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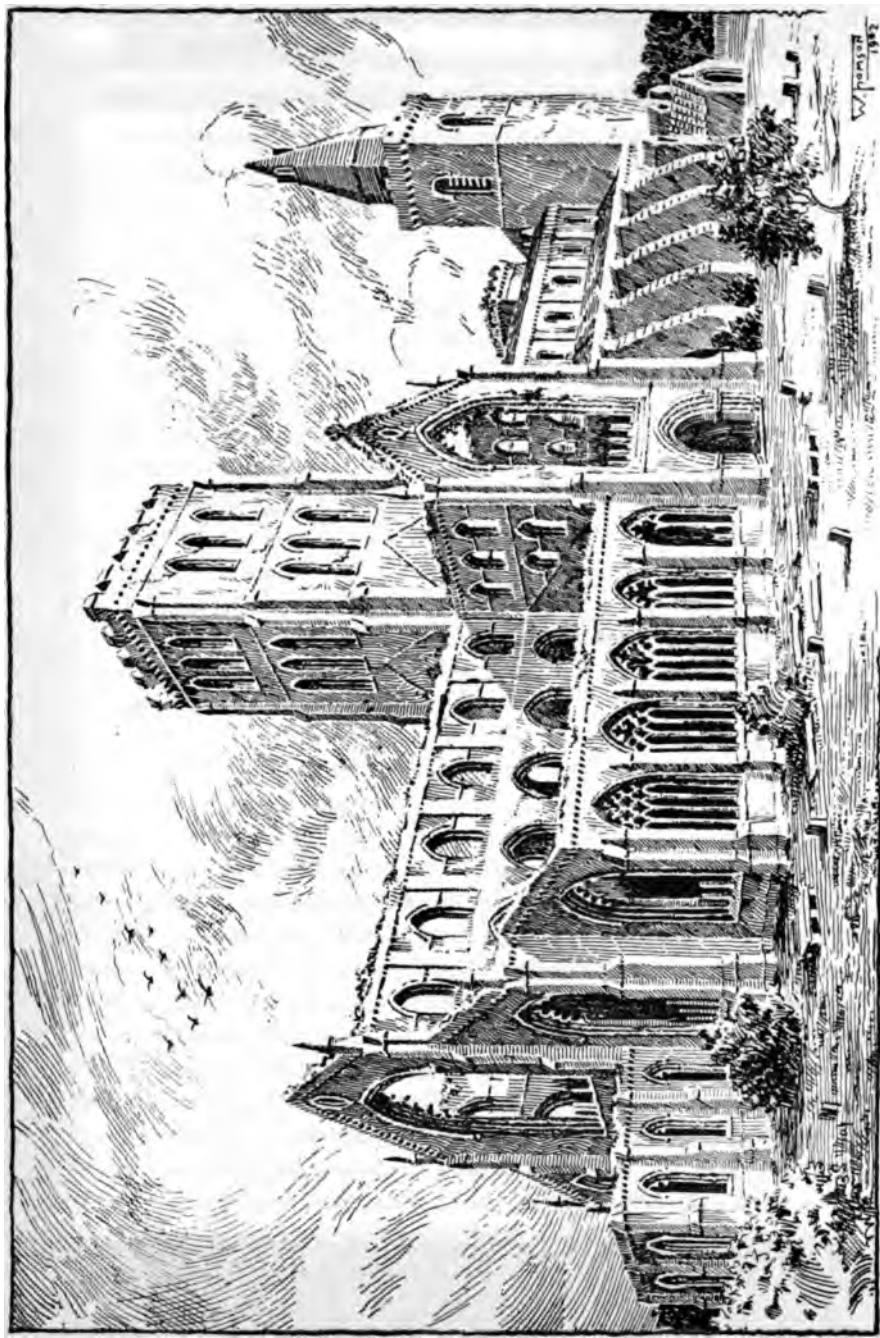


The Weavers' Craft

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The Weavers' Craft



Dunfermline Abbey as in 1650.

The Weavers' Craft

BEING

**A HISTORY OF THE WEAVERS' INCORPORATION
OF DUNFERMLINE**

WITH WORD PICTURES OF THE PASSING TIMES

BY

DANIEL THOMSON

(ONE OF THEMSELVES)

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM THOMSON



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—
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TO

Andrew Carnegie, LL.D.,

A MAN WHO HAS DONE MORE THAN ANY ONE
LIVING TO CREATE AND FOSTER SUCH LOVE OF
BOOKS AND HABIT OF READING AS DISTINGUISHED
THE LIVES OF OUR OLD HAND-LOOM WEAVERS,

THIS BOOK IS,

WITH DEEPEST RESPECT,

DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR.

*Still find we up and down,
In country or in town,
The footprints of our fathers' holier tread ;
A relic here and there,
A pageant or a fair,
An old tradition floating round the dead.*

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A FOREWORD.

THE reader will possibly conclude, after perusing a portion or the whole of this social record, that too much attention is given to small matters; but surely it is the small and numerous things of life that really make up social history. The true matters of history—the life of the common people—has not entered into our records with anything like the fulness these matters deserve. We have been accustomed, by the composition of our school and more pretentious histories, to look for campaigns, battles, and sieges, and all the usual “glories” of war; for the births of princes and the ascensions of kings and queens. We trace the course of these notable events, and become so absorbed in them, that we readily forget or ignore the fruitful soil of research that lies, figuratively, at our feet. Burns’ correspondent, Robert Heron, was one of the first to set the example of writing history with some regard for the social condition of the industrial classes; and though it be a long step down from national history to the subject of these pages, the story of a little community such as the Weaving Craft of Dunfermline may be made to exhibit, with interesting detail, the daily life of our forefathers and foremothers of the olden time.

Our information regarding the Weavers, drawn from their own and other minuted proceedings, will be thoroughly reliable. The scribes of the crafts had no “axe to grind,” no object to serve but to tell the truth. We accord them the virtue of candour

without hesitation, and with an itching inclination to attach other and greater virtues to their names and doings. For, however questionable some of their proceedings may have been, while in life, they are unquestionably virtuous now that they are dead. If their failings are in any way held in remembrance, these are generally found to lean, by natural gravitation, to virtue's side. The ugly side of their characters, if any such existed, is partially or wholly lost sight of, and the bright side made to expand, till the full moon of moral purity is attained—in our fond imaginings.

It is certainly a pleasing trait in our nature that we should thus agree to forget the evil, and augment, if possible, the good deeds of the past. But this line is hardly within the province of the veracious chronicler; and, with the Weavers helping us to rigid impartiality, we are not likely to fall into the snare, but, like Boston in his *Memoires*, relate alike the "mean things and the muckle" in the Craft life of the "Wobsters." In this we will get a true, even if somewhat narrow, view of common life in the past, and the Weavers will not have spoken in vain.

DANIEL THOMSON.

DUNFERMLINE, May, 1903.

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THE WEAVERS' CRAFT.



CHAPTER I.

“Strubblers”—Malcolm and Margaret—Leges Burgorum—Weavers of Edinburgh—A Chapter of the Acts—Foreign Weavers—Brought to Scotland—Immunities of the Weavers.

It is somewhat disappointing to find the weavers of the Auld Grey Toon making their historical bow, to their expectant Scottish friends, in the character and guise of “strubblers.” A round half-dozen do the stage work of the entire weaving community of their time, and all we know of Dunfermline weavers in 1491 is, that six of them were then pulled up before the magistrates on the 10th of January, as “Strubblers,” or disturbers of the peace, and, doubtless, found guilty. We say doubtless, because Dr. Henderson in his *Annals* of the Town, though he mentions the trial, fails to tell us the result.

The six wabsters are designated “of John Shortrig,” as if the dignity of a “Cork,” familiar to the weavers of the burgh, three hundred years after, had even then been in vogue; and John Shortrig was, indeed, an owner of looms and ruler of weavers. If John were included in the panel, we may conclude that the fateful seven had been out early that morning, still celebrating the New Year, had fallen into a row, done a little mauling and paiking all round, and got pulled up as above. Possibly they were the legitimate ancestors of the “Royal Fifteen,” who were familiar to the eighteen and thirties,

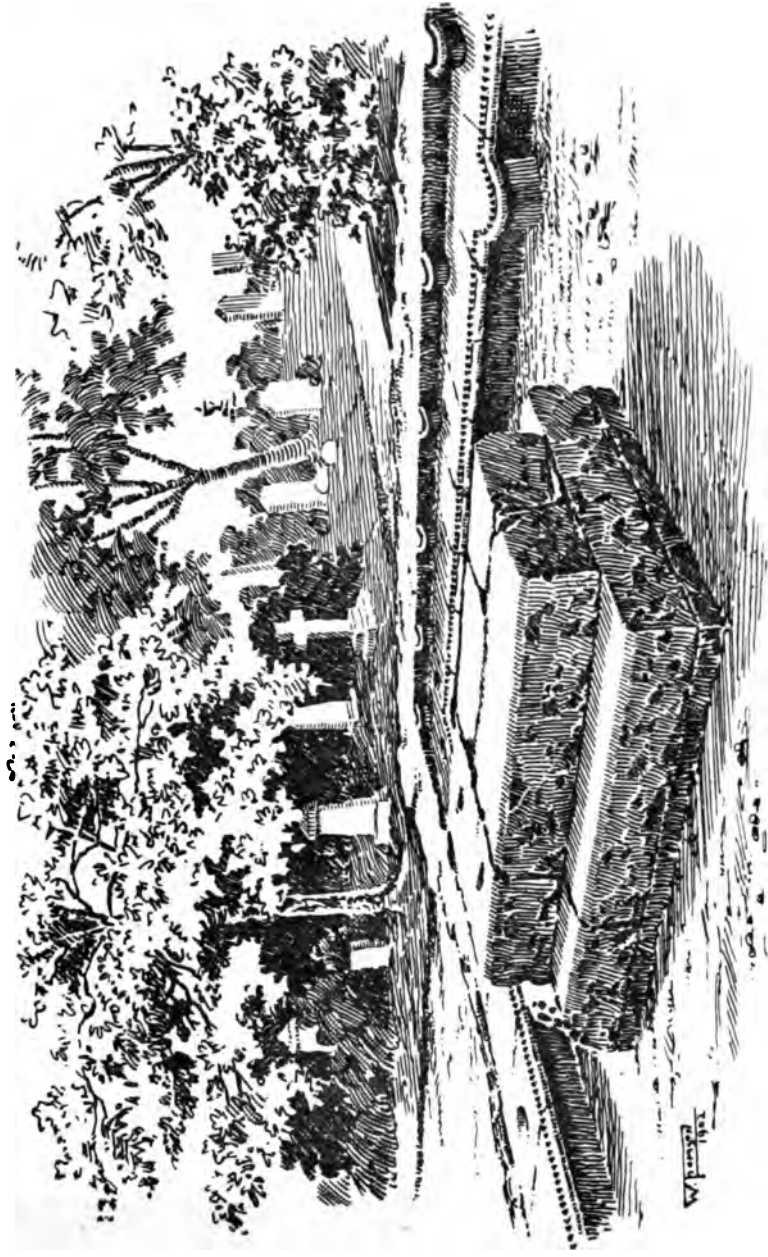
as ardent fisticuffers ; or, of the "Muckle tyke" and the "Wee tyke," who earned their titles as sparring warriors in the same generation.

The word "strubblers," however, may be susceptible of another meaning than that which at first appears. Mr. Ebenezer Bain, in his *Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen*, tells how, in 1536, certain weavers of the granite city were summoned before the bailies for presuming to act (as a craft) independent of the Council. In this case, the misdemeanor is named "strubulance," so that the word was evidently applicable to cases where neither violence nor molestation were involved. Dr. Jamieson, it is true, in his *Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, explains the word as meaning "disturbance"—a form of definition, which does not shut out the meaning of mere constitutional disturbance, given to it in the case quoted from Mr. Bain. If we are right in thus accepting our "strubblers" of 1491, as possibly mere offenders against constitutional usage, and not necessarily disturbers of the peace, an important difference is at once established in the municipal position of the weaving craft of Dunfermline, since it would prove the existence of a recognised legal and constitutional position of the craft at the close of the fifteenth century.

Dr. Henderson tell us (*Annals*, p. 171) that "It is not known when the now staple industry of weaving originated in Dunfermline," and he informs us that the above case of strubulance supplies the first notice of our weaving community. But we all know that history takes but little notice of toilers and bargainers, or, indeed, of any one who is mean enough to work for his own living. The regular historian prefers to record the deeds of all the notable characters of his own or former times, and finds hardly a line to chronicle the lives of simple honest men and women. That the weaving trade existed in Scotland several centuries before our "strubblers" come to view, may be accepted as an established fact—that they were established in Dunfermline long before 1491, may also be accepted as matter of fact. The mere manner of their mentioning is sufficient to show they were, and had been, a familiar element in the burghal life of the town long before the bailies had chance to chastise them in 1491.

David I. is generally regarded as the chief introducer of manufactures into Scotland—though why his father and mother, Malcolm and Margaret, are excluded from the honour, it were hard to say. Malcolm, unfortunately, and by literary and historic fashion, has ever been spoken of as a semi-savage—big, strong, bulky, and capable of handling a long sword or heavy battle-axe; one altogether different from his pious, cultured, delicate, and accomplished wife, Queen Margaret. Few of these men of the feathered implement go further than Turgot, and are quite content to forget that both King and Queen were trained in their youth at the Court of Edward the Confessor, that Malcolm is credited with a capability of Latin speech on a push, that he acted as interpreter between his countrymen and his priestly visitors; that he could frame treaties, conduct diplomacies, and lead armies, with an ability and generous discretion that raised him far above the level of the mere ignorant fighter he is so freely pictured.

The twenty-second law of the “Leges Burgorum”—written possibly as early as the time of David I. (1124-1153)—prohibits any one but a burgess from making cloth or dyeing it; and in the original Cartulary of Glasgow we find it forbidden to anyone outside of a burgh to make or manufacture cloth. William the Lion similarly, in his charter to the city of Perth, expressly limits the right to weave cloth to such as are burgesses of that favoured burgh; and the charter to Aberdeen, granted during the same reign, contains a limitation of the same nature. In 1398, cloth exported to foreign ports is to be subject to a duty of two shillings in the pound; and we may also recall the fact that the weavers of Edinburgh received their Seal of Cause in 1475; and, while the weavers of Stirling are mentioned in a charter of 1226, they are referred to as maintaining their own saints' altar in 1522, and having their own deacon in 1526—marking thus, at this period, their industrial status, as well as the common relations of these crafts, with the Church. The Edinburgh charter referred to runs thus:—“Till all and sundrie to whom it affeirs, to quhase knowledge thir present letters sal come: The Provost, Baillies and Council of



St. Margaret's Tomb, Dunfermline Abbey.

the burgh of Edinburgh, greeting in God everlasting—We mak it known that thair appeared befor us in our Tolbuith—we standing in judgement—the best and worthiest persons in the hail craft of the wobsters within the burgh. Whilk presented to us thair appeal and supplication, in the whilk was contained certain statutes and articles, made and avised with thaim for the honour and love of God Almighty and His Mother the Virgin Mary and of Saint Severine; and for the supplying and holding of divine service, and appairing of thair altar of Saint Severine founded and upholden by thaim in Saint Giles' Kirk; and for the government of their wark and labour, and for good rule and common profit," etc. All this points to an existing condition of things among the weavers in Edinburgh and elsewhere founded generations before the charter was issued.

But the privileges, the "freedoms," granted to the Edinburgh weavers at this time, as clearly point to a long anterior origin. The "supplication" of the weavers was "gart be read" by the Council, and was found to contain:—"(1) That the hail craftsmen may yearly choose them a Deacon—like as every craftsman does—whilk sal rule and govern in all thair trade affairs. To the whilk Deacon, all the lave sal give obedience in all lawful and honest things concerning the craft; and this Deacon to be chosen by freemen of the craft that are burgesses, and naue other to have voice thairin. (2) That na man occupy the position as foirmaster till he be made a burges and free-man; and be examined be the Deacon and masters of the craft, gif (to find if) he be worthy; and that he have good and sufficient graith and warklooms, [these] to be seen and considered be the foreman of the craft, and, being found ane able and sufficient craftsman he sal pay twa merks, and twa pounds of wax to the altar of St. Severine (the patron saint of the weavers). (3) Na maister sal tak ane prentice for less than fyve years, and sal at his entry, to the said altar pay fyve shillings, and gif he be nocht a good mynister (servant) all these fyve years, he sal pay twenty shillings when he has taen anither maister."

The remainder of the suggested statutes provide that no master

take another's prentice, nor work another's warp yarn; that no woman be allowed to have looms of her own, unless she be a freeman's wife; and that all of the craft provide duly for the maintenance of Saint Severine's altar in St. Giles' Kirk. The language of the Act of 1592 seems also to point, at that time, to a long previous existence of the crafts:—"The exercises of craftsmen in the suburbs of the free burghs is not only hurtful to all our Sovereign Lord's lieges, for the insufficiency of the work; but also it ministers great occasion to prentices and servants (journeymen) in free burghs undutifully to leave their masters, and to remain and abide in the said suburbs, thereby abstracting themselves from the jurisdiction of the Provost and Bailies of the said burghs; and also the free craftsmen resident within the said burghs are greitly damnified, seeing that they bear ane greit pairt of the charges of the burgh; and the advantage of the work, that should relieve them, is drawn away to the said suburbs." (*Acts of Parl.*, Vol. iii., p. 579.)

The Convener's Court seems to have been set up in 1420 in each burgh where crafts existed. The Act of Parliament of that date (*see* Maitland's *Hist. Edin.*) calls upon the respective crafts in each burgh to "choose from amongst themselves a prudent and judicious man for their Deacon." In other words, to choose and appoint a man having central and overhead authority—that is, a Deacon's Convener.

These extracts clearly indicate the common existence of weavers, and the prevalence of weaving, at a period long anterior to 1491. The charters of William would also indicate that weavers, like other workers, had already been so far combined as to be able in this monarch's time (1165-1214) to impress their will upon the charters granted by Royal authority, and intended to promote the growth of burghal life, and the trading and commercial progress of the Kingdom. They seem also to have been able to affect the character of subsequent Acts of the Scottish Parliament, since we find that, in 1473, the importation of cloth from England was forbidden, on the ground that the Scots only got cloth they could themselves make at home, instead of

gold and silver, as formerly, for their salmon and other fish, and land and water produce. Neither need we forget that, in 1540, the Scottish Parliament, recognising the general diffusion of the weaving trade, enacted that in every burgh of the Kingdom there should be appointed a duly qualified man, to seal or mark all cloth produced in the bounds, in token of its honest quality. This Act, of itself, would prove the wide diffusion of the weaving trade and of weaving artizans in Scotland at this period, and though its good intent and operation was interrupted for one year by a later enactment (1572), it was found necessary to re-establish its provisions. The crafts, it may be imagined, would get into entire disorder and misrule, while the products would lose the reliable character they previously maintained. A man of practical training was required in each craft, and Parliament finding it so, quickly reversed the error of its ways.

