scattered here and there in small blocks, and only in one instance do the numbers of such dwellings warrant a scheme. In this particular area, which belongs to the company referred to, an undertaking has been given the Local Authority by this company that the whole of the houses will be closed and demolished as soon as other houses are available. The Local Authorities are to endeavour to do whatever is possible in the way of alternative accommodation. A good deal can be done provided some effort is made to see that people requiring houses are either accommodated in a new house or in a house rendered vacant through some cause or other. A feeling exists, and there is a good deal of justification for it, that a good many prospective tenants for the Local Authority's latest houses are not desirable from a rent-paying point of view. It is up to such people to abolish this idea if they are to obtain their objective. On the other hand, I do not imagine any member of the Local Authority has any other objection. I believe they are willing to give the so-called under-dog a chance, provided he can pay the rent. From past experience, this policy has been splendidly rewarded. So now the secret has been handed over to you, ye house-hunters. Good payers are wanted, and invariably accepted. Each man must pay his own rent and not leave it to the other fellow to help.

The scheme of 100 houses launched by the Local Authority was completed before 31st December, 1926, as estimated. The Local Authority decided to continue their operations and approval was obtained for a further 56 houses, which scheme is now well advanced, 24 being occupied and the remaining 32 almost ready for occupancy.

The rents fixed by the Local Authority are fifteen pounds per annum for two apartment houses and eighteen pounds per annum for three apartment houses. The rent for the three apartment houses under the 1919 scheme is twenty pounds and ten shillings per annum. There were no two apartment houses under the 1919 scheme.

In view of the fact that houses were still required that private enterprise showed no indication of assisting further to solve the problem, and that the present subsidy period expired on 1st October, 1928, the Local Authority again had the matter under discussion. They realised that a point had been reached in their own particular domain at which it was necessary to "gang warily." There was the danger of over-building to be considered and avoided. I congratulate them on their wariness. But facts are "chiels that winna ding." And so, in consideration of the facts laid before them herein reiterated, the

decision was made that a further batch of 100 houses be built. The houses are needed badly. We have sufficient people in our burgh able and willing to pay the rent demanded, but we have also many who, much though they would like to, are unable to foot the bill. My regrets are for the man who wants to do well by his own, but who, through force of circumstances, is unable to do so. There is, however, still a chance for him, as I have already shown.

The decision made, a site was the next objective. Stevenson-Beath site, our original housing site being completely filled up. In passing let me remark that this site was originally laid out for 300 houses. To-day it accommodated 314 houses. A piece of ground in Moss-side Road was thought suitable. A mining engineer's report was obtained. The report was not altogether satisfactory, but after due deliberation the Local Authority decided to apply for authority to build on this site. The risk of subsidence was to be counteracted by building the houses on concrete rafts reinforced with indented steel bars. The Board jibbed. Another site, the Local Authority's first love of all, was turned to. Another mining engineer's report proved it likewise unsatisfactory for the number of houses projected.

And now we come to the last resort. A piece of ground capable of accommodating 100 houses is under consideration in the Kirkford area. A mining engineer's report is awaited. I hope to see a start made soon in the area, as the mining engineer's report is looked forward to with some confidence.

Before closing this chapter on housing, I have one more duty to perform, and that is to thank the householders throughout the burgh for their loyal co-operation in the appeal issued asking them to give the inspectors who carried out the housing survey accurate and full information. I only hope that the information given will be the means of bringing a little sunshine into some homes, which stand in sad need of it.

Infectious Diseases.

For several years past the number of infectious diseases cases has shown an encouraging decrease, although in 1915, scarlet fever took a turn in the wrong direction. This year 1926, matters looked promising until the half-year was passed. Scarlatina then became a nightmare. Some thought poor feeding was the cause, and some thought, but said nothing. Despite careful and persistent inquiry, no specific reason could be found for the large number of cases occurring. Fortunately the disease was of a mild type.

I am inclined to the view that the very mildness of this disease was the real reason for so many cases occurring. In very many cases, the doctor was not called in until desquamation commenced. The total number of Scarlatina notified was 207, the highest number ever notified of any disease in any one year. A large number of cases were treated at home by the Milne method and satisfactory results obtained. I think that the public should be advised to seek medical advice so soon as certain symptoms make

themselves apparent. In this way something could be accomplished in the direction of checking the trouble before serious damage is done.

In previous years the practice was to destroy all books likely to be put into circulation found in infected houses. Recently this practice was altered and now only books in a dirty and dilapidated condition are destroyed. A matter of special interest at the present moment is the question of compensation for such books. The Education Authority has made claim against the Local Authority for books destroyed. The books in question must have caused readers to draw upon their own imagination to follow the trend of the written matter - so many pages were missing. They must also have spent some time sorting all the pages which were issued to them. One is apt to conclude the librarian believed in the loose-leaf system.

Child Welfare.

The supervision of the issuing of food and milk to mothers and children during the coal stoppage was carried out by the Department. Well over one thousand pounds was expended up to the time when the matter was taken over by the Parish Council towards the end of July. In this duty, which was a very difficult and trying one to perform, the Department fell foul of certain individuals who might not be above a word of advice. It is no duty of any local Authority to assist a man's family while that man is indulging in the good things of life. Some people cannot grasp this aspect of the problem. My sympathies go out to them. The supply of food, etc., to the younger children was carried out at the Children's Clinic. The older children - two years to five years - were supplied under arrangement with the Education Authority at the school kitchens. The Children's Clinic continues to serve a very useful purpose. The mothers now realise that there is more to be got there than a mere cup of tea. Nurse Greenhorn is the mainspring of this institution and the results observed must be a real tonic to her unflinching interest and effort. The willing ladies who have assisted voluntarily and who are still assisting are due a very special word of commendation and thanks. Probably many of the people of our burgh are unaware of the ungrudging service being given by these voluntary lady helpers. The boon conferred on sufferers by the discovery of the Ultra Violet Ray has stimulated the mind of the Local Authority. So much so that the question of installing lamps for the giving of artificial light treatment is under consideration. The results in every case are for the better, so far as our information goes. I am accordingly very sanguine of the idea being carried into effect soon.

During the year an attempt was made to bring the nursing services in the burgh brought into line with the requirements of the burgh. The scheme proposed meant some important alterations to the status of the Health Visitor. The Local Authority, after careful consideration, could not agree to any interference in this matter. The scheme, so far as the Local Authority was concerned, accordingly fell through.

May, 1927.

“A Wee Keek Back”

DUNFERMLINE ABBEY.

Historical Review by Mr James

Shearer, jun.

On Wednesday forenoon the members of the Societe de Philologie, who are at present on a visit to Dunfermline, paid a visit to Dunfermline Abbey, the Monastery, Palace Ruins, and Malcolm Canmore's Tower. The party were under the leadership of Mr James Shearer, jun., architect. Mr Shearer gave a most interesting review of the historical and archaeological features of these ancient relics, which was both entertaining and descriptive and was greatly appreciated by his hearers.

As the majority of the people in Dunfermline have a really meagre idea of the history of our ancient surroundings, it will not be amiss, as briefly as possible, to convey a condensed report of Mr Shearer's discourse to our readers. Mr Shearer said: -

The first church which occupied the site upon which the Abbey now stands was a Culdee Church. The colony at Iona was broken up by violence about the 7th century. At no great interval of time thereafter we find references to Culdee settlements along the east coasts of Scotland - Aberdeen, Brechin, Abernethy, St. Andrews, Dunfermline, and so on, and it is possible that these religious settlements may have been - or, at any rate, some of them may have been - established by fugitive or missionary members of the church of Iona.

At the beginning of the recorded history of the church at Dunfermline then, we have a Culdee church already in existence - how long ago, there is no record - and in their church it seems certain that Margaret and Malcolm Canmore (or Malcolm III.) were married in 1070.

Shortly after her marriage, and in consultation with her confessor, Turgot, formerly Prior of the Monastery of Durham, and latterly Bishop of St Andrews, it is written that Margaret built a new church "in the place where her nuptials were celebrated" - the date of the dedication of this church being variously placed between 1072 and 1074. The site of this church of Queen Margaret remained, until quite recent years, a matter of conjecture, but in 1916, Dr MacGregor Chalmers, a distinguished architect and ecclesiologist of Glasgow, obtained permission to open the floor of the nave, and there he discovered the foundations of an ancient church, which most authorities now agree can be accepted as the foundations of the church in which Queen Margaret was married, and to which, according to Dr Chalmers, she afterwards added extensively. Dr Chalmers, you will note, attributes to her not a completely new church, as the old writers indicate, but

the erection of a square tower to the west of the existing church, and the addition of a larger church with an apse to the east.

The lines of the foundations discovered by Dr Chalmers are traced exactly by lines of gun metal on the present pavement of the Nave. The church was dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

As to the foundations of the Abbey; - There is in the Chartulary of Dunfermline ("Registrum de Dunfermlyn," a most valuable collection of ancient charters now in the Advocates Library, Edinburgh), a charter dated 1075, whereby Malcolm III., the husband of Queen Margaret, founds the Abbey and grants extensive lands and revenues for its maintenance. Owing to certain difficulties in the text, the authenticity of this charter has been questioned, and certainly the early date - 1075 - a date that must almost have coincided with the completion of Queen Margaret's church (which evidently did not form part of a monastic plan) - seems itself a difficulty. It is nevertheless probable enough that King Malcolm, if not then, did in later years of his reign, project the establishment of an Abbey, and may quite well have taken definite steps on the lines suggested by the document referred to. He had seen something of the beginnings of similar establishments in England, and is said to have been present at the founding of Durham Cathedral in 1093, the year of his death, and he very conceivably came to be inspired with a desire to dignify his capital with an establishment much more ambitious than could be accommodated in the little church of which we now see the outline. This hypothesis is supported by a charter of his son, David I., to which charter I will presently refer.

Malcolm III. was killed in Northumberland in 1093 and was first buried at Tynemouth. Queen Margaret, his wife, survived her hearing of the news by only a few days. She died in Edinburgh Castle. Both were subsequently brought to the church at Dunfermline and buried there. The enriched pillars in the Nave of King David's abbey were designed to mark the position of their graves.

Queen Margaret used as an oratory a little cave in a secluded part of the Glen - not far from the Abbey, but of her use of it for this purpose there is now no visible trace. As lately as the end of the 18th century, Henderson refers in his "Annals" to a stone seat and to some evidence of a stone table with hints of half obliterated carving, but such evidence, if they then existed, have long since disappeared.

King David I., the builder of many Abbeys, is the generally accepted founder of the Abbey of Dunfermline, and his charter (also in the Chartulary) confirms and amplifies the charter of his father, Malcolm, already referred to. It is suggested that David I. began the building of his great church considerably to the east of the church associated with his mother's life and death - first erecting the choir, then the tower or towers. The earlier church, according to Dr Chalmers, was not removed until about 1140, and the same authority fixes the date of the nave at 1156.

It seems feasible, but I am not sure that every element of uncertainty is quite disposed of, for Dr Chalmers thus allows only 66 years of existence to the tower, church, and apse, which he attributes to Margaret. No more acceptable explanation of what has been found nevertheless is in view.

In 1124, King David brought from Canterbury 13 monks and Gaufrid, or Gosfridus, who was made first abbot of Dunfermline. From this time onwards, through the zeal and generosity of King David, and by the gifts and grants of successive kings, and the interest of the mother church, the Abbey grew steadily in wealth and influence and in general magnificence until it attained dimensions so imposing that a contemporary writer described it as spacious enough to accommodate simultaneously “three sovereign princes, each with all his retinue.” A very large group of buildings indeed. From the reign of Margaret and Malcolm the Abbey at Dunfermline was the place of Royal sepulture, the Westminster of Scotland.

A further and still more magnificent extension scheme was begun in 1216, a cruciform plan, with transepts, choir, lantern tower, presbytery, lady chapel, and chapter house, and about the same time, an extension of the monastery was undertaken to provide accommodation for 50 monks instead of 30, as hitherto. This extension proceeded between 1216 and 1231.

In 1249 or 1250 Queen Margaret was canonised, and in the same year her body was exhumed and carried to the position now marked by her tomb. Around her canonisation a most fascinating association of legend, revelation, and miracle has been woven. Very full accounts of these, and quotations from contemporary documents are to be found in Henderson’s “Annals of Dunfermline”, but there I must leave the matter. Henderson was a most painstaking and valuable analyst. He is not perhaps so accurate as he endeavoured to be. He is certainly less sceptical than lord Hailes, whose footnotes are frequently as ample as the text to which he definitely commits himself is meagre.

Of the tomb of St Margaret, what you now see is only the base. The actual monument or shrine is described as being within a canopy supported by six slender shafts of stone. The shrine itself contained a cabinet of oak elaborately carved, enclosing a chest of silver inlaid with gold and precious stones. In this were the relics of Saint Margaret.

In 1304 the monastery suffered a very great calamity. King Edward I. of England having wintered there, gave orders at the time of his departure, for the monastery to be destroyed, and it was destroyed by fire. The Abbey itself was spared. Historians, with one exception, do not attempt to justify the outrage, but Henderson (in his “Annals of Dunfermline”.) and Hailes (in his “Annals of Scotland) both quote Matthew of Westminster as an unblushing apologist - to this effect - That “the Scots had converted the House of the Lord into a den of thieves by holding their rebellious Parliament there, and in time of war, issuing from thence, as from a place of ambush, plundering and destroying the English inhabitants of Scotland.

Henderson suggests that the tower of Malcolm (or the tower on the site of Malcolm's fortress) may simultaneously been destroyed - a very plausible suggestion. He fixes the date of the completion of the re-building of the monastery at 1315. The style of the architecture, however, indicates a date rather later - 1350 or thereabouts.

King Robert the Bruce - our national hero amongst the Scottish Kings - died in 1329, and was buried in the Abbey in the middle of the Choir. His funeral oration was pronounced by Sir Gilbert Hamilton, one of seven Knights who "kept the King's person" at the battle of Bannockburn. The epitaph on the tomb, according to Fordun, was a resounding one, and ran as follows: - "Here lies the Invincible Robert, Blessed King. Let him who reads his exploits repeat how many wars he carried on. He led the Kingdom of the Scots to freedom by his uprightness. Now let him live in the Citadel of the Heavens." The tomb was of white marble and was made by one Richard Barber, a marble worker of Paris. It cost thirteen pounds, six shillings and eight pence.

The king, before his death, had given orders that, after his death, his heart should be taken from his body and should be carried to Jerusalem, and laid in the Holy Sepulchre. He had commissioned Sir James Douglas, an old and faithful companion in arms, to undertake this service. After crossing to the Low Countries, however, Sir James was tempted to digress through Spain to adventure a little in a war against the Saracens. There he was killed in battle, and the heart of Bruce, in its casket, being afterwards found by survivors of the Douglas party, was brought back with the body of Douglas to Scotland, where in Melrose Abbey the heart of Bruce was finally buried.

In 1560 our Abbey, with the exception of the Nave, was entirely demolished by a party of zealous "reformers". The reason for this performance had the usual quality of insensate irrelevance - "The conventual brethren had become careless, lazy, vicious, and in too many instances abandoned characters" - which, if true, might have been a reason for destroying them or driving them out, but hardly explains or justifies the destruction of these magnificent buildings - an irreparable loss to Scotland and to us.

The north-west tower was included in the demolition, on the ground that it contained bells which had been consecrated. Its fall brought with it a large part of the west gable. The south-west tower, probably its twin, stood until 1807, when, during a severe thunderstorm, it was struck by lightning and collapsed.

Not many years later - in 1594 - for the purpose of restoring the nave and rendering it again habitable and suitable for public worship, a scheme of reconstruction was begun, this time in charge of William Shaw, architect to King James VI.

William Shaw designed and built the steeple, the north porch, the gable over the western door, and the heavy flying buttresses which give an appearance so strange and unusual to the exterior of the Nave.

To the memory of William Shaw a monument was erected by Queen Anne. This monument which has a fine inscription, was at first erected in another part of the church, and now stands within the chamber at the base of the steeple.

These note, I think, briefly summarise the several important stages in the rise and decline of the Abbey.

June, 1927.

COWDENBEATH PUBLIC

HEALTH.

—
Sanitary Inspector's Report.

—
Should The Town Site be Moved?

—
A Pertinent Question.

Mr C.A. Alexander, Sanitary Inspector of the burgh of Cowdenbeath, has just issued his report dealing with the Public Health Department for the year 1927. In the course of his report, which was addressed to the Honourable the Scottish Board of Health and the Provost, Magistrates and Councillors of the burgh of Cowdenbeath, Mr Alexander says: - Gentlemen, - We have the honour of submitting for your consideration our seventh annual report. This report will deal with the operations of the public health department during the year 1927, and is framed on the lines required by the Board in their circular dated 20th December, 1927. The period covered by this report has been, we imagine, the worst ever experienced by this burgh, for whereas unemployment was rife and trade conditions were at a very low ebb, the calls made upon the ratepayers were extremely severe. We sincerely hope that the year now entered upon will see the return of our burgh'd former prosperity and a reduction in the burdens which it carries. As in former years, the expenditure incurred by the Local Authority has been severely criticised and mostly by people who fail to realise that certain expenditure is absolutely necessary if the public services are to be maintained, and no service demands a higher state of efficiency than that of the Public Health service. It is really upon this service that the inhabitants are mainly dependent.

In tendering this report for your consideration and criticism, we would like once more to inform you that it has been drafted specially for the information of the general public, to whom we again earnestly appeal for wholehearted co-operation.

Forward

The year under review was, in our opinion, the most difficult and trying period ever experienced by the inhabitants of this burgh. The after effects of the mining crisis were, with the coal market in a very poor condition and hundreds of men unemployed, further aggravated by the closing of several large collieries in the district. This latter calamity caused the Local Authority to abandon their housing activities. It will be readily realised that a state of matters as explained above was all against the securing of anything other

than the most necessary improvements on house property. The various services, however, were maintained at their usual standard.

Water Supply

The water supply to the burgh is as has been reported on in former years. The forgoing statement might appear to be ambiguous to some folks, and for the benefit of those people it might be well to state that our sources of supply are. Loch Glow and Roscobie reservoirs, with holding or storage capacities of 300 and 35 million gallons respectively. Only to those who can understand can the real position be obvious. The bottling up of 335 million gallons of water for the exclusive use of, say, 18,000 people, or, roughly, 18,000 gallons of water per person, would appear to be exaggerated, but that is the real position. Substitute any other liquid habitually consumed by the average man, woman or child, and we get a pretty fair idea of what water supply means. We can imagine how 18,000 gallons of anything liquid is delectable except water, if available and capable of being drawn off at taps without restriction, would be appreciated. We are only striving to bring home the onerous duties of an Authority charged with the responsible duty of maintaining an adequate and reasonably pure water supply. Our opinion is that the position can only be driven home by drawing apparently peculiar comparisons which cast no reflection on anyone and bear no intentional malice.

No important alteration took place in any part of the system except that the filtration plant at Cantsdam was augmented by the installation of two additional shells. This work was carried out during the summer months, and the complete battery of six shells was put into commission in August. Since that time satisfactory results have been obtained, and the town is now assured of a full supply of filtered water for many years to come. During the year some difficulty was experienced with the 'Bell' filter at Dalbeath, due to the unsatisfactory cleansing, of the filtering medium. After due investigation, the Town Council agreed to replenish four shells with new sand, at the same time, taking the opportunity of cleansing out the saucer strainers and treating the pea-gravel tubes. Since this work was carried out satisfactory results have been obtained.

The question of the pressure at the West end of Stenhouse Street, was before the committee during the year, but as the matter was not considered very urgent, the question of improving matters was meantime delayed. For a short period in the middle of the year some annoyance and inconvenience was caused to two districts through the water becoming dirty in its passage from the filters to the house taps. After investigation it was found that the trouble due to proportions of two mains in a gully below the filters, and which, as presently situated, were incapable of being properly scoured. The trouble will probably occur again, but it is hoped to have the mains cut, scraped and scoured at this particular spot in the near future and provision made for regular and frequent scouring. The practice of taking out some of the older distributing mains was continued during the year, new and larger pipes replacing old and badly corroded mains in Thistle Street, Randolph Street, and Wemyss Street.

Drainage

The drainage of the burgh is as reported previously. The negotiations with regard to new sewage works are still proceeding, and it is hoped that during the present year final arrangements regarding the site and other matters will have been completed. The various streams flowing through the burgh were attended to at one time or another during the year. The usual attention was given to house drainage. As befalls a burgh situated as we are, many matters pertaining to drainage require attention, often at a moments notice. Happy must be the Authority be whose drainage system is so constructed, making due provision for the development, that it is not affected in any other way. Here we would almost require to be akin to seers if we were to be sure as to the ultimate direction or gradient of our sewers or drains laid down. Unfortunately, we are not drawing the long bow, as several of our readers will at once agree. Money is spent year in and year out which we are almost ashamed to admit is for the sole purpose of tiding over an emergency. We must face the position that what goes into one pocket must come out of the other; in other words, we are taking the feet from the town by the extraction of minerals and incidentally keeping the majority of the inhabitants in employment, while at the same time, we are wrecking the services which make the town worth living in. A bit queer, we admit, which all leads up to a point we have discussed with many interested people.

We have reason to remember a former official of the Council, to whose wisdom and energy we owe much and which we now gratefully acknowledge, who fearlessly advocated a revolutionary idea. This official realised, as we do now, that this burgh would be immediately faced with a huge amount of expenditure on public services if the burgh was allowed to develop within the area circumscribed by the burgh boundaries. His idea was to cease further development within the then circumscribed area and develop elsewhere. Within two miles of the burgh boundary an ideal site was available, almost a seaside resort, with ideal facilities for water supply, drainage and every other public essential service. With transport progressing as it has done, the idea would have been one of the greatest advances of modern times. This burgh would have been gradually removed from one part of West Fife to another close by, and to-day would have seen the majority of the inhabitants of Cowdenbeath housed in dwellings free from the ominous cracks and rents which are apparent in almost every building in the burgh. We think that the situation ought to be faced now. Some may think it is too late. Maybe for Cowdenbeath, but for other new mining districts the lesson ought not be lost.

Anonymous Complains

“A Wee Keek Back”

A matter which has always been of interest to us has been the matter on anonymous complaints. Should we or should we not put them into the waste-paper basket? We have always felt that anyone desiring to lodge a complaint, and who feels that genuine grounds are available for such a procedure, should not hesitate, in the interests of public health to do so openly and courageously. The anonymous complaint, to our mind, savours of suspicion, and oftener than not, when a tentative enquiry is made, we find that the stair-head squabble preceded the making of the complaint. On the other hand there is just the chance that circumstances are all against the complainant divulging his or her identity, so that it is really difficult to conscientiously consign all anonymous complaints to the waste-paper basket. We have an uneasy feeling on receipt of an anonymous complaint that a gold goose chase might be in prospect, but at the same time we also have a feeling that neglect of duty might take place if the complaint was ignored. It would be interesting to hear what other inspectors do in similar circumstances.

Sufficiency of Working Class Dwellings.

In our last report statistics were given showing the housing conditions existing in the burgh at December, 1926. During the past year a complete change came over the coal-mining industry in this district which very materially affected the housing question. In the early part of 1927, the Town Council, having utilised Stevensonsbeath housing site to its fullest capacity, and being still convinced that additional houses were required, had arrangements almost completed for the erection of 100 additional houses in Moss-side Road when information was placed before them which completely altered the whole situation. Consequently the question of additional houses had to be abandoned for the present. The circumstances which caused the Town Council to take this action will probably be worth repeating.

After the disastrous dispute in the coal-mining industry of the previous year, a large number of men failed to find employment, and those men were still unemployed when a large colliery company in the district decided to close down some of their largest collieries, which threw an addition number into the unemployed category. It was argued that despite the large number of unemployed men in the district, houses would require to be built, but we think that the Town Council acted wisely in deciding to cease building operations for the present, as we believe that while many were anxious to obtain a new and suitable house, the question of rent would sooner or later become a very important one.

Another point which influenced the Town Council in their decision was that good headway had been made in easing the housing situation through the erection of the 272

houses on Stevensonsbeath site. Unfortunately at the present moment no improvement has taken place in the housing situation since last spring, and we are rather afraid that, so far as the burgh is concerned, our housing activities are at an end. Owing to the unsettled condition of the town we have taken no steps to bring the housing statistics up to date, but from our own local knowledge we are satisfied that more houses are still required, but until the persons who require the houses are in employment, and in a position to pay the rent charged for them we do not advocate the building of more houses.

Uninhabitable Dwellings.

Last year we submitted a statement showing the number of houses which ought to be condemned, and, for comparative purposes, the statement is again given:-

Ward	All Sizes	Capable of Reconstruction	Nett Condemnation
1	29	15	14
2	5	0	5
3	22	4	18
4	<u>138</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>66</u>
	<u>194</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>103</u>

During the year the Town Council issued 15 closing orders on properties throughout the burgh affecting 111 houses and we are pleased to report that the majority of those houses are now closed. Several are still in occupation, but we are gradually finding other accommodation for the tenants, and, so soon as a building is entirely vacated, demolition is to proceed. Eight houses were closed without the necessity for a closing order. The following statement shows the number of dwelling houses which have been closed or upon which closing orders existed at 31st. December, 1927:-

Ward	All Sizes	Capable of Reconstruction	Nett Condemnation
1	17	0	17
2	5	0	5
3	46	0	46
4	<u>51</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>51</u>
	<u>119</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>119</u>

Most of the houses were old and sadly lacking in modern sanitary standards. A proportion of the number closed, however, were houses situated in Broad Street, which had become totally wrecked through underground workings. As a matter of fact, two gables in two

properties collapsed without any warning while the tenants were still in occupation. Several proprietors in this area have commenced to repair their properties and many of the houses which were vacated are now re-occupied.