Another proof is found in the Act of 1567, wherein it is provided that "the old Acts" anent "Wobsters" and "Walkers" and makers of white cloth (linen) should be put in force, with this addition, that care was to be taken that the cloth was not "flokkit," *i.e.*, having the nap raised or improperly thickened. (*Medieval Scotland*, p. 36.) This Act gives proof that the industry of weaving, and particularly of weaving linen, had been sufficiently long established for the workers to have learned some of the most ingenious "tricks of the trade."

About 1585, James VI. and his councillors brought over from the Low Countries some three skilled weavers, named John Gardin, Philip Fermant, and John Banko, who were to set up a textile manufactory in Edinburgh, to weave various kinds of woollen, flaxen, and even silk fabrics; to instruct the Scottish youth in all the mysteries of their craft, and to freely communicate a knowledge of their business. They were to be well provided for in every way, relieved of all taxation, and if they wanted a minister of their own persuasion, and a kirk to worship in, even that was not to be denied them. This last item seems to have roused the jealousy and ire of "oor ain kirk ministers;" for we find that, in 1588, there is a "difference in materis of religion betwixt the kirk and the Flemyng wobsters," such a

difference, indeed, that the "Flemyng wobsters" had to "depart the realm"—the town of Edinburgh paying their return expenses.

It is worth while noting, also, that the Convention of Royal Burghs, in 1570, recommended the Scottish Parliament to forbid the exportation of wool; though, in eight years after, viz., 1578, the same Convention thought that no impediment should be put in the way of those who exported to Norway, "shoon, salt, malt, or linen cloth;" and the Privy Council, in 1600, gave liberty to all whom it might concern, to export wool and linen cloth, and to import all sorts of English cloth, at least to the month of December of that year.

The somewhat irrational dismissal of the "Flemyng weavers," in 1588, did not prevent another trial in the way of bringing over foreign "Wobsters" and "Litsters" to improve our textiles. (See Cochrane Patrick's *Mediæval Scotland*, p. 40.) An Act of the Estates, in 1601, provided for bringing over some twenty more "makeris of claith and lauboureris of woll" from the Continent. The burghs agreed to bear the expense of bringing them over, to the extent of 12,000 merks, and the Convention of Royal Burghs at once sent Commissioners to France, Flanders, and England, for the purpose of selecting and arranging with the workmen. Meantime, the Convention conferred with one Andrew Hunter, who had been in Norwich, and who had hopes of agreeing with one Gabriel Bischof, cloth maker there, to come to Scotland; and also with Thomas Fischer, who had been to France on this business. In the end, Bischof obtained the services of some Dutch weavers from Leyden, and these were divided among the burghs of Ayr, Perth, and Dundee.

A Minute of the Convention of 2nd February, 1605, refers to an Act of Parliament which had been passed in June of the previous year, offering the burghs the privilege of working the cloth factories—apparently those set up with the foreign workmen. The burghs as an aggregate, refused the offer, but agreed to give their "fortefecatioun and concurrence" to any one, or party, who would undertake the work.

We next find the foreign weavers established in the Canongate,

Edinburgh, where, again, the narrow spirit of interference by the authorities followed them. In 1613, Scottish cloth is being exported to the low countries. In 1625 and 1633, the burghs were, by Acts of Parliament, under Charles I., advised to continue their efforts for the encouragement of manufactures, and a Royal Executive Commission was set up in 1641 for this purpose, desiring that "in every shire a school should be erected in one or other of the burghs, at the expense of the burgh, and that every parish within the shire should send either one or two boys, according to the valuation of the parish, to be taught for seven years in all sorts of "working of cloth or seys, and of spinning, weaving, wauking, litting and dressing," of yarns or cloth. Every boy was to be above ten years of age. Thus, our modern schools of design and compulsory technical instruction, seem to have been anticipated by a period of two hundred and seventy years.

It would appear, also, that long before these dates, the manufacturers and weavers of cloth were exempt from all military service, for in 1645, this immunity was again ratified; and in 1655, Protector Cromwell gave instructions to his commanders to advance, by every possible means, the manufactures of Scotland.

Weaving mills were a very early institution at Haddington, and in Cromwell's reign a Colonel Stansfield became the principal partner in a woollen manufactory in that town. Woollen factories were set up at Bonnington, near Edinburgh; at Ayr; and, in 1681, at Glasgow, by James Armour, who had an Act of Parliament in his favour, permitting him to import his own raw material free of duty, allowing his products to be untaxed for nineteen years, and granting his workers the usual exemptions from watching, warding, and military service. In this same year of 1681, the weavers of Glasgow were incorporated, and the whole weaving and spinning industry of the country was favourably affected by an Act passed in this year, confirming all the previous and existing privileges of the manufacturing class in Scotland. (*Mediæval Scotland*, pp. 45-50.)

These items may serve to convey some idea of the way, and in what degree, the public authorities in olden times were recognising

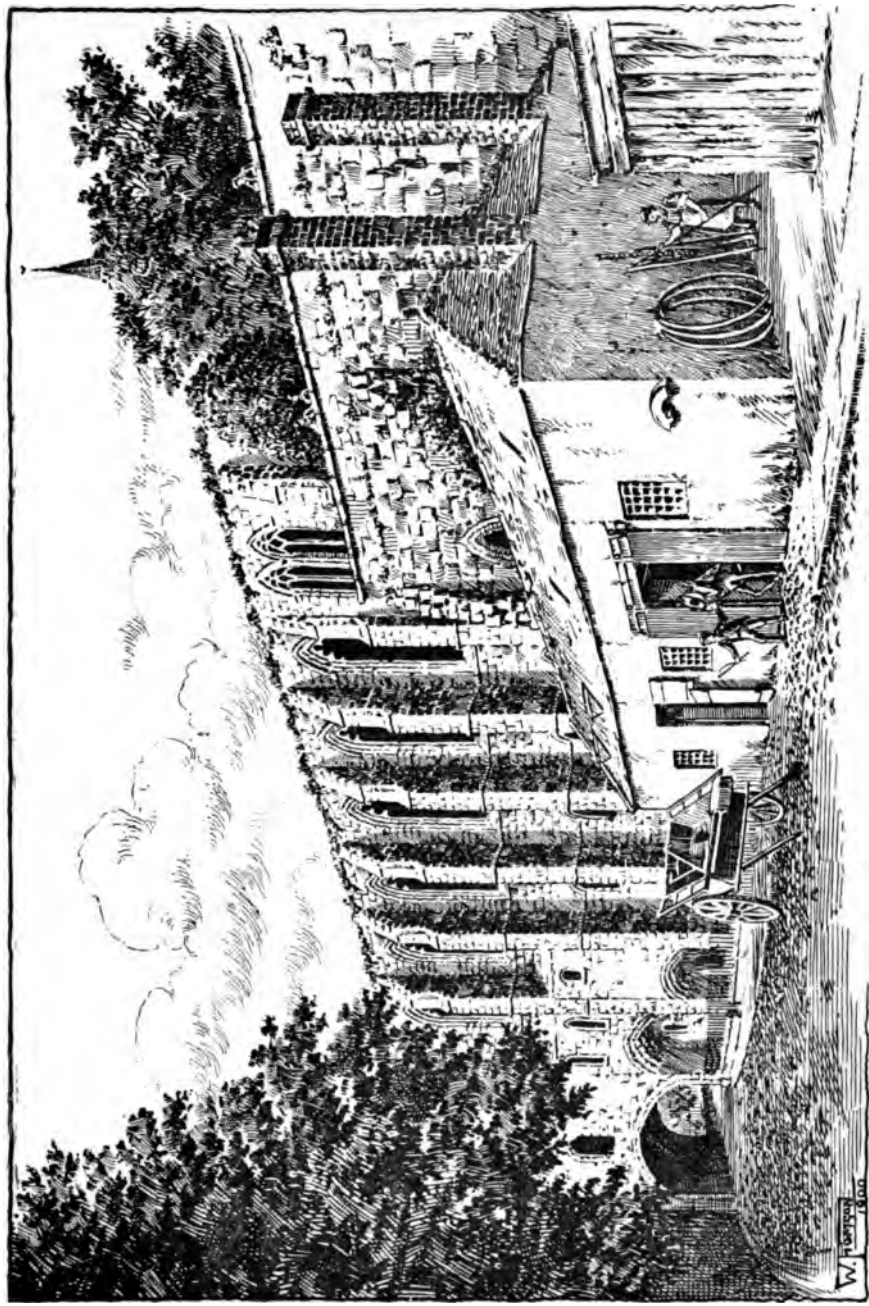
and encouraging the growth of manufactures in Scotland. They will also help the industrial thinker to form conclusions as to the actual condition of the weaving and preparatory industries during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries in Scotland. We will get closer to the subject as we go on to consider matters of organisation among manufacturers and weavers, and especially when we get among the records of the weavers of the Auld Grey Toon.

CHAPTER II.

Guilds and Crafts—The earliest burghs—The strong place—Merchant and worker—Statutes of Berwick—Another chapter of the Acts—Foreign workmen—Act of Revocation.

GUILDS and Crafts, or Incorporations, were the institutions which indicated the existence of commercial, trading, and industrial activities in Continental cities; and not less so in the burghal communities of England and Scotland. Between the two sets of institutions—the Guilds and the Crafts—we must always draw and maintain a clear distinction. The Guilds were composed of merchant traders, and the Crafts of hand-workers, or actual producers. The Guild can trace an older history, and a more illustrious career, than the Craft; but it is probable that “in the beginning” the two sections of workers and sellers would be combined in the same association. This view is rendered all the more likely when we consider the object for which the earliest of these commercial combinations were formed.

The credit of originating these institutions is usually awarded to the Saxons—though we know that they existed at a very early period in European communities far to the south of the Saxon sphere of influence. Leaving out the religious guilds—with which we have no concern here, and of which there were many varieties—we find the



The Monastery Wall, Dunfermline.

secular, or commercial associations of industrialists, exercising a powerful influence upon the policy of our own, and of other countries, from perhaps the fourth up to the opening of the nineteenth centuries. The religious guilds might have their headquarters—the buildings for the accommodation of the brethren—at any convenient point in town or country, but the secular associations were almost entirely urban.

The author of the *History of Arbroath* says :—"Incorporations of craftsmen were probably formed in the principal Scottish burghs in the fourteenth century, if not earlier. They existed, or may rather be said to have lived, in constituted and regulated communities. Their whole system, their detail of routine and of life, was so bound up in the methods of burghal government, that it was impossible often to conceive of the one without including the other notion of fraternity and combination." The writer of the article "Guilds" in *Chambers' Encyclopædia* credits the guildmen with originating the all-important idea of corporate existence in townships, and avers that the guild of old times formed the real germ of the modern burgh. This statement may be accepted as so far correct with regard to the guild proper, and entirely acceptable if it be admitted that the earlier guilds included in their membership not only the vendor, but the actual producer of industrial wealth.

The burghs were indeed at first but a simple Zareba, or protected space, within which the merchant, trading, and working part of the people sought to secure themselves from the common enemy outside. That common enemy was then—as he too often is now—the landlord. The landlord was the common bandit, the pillager of industry, in these old times ; and his reign as such can hardly be said to be finished, even in this the twentieth century. The little knots of houses that formed the beginnings of our towns, and in which the simple knights of industry sought convenience and shelter, were given the name of borchs, borghs, or burghs ; which being interpreted means a strong place, a stronghold, or walled-in place of protection. It is the same word—rooted in Saxon—which we find in berg, borg, burg, or broch, and in such case means a coign of vantage, a place of strength.

In the same way, and from the same suggestion and necessity, the most ancient guilds were, by our Saxon forefathers, named Frith Borchs or Strongholds of Brotherhood. These Brotherhood Strongholds were at first, indeed, what their name implies. Their membership was made up of merchants or exchangers, and craftsmen or hand workers. Both classes felt, in these old times, the need of some protecting bond, and both sought the aid of the other; and, so long as the members felt the common danger to be imminent, worked in harmony together, and gave of their goods, money, and energy to maintain their industrial fortification.

The overhanging rock, the hollow cave, the rabbit's burrow, gave the Strong man, ambitious of rule, the first suggestion for what afterwards became his castle; and both helped the merchant and worker to conceive and build up their communal and associative strong-place, and to call it a borough. Every member of this burghal society—for it was none other—was bound to accept a minimum share of property and financial responsibility—a fixed portion of duty and expense in maintaining the Place, keeping it habitable and safe, healthful and clean. In like manner he was, as a member of his industrial union, bound to contribute his annual *gilda* or money-piece, to the common industrial fund.

As time went on, the merchant, by the profits made in exchanging the products of the worker, became richer than the worker himself; and the merchant classes tacitly and insensibly began to regard themselves as wealthier and more influential, and therefore superior to, and wiser, than those who worked by hand and lived by their labours. Both classes, as burghers or burgesses, grew wealthier as the towns grew greater, and the country increased with people; but the merchant rose faster and to greater height than the worker, and the latter gradually came to be regarded by the former as an inferior being. Meetings, separate and apart from the hand workers, began to be held by the dominant section, and these gradually hardened into the formation of an entirely different institution.

Like our "Lords Temporal" of the English Parliament who,

meeting at first and in the same chamber with the Commons, drew off from their confreres into another meeting-place, first in a sort of sub-committee fashion, then in Committee of the "Whole House," and, finally, in every function were found and maintained in separation from the humbler persons named Commons. Then, too, came the guilds—as compared with the crafts—to reach a higher rung on the social ladder, and to look down, from their long-continued elevation, on the weavers, sutors, wrights, masons, fleschers, glovers, and litsters, who were aggregated in the crafts, or toiled in the workshops below. It was human nature to do so, and craftsmen showed the same spirit when they renounced their trade connection, and sought admission to the guilds.

The methods by which the merchant rose superior to the workman were the same in the days of King David I. and the *Leges Burgorum* as they are now. The actual producer, the worker, necessarily sold his labour and his products to men—the merchants—who soon become familiar with ruling values, and by knowing often the personal circumstances of the toiler, the merchant was put in a position at all times to force working prices down to a minimum of advantage to the worker. In times of dearth, in periods of storm and other occasions of distress and necessity, the purchasing merchant could dictate his own prices, and force the worker into accepting wholly unremunerative, sometimes entirely ruinous, terms. In other words, the worker had to sell at home and among his neighbours, while the merchant could carry his acquired wares to distant, even to continental markets, and dispose of them to those who had but poor chance of even guessing the rates of profit imposed by the travelling middleman. The total result accrued in awarding to the mere seller a much larger profit, and a greatly larger income, than fell to the lot of the actual producer of the goods. This result is, of course, in entire accordance with common experience, and is a feature of every market in the world.

Still, it is the reverse of what should be, and of what would be, if men were just enough, and wise enough, to see the inequity of exist-

ing trading relations, and firm enough to create a change for the better, and maintain it.

The growing fortunes of the merchant class induced them, at last, to put their desires to be separated from the workers, into form and practice. They began by excluding those workers whose occupations soiled or discoloured the hands, or "fyled the claes" of the operator. Dyers were to be shut out "unless they dyed by the hands of their servants," and fleshers too, unless they "killed and skinned" by deputy. Shoemakers and fishermen were also, in some places, excluded from the guilds unless they were "masters" in these businesses, and were owners of stalls or booths, and did not carry about with them the odour of their occupations.

This partial exclusion of undesirable craftsmen did not, however, suffice for the aspiring merchantmen; for, as the area of their repugnances widened, the thread and tie of connection between the bargain maker and the goods maker weakened and loosened, till the whole of the worker class were shut out from the guilds. "The merchants of England and Scotland," says Mr. T. Thomson, the greatest of Scottish constitutional antiquaries, "who traded beyond sea, held high social rank—higher than the mere craftsmen." They came gradually to interfere with, and ultimately to control, the entire management of burghal affairs. The labourer—skilled or unskilled—the craftsman, was pushed aside, while "the guild" began, more and more, to be synonymous with "the burgh," the "guild hall" with "town hall," and Guild Committee with Town Council.

The statutes of Berwick-on-Tweed, says Sir J. D. Marwick, formed the basis, so far as rule and constitution were concerned, of all the burgh guilds of Scotland. The date of these statutes he gives as 1249, and states that they clearly show that the guild of that city ruled its burghal affairs. The guild laws of Edinburgh and Aberdeen, says Sir James, show the same peculiarity. The "Laws of the Four Burghs Court" were sanctioned by David I., and, while carrying much of the spirit of the Berwick statutes, became the constitutional rules of the burghs in Scotland. Sir James refers to the numerous Acts

of the Scottish Parliament as furnishing proof of the efforts made by the guilds to stand clear of the craftsmen, and to obtain the mastery of the burghal administration. Thus by the Act, 1457, of James II., only the wealthier guild brothers were permitted to engage in foreign trade; and by another of James III. (1466), only freemen burgesses were allowed to export goods "furth of Scotland"—an exception being made in favour of "Prelates, Lords, Barons, and Clerks," *i.e.*, Churchmen. Another Act gives effect to the distinction between guild merchants and craftsmen, by prohibiting "every man of craft from using merchandise by himself, his factor, or his servants." This kind of legislation went on till the reign of Charles I., who, in 1633—the year of his visit to Dunfermline—passed an Act reciting and confirming all former Acts in favour of the guilds. A modifying spirit seems, however, to have set in about the middle of the seventeenth century, and an Act of 1672 made free the export of all native commodities by the burghs.

This Act gave the same degrees of privilege to the Baron Burghs as to the Royal Burghs, and as these latter alone were charged a proportion of the public taxation, they raised the usual cry, in such cases, of unfairness; since the unfree burghs were equally privileged with the free, or Royal Burghs. A long series of Acts of the Scottish Parliaments followed—see-sawing, patching, and mending the public law as it affected the guilds and the burghs, till, long after, the weltering difficulty was swept away by the Act of 1835, which deprived guilds, crafts, and burghs alike of all exclusive privileges.

As the guilds became exclusive and aristocratic, the craftsmen were more and more drawn together. A statute of James I. (1424) refers to the crafts as being then in existence, and calls upon the members to choose "one of their wise men, with the consent of the officers of the town," to be deacon or masterman, to try essays (trial samples of work), and to govern all work done by the men of the craft. The opposition of the guilds to this arrangement is seen in an Act of 1427, which states that the continuance of the Deacons "have tended to the common loss of the land," repeals the former Act, and abolishes

the office of deacon for the time being. A few months later a Council-General of the realm directed the Town Councils of each burgh to elect a warden of every craft for one year, who, with the advice of "discreet men appointed by the Council," should examine and fix the price of all work. This ordinance was specially applied to masons, wrights, smiths, tailors, and weavers (1427, c. 3). The arrangement did not, and could not, work well—it was practically putting the business of the crafts wholly into the hands of the guildry. The goldsmiths could not work under this secondary and ignorant authority; and so by an Act of James II. in 1457, the creation of a deacon of the goldsmiths was fully warranted, and in 1473 a deacon of this craft was appointed in each town where the industry existed.