Schemes for Improving Insanitary Areas.

As reported last year, no schemes have been formulated, as the need for such schemes has never existed in this burgh. In the meantime, the Local Authority are concentrating on vacant ground in connection with existing dwelling-houses, and a scheme has been submitted by the Fife Coal Company whereby this ground is to be laid out, fenced, and several other improvements carried out. Our experience in the past has been that the service roadways behind rows of houses are nothing more and nothing less than an abomination, and we have been attempting to have a new order of things brought into being. In one instance, the service roadways were stopped and the back courts laid out with the result that a decided improvement and a much more pleasant state of affairs exists, as against those that existed formerly. We see no reason whatever, if people desire congenial surroundings, to prevent such people from doing a little for themselves by carrying their ashbins and such like to and from the street instead of having carts pulling round to both the front door and the back one. Modern housing developments make no provision for cart entrances into the rear of dwelling-houses, and we have never had any complaint regarding the necessity for the tenants of these houses having to cart coal. Ashbins, etc., a short distance from the street to the dwelling-house.

We are pleased to say that the majority of people support us in our opinion, and in co-operation with Fife Coal Company, we are to continue pressing for such improvements.

Overcrowding Dwellings.

During the year the fact that their dwellings were overcrowded was brought to the notice of the 235 householders reported last year. Many cases immediately took steps to remedy matters, many are still waiting an opportunity, but we are sorry to say that many, and they comprise by far the greater number, are anxious to obey the command but feel unequal to finding the necessary rent. We know it simply cannot be done on the wages presently being paid. It seems a hopeless position to be in, and we can only remark that while the department must refrain from taking action against such cases, we hope that so soon as some members of the these families commence working to implement the earnings of the householder or so soon as wages improve, a larger house will be sought for at once.

Effective Disinfecting Agent.

Dealing with the disinfecting of houses in which infectious disease has occurred, the report says:- We would like to say that the most effective disinfecting agent we know is ordinary

soap and water allied to a pair of useful hands, and backed by desire to sweep or wash all the germs out of the house.

Rats and Mice Destruction.

The Local Authority are in combination with the country for the administration of the Rats and Mice Destruction Act, and we often wonder what the responsible officer does beyond visiting this burgh once a year and depositing in our office a bundle of pamphlets presumably for distribution by ourselves. We want to say quite frankly that we will deal with cases as they arise, as has been our practice, but that we object to this annual visit of the officer in question with his bills. It is his duty to administer the Act and also to keep in closer touch with the various public health officials in the county.

March, 1928.

HISTORY OF CATHOLICISM IN FIFE.

WHEN SEVERE PENALTIES

WERE IMPOSED.

The desire on the part of the congregation of St. Margaret's R.C. Church, Dunfermline, to extend the existing church in order that it may be a beautiful and fitting national memorial to St. Margaret, Queen and Patroness of Scotland, recalls vividly to the memory the hard and at times bitter struggles which the faithful have experienced in order to obtain recognition, not only amidst the scenes so vividly associated with the Saintly Queen Margaret's exemplary life, but throughout the whole of Fife.

Dunfermline, the home of Queen Margaret, in conjunction with the whole of Scotland, suffered the full severity of the cruel penal laws enacted against Catholicism. With such severity were these laws acted upon that it became almost impossible for any Catholic to exist and worship God according to his conscience. After the Jacobite rebellions, new and more terrible laws were introduced, with the results that the adherents of the ancient faith were gradually reduced to a condition little better than that of slaves and outlaws. So awful were the persecutions that in 1779, at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Dr. Robertson intimated the number of Catholics in Scotland at about 30,000, while not more than twenty possessed land worth £100 per year.

Some Idea of the afflictions of the poor Catholics of this time can be gathered from a perusal of some of the penal laws, viz: - "All Catholics were ordered to quit the country unless they gave up their religion and subscribed to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith." "The purchase and dissemination of the Catholic books was punished with banishment and confiscation of personal property." Priest were to be pursued and punished with death and confiscation. The harbour and entertainment of them was like wise punishable by confiscation. Those guilty of hearing Mass or of refusing to attend Protestant services, or of trying to convert ant Protestant to the Catholic faith, either by reassuring or by books, were liable to the same punishment. Catholic books were to be searched for and destroyed by the Magistrates, and importers of such books were to be imprisoned during the King's pleasure. The Presbyteries were authorised to summon before them all "Papists and those suspected of Papistry." And to require them to make satisfaction to the king, failing which they were to be denounced to the Privy Council and their property confiscated, and all persons harbouring them were liable to confiscation. Any person suspected of being a priest was liable to perpetual banishment under pain of death if he returned to Scotland; and a similar penalty was incurred by mere presence at a meeting where there is an alter, Mass book, vestments, Papish image, or other Papish trinkets."

Heavy fines were inflicted on noblemen sending their sons to be educated in Catholic schools abroad, and children under Catholic parents or guardians in Scotland were to be taken from them and instructed by some “well affected and religious friend,” the expense of their support and education to be defrayed from their parents property.

Catholics were incapable of acquiring real property either by purchase or by deed of gift or of inheriting estates. If a Catholic became heir to property, unless he renounced his faith, his right of succession lapsed and the property passed to the nearest Protestant heir. A Protestant turning Catholic forfeited his whole heritable estate to the nearest Protestant heir. Catholics could be neither governors, schoolmasters, guardians, or factors, a fine of a thousand merks being imposed on those who employed them in such capacities. They were forbidden to touch any art, science, or exercise any of any sort under a penalty of five hundred merks, and a similar amount was imposed on any protestant who employed a Catholic servant, the informer in such cases being entitled to the amount of the fine as his reward.

These are but a few in the iniquitous statutes which almost wiped out the Catholic faith in Scotland.

Oppression Relaxed.

In the year 1763 the number of Catholic communicants in Fife and Angus was only 59, and these were under the charge of Father Robert Grant. This number does not seem to have appreciably increased for some time after the repeal of the penal laws (June 3rd, 1793), and at that time there were only a very small number in Dunfermline, who were accustomed to meet in the house of one of their number, and in default of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, united in saying the Rosary and other prayers. About this time Bishop Paterson decided to send a priest from Edinburgh once every six weeks to give them Mass on a Sunday. It is impossible to say where the services were held, except that they took place in the house of a Mrs MacStay, who, as late as 1892, was alive and well in New Orleans, U.S.A.

As early as 1834 Dunfermline formed part of a parish extending from Campsie (Stirlingshire) to Kirkcaldy. The records include a baptism in Kirkcaldy and a marriage in Dunfermline by the Rev. Paul McLaughlan. In 1846 the number of Catholics in Fife seems to have been sufficient to call for the full time services of a priest, and the Rev. Father Aeneas Dawson was appointed, with the whole of Fife as his parish and with parishioners in all corners. He took up his residence in Dunfermline probably in July, 1848, for in the beginning of the register of baptism is written “The first baptismal kept at Dunfermline since the overthrow of the Church of Scotland; Begun 26th July, 1848. For all baptisms connected with the Mission of Dunfermline which have occurred previous to this date see the baptismal register kept in Edinburgh.”

Father Dawson must have been a great man. The register of baptisms show that he must have been constantly moving around his extensive parish, and that he baptised children all over Fife. In 1849 the number of baptisms in his district – in the towns of Culross, Dunfermline, Lochgelly, Kirkcaldy, Leven, Newburgh, Kinross, Cupar, etc. – were 86, and the number of marriages 16. He lived in Dunfermline in the Town House, in a room put at his disposal through the kindness of the Magistrates, and this room was also his church on Sundays. He also opened places of devine worship in Kirkcaldy, Newburgh, Cupar, Lochgelly, and Culross. He had afterwards a large room fitted as a chapel in a building known as St. Catherine's, opposite the Abbey gates, at the entrance to Pittencrieff Glen.

A Riot in 1852

In May, 1852, a riot occurred in Dunfermline, when the rabble decided to expel all Catholics from the city. The majority of them seem to have collected and marched to Inverkeithing, where fifty dragoons met them and escorted them back to Dunfermline, where they were lodged in the Town Hall and provided with by some of the principal citizens with blankets, rations, and ale. Bishop Carruthers, then an old man over eighty years of age, on hearing of the trouble his poor people were in, hastened to Dunfermline, where he was shown every kindness by the Provost and Magistrates, Procurator-Fiscal, and Sheriff-Substitute. He returned to Edinburgh, but the worry had been too much for his feeble body and he died within a few days.

In the same year, 1852, a Father O'Breine came from Ireland to assist Father Dawson, taking up his residence in Kirkcaldy, and having charge of the East of Fife. In August of the same year Father Dawson seems to have departed for Canada to look after the spiritual welfare of the many North Country Catholics who had been forced to emigrate. He was a native of Banffshire, studied in Paris for seven years, and was ordained at Blairs by Bishop Carruthers in April 1835. Thereafter he worked in Dumfries, Perth, and Edinburgh before coming to Dunfermline. In Canada he laboured for well nigh 40 years in St. Andrew's Parish, Ottawa. In spite of the enormous amount of parish work he had to perform, he found time to devote to literature. In his early days he translated some French works into English. In Canada he, amidst his parochial duties found time for original work, contributing largely to the press essays, reviews, poems, and was a lecturer of repute, and an orator of no mean standing.

Fathers Dawson's place in Fife was taken by Father O'Breine, and so once again the county was under the charge of one priest. This state of affairs continued till 1853, when Father John Stuart was appointed to Kirkcaldy and East Fife. Father O'Breine remained in Dunfermline until 1855, when he went back to his native Ireland, Father Stuart taking his place, with a residence in Viewfield House, Dunfermline. On April 19th, 1856, 229 persons were confirmed by Bishop Gillies at Dunfermline, and the baptism register for that year showed that over 140 Catholics were baptised in Fife.

Memory of Rev. Father Stuart.

In 1859 the Rev. William Smith took up his residence in Oakley and Father Stuart removed to Lochgelly, returning to Dunfermline again in 1860, and remaining there till 1864. There are still a few old people in the district who remember Father Stuart, and revere his memory. In this connection an old lady in Lassodie recalls how on one occasion Father Stuart was sent for to attend a dying man at Leslie (twenty miles distant). He arrived on foot in the small hours of the morning, and after administering the sacrament to the dying man, drank a cup of tea and proceeded to walk back to Dunfermline.

In 1859 a Catholic school was opened in Dunfermline, and in 1864 Father Grant succeeded Father Stuart. The new priest devoted himself to Dunfermline and Lochgelly, and in 1867 Lochgelly was given over to the charge of the priest at Kirkcaldy. Father Grant did not possess the physical strength to undertake the care of such a large parish, and he was transferred to Lochee, his place being taken by Father McKerrel, who found a school awaiting him, a music hall for a church, and the necessity of providing his own lodgings. He immediately set himself to the task of erecting a school chapel and dwelling house. The present Catholic school in Dunfermline was caused to be erected by him. It was only a one-storied building then, and the priests' house was situated immediately above the part which served as the sanctuary. The school chapel was opened by Father McKerrel in 1873, and he also opened a chapel in Cowdenbeath in 1868.

Although the new school chapel was a very great improvement on the previous accommodation, it was still felt that it was far from being worthy of the home of St. Margaret, as may be gleaned from the account of the opening ceremony in the Catholic Directory of 1874. In 1879 Monsignor McKerrel was appointed to Stirling, but he loved Dunfermline so much that when advancing years and infirmity made it no longer to carry on his active work, he retired to Dunfermline, where he passed away in 1902. His successor in Dunfermline was Father J.B. Hare, who came from Kirkcaldy, and who was responsible for the building of a church in Lochgelly. He in turn was succeeded by Rev. Stephen Culhane in 1887, who had charge of Dunfermline, Cowdenbeath, Lochgelly, and Leslie, but after two years service Father Culhane, who did not belong to the diocese of Edinburgh, was called to his native land by his Bishop, and the Rev. George Mullan (now Mgr. Of Falkirk) took his place.

Father Mullan.

A native of Dunfermline, it was natural that Father Mullan should have the interest of his parish at heart, combined with a great reverence for St. Margaret, and it was from his fertile brain that sprang the splendid idea to have a church erected in Dunfermline to the honour and glory of God and as a national memorial to the saintly Queen of Scotland, who had reigned in Dunfermline. To this end he devoted all his power and energies, and preparations for the National Memorial Church were begun in 1890. The ground was given by Mr Smith Sligo of Inzievar, Oakley, who had also given the ground on which the

present school stands. The original plans for the church showed a magnificent building, but so far it has only been able to accomplish a part of the scheme. The church as it stands was opened on June 17th, 1896, by the late Archbishop MacDonald. The present Archbishop Smith, then Bishop of Dunkeld, sang the Mass, and Archbishop McGuire was also present. The sermon was preached by the late Canon McGuiness. Unfortunately the time was not opportune to make a national appeal, and therefore to-day the memorial remains only half-built. If all true Scotsmen knew this fact, surely this condition would not long remain, as St. Margaret is a name that is honoured and revered by wherever Scottish Catholics are found, and they are scattered all over the world to-day.