This apparently opened the door to a renewed and general appointment of deacons in all the other crafts. The influence of the guilds was, however, made manifest by an Act passed by James IV. in 1493, setting forth that deacons were dangerous to the common weal, and that all already appointed should cease exercising their office within a year after date. How the crafts managed business affairs for years after this, we have only to guess from the trend of the struggle between themselves and the guilds; but we find, in 1551, the magistrates of burghs were empowered to convene meetings of the deacons of crafts to fix reasonable prices for work—a statute which indicates that the crafts were still being allowed to elect their deacons and to manage their own affairs.

This condition of things was not allowed to continue. In 1555 the crafts were again prohibited from electing deacons, and the Town Councils, *i.e.* the merchants, were appointed to act as visitors and inspectors of the crafts. The workers appealed against this, and in 1556 Queen Mary restored to the crafts the right to elect their own officers; not only so, but the craft deacons were allowed to have a vote in the election of various burgh officials, and the members to frame their own statutes and rules. In 1564 and 1581, statutes were passed annulling all the disabilities entailed under the Act of 1555, and restoring all former rights and privileges to the crafts.

A new spirit seems now to have set in, and manufactures were to be nursed into expansion instead of being restricted and reserved for a few. As we have already seen, foreign workmen were brought over in 1585, from the Low Countries, to improve and develop our productive methods in manufacture, and though clerical jealousy drove them away in 1588, another attempt was made in 1601, and twenty "makaris of claith and lauberoures of woll" were commissioned from the Continent, their expenses met by the burghs, and their employment regulated by the Convention. From that time on to the beginning of the eighteenth century, a variety of public measures were adopted by the Scottish Parliament, by the Convention, and by the Estates, to encourage our manufacturers and improve our manufactures, and also to better the position of the crafts and craftsmen.

The internal administration of the guilds and crafts, the form of admission, the necessary qualifications, the tests, payments, trials, and oaths need not be gone into here, since each town had its own peculiarities, and its own scale of payments and fines, etc. Some idea of how the crafts carried on their meetings, entries, etc., will be obtained as we make our way through the minutes of the Weavers' Corporation, and try our best to throw light on these as we proceed.

Having drawn attention, in the above sketch, to the way in which the merchants of the guildries attempted to, and succeeded, in controlling the councils of the burghs, it may be sufficient now to cite the Act of 1469, which made the councils self-elective, in so far as the "old council" of each year elected their successors, and so made the "new council" of the following year. Of course, as might have been expected and as was possibly intended, the old council invariably proceeded on the lines of electing themselves. The councils in this way became so many close corporations, from which the members of the crafts were generally excluded. This system went on alongside the rule of the Four Burghs' Court Laws, and the decisions of the Royal Chamberlain and his Ayres or Courts, of which we shall hear more by and by.

The self-electing power of the councils continued for two and a half centuries, and was only broken up so far when the Act of 1724

admitted the crafts to the councils, and gave the workers a chance with the bargainers, to assist in the government of their own community.

As an illustration of the way and the extent to which the crafts were shut out of the burgh councils, reference may be made to the case tried by the Privy Council on 11th March, 1613, where it is admitted that only two craftsmen had places in the Town Council of Stirling, that these two were persistently ignored, and that the whole government of the burgh was in the hands of the guild merchants.



Old Town-house Bell, Dunfermline.

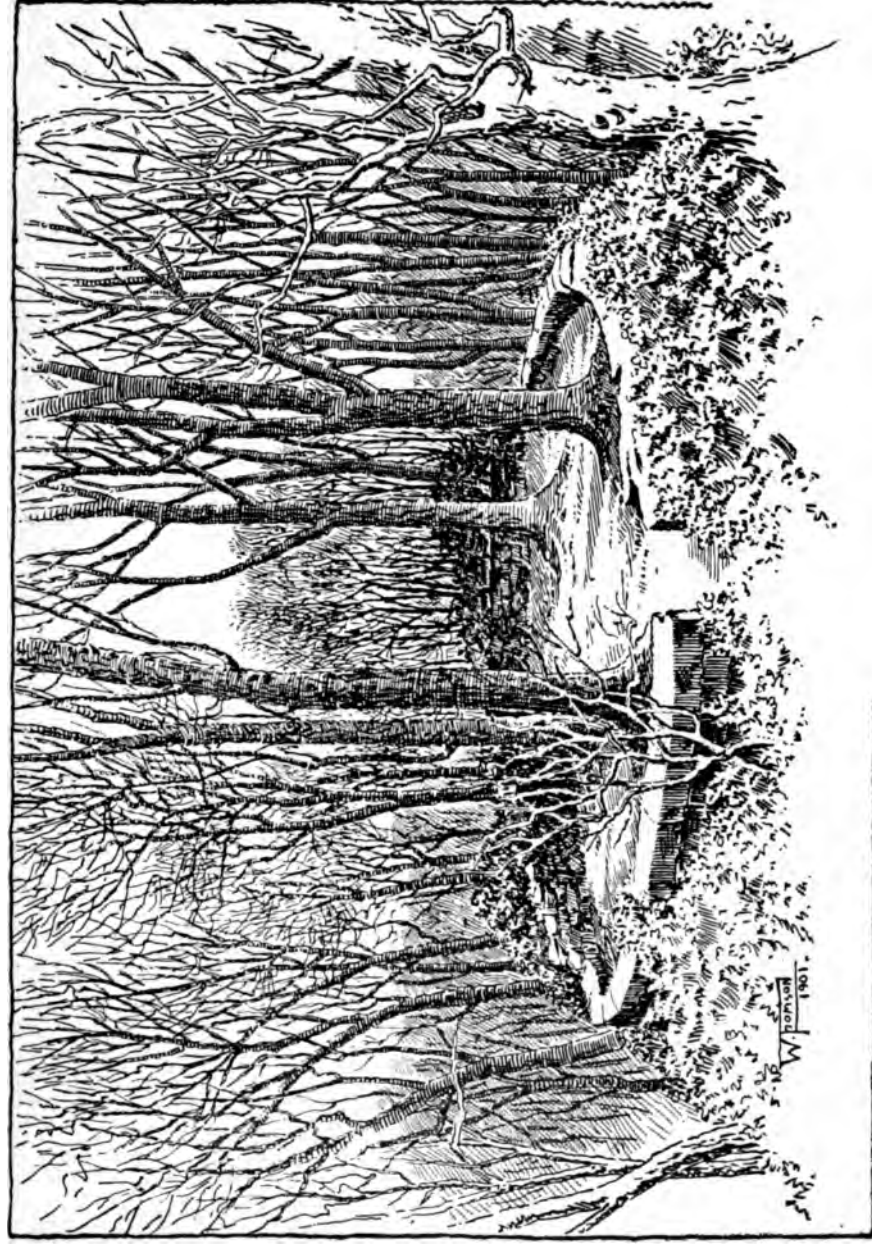
The condition of the question, *Crafts v. Guilds*, is thus set forth in the Act of Revocation of James V., dated Haddington, 3rd of May, 1530. "To all and sundrie our liegis to quhoise knowledge thir present letters sall come, Greeting, forsameikle wit ye, that we, be circumvention and wrangous information, without advice and consent of our Counsell, have ratified, approvit, and confirmit certain articles and statutes maid be the merchandis of our Kingdom for thair particular profit. To the heavy damage and skaith of all craftsmen of our said Kingdom, agains the common weill of the samyne and of

our liegeis. We thairfoir," with respect to "the priveleges and liberties given and grantit be oure most noble progenitors to the said craftsmen, casting, cancelling, and discerning," the same to be repealed. The Act also commands and charges the lieges to "cease from all troubling, molesting, or impeding the said craftsmen or their servants." The language and general tone of the letter are as strange, as its provisions were unexpected. It is somewhat unkingly, in any case, to confess mistakes, and it is even more so when he intimates, as James does, that his mistakes were caused "be circumvention and wrangous information." To "circumvent" a King like James V. of Scotland, was a crime at once of disloyalty and treason.

CHAPTER III.

*Incorporated trades—Deacons of crafts—Law for the worker—
Shoemakers and masons—How the town appeared in 1501—
Church Scandals—Tolbooth—Boy abbots—Our fighting Abbot
Beaton—"Clear the Causey" in Edinburgh.*

DR. HENDERSON in his *Annals*, tells us that in the year 1500, and about that period, the following trades were practised in the town, viz.: smiths, weavers, masons, wrights, tailors, bakers, shoemakers, fleshers, litsters (dyers), brewers, waulkers, fullers, and cadgers. This is a pretty long list, and shows the town, however small and inconsiderable it may have been, was then fairly well supplied with the concrete elements of civilisation. After enumerating the trades, he quietly observed, "It does not appear that any of these trades were incorporated at this period." The remark is a fine sample of the incoherent kind—something like the meaningless things we hear



All that remains of Malcolm Canmore's Tower, Dunfermline Glen.

every day about that innocent element, the weather. The Doctor forgot at the time that the trades might possibly be incorporated with, and form an integral part of, the guildry—for, as we have already seen, the guilds, in their early days, consisted of craftsmen as well as of merchants. If this was so in Dunfermline, separate incorporation of trades was at once impossible and unnecessary! If, on the other hand, the trades, or any of them, *were* incorporated, all information on the point was likely to be, and is, lost. The Minutes of the Town Council, which were but a reflex of the guildry decisions, would shut out all reference to this contaminated lower order—information as to the crafts need not be looked for there. Neither need we, and for the same reason, look for enlightenment to the minutes of the guild brethren. We do not know where Dr. Henderson went to seek light with regard to the crafts as they existed in 1500, but the minutes of the crafts themselves, and of the conveners' court, could alone supply the want, and these are non-existent, for the beginning of the sixteenth century.

But, apart from the existence of written and book-held proofs of trade incorporations at this period, we may confidently hold that the principal trades of the burgh were already, and before the beginning of the sixteenth century, fully and regularly incorporated.

The local guildry had taken form and obtained a charter as early as 1395. It may have been in existence long before this date, but the year given is generally accepted as the one in which the guildry of Dunfermline came on to the stage of local history. If the crafts really formed part of the guildry during the fifteenth century, we may feel entirely sure that no tradesman would be allowed within its pale, unless he were a recognised and accredited member of his craft—there was too much class and sectional jealousy to permit of any other conclusion. If the guild was separate from the crafts, the same feeling of exclusive dealing would operate with increased effect upon the minds of the guild brethren. In any case, the craftsman must then have existed, and must have been combined with his fellows for trade purposes.

This assumption is borne out by the charter granted in favour of the Stirling guildry by Alexander II., in 1226, which names certain crafts as then existing, and which excludes weavers and waukers from membership. This charter is confirmed by David II. at Scone, in October, 1360, and witnessed, among others, by John Abbot of Dunfermline.

Then the Doctor could have helped himself by examining the Act passed by James I. in 1424—already referred to—wherein the crafts are clearly recognised. This shows that, long before we have direct statutory or historical proof of the existence of organised trades, the crafts were already common to our burghs—while Dunfermline could form no exception to the rule. Three years after this, the crafts and deacons are again referred to—the provisions of the Act of 1427 forbidding the further appointment of deacons, since their meetings “savoured of conspiracy.” The want of trade deacons, however, created such confusion that a few months later the Estates General of the realm directed the Town Council of each burgh to elect, as we have seen, a warden of every craft for one year, who, with the advice of discreet men chosen by the Council, should examine and fix the price of work done. The wording of the Act leaves hardly any room for doubt that the trades of Dunfermline, with other towns, were incorporated at the beginning—and long before the beginning—of the sixteenth century. Again, in 1493, James IV. sets forth that deacons of crafts were dangerous, and might prove the cause of great trouble by making ordinances contrary to the common weal, and for their own profit. Their meetings were, therefore, forbidden for one year, and they were to exercise no function except that of examining the fineness of the work, and seeing that it was worked by craftsmen. This ordinance, again, adds to the proof that corporations existed in our burghs at the date of the Act.

One of the “ordinances” of this Act of 1493 is directed against the shoemakers, who, it was found, had imposed a tax on all other craftsmen going to markets, by which disturbances were raised and the prices of shoes increased. The Act orders that this taxation

should be abolished. The masons and wrights, too, were found to have made a rule of craft that they should have their fees or wages on holidays as well as on work-days, "or else that they should not work," and also, "if any mason should, at his pleasure, leave off his work, none other of his craft was allowed to complete it." The Act of 1493 ordained that the "makkers and users of such statutes of Incorporations should be indicted as oppressors of the King's lieges."

We talk, sometimes, with grief and indignation of the drastic and oppressive measures adopted by members of the modern trades union, and forget that even their "wildest" proposals have been exemplified by their ancestral brethren of four hundred years ago. But the Act was a repressive one, and its language may be taken as exaggerating the evils it was intended to repress.

This Act of 1493 cannot, however, be taken by itself as operating against the crafts. The third Parliament of James IV., holden at Perth on 18th March, 1491, ordained the craft deacons to furnish the Chamberlain of Scotland annually with a statement of all moneys received from craft burgesses "in payment of their freedom"—a purely inquisitorial measure, intended to annoy, and to furnish the means of farther exaction. According to Maitland's *History of Edinburgh*, the crafts of the city, during the latter part of the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth century, were in the custom, when any craftsman was summoned to appear before the local courts, to be tried for a trade offence, to send numbers of their brethren to assist the accused one in his defence. These demonstrations were brought about by the iniquity of the laws and the invidious oppression of the crafts. The hand-workers were, by natural impulse, taking such means as were within their reach to maintain their natural and reasonable claims against the spirit of the Act of 1493.

A still more drastic enactment against the crafts and deacons was passed in 1496, when barons, provosts, and magistrates of burghs were empowered to checkmate the craftsmen, by fixing the prices of all craft products. This method of reprisal does not seem to have worked well, for, in 1551, the magistrates of free burghs were ordained to

convene the deacons and craftsmen within their burghs, to fix reasonable prices for the products of each craft. Four years later, the oppressive Act of 1555 gave power, as we have already seen, to the magistrates and councils to appoint inspectors and visitors of crafts, to supersede the deacons, and to subject the crafts to the dominion of the guilds.

Then the legislative tide turned, the crafts were fully recognised, their rights and privileges restored, and the uselessness of attempting to crush them under the heels of the guild fully admitted. Thus the underlying stratum of statement in these quotations, amounts almost to a demonstration, that the trades of Dunfermline would be fully incorporated at the date to which Dr. Henderson refers.

The Doctor himself elsewhere (*see Extracts from Kirk Session Records*, p. 13) tells us that the Town Council Records bear evidence that weaving was one of the trades of the town as early as 1490; and when we remember the strictness with which the exercise of any trade was guarded in these early times—as shown in the Acts and charters already quoted—we may rest satisfied that the weavers were then an incorporated craft, or otherwise a portion of the guildry.

Doctor Henderson estimates the population of the town in 1501 at thirteen hundred people, with other fifty persons in the abbey—of which James Stewart, second son of King James III., was then Comendator, and David Coupar was Provost of the town. The town itself was made up of the High Street, Collier Row, Cross Wynd, Kirkgate, St. Catherine's Wynd, Maygate, Newrow, and Nethertown. The "Foul Vennel" was then a narrow, dirty footpath, where Canmore Street now stretches its genteel length; and the "Common Vennel," which is now Priory Lane. Besides these lines of irregular streets, there would also be a straggle of houses on the roadway leading from the south port—west end of the Common Vennel—to the Girth Brig, now West Nethertown Street, and so south, on the Limekilns Village Road.

At this time there was no little religious, or rather ecclesiastical, excitement. Scandals of a somewhat gross description, and touching

the conduct of Church affairs, were in the air. The easy-going, handsome, and gallant, though somewhat swaggering, King James IV., had aided and abetted the selfish schemes of the Church dignitaries, and had gone hand in hand with them in turning holy Mother Church into a mere set of arrangements for aggregating power and wealth, and for dominating the minds of the people and councils of the nation. James had made his younger brother—also James by name—Archbishop of St. Andrews, Duke of Ross, Marquis of Ormond, Earl of Ardmanoch, Lord of Brechin and Novar, Chancellor of the Kingdom, Abbot of Arbroath, and Commendator of Dunfermline.

All this, too, before the young man was twenty-six years of age, being also without proper education, consecration, or fitness for either social or ecclesiastical dignity. It was a notorious case of heaping high-paid offices upon a stripling, simply because he was the King's brother.

In a town of thirteen hundred people, what a scandal this kingly and churchy appointment would make! How the weavers would talk it over! How they would gossip from shop to shop, and how the pirn-winder wives would stop their wheels to hear the latest phase of the Kirk comedy! There were no seats in the church at that time, and there was only one church in the little town. The people wandered in and out at all times of the day, and any day of the week. They sought their favourite altars, and muttered their lessons—paternosters and prayers—or hung about the huge pillars of the nave, and whispered the latest rumours and wildest stories to each other, while some erring female or villainous male sinner engaged the round-faced priest ensconced inside the confessional box.

Up by, at the top of the Kirkgate, was the tolbooth or town-house, which also was the custom-house, court-house, and jail. Down through the side-gratings a passer-by might catch glimpses of the jail-birds waiting their trial by the bailies, or pacing their weary rounds, as they counted the days and hours of their confinement. Away up above, the Town Clerk wrote out his minutes, while the debtors "but-an'-ben" made merry with the "jayelor," or wandered out to sniff the caller air or snatch a hurried dram.

On each side of the Kirkgate, the Highgate, and the other gates and wynds, the middens exhaled a thick and odorous perfume ; while in the middle of each thoroughfare, a bit of rudely-paved roadway marked the "cantle of the causey." Outside stairs and wooden fronts distinguished the houses, while thatch or greystone lent a dull sombreness to the roofs. If the fraters of the monastery were in



Dunfermline Town-house : Removed, 1768.

colour, the passer-by might also see a straggling and wavering procession of Churchmen, winding first through the venerable Abbey, and then through the muck-midden streets, while the denizens, young and old, doffed their caps and saluted the insignia of the Church.

The youthful commendator died in 1504, and James Beaton, the youngest son of the Laird of Balfour, reigned in his stead ! He, too, was a pluralist of the most pronounced type, and while it was doubt-

ful if he could remember all his titles, it was certain he could not discharge half the duties he took on himself. He got crusted all over with civil and ecclesiastical dignities, and had the usufruct, otherwise the salaries, attached to all the best offices in the Kingdom. He is James II. among our abbots, and when he obtained the appointment, he got also a lordship in the Court of Session. Next year (1505), he was made Lord High Treasurer. In 1508, he was bishop-elect of Glasgow, and Archbishop in 1509; Chancellor of Scotland in 1514; Abbot of Arbroath in 1524; and was Archbishop of St. Andrews from 1522 till 1539.

It was then (1505) that Dunbar wrote his *Tod and the Lambs*, describing the King's capers while in Dunfermline, and skelting his shafts of ridicule on their solemn fatnesses, the Kirk and palace courtiers, that held high wassail in the Frater Hall, or the even gayer halls within the palace in the glen.

Just think, gentle reader, of the grand farce of Pope Julius II. sending over to James the King, in 1507, a sword of state, with a golden handle, and a consecrated gold and purple hat; and having the same presented by young Abbot Beaton de Balfour, and the Papal Legate—the King himself, full of fun, frolic, and gallantry, being then only in his thirty-fourth year. No doubt, when their cups were in, and laughter and merriment resounded through the corridors of Holyrood, the King would don the sacerdotal head-piece, and show the company what a gallant Churchman he would make. Yes, indeed, there were high jinks in those grand old days.

But there were conspiracies and wire pullings too, and men then, as now, looked quite as much to their own interest as to their duties to Kirk, King, or country.

During the minority of James V., the Earls of Angus and Arran were the heads of factions that, for a period of years, were continually plotting and warring against each other—especially in Edinburgh, though every town and district, Dunfermline with the others, were made only too familiar with the faction fightings of the two parties. John, Duke of Albany, was regent from 1515 to 1524, and he, to

preserve the peace of the capital, prohibited by proclamation any one of the names of Douglas or Hamilton (the family names of the two chief political gladiators) to be chosen Provost of Edinburgh. In defiance of the spirit of the proclamation, the Earl of Arran interfered (1520) in one of the city elections; a riot ensued, and one of the deacons of the trades was killed by the Hamiltons. A deacon was a great man in those days, and the death of one, in a faction fight created such a sensation in the country as turned the tide of popular favour entirely to the side of the Douglasses.

So strong was the public feeling in Edinburgh, that Arran found it necessary to withdraw himself to Glasgow. Here he was followed by Abbot Beaton of Dunfermline (who was then also Archbishop of Glasgow), the Earls of Eglinton and Cassillis, Lords Ross and Sempill, the Bishop of Galloway, the Abbot of Paisley, and many others of influence, adherents of the Hamilton party. Thus the country became sharply divided into two hostile armies, each waiting an opportunity to fly at the throats of their opponents.

The Douglasses, taking advantage of the Hamiltons being in the west, got one of their number, Douglas of Kilspindie, put into the coveted office of Lord Provost of Edinburgh. A Parliament was summoned during his provostship to meet in Edinburgh (29th April, 1520), with the view of mitigating the horrors of this hostile party warfare. The Hamiltons, however, would not at first appear, alledging they could not be safe in a city ruled by a Douglas—and Arran and others so fanned the flames of discontent, that in the end they got one, Robert Logan, favourable to their side, elected to the office.

Then came Arran and our Abbot Beaton, and a host of others, into Edinburgh. Angus was also in the capital with a guard of four hundred Douglasses, though Arran's followers were far more numerous. Abbot Beaton had built a house for himself at the bottom of Blackfriars' Wynd, and here the Hamiltons convened to concert measures. Beaton had a special grudge against Angus. He and Angus had been chosen *two* of the *four* governors of the young King—the four to have the revenues of four vacant benefices while the office

held. Angus had, however, managed to appropriate three of these, leaving only a scrap to each of the others. This could never be forgiven by a Churchman, and so Beaton hated Angus, and yearned for his extinction.

His zeal, however, outran his discretion. He urged the Hamiltons to sally forth, seize Angus (who was living at the West Bow), and so become the dominant party. Angus got wind of the abbot's scheme, and was soon prepared for eventualities. He sent the Bishop of Dunkeld (Gavin Douglas, his uncle) to remonstrate with Beaton and the others present. Beaton protested that his desire was wholly for peace, and laying his hand on his breast to give force to his words, the armour he wore under his priestly vestments rattled with the blow. "Your conscience clatters, my Lord," said Dunkeld, and withdrew.

The Hamiltons rushed out of the Wynd shouting their war cry, and meeting the onslaught of the Douglasses, a fierce and bloody affray ensued. Sir James Hamilton was soon killed, and left lying in the kennels. Doors and windows in the lofty houses were crowded with spectators. The whole city was in an uproar, the noise of the conflict and shouts of the combatants turned the High Street, for the time, into a pandemonium. The Douglasses at last prevailed. The Hamiltons were driven down the slope of the Canongate, and Beaton, with many others, fled into the church of the Blackfriars for sanctuary. He was followed in hot haste, dragged from behind the altar, his episcopal habit torn from his back, and his armoured condition fully exposed. Fired with rage, the Douglasses were about to dispatch him, when the Bishop of Dunkeld rushed in and saved his life.

Beaton's priestly prudence once more returned. He got off with a whole skin, scampered down Halkerston's Wynd, and crossing the Nor' Loch by a ford, sought his way by the quietest route out of the city, and did not stop till Linlithgow was reached, where he felt safe. Such was one of the "clear the causey" fights of Edinburgh. It will serve to convey to the good folks of Dunfermline some idea of the kind of man that ruled in their abbey, when the "gudeman of Ballengiech" was in his boyhood.

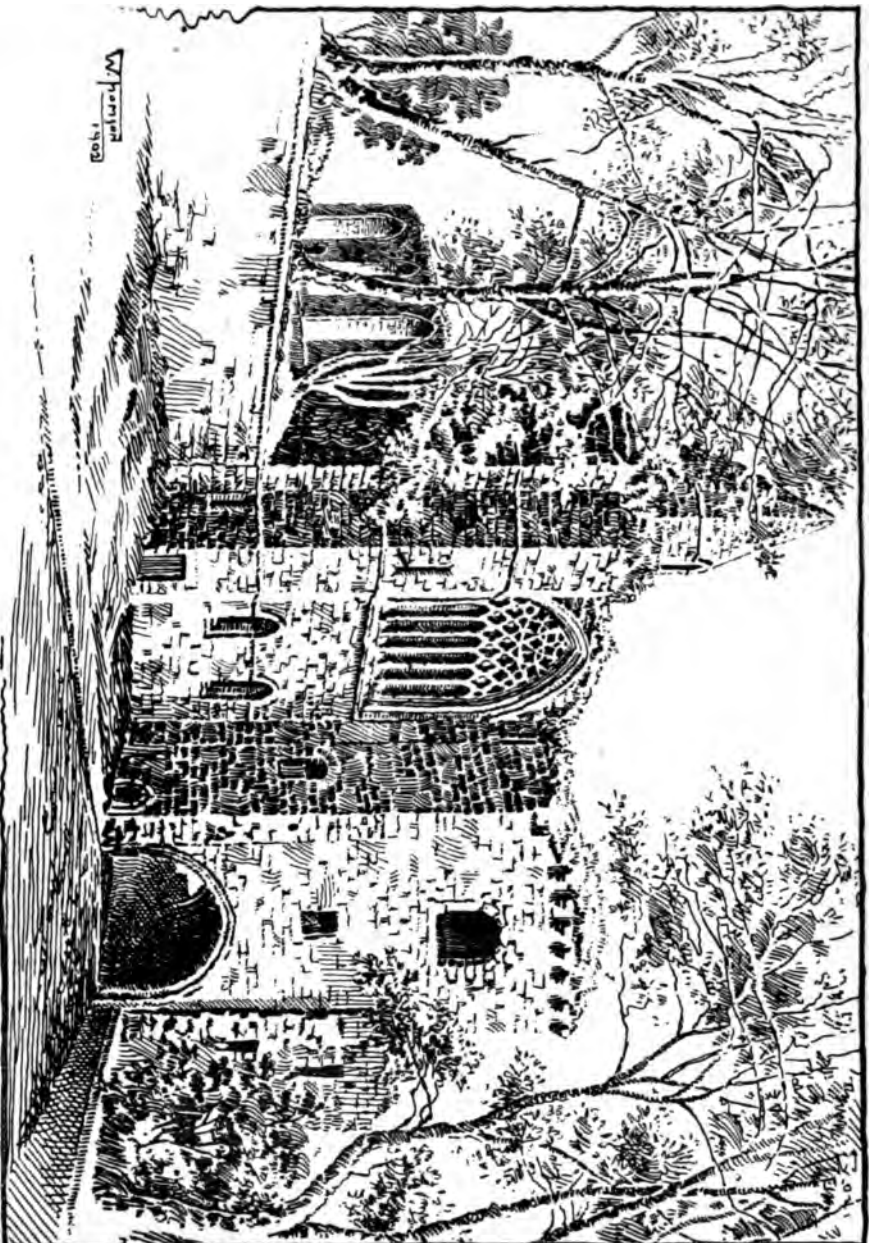
CHAPTER IV.

Abbot Beaton—King James IV.—Old processions—New abbots—The march to Flodden—The King's bonnie boy—Battle of Avonbridge.

WHEN the young Abbot Beaton, after his first appointment in 1504, became disgusted with the annoyances and troubles surrounding him, and despairing of being able to keep his abbotship much longer, he gave up the office (1510), and retired upon the rich and abundant allowances yielded by his numerous other offices. It was high time he did so !

The King had a son born to him by Marion Boyd of Bonshaw, and he was exceedingly proud of that son. When but fourteen years of age, his father made him Archbishop of St. Andrews, and now (1510), being fifteen years old, the same indulgent parent desired to make him Abbot of Dunfermline. Beaton had, therefore, to resign and make way for the King's boy. Then did the monarch set himself to induce the Pope (Julius II.) to confirm the appointments he had made in favour of his son ; and Julius, being a man much akin in spirit and pursuits to the ruler of Scotland, granted all the King desired ; and not only so, but (1511) raised the young lad to the highest possible ecclesiastical dignity, by naming him the Papal Legate, *a latere*, in Scotland. So that at this time, and on occasions of Church festivals and the like, King James might be seen crowned with his consecrated hat of purple cloth and golden flowers, while his youthful son mounted the scarlet cloak and head cover of the Cardinal.

All these goings-on were doubtless carefully noted by the weavers and other craftsmen of the burgh, and talked over in merry whispers as they gathered at the corners and watched the movements of the Churchmen. And when James, having re-established the Chamberlain Courts, held a Justice Ayre in Dunfermline, and marched in procession



Western Window, Dunfermline Monastery.

up the Kirkgate with officers, pursuivants, retainers, and guards ; and with pipers playing and drums beating, and the terrible deemster and executioner bringing up the rear, their thoughts would claw the crown of doubtful conclusion, and they would ask themselves how all this *olla podrida* of love-license, monkish religion, and "law and order" could possibly combine in one man, and that man the King of Scotland? Men and women were then much as they are now, and "oral communication" being their only method, rumour and the local gossip would roll up many a curious tale about the Churchmen and the King.

The visit of Margaret, the Queen, to the old palace in the glen, in the spring of 1512, would doubtless prove a delight to the ladies and lassies of Dunfermline. Margaret Tudor was then a young woman of twenty-three years, of plain features, of a querulous, uncertain disposition, and as strong in her attachments as she was fitful in her friendships. She was fresh in complexion, firm in her step, and queenly in her bearing. Her rich dower of beautiful brown hair was folded at the temples and queued up behind. She was fond of dress, and appeared in gay and richly 'broidered gowns ; while her bodice and bonnet displayed her form and adorned her head. Her maidens fell little short of their royal mistress in their beauty of apparel ; and the gallants who formed part of her train and led the guards, shone in glittering arms and gaily-slashed doublets, and jangled as they rode, with short shot-guns and scabbered swords. This kind of procession would contrast with that of the King ; and all the young folks, the middle-aged and the old, would turn out to see their bright and gay, if fickle and uncertain, Queen, as she, in the early days of May, "took voyage furth of Dumfermling" on her way to the north.

The King was too busy in this year with his preparations for the fatal campaign of Flodden to give time to shows or processions. Negotiations, embassies, and fruitless passages to and from England, of ministers and negotiators, swallowed up the fateful months till September of the following year, when the slaughter of that dreadful battle by the Till counted King James himself, and his son, the boy

Abbot of Dunfermline, among the slain. The King's body was carried away by the English, embalmed, coffined, buried somewhere, but eventually lost to sight and certainty. That of his youthful son, the thirty-second abbot of our monastery, was more piously cared for. It was by some means carried to St. Andrews, and reverently buried there, to lie undisturbed for 307 years. When that time had come (1820), some workmen, digging near the site of the High Altar, found his skeleton, and deep sword-cleft in the skull told only too plainly how the young lad met his death.

We do not know whether many sons of our old town fell on Flodden field, but no doubt the citizens would, like all the rest of the stricken land, bewail the loss of their young, their handsome, and gallant King; as well as the grievous fate of the flaxen-haired lad that ruled as abbot in the Frater Hall, through whose gaping windows the wind now whistles moaning and eerie.

“ The King gaed up the castle hill, and doon the heather knowe,
 And there gat he a little loon : had e'en a flaxen pow.
 The King look'd in his bonnie face, and stroked his yellow hair,
 He saw himsel' in ilka grace, in ilka feature fair ;
 This loon, said he, by mark an' fee, is born for high command :
 To rule the camp, the Kirk, the field, wi' ony in the land.
 He dressed him fair an' trained him weel, his powers and arms to wield,
 That he might shine in councils high, or lead a stricken field.
 The King gaed round St. Andrew's toon, an' but his heart did irk,
 An' there he made wee flaxen pow the bishop of a kirk.
 The bishop's hat it wadna set, the flaxen-headed loon,
 An' sae the King wad deck him out, in but an abbot's croon.
 But aft the hat and aft the croon were laid aside, I trow,
 And then gat he a warrior's helm, to deck his bonnie brow.
 Then mounted he a gallant steed ; wi' thousands in array,
 He vowed he'd do a warrior's meed, in field, or camp, or fray ;
 An' aff he rode to Flodden field, his father's fate to share,
 An' there that fate in death was sealed, wi' eke ten thousand mair.
 The fauldin' nicht closed o'er the fecht, and o'er blood-sodden land,
 For piled an' high, the dead did lie, where bonnie men did stand.

Where grim an' stalwart men were laid, there lay a warrior fair,
His life-blood soaking through his plaid, an' o'er his yellow hair.
Oh sad's the gate, an' hard the fate, sic doom as this to share,
To quench in nicht, a morn sae bricht, and end a life sae fair."

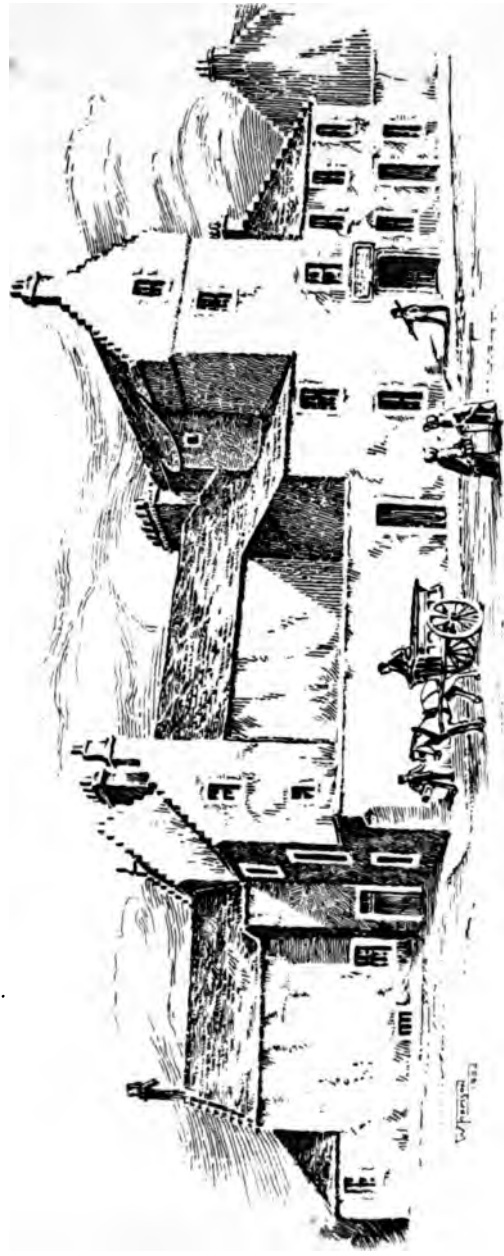
It is hardly possible to conceive the sorrowing sadness and consternation of the Scottish people when the news came, and they were able fully to comprehend the extent and nature of the calamity that had befallen them. For once the voice of faction was hushed, and the common suffering seemed to bind all into one common cause, to draw them together, to face the foe, and to preserve their country. It was not for long, and the widowed Queen was the first to show the example of lawlessness. Parliament had decided that the care of the young King and his brother should be committed to the keeping of certain nobles named in the writ. The Queen-mother refused obedience, fled from Edinburgh to Stirling, and there defied the Parliament. The castle there was besieged under the orders of Regent Albany, and Margaret was compelled to surrender. Then came the unhappy intrigues and marriage with Douglas, Earl of Angus, and the formation of those factions—the Douglas and Hamilton—which rendered the first two decades after Flodden but a succession of cabals, plots, and counter-plots, varied with scenes of bloodshed and rapine. In nearly all of these unseemly scenes of strife, our ambitious Abbot Beaton was mixed up, and was a conspicuous figure in one, at least, of the blood lettings of the time. We have seen how he comported himself in the street fight of Edinburgh in 1520; we now find him, six years after, an actual warrior in the field.

The resignation by Beaton of the abbotsip of Dunfermline, to make room for the King's son, in 1510, has already been referred to. After the death of the royal and youthful abbot, James Hepburn, third son to the Laird of Hailes, was (1515) elected to the office. This election did not seem to satisfy the redoubtable Andrew Foreman, who had, by application to the Regent, obtained the appointment. This double selection of two most fit and holy men continued to be wrangled over for the proverbial year and a day, when Hepburn,

having come to an understanding with the fat pluralist Foreman, retired from the contest (1516), leaving the latter to assume the robes and the duties in 1517. He died 1522, and was interred in Dunfermline church. He was succeeded, strange to say, by the man who had resigned in 1510, and James Beaton found himself once more elected to the abbacy of Dunfermline. He held it till his death in 1539. Meantime, on 4th September, 1526, he had "assisted" at the battle of Avonbridge, near Linlithgow, the rough story of which is as follows:—

The Parliament held in Edinburgh on 16th November, 1524—to dissolve the Regency mainly—had scarcely sat a week when four hundred of the Douglass party under Angus scaled the city walls, declared themselves loyal subjects, and that the King was in the hands of evil-disposed persons. Margaret and her Council ordered Angus to leave the city, which they did; and then Beaton, esteemed the richest and craftiest man in Scotland, made such an alliance with the factionists as enabled him to come out as the leading villain in the next tragedy. The Parliament of 13th June, 1526, saw the young king take up the reins of government, under a council of eight persons—all of whom were eventually controlled by Angus, and the King felt he really was a prisoner in the hands of the Douglass faction. This galled his spirit, and he determined to be free.

He appealed to a Stewart, the Earl of Lennox, who undertook the difficult task, assisted by the Queen-mother and the versatile Abbot Beaton. Soon after this he had an army of ten thousand men, besides one thousand Highlanders, who joined as volunteers. Angus, who was an accomplished diplomatist, got hold of Arran and represented to him that the King had made up his mind to declare the succession to the crown lay not with Arran (who was most nearly related to the royal family), but with the house of Lennox. On this, Arran, though a Hamilton, joined the Douglas party. Both factions being now fully armed—the Douglasses in Edinburgh and the Hamiltons in the west—marched out to a meet of deadly intent. The King (unwillingly), with the Douglass army, marched towards Linlith-



The Abbot's House, Maygate.

gow, seized the bridge over the Avon, planted a force on the heights to the west, and waited on the Hamiltons.