It must have been a sad day for Mgr. Mullan when he received orders to leave Dunfermline and his unfinished task, to labour elsewhere. It still remains his proudest wish – according to many who know him – that some day he will return to Dunfermline to complete the beautiful memorial which he so splendidly began.

Rev. David Robertson.

During his stay in Dunfermline, Mgr. Mullan enlarged the school, adding an additional storey to the existing building, and also enlarged the presbytery. It was also during his stay that the Sisters of Charity were introduced into the city in 1898. He left Dunfermline in 1903, and was succeeded by the Rev. David Robertson, who laboured till 1916, when he was removed to Lennoxton, whence, after a period of eight years' service, and owing to failing health, he went to Selkirk in 1924 to spend the remainder of his days.

He died in St Rachel's Home, Edinburgh, during the present year. During his period of service in Dunfermline he saw that the growing number of Catholics could not be properly looked after from the town, and a separate mission was formed for Rosyth and Inverkeithing. He also extended the Dunfermline school.

Rev. W. Mellen and Dr. S. France.

His successor was the Rev. William Mellen, who took charge in 1916, and it was during Father Mellen's time that the last of the heavy mission debt was finally cleared off. Father Mellen was called to Lennoxton in 1924, and is now at St. Columba's, Edinburgh. The Rev. Samuel France, D.D., who came from Haddington, succeeded to the charge, but his health, which was previously undermined, completely broke down in the summer of 1926, and after a period of rest in a nursing home, he attempted to resume his work. After a short time, however, it proved too much for him and he retired from active service, his death occurring shortly afterwards.

Rev. Father Gray.

The present priest in charge of St. Margaret's is the Rev. Father J.A. Gray, who has already established a niche for himself in the affections of his people by his kindly influence and unceasing labours. The congregation numbers 1500 souls, and the church is too small to accommodate them, even despite the fact that only a short time ago Rosyth and Inverkeithing were made into a separate mission, with a beautiful church and school at Rosyth.

Surely the time has come for Scotsmen all over the world to remember the debt they owe to St. Margaret, the Queen and Patroness of Scotland, and come with willing hands to help to finish the nation's monument to the memory of her who did so much for their faith, and for their country. Surely it cannot be that Scotland can ever forget her, that Scottish Catholics, wherever they may be, could be unwilling to help raise this monument to her everlasting memory.

December, 1928

"A Wee Keek Back"

DISTRESS IN FIFE MINING

AREAS.

Position Reviewed by a Visitor.

The following letter has been sent to us with a special request for publication. It is a remarkable document, and should be carefully digested by our readers.

(To the Editor of the "West Fife Echo")

Sir – Apparently it is fashion at present to befriend the poor miner at this stage. To get at the truth of the conditions I have gone carefully into the position of affairs in the most convenient area, which in this case is Fife. I am fully versed with the awful conditions that have existed in South Wales for some time, where the miner and his dependants, through the closing of the pits, has not had the necessaries of life. If there is any truth in the statement that the conditions that exist in Fife are in any way similar to those in South Wales, yes, and in some other parts of England, then it is high time something was done.

I went to Fife expecting to find distress, and while I came across cases where the miner has been better off in his life, I have yet to come across cases where serious cases of distress in the Fife area. The first place I visited was Cowdenbeath, as that is reckoned to be the capital of Fife as far as the coal industry is concerned. I arrived on Friday evening, and decided, apart from a general look around, to postpone minute investigation until the next day. I looked out for some place of amusement to pass the evening. By this time I had begun to feel sorry for amusement owners in the stricken centres, but that did not last very long. I got the surprise of my life to find a picture hall full, and it was a very large hall. I also went to see how the other place was faring, and there also I found a late audience. Not much distress here, sure, I said to myself. I then decided to make a tour of other halls in the town. I found an exceptionally large gathering at a concert, a variety show going on in another; and in several smaller halls the noise coming from the miners told me at once that quite a large number of people were enjoying the foxtrots and one-steps. In the High Street the shops were not too busy, but still there was a fair amount of business being done, and I dropped into one to see how things were.

The shopkeeper told me that people have no money. But I asked where do they get the money for entertainment? "Aye," he said, "you've struck it, they have always enough for the pictures." Then between the two of us we made a rough and ready calculation, that out of the fourteen thousand of a population Cowdenbeath, allowing for the shopkeepers who cannot go to entertainments during the week-end, the attendance at the places during that time was an average of slightly over one visit per head of the population. The average price to admission is over sixpence, or at least that amount. This was surely not meant as a sign of the distress I was led to believe existed in this mining community where I was told children were going about with bare feet shivering with cold and hunger.

My friend the shopkeeper said that the annoying thing about it was that when he went for his tea, he often had to pass a queue in whose ranks were many who had previously come pleading they could not pay for goods supplied during and after the coal stoppage. "I have never seen or experienced", he said "such a time as now for sales of work. People have no money for their church, and the result is the Sale of Work. We shopper give the stuff, and not only those but we lose the sales for folk to go to these functions, and very often they get the goods for less than what they cost us."

I went by car to Lochgelly and found practically the same conditions existed there. One thing, however, was apparent. There were not the crowds in the public-houses I have seen in former days. The chief craze seems to be pictures and such classes of entertainment. Cigarette smoking is also on the increase, nearly every man I met having a fag in his mouth. A slight calculation at sixpence per ten must make the cigarette bill for West Fife an alarming one, the only redeeming part feature being that a large part of the bill is returned to the Government in the shape of duty.

Returning to Cowdenbeath I fell in with a miner sitting on a wall, one whom I took to be an ordinary or everyday type, such as I had been accustomed chatting to in former days. In short time I got him talking about the general conditions. Is there any distress in this district, I asked. There was none as far as he could see, but there was a certain class not very well off, and the unfortunate point about it was that the class who suffered most were those who were trying to do their best. "For instance, here am I working hard all week, and all I can make on an average is £2 per week. That has to keep six of us, and I am paying rent and a half to the landlord to pay up for the time we were idle. The New Year is coming on soon and I cannot see my way to have any enjoyment, as taxes have to be paid. At this stage a man and his wife passed, whereupon he said, "Look at that, there is a man and his wife just returning home from the pictures. That man has been on the dole and able-bodied relief from the parish for years. They get boots and clothes from the School Board and everything that is going extra. He has made up his mind not to work any more, and I have to keep him. He can go on holidays at holiday time, and he can go to all kinds of entertainments, yet he has the sympathy and help of the Public Bodies. It's the old story that they cannot see his children starve."

But there is nothing for him. He is unemployed. "He can as easily get work as I can, and I am not idle, and he only gets a few shillings less relief from the parish than I have for a wage. He will not work, and if you talk to him on the quiet he will admit it. He is the kind of man we are supporting from the rates, not only by relief but by giving him boots and clothes from the School Board for his children at school, because his income is under the scale."

Then why don't you apply for these things?

"Because if every working miner and other worker in Fife who is under the scale was applying it would be a calamity for the ratepayers.

But these people can't live decently and squander their money like that.

"Yes, that is true, but the poor shopkeeper and ratepayer are the losers."

At least they cannot look forward to a very happy New Year in the mining community.

"If you saw these folk I am referring to buying their stock of liquor in bottles it would surprise you."

The next day I made further inquiries and found that the Local Parish Council was paying well over £100 per week in able-bodied relief, something outside their ordinary poor relief – over £6000 per year to be met by the taxation from the workers of the town and parish.

Nearly one adult in every three at Cowdenbeath is unemployed, and yet a member of a public body estimated in my presence that every week-end at Cowdenbeath about £500 was spent foolishly. "I would not mind so much," he said, "but when one pays a sixpence or ninepence for the pictures, a large share of that money goes to pay the cinema stars who are getting ridiculously high salaries in America, money that leaves Cowdenbeath like coal on a belt conveyor."

On Monday I visited the schools. I did not come across the children who were alleged to be going about barefooted to school. At a restaurant I entered into a conversation with a teacher, who said that he never came across a pupil who, by reason of the lack of clothing or food, was unable to take in the education given. "What is wrong in Cowdenbeath," he said, "is that the miner during the war got good money and learnt to spend it. Since the war he has not forgotten how to spend it. The dole has made a large section of the population a class of beggars and completely spoilt the young men and women."

I had other talks with young men I saw knocking about, and some openly said that they were not such fools as to work so long as the dole was there. I asked one strong young man why he did not go to Canada, as there were plenty of openings for him out west. The reply was that he did not want all work and no dole.

I left that district right sorry for the folk there. Distress I found none. I have a sympathy for the class of miners who are working hard to keep the others idle, giving them in relief as much as would make the fishermen of the east coast or the north of Scotland, or the agricultural labourers of England quite happy, but how to deal with a class of this district who are exploiting the community in every way possible. But how to deal with a political class who are out to raise discontent in the minds of workers and preach sedition in the minds of the loafers must lie entirely with the people themselves.

I Am, etc.,
A Visitor

January 1929

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Distress in the Mining Areas.

Four letter to the Editor of the West Fife Echo in response to the previous article that appeared in the week's previous edition.

Sir, - Your correspondent, "A Visitor", who claims that he found no distress amongst the miners of Cowdenbeath, must not be taken too seriously, nor must his general condemnation of those in receipt of the dole as ne'er-want-works be taken as being the general attitude of the big majority of the unemployed miners. "Visitor" is, I believe, if I may be allowed both a guess and an Irishism, no visitor at all, and his nom-de-plume will not hide his identity to many in Cowdenbeath. However, for the sake of argument, I shall try to answer his review of the present position in Cowdenbeath, as if his nom-de-plume were bona fide. "Visitor" was quite amazed to find the miners with their wives and families seeking and partaking of amusement at the New Year. Little he knows - or does he want to know? - that a small amount was, for many weeks put by, previous to the New Year festivities. "Visitor" seeing a few hundred persons spending a hardly saved shilling or two, sees reckless extravagance. How dare they amuse themselves! Seemingly "Visitor's" pet aversion is the cinema, so he had a good tilt at it and illogically ascribes the distress of the miner to a rabid form of squandermania on this particular form of amusement, and cigarettes. Is "Visitor" aware that the cinema is the cheapest entertainment going? To the poor man it is his only travel medium to all parts of the world, without which, strange lands, peoples and customs, would be as a sealed book to him. Is it extravagant for a miner to spend one shilling on the pictures. This princely amount will admit himself, his wife and two children, to a close on two hours entertainment. "Visitor" would perhaps rather have them all play golf or patronise grand opera. According to "Visitor" and his accommodating miner friend only those in receipt of parish relief or the dole are able to indulge in holidays and entertainments. It is perfectly correct to state that the working miner's wages are too meagre to allow him a decent holiday, and as far as entertainment, he has very little time to spare for that. To state that those in receipt of relief can afford, and do enjoy in a small way the amenities of life is a calculated and wicked mis-statement. The scale of relief is fixed and administered according to recipient's financial distress, and the amount received requires very careful spending on necessities, any feasting is naturally followed by famine, and want of thrift deals out its own punishment. However, we are not dealing with the admittedly thriftless few, but with the big majority. "Visitor" and his shopman friend's calculation, rough and ready as to the attendance of miners at the cinema can, along with a "member of a public body's estimate of £500 spent foolishly every weekend at Cowdenbeath," be brushed aside as having no foundation in fact. It can, I think, be safely presumed that whatever is spent belongs to the spender, who has a perfect right to exercise his or her judgement in the manner of spending. "Visitor's" letter is particularly mischievous at the present moment, when the general public is responding so generously

to appeals for help for the miners. The appeal, in general, are coming from those whose knowledge of the miners and their sufferings is first hand, and of a longer period than a few casual hours, as is the case of "Visitor". Judged by his article, it seems "Visitor" is definitely against the unemployed miner and any form of relief given him and his dependants.

I am, etc.

Councillor John Slora

Arcade Cinema
Cowdenbeath

Sir, - Although I tried to follow your advice and digest carefully “Position Reviewed by a Visitor”, unfortunately it stuck in my throat, and for compensation I send this letter with a special request for publication. If these slurs of the Fife distress are to be continued, “A Visitor” and his twin brother “West Fife”, who has been writing the same style of rubbish to “The Courier,” had better accept the challenge of a public debate in Dundee, the subject being “Does distress exist in West Fife?” which was given by “Unemployed Miner’s Wife” in “The Courier” on 5th January. When it come to that they realised that a good retreat was better than a bad battle. Cowards to criticise under a nom-de-plume the men they are in all probability depending on. I can assure “A Visitor” that the miner’s wives are not going to let him off, and if we do, it will be with a severe bang. His impertinence, plus his low standard of intelligence, is appalling. The lesson from his review is we are a set of lazy loafers whose sole aim in life is spending other people’s money in our mad race for pleasure. Wicked people to spend 3d (not 6d) on pictures at the week-end; in future sit at home even if it costs the same for light, and keep your mind on your worries, for around you everything is threadbare. Long periods of unemployment wear everything out, even the nerves of the fine men and women in Fife who are not “beggars.”

As to the shopkeepers, if that is an example of their opinions, the miners of Cowdenbeath-Lochgelly area would do well to practice their policy of economic efficiency, and so teach them what it means to bite the hand that feeds them. The same applies to the teachers and all the others who have not the courage to make their remarks in public. They know too well which side their bread is buttered, and so they don’t want to resort (like us) to dry toast. How amused I was at his remarks about the children. They may be devoid of decent boots and underclothing at times, but never will they starve as long as there is a breath left in the bodies of their mothers.

I challenge anyone to produce one in every hundred of the 30,000 unemployed who can be genuinely called lazy. If they can find that one, are the ninety-nine left in each hundred to be classed with him? Prior to the existence of the dole there were always a few who had no inclination for work, but you will find more of that amongst the employing than the unemployed. I am neither a Communist nor a Labourite, but I cannot help thinking there is something behind (I) the great cry for help for distressed miners, and (II) also behind the comments by such as “A Visitor”. First, the phrase, “Bread of Revolution,” occurs to me. By that, I mean that the unemployed army, plus the army of men working for the starvation wages, were going to prove a menace, and hence they try to silence us by offering us charity. Secondly, we have these “reviews” broadcasted through the press to keep the two a variance – the worker, the enemy of the dole man, and vice versa. The march to London is to demand that unemployment, having become a national crisis, should be made a national charge. We want remedies, not charity; the problem is too big for that. Experience teaches, and my sympathy is with them on the dole ect. My husband was employed in a pit here for twenty years, but after drawing weekly compensation there was no work for him when he recovered his health. This is a common occurrence, he only succeeded in getting work with another Company last month after twenty months of dole. During that we received 32 shillings weekly. After rent, coal, light etc., were paid, I had

17 shillings to keep six of us in food and clothing. My message is “workers and workless cling together, united we win, and divided we fall.” Those who bravely fought for the rights of the moneyed class in 1914 can surely stand together in 1929, when our children cry for bread in the land of plenty.

I Am, etc.,

Worker's Wife.

Sir, - Might I be allowed to congratulate your valuable paper on its publication of what I consider to be a true description of the supposed distress in Fife mining areas as conveyed by your correspondent who signs himself "A Visitor." "Visitor's" letter is a valuable contribution, in so far as his statements are made in an unbiased manner – he is describing what he, as an outsider, has seen and thinks true. I have lived in West of Fife all my life, and I can truthfully say that any distress that exists in the district is due in no uncertain manner to the lack of desire on the miner's part to do an honest days work. "What is the good of working" he asks, "when I can get along just as well on the dole and have my bairns fed and clad by the School Management Committee?" Yes, that is the snag. Things have so operated that the miner who does no work is just as comfortable off as his mate who works hard from one week's end to the other. But that is not what sticks in my throat. The man who depends on his employment benefit and parish relief is the man who can go to the pictures every change of film, who can get his "nip" when his throat is dry, and who is quite happy to jog along while the other fellow pays sweetly for his comparative comfort. It is little wonder that the employed man begins to question whether, after all, life is worth the candle. The miner who lives by the sweat of his brow, pays his rates and taxes, attends to the needs of his children, and refuses to go to the Parish Council for relief is no better off than the other fellows, and there are many of them, who lie back at their ease and say, "Ah well, we've got enough to satisfy our hunger and give us a bit of enjoyment when we need it, so why worry?"

There may be distress in the Fife mining areas, but I have failed, after keen observation, to see any of it, unless the fact that a great majority of the miners have become lazy and indolent is a distressing one. And such is, without the shadow of a doubt, the case, much as I regret to admit it. Once the miners make up their minds to seek work earnestly and willingly, I feel confident that there will be fewer unemployed and less supposed distress in the mining areas of Fife. The miners would be well advised to:

Let us then be up and doing
 With a heart for any fate;
 Still achieving, still pursuing,
 Learn to labour and to wait.

I Am, etc.,

Employed Miner

Sir, - I was very much struck by a contribution in your columns last week anent the distress in mining areas in West Fife by a person who signed himself "A Visitor." He was indeed a visitor, very much a visitor at that, and something of a hustler into the bargain. To visit a place for a couple of days, collect a certain amount of information, then to depart and pose as something of an authority on the general conditions of the place he graced – or ought I say disgraced? – with his presence, is reminiscent of the Yankee tourist who blows into London, boats it over to Paris, does the Riveria, all in ten days, and then goes back to U.S.A. with a fund of information about Europe. "Visitor" waxes eloquent regarding the miner earning £2 per week on which he has to keep six of a family and pay rent and a half to the landlord. All I can say is if "Visitor" regards his quoted instance as a condition of comparative affluence and not as one deserving of help, then I would surely hate to be in a condition which he would describe as "distress". He raises hands in holy horror at an unestimated calculation of the cigarette bill for the West of Fife. Well, if "Visitor" has ever been in the position of being "up against it" in the trenches for instance, where rations arrived with a cheerful irregularity – he would know that the 'fag' has a wonderful soothing effect on an empty stomach. I have seen men in acute stages of starvation who would have sold their souls for one blink of "Lady Nicotine." When "Visitor" next honours West Fife with a visit, I trust he will not indulge himself in picture palaces or catering establishment, but, that he will get a guide who will trot him around Bowhill, Glenraig, Lochore, and Steelend, where he will be apt to see something of distress worth writing about.

I Am, etc.,

Inhabitant

January 1929

WEST FIFE MINING

COMMUNITIES.

Growth and Greatness of Bowhill.

To the mind of the untutored, Bowhill is a word understood and used in a comprehensive sense. It is applied to the whole of the large and populous district surrounding Cardenden Station on the three sides of east, north, and south. That is a mistake. The term Bowhill can only be applied with accuracy, or a big measure of it, to the district north of the conglomeration of unsightly offices which are dignified by the name of a station. Cardenden is a distinct and isolated village. So is Dundonald, further south. Cardenden has been Cardenden, or perhaps Carden, for centuries. Dundonald was a centre of mining development even before the days of our great grandfathers. It derives its name from the distinguished people who owned it. Cardenden was called after the Lairds of Carden, who had a fortified keep in the place. It bore that name until some stupid person, with a taste for the superoragive language, tacked on the additional and useless “den”. The Lairds of Carden were the elect of the land. Their ashes sleep peacefully in the arboreal glades surrounding the private cemetery in the adjoining woods.

Old Stories and Legends.

To return to Bowhill. The name, which is now so closely linked with one of the most up-to-date colliery ventures in Fife, if not in Scotland, had at one time only a farm to possess it. The farm overlooked and dominated by the huge pithead of the village colliery, still stands. In bygone days it had the alternative titles of Corpse Ha’ and the Roundhouse. From the ghostly superstition that the house was built by people who robbed the dead out of their graves arose the term “Corpse Ha’”. The shape of the steading accounts for the other name. If it has no other claim upon posterity than that of giving a name to the colliery and the village, it will be well remembered. It will ever be associated with an industrial romance. Whitehall, another farm to the east of Cardenden, was a stone and lime oasis in a fertile desert – to coin a hideous paradox – of growing crops and healthy plantations. It is a far cry down the ages to the legend, which clings to it. She was a brave widow who occupied it, and her mind was ever gifted with that handy quality of “presence”. This woman’s stores were being plundered one day by a marauding tramp. When the widow was done with that robber he had gone to some other clime to thieve. She caught him head downwards in her meal barrel. Giving him a tilt at the nether extremities she kept him in the barrel until the meal that was to be his succour was his suffocation. The farm of Bowhill boasts of no such tragedy, either real or imaginary. Fully half-a-century ago, or more, before the main line of the railway was made, the resting places between the fine old colliery villages of Clunie and the then village of Lochgelly, could be counted on the fingers of one’s hands. They were Whitehall, Carden Hill, Bowhill Farm, Kirkhill, “Katie Wishart’s”. Balgonie Farm, Jamphlars, and Moray

Knowes. The stories of Whithall and Bowhill farm have been told; of Cardenden Hill, there is nothing to say; Kirkhill consisted of a few thatched houses, one of which domiciled the country shoemaker, and stood on part of the site of the cemetery; "Katie Wishart's" was the homely designation of a way-side public-house, occupied by a homely woman who on Sabbath, as on other days, made her customers welcome, and supplied them with a piece of oatcake for consumption with their dram; Balgonie was a small estate; Jamphlars, two or three houses; and Moray Knowes, a little farm, named after the clerical gentleman who built it. There was not much difference on the district 20 years ago. To-day the aspect of the place is entirely changed. Instead of isolated structures dotting the landscape, one sees a continuous line of houses, with row after row now running at right angles to them.

The Management and the Workmen.

Bowhill is now a busy place. The colliery has made it so. One cannot plant a great industrial concern like a modern pit working anywhere without providing the corollary accommodation for the workers. So, as the pits were opened out and became fully manned with 1500 men, provision was made for the greater number of these. As the demand grew, so was the expansion made. By the Company, who are brickmakers as well as colliers, the greater number of the houses were built. Some of the more industrious and enterprising men built cottages for themselves, the school came, so did the churches and the public-houses. And all the other institutions which form part of the paraphernalia of communal life. As a class of workmen, Bowhill miners are regarded as having reached as high a standard, socially and morally, as may be found anywhere. Some people indeed regard them as the pick of Fife. Without wishing to be unduly flattering, let it be said that they are, on the whole, a sober, peace-loving, law-abiding class. Their "Store" book is not lean, nor are they unacquainted with the virtues of the Post Office Savings Bank. They know the public-houses too, but are not unduly bibulous, although each of the five institutions of that kind does a trade which secures an income that would make some of your highly-paid professional men turn green with envy. Bowhill people must be sober. The strict discipline which obtains at the colliery knows no alternative. A man may drink, but if he loses work by it, Bowhill no longer remains the scene of the remnant of his activities. If a worker loses two shifts after pay Saturday, a doctor's line must be produced; otherwise something is said and – often done. Just as unsteadiness is frowned upon at the colliery, so is the steady, industrious man, encouraged. No more potent influence against the fault of unrelia- bleness in its initial stages can be had than the entire deprivation of work. And the Company would wield that influence in a manner, which although not despotic, lacks nothing in the way of firmness.

Happy and Healthy Recreation.

In order to discourage drinking the Company provide various counter attractions to the public-house. They mix philanthropy with business. It pays them to do so. They not only retain the men they want, but they easily recoup themselves for the outlays incurred in maintaining those counter attractions. They have erected a large billiard room, which

houses four tables. Owing to the extensive patronage bestowed on that institution by the younger men, the Company incur no loss in the maintenance, although their charge is the small one of 4d per hour for the use of the table. For the use of the reading room a merely nominal sum is asked. This is the howff of the older men, who, when tired of reading, can engage in draughts, chess, or dominoes, in each of which games tournaments are held periodically. Cottage gardening is another recreation which is pursued with pleasure. To stimulate a taste for village beautification in that direction the Company provide prizes for the best kept plots, and any day or evening the villager who is fortunate enough to possess a front plot may be seen peacefully pursuing his taste for horticulture. Other forms of sport which thrive in the village are a quoiting club, which possess some deadly throwers of the ring; a football club; and a motor cycling club. This last named, which is a new-born thing, but not without vigour, surely testifies as soundly as one could wish to the leading of thrifty lives on the part of the young men. Motor cycles were things of luxury, procurable only by a class who did not work at the face for their livelihood, not long ago. Curiously enough, neither poultry nor pigeon keeping is carried on to any great extent, and the whippet is a breed of dog which is as conspicuous by its absence in Bowhill as it is ubiquitous in other mining districts. Whippet racing does not commend itself in certain high quarters, and that is knowledge that is abroad.

The Higher Ideal and Levels.

Things religious and educational are attended to in much the same way as in similar districts. While there is a considerable amount of non-churchgoing there is no parade of the unseemly levity which can be observed in other mining districts on Sabbath. The denominations represented are the Established, the U.F., the Baptist, and the Roman Catholics. All are attempting to raise the social as well as the spiritual status of the people, and with no little measure of success. Scholastically, the village is forging ahead. The best index to the prosperity of a place is the size of its schools. Some four or five years ago the Auchterderran Board managed to get along with the old school and an iron erection. Four years ago the administrators of local educational affairs thought they had said the last word in school buildings for a generation to come, when they erected a handsome new school with accommodation for 1200 children. So great has been the pressure already, however, that another school, to accommodate 900 pupils, is being built on ground a little to the north of the station, and the Board are sorry that they parted with their iron structure to the Catholics, who use it for worship.

S has been said, co-operation is represented in the Co-operative Society, but it is no stronger than that of which the Miners' Union is typical. Bowhill miners are members of the Union almost to a man. At their Branch meetings, which are held in the dingy hall above the rather mean branch premises of the Lochgelly Co-operative Society, the discussions are conducted with a vigour which at time develops into fierceness. Yet no animosity is cherished.