These, under Lennox and Beaton, soon appeared, and without delay attacked the enemy. The Douglasses stood firm at first, and then paid back the compliment of a charge on the Hamiltons, and completely routed them. Hamilton himself, however, nothing daunted, divided his forces into three sections. With the first he made a precipitate attack upon the Douglass men above Manuel Priory, and was again defeated with heavy losses. Just at this moment a party of the Douglass men, who had come late, dashed over the bridge and into the field, shouting "A Douglass! A Douglass!" put the whole of Lennox's men to flight, and inflicted a complete and disastrous defeat on their opponents.

The Earl of Lennox was killed by Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, and many other lairds and notables, with scores of the common, uncounted men. The Abbot of Dunfermline again escaped with a whole skin, and got himself quickly out of the way. He wist not where to go nor where he could find shelter and concealment. He seems to have wandered into the north, for we find him reported shortly after as in the wilds of Lochaber, disguised as a shepherd and living among the peasantry of the hills. The Douglasses were now absolute rulers of the country and the King, and Beaton saw no way of return but that of buying himself back. He made up his mind. He knew the greed of Angus, and he offered to resign in Angus' favour the rich living (two thousand merks a year) of Kilwinning Abbey. In this style Beaton made himself safe, and retired into quiet life for a time. The King escaped from Falkland, and the Douglasses in 1528, proscribed at once the whole of the Douglas clan, and brought back the scheming Beaton to take charge of the royal purse and rule as Chancellor of the Kingdom till death relieved him of office in 1539.

He was succeeded by George Dury, who was named, as Leslie tells us, in Beaton's will, and who got the place, not by divine permission, but the "tholing" of James Beaton. Such were our chief local rulers in the first half of the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER V.

Crafts, how formed—Dunfermline weavers—Earliest minutes—The Second Stewart—War of Independence—Poverty v. wealth of Scotland—Its former riches—"Laws of the Four Burghs."

MR. CHARLES GROSS, in his *Guild Merchant*, tells us that while "municipal (craft and guild) corporations were common in England, they were almost unknown in Scotland." Yet, at page 113, he says, "Generally speaking, this body [*i.e.*, mayor, aldermen, and council of an English town] had the power to establish, and even to incorporate, guilds and companies; and such incorporation meant a supervision over these associations; but scarcely anywhere had the craftsmen any independent government and jurisdiction over their trade, though they were allowed to regulate the latter, subject to the general control of the burghal magistrates." Now, this was precisely the way in which a craft in Scotland obtained its "seal of cause," or constitution. It was made a municipal incorporation, it was given a share in the local burghal government; and, though subject to the general control of the council and magistrates, it was allowed to draw up all necessary rules and bye-laws for direction and regulation of its own trade.

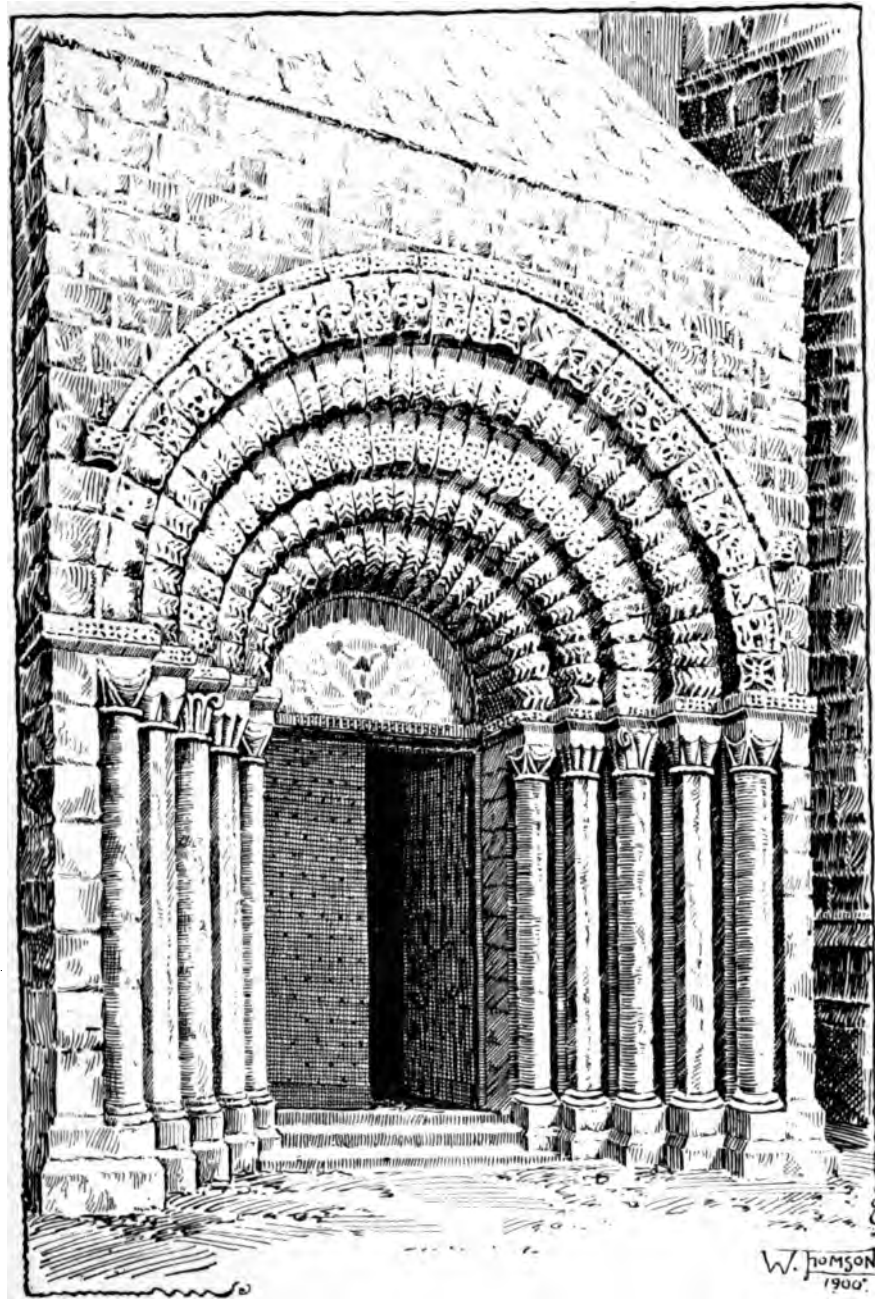
Mr. Gross will have it that Scottish municipal institutions in the middle ages were framed on examples furnished by the Continent, rather than on those furnished by England. But Scotland had then no need to look anywhere for precedents for her municipal methods. By the end of the thirteenth century, as clearly shown by the "Laws of the Four Burghs," all the Scottish typical town charters had been granted. From that time down to 1532, when the Court of Session was set up, the changes in our municipal system were exceedingly few, and these were largely confined to matters of detail. One of the most important was the legal recognition of the crafts, and perhaps the

most absurd was that fatuous law of 1469, which made the councils self-elective. The former gave the crafts ultimately a place at the council boards, and the latter gave the members of Town Councils, and especially the officials, a power of *re*-electing themselves and party friends as often as they chose.

The Weavers' Corporation or Craft in Dunfermline being, like its individual members, keenly intelligent and frequently pugnacious, has much in its history exemplifying the foregoing remarks, and proving not only its own position and character, but the established order of things municipal. The minutes of the craft contain an annual reference to the election of their Town Council representative; and occasional, and sometimes bitter, allusion is made to the treatment which the Town Council meted out to them, especially in the matter of selecting as deacon *one* representative from the short leet of *two*, the members were compelled to accept and put before their members at the September meetings.

A practice common to all the crafts in earlier times was that of carrying forward the fundamental rules of their association from one minute-book to another, as the earlier ones got filled up. "By this practice," says Mr. Hay, in his *History of Arbroath*, "we have preserved many ancient and curious craft laws, bearing on the details of their trade, constitutions, and rules of procedure, as well as on the aspects of religion and morals, which the crafts from time to time favoured or adopted as rules of conduct." The earliest existing book of the Dunfermline Weavers' Craft shows this feature on its first page, the opening entries being a recapitulation of important general and special regulations affecting the members individually, the interests of the trade, and the kinds and quality of the work.

The earliest extant minute of the Weavers' Corporation is dated 2nd April, 1596, when James Cairns was deacon. But as the minute is carried over from an older book, now lost, it is clear that the craft had already been long in existence when this minute was penned. Seven individuals, in addition to the deacon, are named in the minute as "free" members of the Corporation, and as burgesses of the burgh.



The Western Doorway, Dunfermline Abbey.

These seven names it may be worth while to give, since they are names still common in the town. They are—James Mackie, John Littlejohn, John Anderson, Thomas Bell, John Hunt, James Westwood, and John Haldane. The minute is a long one, and the matters it touches on and the directions it sets down for the guidance of the craft members, furnish equally strong proof of the long-continued existence of the Corporation. The craft is found to be fully constituted, and counts a list of all the necessary officials. The members have then a court of assize—the Conveners' Court—for determining all disputes arising among the weavers as to quality of the cloth and accidents to the work-looms. They have fixed contracts for web rods and other implements, and rules as to the treatment which the "free craftsmen" were to mete out to the "landward" weavers outside of the town. Reference is also made to a trade being carried on by the more wealthy weavers with merchants in England. All of which proves a degree of consolidation that could hardly then have grown to such ripeness in a period short of one hundred and fifty to two hundred years.

But it is really needless to fix any historical date or period at which the guilds and crafts had their beginnings. It is simply a question of the fitness of time and of social conditions. The guilds or crafts would spring into existence soon as the elements of which they were composed developed themselves in the social and industrial conditions of the people. If we are to accept the statements of Professors Newton, Morrison, and others, the guilds and crafts of the middle ages were the true successors of the classic guilds of Greek and Roman times. So far as Scotland was concerned, it may be difficult to establish this succession; but it is not unreasonable to suggest that a set of institutions so complete in constitution and practice as this of the Dunfermline Weavers could not develop in less than one hundred and fifty to two hundred years.

This would carry us back to the time of the second Stewart (1390-1406), a period when Scotland was gradually and fitfully recovering itself from the disasters of the reign of David II. (1329-1371). At

this time, the country may be said to have been comparatively prosperous, though it was far from the degree of opulence and comfort enjoyed by all classes of the people during the long reign of Alexander III. (1249-1285).

It is generally, though erroneously accepted as a truism of our history, that the farther back we go, the poorer and more rude do the people become. This is far from being true of the Scottish people, and though the barbarous policy of Edward I. of England, in destroying or carrying away our national records, has left but a beggarly account of our social condition in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we have still such a fair amount of documentary evidence on these matters as proves that Edward of England, in his wholly unwarranted invasions of Scotland, not only destroyed our finest buildings, burnt our towns, and slaughtered our citizens, but crushed our manufactures, paralysed our industries, and reduced our standard of life from the level of prosperity, comfort and content, to that of poverty, privation and suffering.

The reader may here interpose, and complain that it is hardly fair, in a sketch history of a local industry, to cram in a monograph on the general condition of the people of Scotland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. We should gladly avoid the infliction, did we think it possible we could give the true colour of local events and facts, without putting in the background which properly belongs to the picture. What is that background?

The poverty of Scotland, as contrasted with that of England, was a theme of common talk with our southern neighbours at the time of the Union (1707), though no one of these neighbours ever thought of attributing this poverty to the rapacious policy of their own King and countrymen.

Those who wish to reinforce their memory and their information on this point, may, with advantage, consult Tytler, whose *History of Scotland* is built up on unimpeachable muniments. A few statements from that history will be sufficient to prove our position. It will hardly be believed by any disciple of the "dominant partner"

hallucination, that William the Lion (1165-1214) paid Richard I. of England (1189-1199) the sum of 10,000 marks in lieu of the homage extorted by Henry II. (1154-1189); or that he made a gift of 2000 marks to the English people to assist them in paying Richard's ransom to the Emperor of Germany. This same William bestowed upon King John of England a sum of 15,000 marks on the marriage of two of his daughters, and offered 15,000 more as the purchase price of Northumberland. "Allowing," says Mr. Tytler, "ten pounds of modern money for each mark of this ancient medium, we find from these isolated instances," that this twelfth century Scottish King "disbursed out of the royal revenues a sum equal to £270,000" in present day reckoning.

Then again, "Upon the marriage of Alexander II. (1214-1249) with the daughter of Lord Ingelram de Couci, the portion of the youthful bride amounts to 7000 marks, given her as one-third of the royal revenue. So that in 1239, the date of this marriage, the royal revenue of the Scottish King was 21,000 marks, something more than £200,000 sterling." The same monarch gave 10,000 marks, besides lands, as a marriage portion to his second sister; and when on one occasion he visited Henry III. of England (1216-1272), he made Henry a present of 2000 marks, equal to about £20,000 sterling. Alexander III. paid 4000 marks for the Isle of Man and the Western Isles to the King of Norway, with "rent of 100 marks for ever." From these and other instances of liberality, Mr. Tytler concludes that in these early times the dignity and state of the Scottish monarch was scarcely inferior to that of his southern brother. So much for our ancient Scottish Royals and their riches, and "the poverty of the Scots."

So far as the common people were concerned, their conditions of comfort and content were, in these times of 650 years ago, no less remarkable. We pass over the matter of discussing the social conditions of the Churchmen and noblemen of the period, since their level of comfort may be easily guessed from that of the royal state, and

also since that matter may be fully seen on examination of the pages of Tytler, in his chapter on the Ancient State of Scotland.

The actual condition of the common people—the mass of the population of the times of David I.—is, as may be expected from the habits of our historians, much less frequently, and but rarely directly, touched on in their works. No one, however, can read with intelligent apprehension the “Laws of the Four Burghs Court” without noticing many things that tend to reveal the surroundings of the common lot.

The common sense and natural equity of these laws appeal at once to the reader, but he is able also to read between the lines, and to notice many things and conditions of life to which this equity is applied, that speak eloquently of the comparative comfort of the industrial orders of the times of David I. and his successors. Though large tracks of the country were still in a state of nature, and covered by morass and forest, the arts and practice of agriculture were not neglected. All the cereal crops we know at the present day were cultivated then. Herds of swine and cattle and vast flocks of sheep were in the possession of the landlords, Churchmen, and the leasehold farmers who cultivated the soil. The breeding of war- and work-horses was widely pursued, and if the fields were not fenced as now they are, they were carefully divided, herded and watched during the seasons of seedtime, growth, and harvest. Mills for the grinding of oats and flour were on all the streams, and brew houses with granaries seem to have been in every village and thickly set in every town. Each cottage in these village communities had half an acre of ground attached to it, with rights of pasture on the common lands—a state of things which the changed relations of men, and the greed and legislation of a landlord Parliament has long since swept away.

The pages of Tytler may, in this matter also, be profitably conned. Not less so are proofs of comparative comfort of the lower classes in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries furnished by the examples quoted by Mr. Cochran-Patrick in his *Mediæval Scotland*, to which I would refer the enquiring reader. Any one of our antiquarian

historians will furnish accounts of the Chamberlain and his "Ayres" of these far-away times, and these all go in the direction of showing that the Burgh Laws were as strictly applied for behoof of the people as they were carefully drawn with that view. In an ancient book, called the *Quoniam Attachamenta*, an instance and enumeration is given of the household possessions of a burgess of the thirteenth century. Herein, according to Chamberlain rules of the time, and for the benefit of the heir-at-law, every article of household or other furniture, graith, or possession, is set down; and one is apt to conclude in reading it over that he is running over a list of the household goods of a well-to-do merchant of our own days. Similarly in the *Regiam Majestatem* do we find much to enlighten and surprise us as to the social and domestic condition of our forefathers previous to the time when Edward I. of England set the example of waging perpetual war against Scotland, and of destroying her peace and prosperity.

"David, King of Scotland," says Mr. Warden (*History of Linen Trade*, p. 228), "who had passed his early youth at the court of England, was the first to introduce the manufactures of that country into his own less favoured land. He brought English artizans with him into Scotland, and settled them in the burghs and towns to instruct the Scotch. . . . From this date," he continues, "their progress in the textile arts must have been considerable," as in 1410 Sir Robert Umfraville, "vice admiral of England, entered the Firth of Forth with ten ships of war, and carried off plunder of woollen and linen cloth in such quantities that the sale of them in England lowered the prices in the market." It is in this period and reign we would be inclined to fix the corporate origin of our local industry. We have no positive and direct history on the point. We are compelled to choose a time and condition of things most consistent with the initiation and rise of an industry like linen weaving, and that period is evidently found in the reign of David I.

CHAPTER VI.

Producers and Sellers—Letters of James V. and Mary—Restoring the Crafts—Seals of Cause—Weavers' Charter—The Friendly Society element—The Conveners' Courts.

IN previous chapters, we have endeavoured to show that the existence of our crafts—and in Dunfermline our weaving craft specially—was generally maintained by a fitful, if not constant state of warfare between the workers who produced and the merchants who sold their productions—in other words, between the guildry and the corporations of craftsmen. There was, however, another element of hindrance to the progress of industry, and this one was as much political as social or industrial. “It appears,” says Mr. Tytler, “that a practice had crept in of electing the feudal barons in the neighbourhood to the offices in the magistracy of the burghs; and the effects, as might have been anticipated, were highly injurious. Instead of industrious citizens, occupied in their respective trades and adding by their success to the wealth, the tranquility, and the general civilisation of the country, the provost and aldermen, or bailies, were idle, factious, and tyrannical; domineering over the industrious burgesses, and consuming their substance.”

On this point the opinion of Lord Kames is no less emphatic as to the evil, if not disastrous, results of electing these territorial magnates to the offices of the magistracy. These incapables were protected by the thief-protector Saint Christopher, and the weavers appealed in vain to their own Saint Severine.

Referring to the office of Chamberlain, his Lordship says:—“This office of Chamberlain by excess of power being superseded, the Royal Burghs were left in a state of anarchy—there being no check or control. The magistracy was coveted by noblemen and gentlemen in

the neighbourhood, who, in name of office-bearers, laid their hands on the revenues of the burgh, and converted all to their own profit. . . . These [revenues] were seldom laid out for the good of the town, but in making friends of the party in possession of the magistracy, and in rioting and drunkenness, for which every possible pretext was laid hold of—particularly that of hospitality to strangers.” (*Natural Hist. of Man.*)

The Act of 1535 was intended to put an end to the urban rule of landed, and, too often, warlike and plundering local lairds; and to leave the government of towns to those who lived within the walls.

James V. also, in 1537, perceiving the ills and impediments to which the craftsmen were being continually subjected by the guilds and magistrates (the one being nearly synonymous with the other), issued his well-known letter of revocation and recall of statutes passed by his “most noble progenitors”—his letter being intended to rehabilitate and improve the position of the crafts. This letter of the Fifth James proceeds on the same lines as those of his letter of 1530, in which he pleads that “from wrongous information, and without advice and consent of his Counsell,” he had ratified certain acts promoted by the merchants, *i.e.*, the guildries, to restrain and coerce the craftsmen. That ratification he now withdraws, and re-endows the crafts with all their ancient liberties, warning all evil-disposed persons to cease from troubling or molesting them.