There is no doubt that there has been a decided step towards social advancement in recent years. The people have a higher ideal in life. One very kindly old native of the district – a

man whose forebears go back for generations, whose great, great, grandfather suffered imprisonment for his agitation against serfdom, and lost his life in early manhood as a result of the confinement, - will not admit that the inhabitant of Bowhill to-day is honester or of more independent mind than the native of the district 60 or 70 years ago. Then, he said, there was more honesty. To put it in his own words – “A man could leave an axe or a saw lying about without the least fear o’ hae’n it stealt. Could he dae that noo? Men in thae days were faur keener on releegion and politics than noo. The colliers were cleverer than the farmers in arguin’ their pint. An’ whaur dae ye find the great respect for the Sawbath day noo that we had? We dauredna whustle on the Sawbath, an’ I dinna like tae hear it yet, and it wis considered even a sacrilege to pull oot the drawer whaur the fiddle lay. I mind o’ findin’ a green lintie in a near-by hedge ae Sawbath, when I hed nae claes tae gang tae the Kirk wi’. I telt ma grannie I hed fund it ‘Whan did ye fund it?’ asked ma grannie. ‘On Sawbath’ said I. ‘Weel,’ she said, ‘if ye canna gang tae the kirk ye’re tae bide in the hoose, and no’ gang stavaigin’ about on the Sawbath day’.

Such was the verdict of this fine old type of humanity. One cannot say “Amen” to it, yet what use will there be in attempting to dispel a cherished belief, even although it be based on a non-comprehensive outlook, if not on a pleasant delusion. Bowhill is a village of which Fife may be proud.

June 13, 1908

WEST FIFE MINING

COMMUNITIES.

Lochore and Glencraig.

These villages stretch in a long irregular line north from Lochgelly Station for nearly two miles. Ten years ago they had practically no existence. To define the boundary line of each requires considerable geographical acumen. The villager may be able to sub-divide the continuous street according to the local appellations, but the visitor cannot. All that he can say is that Glencraig is the first place to be met on leaving Lochgelly, Crosshill next, and Lochore last. Mushroom fashion, the district has grown like its rival, Bowhill. Comparisons between the two localities must end there. Too great an indiscretion would be committed in making them.

The Transformation in a Decade.

When in 1901, the last census was taken the population of the district was 1500. today 6500 souls are resident in the place. A decade ago, one saw an occasional house as he ascended the long steep slopes from the station. Now there is an almost unbroken line after one passes the Lochgelly Iron and Coal Company's recently deepened and enlarged pit. In those days the place was neither invaded by a Trust Public-House Company nor a Co-operative Society. A palatial building, standing isolated on the highway, well up on the brow face, and overlooking a wide expanse of moorland country on either side, was the local public-house. That castle-like structure, now incorporated as part of the village of Crosshill, and occupied and owned by the resident J.P, has the company of another public-house owned by the East of Scotland Public-House Trust, and preparations are being made for the erection of a second Gothenburg – on ground at the threshold of Lochore. Other evidences of the development of the place are the healthy shops which puncture here and there the line of dwellings, the presence of three branches of "the store", owned by two different societies, who for the nonce, have forgotten the evil of overlapping; the inauguration of a reading-room; the existence of a church; the recent enlargement of Ballingry School, and the prospective erection of another school to meet the needs of Glencraig.

Lochore Castle.

Industrial rather than historical romance is the keynote of the place. Yet the fragmentary ruin of Lochore Castle, which stands gaunt and ghostly in a wide circumference of pasture land – once the bed of Loch Ore – recalls a period which is seen dimly at the end of a vista of centuries. In the interests of the public weal, if not as a historical relic, crude may be, but unique in its masonry and contrasting vividly in its massiveness, with the flimsy structures which have invaded its domain, and which will yet outlast, the Castle ought to be enclosed and preserved. When time has laid its icy hand on the mineral workings, and

nothing remains to tell of the present day glory of the place except for the bings of pit debris, Lochore Castle might still stand to mark an epoch in the history of the place distinct and entirely apart from that associated with industry.

An Unattractive Environment.

The district is not to be judged by its appearance on a summer day, when everything is fresh and fair, any more than the character of its inhabitants generally is to be measured by the unenviable record which it has brought upon itself in the criminal courts. Even on a fine day the place is not idyllic. No colliery village, overlooked by a spewing chimney and a mountain of pit refuse ever was, even after it had maintained the mellowness of age. Much less a district in an embryonic state of development be expected to look like a garden of delight. Flower culture is not a hobby of the inhabitants, nor are the filth polluted streams conducive to the amenity of a place. Yet, one may not look far into the future without seeing well-kept flower plots in front of many of the houses abutting the thoroughfare, nor without witnessing the abolition of sewage pollution by the introduction of a drainage scheme. Some of the cottages are trig-looking structures in their present day freshness, albeit one cannot help commenting upon a taste, or lack of it, which permits a plaster-working imitation of dressed rubble. In good weather the rows are fairly clean; in bad the mess is indescribable. The space between the Lochore rows is not wide enough to allow of village beautification. Nor could the shifting habits of the tenantry, who have no settled interest in the place, give promise of the desired amenity, even were ideal conditions provided. Of red brick are the old rows of Lochore built. Those miners' houses, typical of a bygone day, were erected for those who found an outlet for their activities in the winning of cannel coal at the now defunct collieries of Rosewell and Lochore. They never were pretty, and old age has not improved them. Their most conspicuous feature was a water barrel, which in dry, bright weather receives assistance in its function of ornamentation from the guidman's pit clothes. Lochore is almost cosmopolitan, and it has recently had the addition of that nationality which has proved so undesirable in other mining districts in Scotland, namely, the Pole. He is represented so far by only one family, but who knows, with the conditions prevailing at the pits, when others may not come?

Migratory Workmen – The Seamy Side of Life.

What is the cause of the migratory character of the inhabitants? Various reasons are assigned. By some it is said that the place has not yet developed beyond the state of being obliged to receive the less reputable of other districts in Scotland, notable from the West. Others assert that the character of the work is such that the typical Fife miner does not care to undertake it. Somewhat gassy are some of the seams, rendering the use of the safety lamps a necessity. The "Glennie" is the lamp which is mostly in vogue and it is asserted that its mechanism and structure is such that it does not commend itself so readily to the Scotch miners as to the Englishmen or the Irishmen, both of whom are numerous represented. In any case, the fact has got to be faced that many of the inhabitants are of

anything but settled habits, and that many more are decidedly ill-behaved. Drinking and gambling are the two principal vices. Wild scenes on the highways are of weekly occurrence, as pay-day comes round, and the police have sometime a hot time. The existing public-house accommodation is inadequate for the demands of the district, and congestion with its corollary of rowdiness is frequent rampant. Were the district as quiet as its neighbour, Bowhill, the policing would be adequate, but where there is such a tendency to lawlessness, the best means of stamping it out would be the employment of more officers. Additions police would mean more "cases" for a time, but with the co-operation of Sheriff Shennan, whose imposition of a special tariff is generally commended by the more respectable of the inhabitants, it would mean fewer before very long. Then the coal Companies might be expected to wield a greater influence over the behaviour of their employees. Misdemeanour and unsteadiness ought to be rigorously regarded as an excuse for dismissal, and time to pay fines ought neither to be encouraged in the Court, nor by the colliery officials, who are called upon to pay wages before payment is due. Gambling takes the form of card-playing and pitch and toss, innocent enough recreations when free from the contamination of money exchanges. In this matter the police are powerless. Groups of players lie about in the fields and shuffle cards the day long. This is a matter which might be remedied by sharp action on the part of the owners of the land, if not by the passing of a special bye-law to meet the existing evil. If the coal companies have a duty to the men, so have the men a duty to the coal companies. Much energy, even that expended in uttering oaths, as was said the other night in the place, could be diverted into more healthy channels.

Reforming Agencies.

But the district is not without agencies at work for the betterment of man. There is leaven in the place which may in time leaven the greater part if not the whole lump. Friendly society efforts, as represented by the Oddfellows, the Rechabites, and the Sons of Temperance, is doing beneficial work, and the good Templars are gaining converts. Bad as it still may be, the place is not so rough as it was several years ago. Improvements will come. The Established and U.F. Churches are playing their part in the work of social amelioration. The new U.F Church is increasing in membership, and a movement having been set afoot to provide the minister with a manse, it is being heartily supported by Sir John Wilson having, besides giving indication of subscribing to the object, provided a site free. A bazaar is expected to do the rest. A reading-room was the gift of the Public-House Trust. The inhabitants think that they do not get a fair share of the profits they create, and a locally controlled house is to be established. From that company great things are expected. The reading-room, however, is an institution not to be despised in its function of providing a counter attraction to drinking. It is a neat, compact building, which houses two billiard tables, and provides facilities for draughts, chess, dominoes, etc. Of an evening, many who might otherwise go to the public-house for their "crack" and their game, go to the reading-room. Its library is sufficiently varied to meet the tastes of many readers. In the matter of education, Ballingry School Board as good as may be had in the county. The old school, into which is incorporated the schoolmaster's house, accommodates 750 scholars. To that building there has been a recent addition of a manual instruction room

and a cookery room, and the new school, designed by the son of the father who in 1873 drew the plans for the original school, is to cost £6000. Thus the rising generation, besides having the refining influence of a good education, will be disciplined in morals. Golf is to have its votaries in a short time, a club having been started with a membership of 50, and if good facilities are offered for playing the game, one may look forward not only to the number being augmented, but in the club becoming a potent factor in the elevation of the people. In time Glenraig and Lochore will doubtless bear as high a reputation for respectability and good living as Bowhill. That will be when the agencies of social reform have had time to operate, and when the coal companies, by insisting upon steadiness and sobriety on the part of their men, have weeded out the unfit. By that time the community may have attained the dignity of self-government.

June 20, 1908

WEST FIFE MINING

COMMUNITIES.

Cowdenbeath

Its rapid rise since it became a burgh in 1891 has gained for Cowdenbeath the flattering appellation of “the Chicago of Fife”. At the time it was decided that the village should be freed from the domination of the county authorities and become a self-governing community, Cowdenbeath had a population of 3198. At the present time the population is 10,000, which figure does not include several populous districts lying contiguous to, and might fitly form part of the burgh. Half-a-century ago the passer-by on the Great North Road might have observed a few detached rows. One or two were in what is now Broad Street, and another found location where the Co-operative Society Buildings and the Guthrie Church are. They had seen Cowdenbeath or the greater part of it. Those who live to see fifty years hence may witness a doubled or quadrupled population, with the burgh extending to embrace the districts immediately outside the burgh area, if not detached communities further afield. As the development of the coalfields has been the means of the increase of the population, more particularly during the last thirty years, so it is computed that there is sufficient mineral to withstand the constant operations for the next fifty years. There is no doubt that much of the rise and progress of Cowdenbeath is due to the foresight and energy of Mr Henry Mungall. To Mr Mungall, who became the first Provost of the burgh, must be given the credit of taking the initiative in working the coal for sale purposes. Before then there were some pits worked by the Oakley Iron and Coal Company, whose principal, if not only outlet for the mineral were the blast furnaces at Oakley. He was the principal man in the formation of the Cowdenbeath Coal Company, which afterwards became merged in the Fife Coal Company – one of the most gigantic combinations of the kind in Scotland. At the present time pitheads dot the landscape all around.

Municipal Developments.

Cowdenbeath is by no means a beauty spot, yet it is not without fascination for many people who would never dream of removing from it to districts with greater natural attractions. While the majority of its dwellings are of the plain tenement order, there are a few buildings which relieve the architectural monotony. Since it became a burgh, it has progressed rapidly in a municipal direction. It has its own water supply, its own electric lighting scheme, and not many years ago it faced among other pressing sanitary reforms the provision of septic tanks for the prevention of stream pollution, and now there is in contemplation a scheme for the transference of the control of the gasworks from a private company to the Corporation. It is true that the water supply is now inadequate for the enlarged population, and that the electric light was not the success it was anticipated. Yet they were a step in advance of what had hitherto been.

Prosperous Shops.

Contemporaneous with the coal development naturally came the establishments of shopkeepers. Gradually High Street became lined with attractive premises, and now the burgh boasts of a street equal to any in Dunfermline, and its merchants declare that they can sell as cheaply, if not more cheaply, than the shopkeepers in larger and more important towns. As in other rising Fife communities, the Co-operative movement gained a hold. But through the rascality of a certain individual in its service, it had a terrible set back, and for a time the Society hovered between life and death. Only after the members had agreed to lose a considerable portion of their holdings did it again begin to thrive. Now it is a healthy plant, and an important factor in the life of the place. The burgh has also a branch Savings Bank, which is a flourishing institution, a building company, while the majority of the friendly societies are represented.

Educational Equipment.

Nor can it be said that educationally it has been neglected. Under Mr Mungall, and now under Mr James Terris, the reading of the three R's is well attended to. For many years the Board struggled along with Broad Street School only. Addition after addition was made to it, until now it is a conglomeration of patchwork, nor particularly beautiful architecturally, nor perhaps embodying the essence of convenience in internal design. Since then Foulford School became a necessity, and ultimately the Board have been compelled to erect a third school, in which special provision is to be made for instruction in mining that third school is only in process of construction. Creditable if not flattering reports have always been received for the work done in the schools.

The Church and the Public-Houses.

If it has three schools it has six churches, or seven if Beath Parish Church lying a little beyond the burgh boundary, be included. Besides the Parish Church, there is a Chapel of Ease, two U.F. churches, the Episcopal, and Roman Catholic bodies being also represented in stone and lime. All these bodies are doing hard and earnest work, but the field is wide, and there is still a considerable amount of non-churchgoing. The licensed premises easily outnumber the churches and schools put together. There are sixteen places in which alcoholic liquor is sold. Seven are either hotels or public-houses. Those places do a big business, that is, if compared with the turn-over of any Dunfermline house. When compared with the average of Scotland Cowdenbeath is under-licensed; but prospective publicans need hardly set their faces within the burgh so long as the present bench of Magistrates is constituted as it is. Not even can the Public-House Society secure the liberty to plant a house in a district where a workman's club made day and night hideous for a time before it was abolished. The existing "Gothenburg" is a palatial place, and it is not believed that the internal reconstruction of a part of it will tend to reduce the drawings, although it will certainly give opportunity for greater supervision by the manager. This house is credited, rightly or wrongly, with doing the biggest business in Cowdenbeath, and with drawing more money than any "Gothenburg" in the county.

Its profits are distributed in various ways which conduce to the uplifting of humanity, and at the present time a fund is being accumulated for the establishment of baths and a gymnasium for the burgh. Whether it deserved the merciless criticism bestowed upon it is a question which will be answered according to the opinion of the individual who has to answer it; yet it is undisputed that it is managed by a number of respectable men whose aims are certainly not in the direction of doing harm by drink selling. Total abstinence has long had its advocates in the burgh, and the Waverly Lodge of Good Templars has been an educative and uplifting force in the community. Recently, too, a Vigilance Committee was formed from among temperance people. The objects are to return men to the Council who will pledge themselves to give no countenance to any desire to increase the drinking facilities.

The Tramps.

Cowdenbeath has by far the greater portion of settled population. One district alone houses the migratory class, and there is a continual change going on, the Lothians and Lanarkshire contributing the majority of incomers. Class for the most part is represented by drunken brawls, and in these the residenter is not often a figure. Tramps are a source of continual annoyances to the police authorities. Cowdenbeath is on the main highway for those gentry, who find initial employment at the pitheads. Notwithstanding the fact that there are two large lodging houses within half-a-mile of each other, several of these children of Ishmael are brought before the Court every week for sleeping about the pits or in the gasworks.

Recreations.

Besides the various games common to burgh life, such as golf, cricket, football, bowling, etc., Cowdenbeath gives great support to whippet racing. In itself this form of sport is as innocent as it is interesting – that is to those far removed from the irritating yelp of the dogs – but when it is associated with betting to the extent seen in the burgh it does more harm than good. At the weekly races between twenty and thirty Edinburgh bookmakers are present, and it is safe to say that the majority of these betting men return with more money than they came. Perhaps the owners of the ground might do something to restrict the betting facilities. It would do them credit. Football, golf and bowling are all flourishing, but cricket is in a rather languid condition. Quoiting, too, is not nearly so much practiced as it once was. Garden cultivation is attended to less than formerly, for the all-important reason that the ground is now taken up with buildings. Nor is the breeding of fowls so extensive as a hobby as at one time, when pig-styes were the adornment of every backyard. Sanitary legislation caused the departure of the porker, and enlightened hygienic knowledge was the means of abolishing the hen-runs where they were better not to be. Yet there are some fanciers who prosecute the hobby which is fascinating and under conditions commendable.

Cowdenbeath is a burgh which has no need to hide its head. If much still requires to be done, much is being done, and agencies at work, not before mentioned in the elevation of

the masses are the Brass Band and the Saturday Evening Entertainment Committee. If the railway company showed as much enterprise in it as the Council do, the stranger would be saved the bother of removing a first and very wrong impression of it.

July 18, 1908

“A Wee Keek Back”

WEST FIFE MINING

COMMUNITIES

Crossgates.

Although it has been the scene of considerable extension within recent years, Crossgates is a village of long standing. At the present time there are to be found in it more representatives of the truly typical Fife miner than in any other place of its size in the county. Once a great aspersion was cast on the character of its inhabitants. That was on the occasion when Queen Victoria visited Scotland. So deep a root had the belief taken that the miners intended to make a violent attack on the good Queen that as she passed through the village that she hurried through with all possible speed. The Crossgates miner was not a wicked person then, nor is he anything of the sort yet, although the village is not without aged inhabitants who declare that he drinks more than his predecessor did more than fifty years ago.

The village, notwithstanding the structural changes which it has undergone, retains, as does its neighbour Donibristle, most of its old characteristics. All these things, however, Fordell has lost, and not for its good. At the present time Crossgates contains more retired miners than any village of about similar population in Fife. But the transition stage is at hand. Crossgates is just at the beginning of an influx of people, of whose antecedents it knows nothing. It is not a colliery village in the sense that some of the other districts already treated of are. It is not the property of any coal company, and its inhabitants are, therefore, under the domination of no one. Within its confines no great pit works to provide it with energy. Part of the property belongs to Fordell, but perhaps the major portion of it is privately owned. The villagers can live in it without being at the mercy of any coalowner. Yet, it may be that were it owned by a coal combination such as the Fife Coal Company, more might be done to improve and brighten it.

So far from being a wicked or lawless individual, the average Crossgates villager is a thrifty, industrious and respectable person. Thrift is a virtue in which he is particularly strong. In witness of that, the flourishing branch of the Co-operative Society, embracing all departments, can testify. So also can the Savings Bank and Penny Banks, which prosper more abundantly as the days go by. The criminal Courts know little of him now; and when their acquaintance was so close as almost to demand a special tariff, it was rather the surrounding district than the village itself which brought about the unenviable distinction; or, on the other hand, one or two ill-behaved families created a name both for the village and the villager which neither deserved. An unchallengeable index to that characteristic for which Fife mining villages were at one time noted – the existence for generations of the same families – is to be had in the school register, where for many years the same names recur again and again. And a peculiarity in connection with the names of the original Crossgates villagers is that the number consisting of one syllable only is far beyond the ordinary proportion.

Need For Public Improvement.

Crossgates is a healthy place, but it cannot be described as pretty. Cottage gardens are not a feature of the landscape; but the Mowbray Burn is. This stream constitutes the plague spot of the village. Its principal feeder is provided by the effluent from the sewage purification works for Hill of Beath. That effluent has not the limpid purity which it might have; nor do the villagers keep the burn bed as free from refuse as they might do, and the consequence is that in dry, hot weather the smell which arises is not pleasant. If the sanitary condition is not up to the standard, it might be by reason of the presence of the burn referred to, and also because of the water scarcity to some of the houses. The footpaths in the village, again, are not so level as to make walking a pleasure in daylight, not to mention in darkness. In tantalising irregularity of interval the foot pavements take rise or dip, so that the visitor has to be careful in picking his way in the night time. Crossgates can boast of no electric light. The oil lamps, which at one time served to make darkness visible on the main street, have disappeared. These lamps were the outcome of some public-spirited effort. But when the annual canvas was made for funds for their upkeep, the committee taking collections received so many gratuitous innuendoes that they simply refused to perform the work, and the lamps are now stowed away in some lumber store. Nor does the village enjoy the sweetness of scavenging; but it is expected that eighteen months hence, when the debt on the present Cullalo water works is paid off, and the local taxation remains no longer at the maximum, a scavenging and lighting district will be formed. But within recent days less mud has been conveyed from the road surface to the house, for the very good reason that the highway has been more regularly scraped and generally better attended to, as a result of the redistribution of the road section men.

Lack of Social Institutions.

Crossgates is supplied badly in the way of institutions. It has neither library nor reading-room, nor public baths. But if its literary and social provision is not so full as could be desired, the village is well equipped musically. It has both an orchestra and a brass band, the latter, at one time the holder of the junior championship of Scotland, having been resuscitated recently to celebrate the jubilee of the school. Instrumental music in some form or other, may be heard in almost every house. Through the efforts of some of the better educated people in the village, an annual course of lectures was established five years ago to relieve the tedium of the dark nights. Although the lecturers so far have been unpaid gentlemen their efforts have been of a superior order, and have been highly appreciated. With the view of assisting the committee in their good work, Mr R.W. Wallace, of Hallbeath, who is a good friend to the village, provided a beautiful lantern. There are two churches and two schools in Crossgates, each in its own sphere helping to uphold the moral and social well-being of the people. Evidence of drinking are decidedly more visible than those of temperance effort. "Twa ton o' beer" said an old native, "gangs tae each hoose every week; I dinna ken hoo they drink it." Whether the moralist's estimate in weight of the consumption is correct cannot be stated here, but if it

is, the quantity certainly looks enormous. Probably the consumption of ale would be lessened, the card-playing for money on the public highway, to the accompaniment of much atrocious language, reduced, and the whippet-racing abolished, were a good reading and recreation room established in the village, or if the back gardens were made the scene of leisure hour activities

August 15, 1908

THE LORD ADVOCATE AND THE FIFE AND
CLACKMANNAN MINERS' RULES.

On Thursday afternoon the Lord Advocate received in his official chambers, Parliament Square, Edinburgh, a deputation from the Fife and Clackmannan Miners' Association – consisting of Mr John Burt (chairman), Mr James Innes, Mr Robert Mitchell, and Mr John Weir (secretary) – with reference to the “general regulations and conditions of employment” at present enforced by the coalmaster in the counties of Fife and Clackmannan.

Mr Weir, who stated the views of the deputation, after expressing regret that Mr MacDonald, M.P., was not able to attend the interview, as had been anticipated, said that the regulations and conditions of employment formed a code of eight rules, every one of which was fearfully one-sided and unfair, lacking in every respect that equality which should characterise a contract having due regard to the interests of both contracting parties. The rules had never been agreed to or signed by the workmen, but notwithstanding this the men had been taken into Courts, and decrees given against them for breaking a contract which they were virtually no party to, or at least had no voice in making. An examination of the rules could not fail to convince a disinterested party that such regulations administered by a harsh employer, subjected the workmen to much trouble and annoyance. Rule I. said -

Every workman shall be held to be engaged to work until the expiry of fourteen days after he shall have given the company notice in writing of his intention to quit the employment, or until the expiry of fourteen days after he shall have received notice in writing to quit the employment from the company or their manager. The foregoing stipulation shall not prejudice the powers of the company to dismiss summarily any workman for misconduct.

This rule was not so objectionable as the others, with the exception of the last clause, which virtually gave those in charge power to make a man's misconduct, and then get him summarily discharged. It was scarcely fair, he submitted, for interested parties to judge in this matter. Rule II. Said –

Every underground worker shall, except when not required by the company, or their manager, to do so, or, unless he give reasonable excuse for absence, work at least eleven lawful days in each fortnight, which days shall from time to time be fixed by the company or their manager. Every workman shall run the risk of being stopped in his work, and of suffering a corresponding stoppage in his pay, by any unforeseen accident at or to the works or machinery. In the event of a stoppage from any of the foregoing causes, it shall be in the power of the company to require the workmen to continue in their service, and liable to be employed by them in any kind of work connected with the works.

This rule was, he held, fearfully one-sided, binding the workman to work eleven days per fortnight, while there was no corresponding obligation on the part of the employer to find him either work or wages, though he could prevent him from taking work elsewhere. Rule III. said –

Each workman shall pay the usual charges customary at the works. Should any workman conceive there is an error in the statement of wages due to him, he must state his objections thereto on the first lawful day after the pay, failing which, the statement at the pay table shall be held as conclusive, and not liable to be afterwards disputed.

This rule was not in accordance with the spirit of the age. Was it not, Mr Weir asked, against the provision of the Truck Act to make deductions from wages when no written agreement was entered into to that effect? Besides, mistakes in wages should be remedied no matter when the mistake was discovered; at any rate it was hard to limit the time to one day. Rule IV. said –

All houses, gardens, &c., leased or granted to workmen by the company, are to be held as leased or granted only during the period of the workman's engagement; immediately on the expiration of which he must remove from the subjects let to him, and leave the same in good order. Failing removal he will become bound to pay as rent the sum of one shilling each day. The company shall be entitled to retain the wages due to the workman until the terms of this article are fulfilled.

This rule was entirely at variance with the very idea of justice and common sense. As well as with the spirit of the Act of 1778, which provided “*That no coalmaster can have diligence against his colliers for any debts created by them, either previous to their engagement or during the currency thereof, and in view of the same.*” Rule V. said –

No worker at any other colliery shall be allowed to reside or lodge in any of the houses belonging to the company and occupied or leased by the workmen.