Queen Mary seems to have come to the same resolution as her father with regard to the craftsmen of the burghs. She writes from Edinburgh, on 1st March, 1556, and, after referring to the necessity of good order being preserved, and honest practices in trade made the rule, she points to the benefit of having good craftsmen in the kingdom; and then further refers to an Act of Parliament passed at, and by “the Parliament holden in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh in the month of June, 1555 years,” whereby it was ordained that no deacon be chosen within burghs, but that the provost, bailies, and counsellors should choose the most “godlie and skillful man of every craft, and that these men should be called visitors, to be elected at the feast

of Candlemas (2nd February) yearly ; and that nae craftsman, in time coming, should bear office within the burgh, unless he be elected to the council of the burgh," etc.

Mary's letter goes on to say—That the above Tolbooth Act had done no good but evil, and dispenses with "the provisions and hail clauses thereof;" and then enacts, "We re-establish and give them [the crafts] power to have deacons to visit and oversee all kinds of craftsmen, as they had and were in use to have before the making of the said Act of Parliament;" and "We have given, and by these presents do give, power to use and exercise all and sundry the liberties, privileges, consuetudes, and powers given and granted by our said most noble progenitors."

This letter of Queen Mary, though it purports to be a mere revocation of the Act of 1555 was, in reality, an evidence and continuation of the spirit of commercial activity which had opened with the early years of the sixteenth century. In the first year of that century, the Provost of Edinburgh (Mr. Richard Lawson) indicates a trade with France, by ordering that none but burgesses dwelling in burghs should engage in it. In 1529, John Campbell of Lundie was sent to Flanders to carry through a treaty of commerce with the Emperor, defining and restricting the tolls or duties to be charged on Scottish goods—enacting also, and curiously, that all Scottish merchants should be well dressed; and if they were not, the Conservator (Scottish officer at Middleburg) was empowered to sell as much of their goods as would "fit them out reputedly."

In keeping with the growing spirit of commercial activity, the city of Antwerp, in 1539, desired that the centre of the Scottish trade might be fixed in that port. In 1541, the Convention of Royal Burghs agreed to pay the expenses of "a great personage" to go to the King of France, to obtain a modification of customs duties on Scotch goods. The Convention undertook a similar responsibility in 1563, with respect to a mission sent to Denmark to obtain a reduction of imposts.

But events, as well as public enactments, were gradually shaping themselves in favour of the crafts. The two letters given above from James V. and Mary were followed by one from James VI. in 1583, freeing all craftsmen from liability to pay the guildries for licences to sell foreign-made articles in their places of business or in the markets. This Act of James VI. purporting to initiate an era of free trade to the crafts was largely inoperative. Its administration was committed to men and institutions opposed to its spirit, and crafts and craftsmen had virtually to take what meed of freedom was granted them—even sometimes though their original charters proclaimed the rights sued for.

All these crafts or incorporations, as we have already seen, obtained their charters of erection from the council of the burgh in which they were situated. This charter in Scotland was usually denominated a "Seal of Cause." A "Seal of Cause" was a writ under the seal of the municipality conferring certain privileges—to be exercised within the burgh—on the individual members, and the combined association called a Craft-Guild, or Incorporation. These privileges generally consisted in the right to carry on the particular trade mentioned within the precincts of the burgh; to be "free," as it was termed, to buy and sell, and to enter into arrangements with other incorporations in the same burgh, for mutual trade and mutual benefit, one stipulation always existing, *i.e.*—that each member of these incorporations must be approved a capable workman in his trade.

The publication of the Queen's letter seems to have stirred the craftsmen all over the kingdom, as may be verified by examination of the records of our old burghs. In Peebles, the wobsters met (1st October, 1565) and ordained "That in all time coming, the wobsters of the said burgh obey their deacons, and gif ony of them fails in ony act or statute whilk is devised by the said craft, the faut being notour (known) to the deacon and the laive of the men chosen on his council, the failer thereintil sal pay xx shillings to the bailies of Peebles." In the following year (1566) the same craftsmen appeal to the council, to insist upon and to enforce, against "all stubborn persons," the burgh

and council regulations dealing with the wobsters, and the weighing of their yarns, webs of cloth, and materials with which they worked.

This matter of measuring and weighing in the public markets and otherwise, seems to have caused a continual bickering between vendors and buyers, and between both these and the magisterial authority. The Burgh Laws enacted that every burgess should have in his house "a mesure to met his corne, ane ellwand, a stane and pund wecht for til wey," but these primitive arrangements had fallen into disuetude, and the public market, and public associations of buyers and sellers, and makers of materials should be guided by something more definite; accordingly, and after frequent urgency of its need, a Commission was appointed in 1587 (*Mediæval Scotland*, p. 157) to consider and settle the standards of weights and measures for the whole country. This Royal Commission, like all such since the world began, went as leisurely about its work as if the existence of the solar system had been its subject of consideration.

In 1617, the conclusions of those appointed thirty years before, were confirmed, so far as certain measures were concerned, but we learn, as late as 1663, that all burghs were, on 1st January, 1664, to have a standard foot measure (the ell and measures of capacity had been already provided) hung on the tolbooth doors or market crosses.

Leaving the matter of weights to adjust itself, it may be interesting, meantime, to give some jottings from ancient Acts of the Scottish Parliament touching the position and privilege of guilds and crafts, and the rights of their members.

James III., in 1462, ordained that all members of the guildries, merchants, must be freemen indwellers of the burghs in which they are situated. James IV., in 1490, enacted that no one dwelling outside of the burrows were to use merchandise (act as merchants), nor tap, nor sell wine, wax, silk, spicerie, wad (rough woollen cloth), nor siclike stuff; nor staple goods; That they were neither to pack nor peel in Leith or other places, outwith burrows (Leith being then a part of Edinburgh), under pain of escheat of the goods. James V., in 1516, enacted that the magistrates of burghs bring yearly to the

Exchequer their Account Books of their Common Good, under pain of tinsell (loss) of their freedom ; and that, fifteen days before this, the Magistrates give warning that all that choose to come and see the books, should do so, and have power to object. This Act further ordained that no earl, lord, baron, nor others were to be allowed to molest the burghs, their officers, or merchants, in using their abilities, under pain of oppression. James V. again, in 1517, enacts that the power to punish forestallers in burghs be only in the hands of the officers of the burgh : and that burghs have a common set of weights and measures. Mary, in 1548, enacts that "Magistrates of burghs cause deacons, craftsmen, and hostlers to take only reasonable prices for their work and victual, or else deprive them of their offices and privileges ;" and James VI. (1592) declares that no one will be allowed to "exercise merchandise, not being freemen in any burgh."

These various enactments must be read in the light of the periods in which they were passed, and the likelihood of their being enforced would depend very much on the parties against whom they were directed. Still, a close study of the minutes of any of our ancient crafts, or of the records of our town councils, will show that these Acts of the Scottish Parliament were nowise nugatory, or allowed to lie in abeyance. They affected at all times, and sometimes seriously, the industrial life of our "burrow toons."

One other element in the government of these crafts, must not be omitted. We refer to the Conveners' Court. "This court," says Mr. Charles Gross in his *Guild Merchant*, "existed in all the Scottish burghs where crafts or incorporations were established." In Dunfermline, it existed from a very early period, probably from 1420, the minute books of this court going back to August 26, 1686. This court was presided over by a chief craftsman, chosen by the representatives of all the crafts, and named the convener. His duty was to preside at the regular meetings of deacons of the crafts, and to summon extraordinary meetings when any important or unforeseen event made such a meeting necessary. From certain entries in the weavers' minutes, it is also evident that an important part of the

convener's duty was to call attention to any infringement of the privileges of the crafts, or of any attempt on the part of the guildry, the council, or the Convention of Burghs, to diminish the rights and liberties of the incorporations. An example is furnished by the weavers' craft minutes as recent as 5th June, 1812, when, at a meeting of the craft, the deacon stated that it had been reported to the Conveners' Court (which he had recently attended) that the guildry had been endeavouring to prevent several of the craftsmen from selling articles connected with their crafts, when it was resolved to oppose this action by every means in their power. The deacon also called attention to the rights of the craft, granted by Royalty, and read the letters of revocation from King James V., and from Queen Mary, which letters we have already given.

The Conveners' Court was also a court of advice, and when, in 1809, the "Ancient Weavers' Friendly Society" found itself in monetary difficulties, the Conveners' Court was summoned to deliberate on the existing state of matters, and to devise a remedy. After a full discussion of the matter in hand, each deacon was instructed to bring the question before his particular trade, and so obtain a general opinion! to bring up a report from each trade at the next Conveners' Court, and so settle the matter for good.

The magistrates and council also, sometimes acted as a Conveners' Court, and gave directions to the deacons of the trade. In the Town Council Records of Edinburgh for 19th May, 1568, "The Provost, Bailies, and Council, ordains the deacons underwritten, to avise with their crafts and report answer on Friday next, whether they will pass furth with my Lord Regent's Grace (Regent Murray) after the dinner and the Proclamation, the forces to convene at Biggar on the 10th of June next, or furnesh men or money?" How the craftsmen obeyed this call to arms, may be known by the fact that the Regent made his way south to the Lanarkshire town, with a force of 2000 men in his train, and commenced at once, not so much to discover and slaughter the forces that had opposed him at Langside, as to plunder the dwellings and wreck the property of the men who had risked their

lives and fortunes for the unfortunate Queen. Herries tells us that the Regent had with him "four thousand hors and ane thousand foote with fyrlocks." With this force he began a campaign of reckless destruction by destroying the castles of Draffen, Boghall and Skirling, and otherwise carrying fire and sword through the south and west of Scotland—the banner of peace, the insignia of the craftsmen, being conspicuous in his plundering ranks. It is needless to say now, that the craftsmen might have been better employed. Their organisation in the capital at this time is somewhat obscure. The Conveners' Court, under which the craftsmen ranged themselves, and whose orders, as freemen, they were bound to obey, was probably constituted (*see Maitland's History*) in 1420. Seals of Cause had been issued by the city council since the beginning of the sixteenth century at least; and the weavers of Edinburgh had been incorporated nearly a century before the warlike Regent summoned them to attend his banners.

The Edinburgh Council Charter, or Seal of Cause, granted to the surgeons of that city, may serve as an example—though in a profession widely different from that of the weaving fraternity—of the craft charters of that time. It is dated from the City Chambers, 1st July, 1505, and reads as follows:—"And also that everie man that is to be maid frieman and maister amongs us, be examinit and provit in thir poynts following: That is to say that he know anatomea and the complexion of every member in man's bodie, and that lykewise, he know all the vaynis of the samyn, that he may mak fleabothomea in dew tyme. And also, that he know in quhilk member the signs and denominations for the tyme, for everie man aucht to know the nature and substance of everything that he makis, or ellis he is negligent. And that he may have anes in the year, ane condemnit man, after he be deid, to mak anatomea of, wherethrow he may haif experience. Ilk ane to instruct others, and we do suffrage for the soule." The weavers of Edinburgh, as we have seen, obtained a Seal of Cause from the city council, on 31st January, 1475-6, containing full and proper regulations for the craft, and it may be mentioned that they were

joined by, and incorporated with the cloth walkers of that city in 1509.

At what time the weavers of Dunfermline as a craft or incorporation received their first charter or Seal of Cause, we do not know. There is nothing in published records, or in the extant minutes of the Weavers' Craft, to indicate the period of their incorporation; but in the minute for 1596, there is a reference which clearly points to an ancient origin for their existence as a united body. That reference is in the last paragraph, where mention is made of the "town's Acts" affecting the weaving craft. These Acts, it is clear from the text, were of a purely practical character—dealing with the work as well as of the organisation of the weavers. Such Acts indicate an acquaintance with and mutual balancing of responsibilities between the council of the town and the craft, stretching over many generations.



The Ancient Stocks of Dunfermline.

CHAPTER VII.

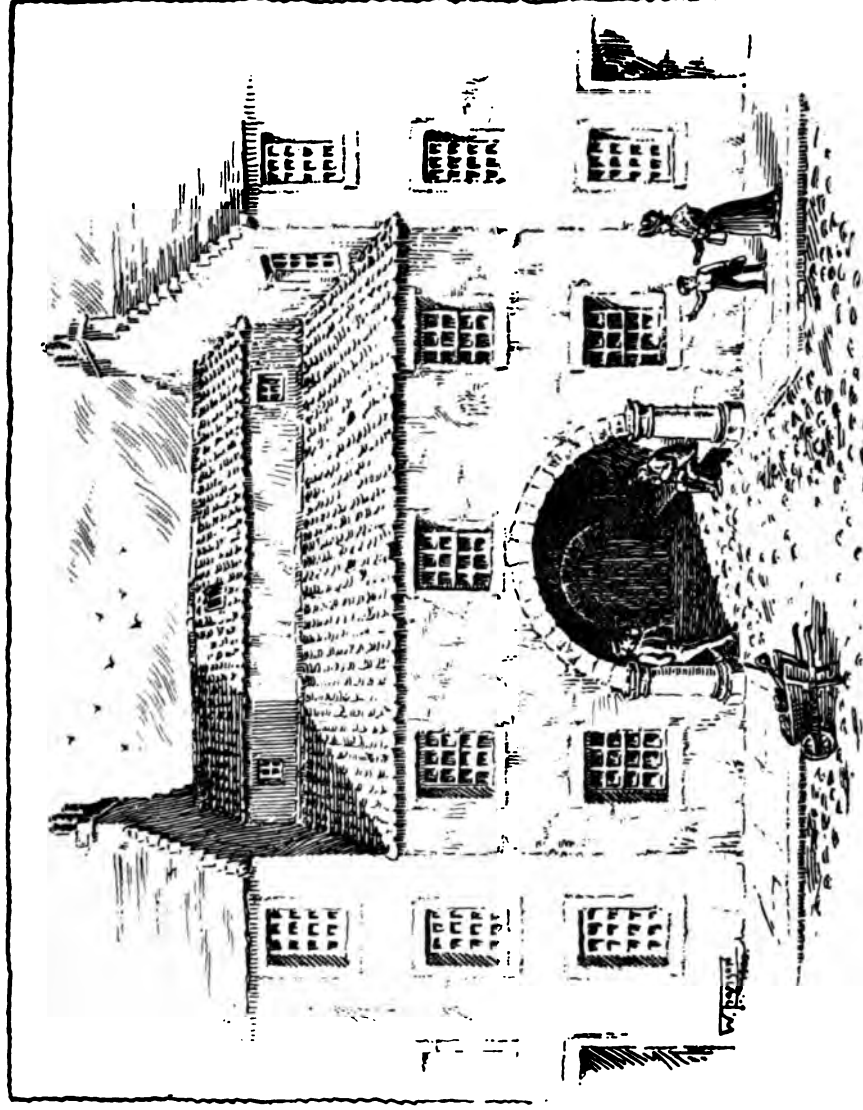
*Weavers' Minutes—Buying yarns—King James and Queen Anne—
—Synod of Fife—Fife in Sixteenth Century—"Spring Cleaning"
—Convention of 1596—Primitive days—William Prattis, M.P.—
Repairing the Abbey—Old Age Pensions in 1592.*

TURNING now to the Minutes of the Craft or Incorporation of the Weavers of Dunfermline, we find these extending over a period of two hundred and fifty years, or, from the close of the sixteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. The first minute is dated second day of April, 1596, and, after difficult deciphering, is found to read as follows, when put in modern form and spelling :—

At this meeting of the craft the members decree, for "the keeping of good order among them and their successors hereafter, and for working good and sufficient work, to our Sovereign Lords and Ladies in time coming, made, and by thir presents makes the Acts and Ordinances to be observed inviolate among them, and under penalty," as follows :—

1st. No master or freeman to fee, hyre or receive ony servant (journeyman) frae other places, without sufficient testimonial from the master and place where he last served, of his honesty and good behaviour, or to find sufficient caution therefor, under the pain of fortie shillings Scots money to the craft.

2nd. It is statute and ordained, That each master and foreman of the craft who happened to spill or abuse his work through want of sufficient skill of craft, or through servant's negligence, so that the owner of the work has just ground to complain; and the same examined and proven before the deacon and brethren of the craft, shall pay fourty shillings Scots to the deacon and brethren of craft, and refund the skaith to the party complaining, according to the determination of the deacon and brethren.



The Abbey Sanctuary House, Maygate.

3rd. It is statute and ordained, That no freeman's son or servants of the said craft, not entered to the freedom thereof, presume, or take in hand hereafter, to buy any linen yarn to make into webs for their own use, until they be entered and made free with the craft, under the pain of escheating thereof, *toties quoties*, etc.

4th. No master or freeman to give in loan any work-loom out of the town to landward weavers, but only to free brethren of the craft, to one another, under the pain of forty shillings.

5th. Anent John Haldan (who seems to have made web rods, etc., for the weavers of the incorporation under contract), he complains that weavers in the town get his rods at the contract price, and give them, or sell them to outside weavers. "It is statute and ordained that no master or freeman of the said craft hereafter sell any of the rods bought and received from the said John Haldan and his heirs, under the pain of forty shillings Scots—one half to be paid to the said John Haldan in recompense of his skaith, and the other half to the deacon of the craft."

It seems that certain of the brethren, anxious to secure yarns for themselves, went about "forestalling" in the town and outside of it, and even from town to town, for "buying of yarns, and thereby have raised such dearth that none can hold their own upon it." Hence:—

6th. "It is statute and ordained: That none of ye brethren of ye craft hereafter, in time coming, pass to any house within this town, or to landward, for buying of any yearns, or to make any clarking or paction thereanent. Untill it be brought to them and offered to sell to them in their own house, under pain of forty shillings Scots, to be paid by each member so offending."

7th. At this same meeting it was stated, "That some of the brethren of the craft, having three going looms in their own house, notwithstanding thereof, furnishes wark to several other craftsmen, partly within this town and partly in landward pairts. That some of them have seven or eight going looms working their work, and for the furnishing thereof, buys up all the yarns in the town and countrie;

and not only furnishes the said looms in work, but also transports the rest thereof that cannot be wrought, to England, through whilk the remanent brethren of the said craft who have [only] four looms, and can scarcely get work to hold these looms going, are heavily hurt and prejudiced thereby ; therefore :—

8th. “ It is statute and ordained : That no brother of the said craft having three going looms within his own house, shall furnish work to any other craftsmen neither within the town, nor to landward, in time coming, under the pain of five pounds Scots money . . . and this without prejudice of the Town's Acts ordaining all masters of the said craft, having three looms in his own house, to have ane ready for serving the neighbours of the town, as they shall require it. Providing also that it shall be leisume to such masters of the craft as have but one going loom, to seek help and work of his brethren of craft, within the town allanerly.”

The remarks of Professor Cunningham in his *Growth of English Industry and Commerce* (p. 410) may fitly be read here and in conjunction with the above minute :—“ The old burgess society (craft or guild) had this striking characteristic : that the ordinary object of ambition was not so much that of rising out of one's grade but of standing well in that grade. The citizen did not aim at being a knight, but of being warden or master in his guild, or alderman or mayor in his town.” Farther, he speaks of the mild and humble ambitions of these craft and guild times ; and points out that while the craft or guild burgess worked for the general benefit, the ambition of the modern citizen is to raise himself as an individual in the social scale, disregarding the effect of his actions on the welfare of the community. Both forms of emulation have their benefits, and both may be overdone.

The “ Town's Act,” enjoining all master weavers having three going looms to keep one in readiness to serve the burgesses of the town “ when they require it,” seems at first rather hard on the possessor of the looms. It only means, however, that one loom was to be at the service (not necessarily empty) of the lieges. It was, in fact, the germ

of the "customer weaver" of later times—one who depended for employment upon the orders of "his neighbours," and recognised in these primitive, innocent, and uncommercial times, the rights of the customer as well as of the worker and seller.

The rules and "statutes" given above are followed by another, framed at a meeting held on the 3rd November, 1613, when the deacon, Alexander Law, and a full quorum of the members were present. It deals with the grievous question of forestalling and "buying up of yearns;" and ordains that no brother of the craft "shall carry nor transport any kind of yearns of lint forth out of this town or countrie, neither sall sell, under whatever colour or pretence, any of the said yearns to any merchant or any other transporter thereof forth of this town under the pain of ten pounds money of this realm."

The next minute dealing with rules is dated 1st December, 1647, and discerns that none of the freemen masters in the craft shall make any second bargains with their apprentices "in prejudice of their indentures;" and in the following year—25th January, 1648—the brethren by "common consent" agree that no master freeman "take on any apprentice untill first he acquaint the deacon and masters in the craft, who shall meet and be witnesses to the agreement;" and that the apprentice "shall pay two dollars, one thereof to the box, and the other to be spent at the binding," so that the "remanent brethren" might adjourn to the nearest change-house, and there rejoice for a spell and be merry over the new apprentice.

The 28th January, 1652, is the next day of legislation, when it is fixed "for all time coming" that "every taskman who shall be fied shall pay twenty shillings to the box, and that they be fied yearly though they stay with the same master, under the pain of three pounds not forgiven."

After this period, and for fifteen years, the legislation of the weavers is much less important. It deals more with matters touching the interests of individual members, with details as to apprentices,

servitors or servants (journeyman), the engagement of neutrals and the payment of fees and "binding" or drink money.

This drink money is a payment in universal exaction among the guilds and crafts. Every occasion in the active life of these associations seems to furnish the necessary excuse for a short and mild indulgence. Sometimes the custom is called payment of "Cans" or "Canns," and sometimes "speaking drink"; but the purpose was always the same—a mild libation.

The intelligent reader will bear in mind, as he scans the contents of the above minute of 1596, how different was the town and society three hundred years ago to what it is now. It was then but a mere village as to bulk. The east side of the glen—from the bottom of St. Catherine's Wynd, up the Collier Row, to the end of Mill Street, was built upon. The High Street, with its parallels of "The Backside" on the north, and Maygate and its continuation on the south; the Cross Wynd, Shadow's Wynd, the Newrow, and Nethertown, with a few houses at Rhodes and Hospital Hill, constituted the town of 1596.

At that time "James the Sext," the "wisest fool in Christendom," lived in our palace in the glen. He reigned, ruled, and talked with the learning of an eastern pundit; "haivered" with the looseness and inconsequence of a Sancho Panza; and begged, borrowed, and promised with the magnificence of an impecunious Solomon. Light-hearted, fanciful and fitful, yet somewhat inscrutable, Anne of Denmark dominated his household, and sometimes moderated the clouted eloquence of her husband. Though the east abbey was then in ruins and the monastery crumbling to decay, yet the palace was occupied in all its parts. Servants and lacqueys bustled out and in of kitchen, larder, and cellar. Smoke curled light and blue from its many chimneys, and the voice of gladness was heard in maiden's song and the cavalier's roundelay. The courtyard resounded with the noise of arriving or departing guests, or clattered with the fall of horses' hoofs and the jingle of harness and accoutrements.

The Rev. David Ferguson was then in the thirty-sixth year of his ministry among us, and, regular as the Sabbath came round, lifted

up his cheerful, jocund voice and discoursed on the follies of the day, the crying needs of the time, the wickedness of State rulers, or the selfishness and greed of men in office. His sermons were at once philosophical and practical, didactic and advisory, dealing with eternal verities and with immediate necessities; speaking direct, and bringing home the truth to every one. Not at all like the elegant, courtly, and refined abstractions which form so large an element of the sermon in these "lonesome latter years," an element which is alike harmless and useless, feckless and fushionless, to the hungry human soul.

Just six weeks before the minute was written, and possibly all unknown to the trusting townsfolk, the Queen, with authority of the King and her Counsellors, had granted a charter to Alexander, Lord Seton (afterwards Lord Dunfermline), appointing him and his heirs male, "Heritable Bailies of the Lordship of Dunfermline" and "undoubted and irrevocable Keepers, Guardians, or Constables of the Palace of Dunfermline, and edifices adjacent."

What wretched guardians they have proved to be! An almost brutal Philistinism on the part of the public, a miserable acquisitiveness on the part of the ruling heritors, magistrates, and men in position, and a general indifference as unaccountable as it was culpable, allowed the "Palace and edifices adjacent" to fall into decay, to become ruinous, and to be hewn down, and carted away; built into field fences, garden dykes, outhouses, pigstyes—any menial, contemptible purpose, to which the absolutely tasteless indifference of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could devote the carved and decorated stones of our ancient palace.

Six weeks after the date of the minute, the Provincial Synod of Fife met at Dunfermline, amended and renewed the National Covenant (the amending being principally the work of William Scott, minister of Cupar, and the author of *An Apologetic Narration*), and no doubt many of those who signed the Craft Covenant of the weavers, signed also this Covenant of Grace and Truth, as understood and accepted by our forefathers of three hundred years ago.

The first and second paragraphs of the minute are made up of moral aphorisms, that find their local authority in *Leges Burgorum*, or Burgh Laws, and are adapted in phraseology to the trade and calling of the wobster; the remaining parts have to do, and only to do, with the exigencies of the corporation and the circumstances of the time. Yet these latter parts, largely technical though they are, furnish a vivid picture of our industrial condition at the close of the sixteenth century, and serve to point out how slow had been our advance, how insignificant the changes we had made, in the preceding generations.

The towns, at this period, had not yet begun with ravenous maw to swallow up the rural hamlets and villages; and the big farm with its gentleman farmer had not yet taken hold of the landlord intelligence. The population of Fife was more numerous, and yet more rural than that of any other county in Scotland. All over its cultivated slopes, and even on its moorland reaches, river banks, and sea-beat shores, the cottages of the labourer, the fisherman, and the artizan, were widely and generally scattered. Every farm had its loom or looms, every hamlet had its weaver, every cottage had its means of spinning or of weaving. The shire was hemmed in by friendly seas on three of its sides, and was difficult of access by an invading army. Its industries therefore grew up, and its sons and daughters of industry had leisure and opportunity to cultivate the arts of peace beyond those of any other district; so that even in the *Chronicle of the Picts and Scots*, under the date 860, this "kingdom by the sea" is called "the Kingdom of Fife"—it was veritably a kingdom within a kingdom. Its industries were not then aggregated in mills and factories as now, but spread, with their harmonising influence, all over the land.

These jottings as to the general condition of "ye shire of Fife" at the end of the sixteenth century, will help to throw light and consistency on those parts of the minute where the landward weavers are distinguished from those of the town. Now-a-days, such references would be meaningless, since weavers are now practically unknown in

rural districts, and the whilom isolated or customer weaver is now a being of the forgotten past. Three hundred years ago, we in Fife were much as the Greeks and Romans of the pre-Christian ages were, when, as Dr. William Smith tells us (*Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*), "Every stable domestic establishment, especially in the country, contained its loom, together with the whole apparatus necessary for the weaving of cloth," where "the farms and palaces were alike fitted with a weaving arrangement," and where the "mistress or daughters of the house took a leading part in the operations, finishing the finer sections of the work with their own hands. Minerva herself was supposed to guard, guide, and direct the hands and heads of the Greek weavers of old," and to bless the households where the whirr of the spinning distaff, or the click of the rushing shuttle was heard. No one knows anything about the Minerva of Fife. Nevertheless, the Greek notions were part of our beliefs, and the blessing which came with industry to the Hellenes of three thousand years ago, was not unknown to our forefathers and foremothers of 1596.

The explanation of the seventh clause must be sought in the common conception of what a burgh was in these ancient times. From the *Leges Burgorum*, the *Leges Magistatem*, and other rarely seen books, we gather that the root idea of a burgh then was that of a protecting fence, a strong place, a haven of safety built up and maintained by its habiting people. It was regarded as a harbour of refuge, a place of strength and security against the ravening plunderers of industry. It must be walled in, its ports must be guarded, its streets formed and maintained, its legal, social, and sanitary offices kept up, and its place and character sustained among the other burghs of the kingdom. All this must cost time, money, energy, and responsibility, and these elements were only to be found among the town's own indwellers, its own burgesses.

The burgh of the ancients—even down to the nineteenth century—was regarded as a society or association of men. Each member of this society—its burgesses—was bound to accept a share in its pro-

perty and financial responsibilities, and thus each burgess became a virtual shareholder in this burghal society. He might be a freeman of the burgh simply, or he might be also a craftsman or a guild brother. But whatever his calling, connection, power or influence, he must—to be a burgess—possess a minimum amount of property (the toft), and hold a minimum of risk in the fortunes of the burgh. How this worked out, how the position was manifested, will be seen in a striking degree as we advance into the history of the Dunfermline weavers, and cull our evidences from the record of their doings, down even to the middle of the nineteenth century.

It is this conception of the burgh—one completely obliterated by the Act of William IV. (1835)—which alone can explain how it was possible to constrain a master “having three looms in his own house, to have ane ready for serving the neighbours of the town as they shall require it,” and how, on the other hand, “such masters of the craft as have but one going loom, to seek help and work of his brethren of craft within the town.”

The seventh clause makes it clear that even at this early period, and at least in flax yarns, we in Dunfermline were doing a trade with England. How this trade was carried on—whether by ship, pack-horse, or pedlar—it were indeed interesting to learn. But however picturesque and seductive it might prove, we are deprived of the pleasure by the hard laconism of the local scribes. The fact only is set down, and we must bear with its narrowness. We know, however, from the records of the Convention of Royal Burghs, that at this period we had a steady trade in textiles, especially in linens, with the Flemish burghs of Middleburg and, afterwards, with Campvere. This trade was, of course, carried on by shipping; while our Scottish trade with England in 1593 was so great as to induce the appointment of a conservitor with a residence in London; and though the appointment was cancelled in the following year, the transaction shows how considerable our trade must then have been.

The entire minute, however, bears the impress of a “spring cleaning.” We have already indicated (Chapter V.) that the first visible

minute of the wobster craft is but a transfer, by a happy custom, from another and older book ; and while this may account for the homiletic character of the minute, there may have been other and more concrete reasons for its appearance. Just two years before the minute was written, there occurred what appears to have been an extraordinary and fatal row betwixt the members of the Dunfermline guildry and adherents of the crafts. Our local histories contain no account, not even an allusion to the affair, but the records of the Convention give us a faint, yet sufficient picture of the bruilzie.

It comes up in the Minute of Convention held at Stirling, in July, 1594. On the 3rd of that month compeared "James Reed, James Cudbert, George Peirson, Thomas Couper, Robert Pawton, and remanent guild brether of the burgh of Dunfermling, against Patrick Freland, saidler ; James Mochrie, wobster ; and remanent craftsmen of the said burgh, for molesting and troubling the said gild brether in their guildrie, be violence and masterful usurping, by force and be way of deed, to use the privelege and freedom thereof, be selling and handling of merchandise and staple wayres, whilk only pertains to the said brether and their successors ; and using alswa their awin handie-crafts and occupations, beside intending thereby to deface the ordour of the said gildrie, and to bring in mair confusion within the said burgh, be making of cadgers, kairters of fuilzie, and all sorts of people to be equal in freedom and society with them."

These complainers go on to indicate that while the craftsmen are assuming the duties and privileges of the guildry, they will not pay the dues and enter, nor "tak skott and lott" with them. The craftsmen and burgesses then proceed to enter their case, and state that they are backed up "be the hail deacons, craftsmen, and burgesses of the said burgh." They complain that they are "wrangously debarred by the said gild brether from buying and selling the wares and merchandise they win of themselves, whilk occasions their decay and poverty, and is a grievous loss and hurt to their crafts and brether." They also set forth that in some street or market brawl between the

craft members and the gild merchants, "one of their number had been slain."

The Convention Commissioners, after hearing both sides of the narrative, ordain and discharge the craftsmen from either buying or selling, or invading in any way, the privileges of the guildry; but enjoins the brethren of the guild to open their doors to the craftsmen, and to admit them as members (upon the usual conditions) under pain of five hundred merks. William Prattis being the town's commissioner here, was burthened with this message to the burgh, and this industrial war-waging came to an end.

This William Prattis must have been an important personage in Dunfermline at this period. He is not only commissioner for the burgh in the Convention, but figures also as M.P. in the Scottish Parliament in 1594, sitting there as representative for Dunfermline.

Another eminent man of the time was William Schaw, Master Mason to the Crown of Scotland. He was also Chamberlain to Queen Anne of Denmark in this year of 1594, and began then to carry out his extension improvements on the Dunfermline Abbey Church. These improvements were begun by the erection of the spire which still adorns the north-west corner of our Abbey, and by the building of the north porch which also is still standing, a monument to his skill and taste as an artist in stone and lime.

Originally the Abbey Church was finished on the west by two similar towers—the external appearance of which is seen in the south-west tower. The reformers (in 1560), after demolishing the east Abbey, pulled down the north-west tower, to get at the bells; and having accomplished this, they left the grand old structure in a half-wrecked condition. But William Schaw was now (1594) about to restore an appearance of completeness, by rebuilding the ruined tower and finishing it with our finely proportioned spire. Some of the uncouth buttresses on the south and north walls were also added at this time, while the interior was restored and repaired.

The need of repairing at different times the Abbey at Dunfermline, along with other churches in the country, seems to have drawn

the attention of the King and his councillors to the legal position and possessorship of these buildings. In 1587 the Abbey buildings, with some exceptions, were annexed to the Crown. Nothing of any consequence in the way of repairs was carried out at this time; and though, in the year following, the General Assembly of the Church was reminded of the ruinous condition of the Dunfermline Abbey, the process of decay was allowed to go on. But in 1593, the annexation having been completed, it was resolved to put the buildings in a thorough state of repair. This accounts for the appearance in 1594 of William Schaw, the King's Master Mason, in Dunfermline, and for the improving alterations then carried out.

But "The Estates," or governing power of the time, having done their best in matters of stone and lime, became social and sentimental, and began to decree quite other things. They bethought themselves of the men—the monks and hangers-on—who once lived and "joyced themselves," till age silvered their locks and bent their backs, within the monastery hard by; and the said Estates determined to do something for the monks.

In these modern times—the opening of the twentieth century—we never tire discussing the rightness and propriety of old age pensions. Here, as in many other things, we are forestalled by our forefathers. While the members of the weavers' craft of Dunfermline were pursuing their daily and unrecorded tasks of diaper and dornick, and withal of "cover" weaving, the Scots Parliament were framing a law by which the monks of our once beautiful monastery were to be put on a life pension list. Here is how the said Act proceeds:—"And mairatour it is specially provided that, notwithstanding all the annexations of the temporalities and benefices to the Crown, yet the conventual brether of the Abbey of Dunfermling sall nawise be prejudiced nor hurt, anent the livings, portions, pensions, yairds and duties of the said Abbey;" but that they "and every ane of them, may peacably brook, joyse and uplift their portions, pensions, livings, yairds and duties of the same Abbey during their lifetime, conform to the gifts, and specially the assignations thereof be our

Sovereign Lords' ratification and the confirmation thereof in all points." (*Acts Parl.*, 1592; *re* Exceptions.)

Still more, and in our old palace in the glen, the keeper thereof in 1592 was made glad and joyous by an Act of the Scots Parliament in his favour. The Act recites: "That, in ratification [in favour of] Johnne Gib, valet of the chalmer to our Sovereign Lord. Remembering the long, guid, true and faithful service done to His Majestie . . . be the said Johnne Gib, and willing to give him some better occasion to continue therein in time coming; and with express consent of the said Johnne Gib and his sone James, do constitute them keepers of The Place and the yairds of Dunfermling—now vacant be the decease of the umquhile Robert [Pitcairn], Commendator. And grants to the said Johnne Gib and his son James, all and hail the feu mails of the town, and the lands of Masterton—together with the hail tiend victual and straw extending to fourtie threaves—as payment and wages for keeping the palace and the Queen's house in the glen."

The weavers say nothing about these doings of our Scotch M.P.'s in 1592. We see it through other windows—the records of the Privy Council, and the doings of the "sair tracheled" members of the Scotch Parliament, when the seventeenth century was about to open.