This rule was regarded as simply oppressive. It was rank presumption on the part of any landlord or employer to ask a father to banish his son from his house, for which he paid rent and taxes like any other citizen, merely because it might not suit the son to work in the same colliery. Rule VI. said –

The company shall be bound to pay to each workman the customary wages for such work as he may have actually performed, but only upon the usual payday at the works, and subject always to the deduction before specified. The company shall always be entitled to retain in their hands the wages of the usual “lay days”, and in the event of any workman not working his “lay days”, he shall have no claim on the wages due him until he works his “lay days”.

This rule was unfair in so far as wages were only to be paid on the usual payday and subjected “*to the deductions before specified*”. – Wages should be paid on the completion of the contract as well, and there should be no power to retain a fortnight’s wages until the “lay days” were worked. Rule VII. said -

Notices by the company of general alterations of these regulations, or of rates of wages, or prices, shall be posted fifteen days before they are to take effect; and – any workman not giving notice of his intention to leave the works, shall be held bound to abide by the alteration.

This rule was held to be altogether unnecessary, as the alteration therein mentioned should finish the contract, leaving both parties at liberty. Rule VIII. said -

All workmen shall be held to have satisfied themselves with the foregoing regulations as those on which they are employed, and shall not be entitled afterwards to take any objections thereto.

This rule was held to be unfair inasmuch as it prohibited workmen from taking objections to the rules after their engagement. Mr Weir added that a similar deputation had waited upon Lord Watson when Lord Advocate, and his Lordship then promised to give them legal opinion as to the validity of the rules, but he had been prevented from doing so by the change of Government. The deputation now addressed a like request to Lord Advocate McLaren.

The Lord Advocate, in reply, said that some of the regulations appeared to him to bear rather hardly upon the workmen, particularly the one under which, in the event of leaving their employment, they were liable to have the rent of the cottages occupied by them raised to 1s per day. But his Lordship saw great difficulty in devising any means for preventing employers using the power which they possessed, of dictating the terms on which they would engage their workmen. Generally speaking the law left the regulations of the terms of contracts of employment to the employers and the employed themselves, though in extraordinary cases, of which they had an example in the present proposal with reference to contracts between landlords and tenants in Ireland, the Legislature might think fit to interfere, and prescribe certain limits to the powers of one of the contracting parties. It rather appeared to his Lordship, however, that in this case all that the Legislature could do for them would be to prescribe that no regulations should be held to be binding on workpeople until they had been submitted to a general meeting of the workpeople themselves, and an opportunity given for stating their objections, and for discussion with a view to settle the terms of contract by mutual concessions, but that articles agreed upon after consultation should not be subject to revision at the instance of any new workmen who entered the service. He must accept the conditions under which the majority of the men had agreed to be bound by. In the event of an alteration of the rules being proposed it was, his Lordship thought, but fair that there should be certain notice given and an opportunity for conference.

Mr Weir pointed out that to some extent that had already been done. A few years ago they had a meeting and discussed the rules with the employers, but had not been able to obtain any material concession. Since that time the rules had been revised by the employers without any communication with the workmen, and had been made somewhat stricter than they were before.

The Lord Advocate added that he should give the deputation in the course of a few days a legal opinion on the rules, reserving any further consideration whether any change in the law was necessary.

The deputation then thanked the Lord Advocate for the courtesy with which they had been received, and the interview, which lasted about an hour, terminated.

December 18, 1880

SANITARY CONDITION OF

LIFE IN FIFE.

The elaborate report prepared by Dr Dewar, the Medical Officer of Health for Fifeshire, is an invaluable publication. This first few pages indeed are fitted to raise a suspicion that Dr Nasmyth's successor is about to yield himself a victim of the red-tape swathing of the Local Government Board. The reader, however, does not proceed far before he is made to realise that the Doctor, appreciating his work and its responsibilities, is a man of strong force of character, who thoroughly knows his duty and means to do it without fear or favour solely in the interests of Public Health. As an officer who understands that his business is to make war against disease and all other conditions that tend to originate, foster, and extend it, he brings his searching reforming supervision into exercise in many states and spheres of life, industrial and family, social and administrative, but always in the spirit of the benefactor. He carefully examines and investigates the problems with which he is confronted, and earnestly seeks to discover and to commend the most effective means for the amelioration of the conditions of life in our midst.

Concentrating attention first of all on the conditions of home life, which Dr Dewar brings into notice, we find some remarkable, if not startling facts with respect to the birth and death rates. In 1908 the birth rate for the whole county was 36.46 per 1000; but the variations in the four districts were considerable - viz., 23.12 in Cupar, 26.61 in St Andrews, 35.74 in Dunfermline, and 47.48 in Kirkcaldy; and the Medical Officer is led to the conclusion that "the mining population are more than fifty per cent. more prolific than the typically rural population." The death rate likewise show wide differences, viz., 12.52 for St Andrews, 16.05 for Dunfermline, 20.05 for Cupar, and 21.26 for Kirkcaldy, compared with the county average of 18.06. infantile mortality largely accounts for the death rate. In Dunfermline district the rate last year was 123.5, or nearly 2 above the county average; and while in the Kirkcaldy district it was as high as 129.4, in the St Andrews district it was as low 59.1. Dr Dewar does not fail to notice that in three of the four districts the infantile death rate is unduly high. More serious still, he points out that the figures reveal "a clear tendency to a continued increase," and he adds; "worst of all, they show that it is in the prosperous districts, where wages are relatively higher, that the proportions of infants dying in the first year of their life is greatest." He presents another tabular return which tells "that while in the Cupar and St Andrews Districts more than half the deaths occurred at ages exceeding sixty years, in the Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy districts only a little over a quarter of the whole deaths were of persons over 60; and that of the total numbered registered the proportion contributed by deaths in early childhood is two to two and a half times as great in the latter than in the former districts."

What are the diseases that contribute to the keeping of the death-rate high? Tabulating first the statistics bearing on the ravages of Zymotic diseases, he points out that notwithstanding the prevalence of scarlet fever (happily in a mild form) more deaths are were caused by measles and whooping cough. Accordingly he enforces the need of increased effort to prevent the dissemination of the maladies usually and popularly considered relatively unimportant. He mentions that 47 deaths were ascribed to diarrhoea, no fewer than 210 to tuberculosis disease, 77 to cancer and allied “malignant” diseases. He specifies among the conditions which promote the presence and dissemination of those organisms which are known to be the essential factors in the cause of so many communicable diseases, the following: - Polluted or infected water supply; infected or unclean milk; defective construction of dwelling-houses; defective condition of dwelling-houses as to cleanliness, ventilation, or otherwise; accumulation of filthy or putrid organic matter in close proximity to houses; alcoholism; errors in the rearing of infants, especially in regards to diet and purity of air-supply; aggregation of children under unhealthy conditions in schools. This subject brings the Medical Officer into the sphere of local or municipal and also educational administration. Happily, he is able to say that to the consumption of impure water but a trivial fraction of the total illness in the county can be attributed. His account, too, of the condition and protection of the milk supply is also fairly satisfactory and reassuring. Though he is careful to insist on the need for constant vigilance and cleanliness, he remarks that “the one intolerable defect in the construction of a dairy is the direct connection of the milk-store with the living rooms of the house,” is now fortunately very exceptional in Fifeshire. Perhaps the most important passages in his report are those which dealt with the Housing of the Working Classes. We quote the following paragraphs bearing on the dwelling accommodation provided for miners, agricultural labourers, and navvies, which have a special concern for the Dunfermline district.

Domestic Servant’s Accommodation.

Owing to the adoption of the building bye-laws in all the districts of Fifeshire, and to the care scrupulously taken that all new or radically altered houses conform thereto, an improvement in the conditions of housing is gradually taking place all over the county. One regrets to notice, however, that in the houses intended for the occupation of the humbler classes, bed recesses are still very frequently provided; in clear antagonism to the view now everywhere excepted, in theory, that light and air in liberal allowance are primary essentials for health. Examination of plans also shows that there is still a prevalent opinion that domestic servants require less cubic space, and even less light and ventilation, than those whose comfort their services secure. When, in years to come, houses with such features come under the scrutiny of our successors in administration, it will assuredly be a matter for surprise that those anomalies would have been countenanced.

Barely Habitable Houses.

It is in regard to the older houses falling into disrepair, or even approaching dilapidation, that the problem of housing becomes most urgent and difficult. There is a great number of such dwellings in the middle and West of the county. The solution of this question is ever becoming more difficult; for while increased and increasingly diffused knowledge of the laws of health tend to raise the standards of habitability, while the steady influx of people increases the demand for dwelling accommodation out of proportion to its provision, yet all the time those old and ill-cared for houses are passing steadily from bad to worse. Yet another feature of perplexity is introduced when rural districts with decaying industries is concerned. There, in regard to dilapidated and barely habitable cottages, there is a choice between two evils. Either, after some perfunctory patching up, the local authority may permit their continued occupation; or more drastic improvements may be demanded, whereupon they will be closed altogether. The latter involves great hardship by necessitating the exile of some of the older and poorer inhabitants. So the former appears the lesser evil, and the people remain.

The Housing of Miners.

It will be agreed, however, that there is a certain minimum standard to which all houses intended for human habitation should be required to attain. Thus the earthen floor is by no means unknown in Fifeshire. The time for its toleration has surely passed. Similarly, there is a degree of dampness, of dilapidation of roof admitting free entrance of rain, and of rottenness of floor which, in my opinion, demand active measures for their remedy. I propose during the current year to devote considerable time and attention to the question of housing, and particularly to the housing of miners to the south and west of Fifeshire. Thereafter, it will be my clear duty to set forth the results of that investigation fairly and frankly, without favour and without fear.

The Hygienic Standard.

The question of how to deal with the house whose construction is not grossly defective, but whose condition is unwholesome or filthy, is still more difficult, and sometimes appears well-nigh insoluble. It is obvious that the presently existing machinery is totally inadequate to deal with this aspect of affairs. With eight whole-time workers in the public service and over 88,000 people – 11,000 persons or over 2000 houses on an average to each – but little, it is clear, can be done towards raising the hygienic standard of the individual homes. It is to be hoped that, at least in the centres of population, the association of district nurses, working among the people, with the medical inspection of school children, may lead eventually to substantial progress in this respect.

The Lodging of Field Workers.

The accommodation provided for temporary labourers in Fifeshire has required much attention and supervision during the past year. These workers are of two classes, and the accommodation provided for each must be considered separately. In the Dunfermline district a considerable number of labourers, both male and female, come from Ireland to engage in potato gathering and other forms of agricultural work, and remain for many months. These people have been brought up evidently in miserable conditions of environment, and are cheerfully content with the barest and most squalid surroundings. Not only do they require protection from themselves; the people whose neighbourhood they are brought require to be protected from insanitary conditions arising from their propinquity. The simplicity of their lives evidently discounts to a remarkable degree the evil effects which might be expected to arise from their elementary notions of sanitation. I am not aware of any epidemic disease occurring among them or attributable to their presence.

The Huts For Navvies.

The other class of labourers referred to comprise workers of the navy class. These are ordinarily housed in huts; and owing to that, to their lack of social spirit, and to their indifference to their future welfare, they and their temporary dwellings require to be very closely looked after. As a result of their general habits and their nomadic life, they frequently import enteric fever into the districts where they are assembled. In the early months of 1908, Dr Nasmyth, at the request of the Local Government Board, prepared a report on the housing of navvies in huts, with suggestions for extended legislative control. The necessity of this is very evident to those who have had to do with these structures and their occupants; and, locally, the necessity is all the more urgent since the erection of works of great magnitude along the southern shores of Fifeshire in the immediate future involves the importation and continued residence of a large population of the navy class.

Dr Dewar says much that is full of interest and help to administrative bodies with respect to the sanitary conditions required by law and regard for health, in factories and workshops, in bakehouses, as to the treatment of infectious diseases, and the prevention of pollution of rivers. He is an earnest and eloquent advocate of the cleanliness that is next to godliness, of preventive disinfection and precautionary isolation, and of the vigilance that is needed to prevent dissemination of infectious diseases in places of entertainment, in the school, and in the church. He makes the disquieting announcement that there are from six to ten thousand children suffering from parasitic skin infection in Fifeshire, but he has great hopes from the medical inspection of school children "with the assiduous nurse in the wake of the medical inspector." and from the increased appreciation of hygienic conditions as regards school premises on the part of both School Boards and teachers. Most of all, however, he looks for improvement to the greater concern for the maintenance of sanitary conditions in the home. Just as he expects that "the dissemination among mothers, especially the younger mothers of the humbler classes, of knowledge regarding the rearing of young children, and particularly regarding their requirements in the way of food, fresh air, sunlight, cleanliness and suitable

clothing," will greatly reduce the rate of infantile mortality, so he turns to the co-operation of home and official administrative agencies, civic and educational, for effective co-operation with him in his campaign against preventative disease and premature disablement and death, and for the advancement of the conditions of life that promote health and happiness.

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