Other craftsmen there were in other towus, and bustling, active, watchful and jealous as were those of our auld gray town. In 1581 the craftsmen of Edinburgh, Dundee and Perth, by agreement, applied to the young King for "ane new charter of privileges," and succeeded in obtaining an important confirmation of previously existing rights, along with the liberty to deal in merchandise. The Act of 1555 was specially repealed. "We repone them," says the King, "to use and to have deacons of crafts who shall have a vote in choosing officers of burghs, who sall elect and admit all kinds of craftsmen within the burgh to use and exercise their craft. And they sall convene, and make priveleges, statutes and ordinances, for said craftsmen, for keeping of good order amongst them, and the sustentation and entertainment of God's servants (ministers), and the use and

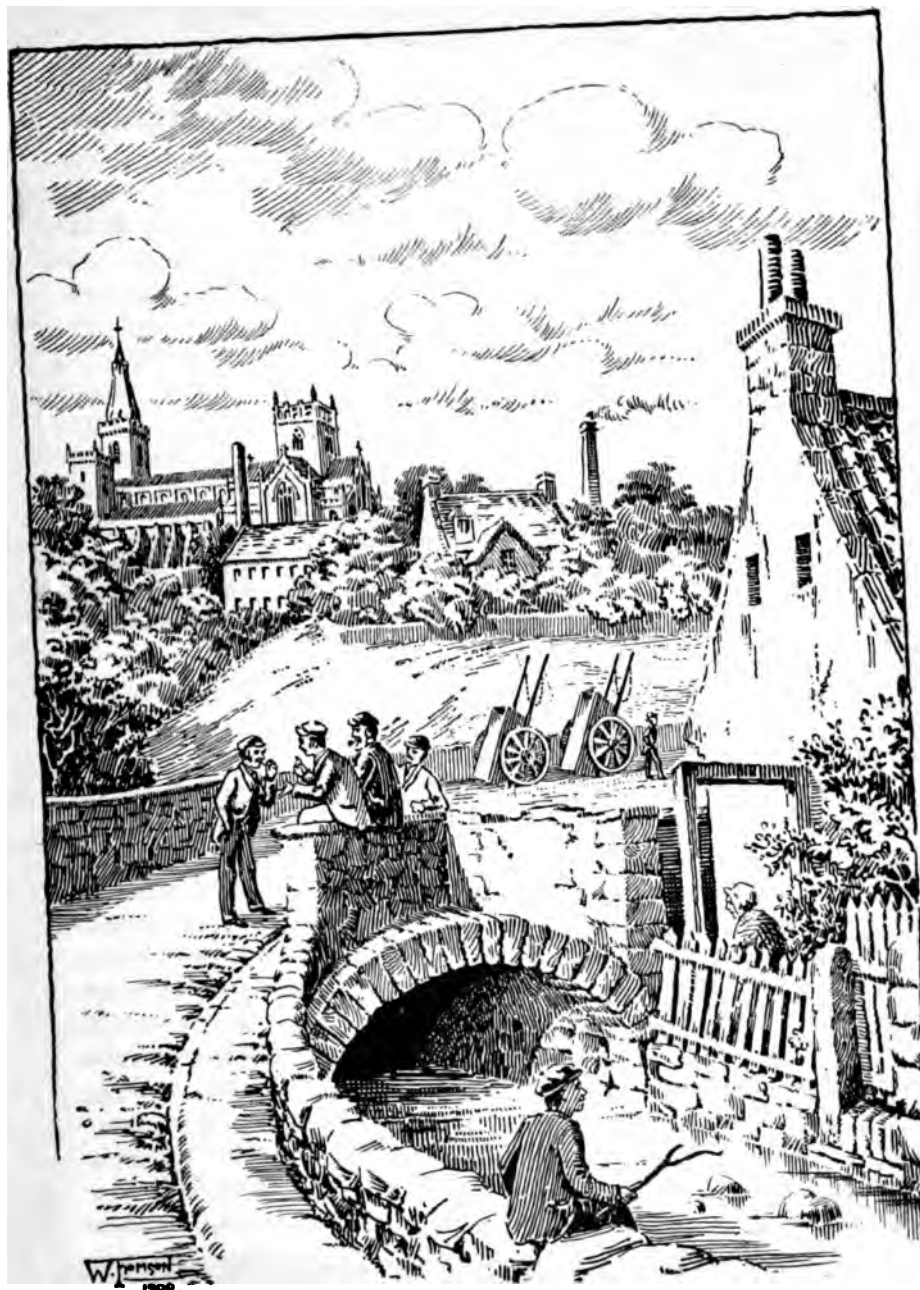
exercise of all manner of merchandise within our realm. Attoure we, be thir presents, ratifies and approve all priveleges, liberties and faculties—given and granted to the said craftsmen in all time bypast to be used and exercised be them in all time coming.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Thursday's Catechising—Dunfermline Weavers in 1613—Princess Elizabeth—David Ferguson—John Fairful—The Auld Kirk in 1590—The True Religion.

A PERIOD of over seventeen years elapses ere we find the weavers again recording their own proceedings. By some of those mishaps to which such local writings are liable, the minutes of the weaving craft, from 1596 till 1613 are now lost. So that, so far as the history of weaving in Dunfermline, in those years, is concerned, we can get no help from the weavers themselves. We have already pointed out that the minute already quoted, is transcribed from another and older book ; and the half moral, half technical rules given in the opening paragraphs, are copied into the new one as a kind of homeletic prelude to the work-a-day transactions about to be entered therein. Whatever the cause of the disappearance of these records, we are left the single heritage of regretting the loss of the craft pen-settings for these seventeen years.

In the absence of these, probably, highly concrete records, we are constrained to gather our local history from other sources, and to spell out the spirit and action of the time, from incidents other than those the scribe of the weaving craft would have given us. In doing so, we will find that the websters do not wholly disappear, though



The Girth Brig, Nethertown, Dunfermline.

they look at us, or rather we see them through other people's spectacles.

The seventeen years thus omitted from notice by the weavers, cover a period of severe ecclesiasticism—not to say religion. By orders of the Privy Council in 1600, the Thursday of each succeeding week must be given to that kind of mental step drill exercise called catechising. When that day came round, each master of the household, “with their wives, bairns and servants ilk ane, should compeir within their own parish kirk, to their own minister to be instructed be him, in the grounds and heads of catechism, and to give, as they should be demanded, ane proof and trial of their profiting in said heads.” Mr. Andrew Forrester was then minister of the Abbey Church, and we know sufficient of this man's character, to estimate correctly the manner and effects of his teaching. He was neither honest, intelligent nor energetic—in fact, a man who merely shuffled on the priestly garments to obtain the priestly office. Education in grace, and the general tenets of Christianity, was impossible under such a man; so that we may readily accept the statement of Dr. Henderson, when he says that the lessons were fairly well attended at first, but were soon given up; both parties—the priest and the people—and from very different motives, being glad to find themselves free of the weekly task.

It was a period of priestly intolerance exhibited in the infliction of degrading punishments for the most trifling disregard of church rules and ceremonies. Absence from church on Sundays was regarded “as ane heinous crime,” and punished by exposing the offenders to the congregations at the church doors, or on elevated seats in front of the pulpit. Parties were fined or sent to prison for the same fault. Visitors, *i.e.*, seizers, passed through the streets looking for vagrants, on the Sabbath days, and reporting all and sundry to the session, whom they found elsewhere than in the church. To be found begging was no less a criminal offence, and visited with imprisonment, whipping, branding with hot irons or banishing from the parish. Ignorance, dense and palpable, distinguished the common people.

Witchcraft, with all its absurdities, horrors and tragedies, was implicitly accepted as true by all classes; while beliefs of a grossly extravagant nature, and practised with repulsive rites, permeated all ranks of the people. The religion of the day was of the bearing-down character, and crushed the intellect while it steeled the heart against all the softer emotions.

This year of 1613 seems, however, to have been an exceptionally busy one for local craft legislating—the “statuting” and “ordaining” of the weavers is beyond average. They meet on 3rd November, and at once proceed to enact rules and decrees for the suppression of forestalling and regratting in the matter of yarns at the markets or otherwise.* To this minute we shall refer again further on. On 17th November they again meet, and fix the widths of the various kinds of linens then woven, decreeing :

“That all cloath for sale, or to be presented in the mercat, shall be made in breadths as follows :—That all good dornicks for table or bed shall be full two yards of breadth when whitened ; that all serviettes of that sort shall be full three-quarters of a yard when whitened ; and that all common linens shall be one yard and half broad when whitened ; and all serviettes of this sort shall be three-quarters of a yard broad when whitened. And also that all these cloaths shall be made of weel assorted yarns, and sufficiently wrought ; under a penalty of fourtie shillings *toties quoties*.” This minute is signed by John Hart, John Wilson, Robt. Kerr, Jas. Turnbull, John M’Raith, John Williamson, Henry Mitchell, Andrew Wilson, Jas. Dalgettie, William Paton, and George Meldrum.

The last meeting for this year is held on 10th December, when the chief business was fixing rules as to engaging apprentices, drawing their indentures, and fixing the responsibilities of the masters. This

* A forestaller was one who bought outside the market—intercepted the sellers outside the town walls—to get the desired article cheaper. A regratter was one who bought in the market and sold the same article in the market, at a higher price.

minute is signed by the same parties, with the addition of James Hatton, John Richardson, James Thomson, and Robt. Barker.

There are good and sufficient reasons for this activity of local legislation. Just two years before, *i.e.*, in 1611, King James had granted to Nathaniel Udward, son of Nicolas Udward, once Provost of Edinburgh, a patent and monopoly, to last for twenty-one years, for linen goods that had not heretofore been manufactured in Scotland. This Act of Privilege was followed by a general Customs Act, passed in 1612, levying customs dues upon almost every necessary and luxury of life, and upon linen textiles among the rest. The expected monetary fruits of this Act were farmed out to one David Primrose, an ancestor of the present Earls of Rosebery and Elgin. In this way it would be found, in 1613, that the agents both of Udward and Primrose would be going about in every manufacturing town and district: the one set to guard against any infraction of his monopoly, to report any case of the invasion of his legal rights, and to secure his share of the fines inflicted, and the other to see that every parcel of goods, exposed for sale or sent abroad, should be made to yield its full share of customs duty.

This situation of industrial affairs in the year 1613 is sufficient to account for the evident stir among workers and manufacturers, as made manifest in the minutes of the Dunfermline weavers.

This question of monopolies, as presented to the thinking public of these early times, is a question of fiscal fashion mainly, and has little to do with industrial or social progress. The right to grant monopolies was held to be an inalienable prerogative of the crown. Elizabeth of England deemed it one of the brightest jewels in her diadem; and her successor, James VI., was also a follower and imitator of her policy and claims. But Elizabeth was in some degree amenable to reason and to her Parliament in these matters, and had so reduced the number of these unwarranted grants, that some time before her death they could be counted by units, while the Stewarts had not been long in possession of the royal power when these same monopolies could be counted by scores. In some cases the monopoly was given, as in the

case of Udward, referred to above, to advance the interests of trade ; but the general, and more common, purpose was to swell the income of some spendthrift or impecunious favourite who had influence, or whose friends had influence, sufficient to move the partial and uninformed ear of royalty.

In the same year as that of the quoted minute—that is, 1596—and on the 19th of August following, the Princess Elizabeth was born in the Palace of Dunfermline ; and there were great rejoicings and mighty ongoingings at court, till her baptism at Holyrood, in February of 1597. She grew up through girlhood and to womanhood a rare and radiant beauty. Her accomplishments were not less remarkable than her appearance, while her disposition, manner, and attractions made her the subject of song and sonnet by the gallants of the court, and poets of this Jacobean time. She was married to Frederick, the Elector of Palatine, in 1612, and, for a few halcyon years, enjoyed at Heidelberg the highest form of happiness that can fall to a woman's lot. In an evil hour her husband was offered the crown of Bohemia, and in one more evil still, Elizabeth, pressed by an unthinking ambition, urged her hesitating husband to accept the glittering gaud. In October, 1618, she and her husband and family made a triumphal entry into Prague ; and at once, all the furies that are stirred by religious hatreds, rose round the shadowy throne. "Hussite and Taborite, Lutherans and Catholics, were at daggers drawn, and at each other's throats." The Spanish army plundered and ruined the lovely palace of Heidelberg, and devastated the Palatinate. The Duke of Bavaria's cannon thundered over the Weissenberg, and his soldiers descended into the doomed city. The Queen and her children had to fly for their lives, her husband remarking : "Now I know what I am. We princes seldom know the truth until we are taught it by adversity." The King remained with the armies in the field, while his unfortunate Queen found a refuge at the Hague. Here she remained till her husband, broken-hearted with his own and his people's misfortunes, died, in 1635, at the age of thirty-six. The sorely tried Queen lived on for thirty years longer, maintained by the charity of

others, and found a grave at last in Westminster Abbey (1662). Thus sings Sir Henry Wotton of the Princess in her youth :—

“ You meaner beauties of the night
That poorly satisfy our eyes
More by your number than your light,
You common people of the skies,
What are you when the sun doth rise ?

“ You curious chanters of the wood
That warble forth Dame Nature's lays,
Thinking your voices understood
By your weak accents ; what's your praise
When Philomel her voice doth raise ?

“ You violets that first appear,
By your pure purple mantles known,
Like the proud virgins of the year,
As if the spring were all your own,
What are you when the rose is blown ?

“ So, when my mistress shall be seen
In form and beauty of her mind,
By virtue first, then choice, a queen,
Tell me if she were not designed
Th' eclipse and glory of her kind ?”

In 1598 the loved minister of the Abbey Church—the only one then—passed away. He was indeed one of the fathers of the Church : one of those strong and daring spirits which leap into being in the hour of trial and difficulty. His famous sermon, preached at Leith in 1571, was as fine a compound of strong, practical, good sense in worldly matters and things spiritual as one could wish to read, and we do not wonder that Knox, then on his death-bed, should have perceived its intrinsic value, and, in a last interview with Ferguson, should have expressed a warm regard for the preacher. Ferguson was a man of rare industry as well as of clear insight and fearless expression. His *Collection of Proverbs* is still extant, and the

materials he had collected for a record of his beloved Kirk served his son-in-law, John Row of Carnock, as the beginnings of his *History of the Kirk of Scotland*.

He was succeeded by John Fairful—a toiling and fervid son of the Kirk. He had been an exhorter at Aberdour and a schoolmaster in Dunfermline (1584) and was now deemed a man of such parts and character, as to be a worthy successor to the first protestant minister of the Abbey. He continued for a few short years to preach and exhort, visit the parts of his wide-spread parish, reprove, condemn and direct with acceptance by the people. He was opposed, however, though a royal chaplain, to the policy and measures of King James, and he committed the unpardonable crime of praying for those distressed ministers whom the King had shut up in Blackness Castle, because they could not accept his views of Christian truth and Church discipline. Chancellor Seton was then living at Dalgetty, and learning from some busy body how Fairful had prayed, he summoned him before the Privy Council (1609) and had him deprived of his office, and banished from the parish. Fairful went north to Dundee, an exile during the King's pleasure. He never came back to Dunfermline, but was allowed to accept the parish of Anstruther, where he died in 1626.

Changes of ministers were alike frequent and fitful in these old days, and we find this worthy man, John Fairful, succeeded, in 1599, by Andrew Forrester, one of the most unworthy men that ever filled the pulpit of the Abbey, or darkened the door of a Christian kirk. He neglected his duties outside. He made the pulpit a mere show of shame and contumely. He lived a riotous and excessive life in meat and drink; and became at last a mere sight and thought of disgust and lamentation to his people. These prayed him to leave the charge, to go elsewhere, to take himself off anywhere out of view and remembrance. He plundered the poor's box (for the Church was the only dependence of the poor in these days) and took bribes to do contemptible things. Seized at last with horror at his own doings, he believed the magistrates of the town were preparing to have him

hanged; and getting petrified with terror at the thought, gave up his charge to his colleague, Mr. John Murray, and left the district for good. He was thrust upon the good folks of Collace, in Perthshire, and there, incontinently, died.

Such was one of the men whom the King delighted to honour, and such, a sample of the level to which the policy of King James was reducing the ministry of the Church. Divine service under guidance and pastorship of Andrew Forrester, would, to the reverend souls in his congregation, be indeed an infliction of repugnance, anger and sadness, and we can picture the passionate and fiery spirits, alike among men and women, lifting their cutty stools, or setting past their settle seats, and leaving the church for the day.

The pulpit with its hour-glass was then fixed by bolts and supports on the eastmost plain pillar on the north side of the old Abbey, and from here its occupant looked down to the floor and across to the galleries, on a gathering of worshippers such as we never see now, and hardly ever imagine.

In the north-east corner of the building sat or stood the members of the session, accommodated in some degree with what was called a "dask" or enclosed square sitting space, as uncomfortable as it was rude and primitive. In front of the pulpit and on the level of the floor—though raised upon a platform to give it due elevation—stood that instrument of torture called the "stool of repentance;" and here might not seldom be seen an erring man or woman, or mayhap, a guilty pair, dressed in rough "harangown" sitting there with depressed eyes and saddened features, abiding the fierce upbraidings, or scorching exhortation of the minister. They had already stood "frae the first to the second bell" at the door of the church, a subject of cutting remark or of jeering smile, to every one that passed therein, and when the sermon began, were escorted inside by the bedral for the day, to take seat on the dreaded stool and give "satisfaction to the kirk."

In the remainder of the floor space, the people sat, or leaned, or squatted on the cold stone pavement. The "better sort" had provided themselves with "furms," or with small, fancy, or decorated and

padded stools, which were sent on in advance, carried into church, and guarded by servants till their owners arrived. The "lafts" or galleries were ranged between the pillars and the walls, in the south and north aisles, and these, too, were seated or spaced much as the wider area below was treated. Here most of the trades or crafts had their "dask" spaces with stool seats, standing room, or forms. In the south aisle, and directly opposite the minister, was the royal loft or seat for the King and his household. Here James VI. sat and listened oft to the gay sallies, wise sayings, or strong statements of Mr. Ferguson, and here, too, for a while, to the quiet and solid discourse of Mr. Fairful.

The seats and sittings in the Abbey Church before pews were invented, and before we were generous enough to provide sitting space for all comers, were the exclusive property of private persons, or of public bodies who occupied them to the exclusion of all others.

About the middle of the seventeenth century, the council built a spacious set of sittings, "at their own propper charges," and we are instructed, by a council minute of 1st September, 1665, that the provost sat on a seat raised above the others, with the old provost on his right, and dean of guild on his left, and with the merchant and craft councillors set off on either hand. The details of how the members sat—their order and precedence—is given with such minuteness of detail as to show how vast was the importance attached to the possession of "a bughtit seat, a dask, or a laft" in the Abbey Church.

Over in the north-east corner, as we have seen, sat the members of the session; while the south-east, and round the floor space of the church till the sacred precincts of the council were reached, were a succession of craft and other built-in sittings. In 1769, we find that the old seat of the hammermen is being taken down, and "Andrew Smeaton, wright, undertakes to lay the bottom of the seat with new wood and repair every other pairt necessary, and complete the same for setting against the 23rd of June next." The smiths and masons meet together on 23rd November, 1776, and "agreed that their seats

in the church should be properly and exactly keepit," and that to the effect that "smiths' wives nor masons' wives, nor their children, be admitted to the seat;" and only bound apprentices shall be allowed to sit in the back seat. In 1792, these jealously exclusive craftsmen make a fresh and careful division of space, so that the masons may sit by themselves; and the smith, "with their conjuncts," sit also in solitary grandeur.

The wrights also had their seats, and these are carefully described in the craft minutes from 1768 to the end of the century. They are as jealous about, and proud of their "bughtit sittings" as any craftsmen could be. Their seats seem to have been of a rather handsome description, as, in 1778, we find the boxmaster empowered "to buy a brush for brushing the cloth on their seat." The wrights and coopers had a curious way of shewing their respect and appreciation of the privilege of sitting in comfort to hear the message of peace. They publicly roused the seats—not specially set apart for themselves—to the highest bidder, the notice of rousp being fixed on the church doors.

The weavers also had their seats—as we will see—and held them with as jealous care as if their possession was the inheritance of an estate. Here is the "Disposition of ane kirk seat" in 1700:—"7th January, 1700, which day Lawrence Henderson, deacon of the wrights, produced to the kirk session a disposition of a seat in the kirk, granted to him be John Watson on 20th December, 1699, which seat sometime belonged to Helen Nicoll, his mother; and is situate just before the baillies of the regality, their seat, and upon the west side of that seat belonging to William Walker, late provost, his heirs, etc." The session ratify and approve the disposition of the aforesaid seat.

The weavers were very precise in the order of their going to, and of sitting in the church. No person was allowed to sit in their "foir seat," or "foirmost rank of the loft," but the deacon and his committee of councillors. If an exception were made, it was to admit some ancient member of the craft, or some octogenarian freeman whom the trade delighted to honour. Those who transgressed the

rules of the seat were fined or made to suffer "unlaws" imposed for pious purposes—possibly, in Catholic times, for candles at the altar of their protecting and patron saint, St. Severine.

In the midst of this aggregation of the common lot and of the great—of councillors, guild brethren, and craftsmen—preached and laboured the strong David Ferguson; the gentle John Fairful; the loutish Andrew Foster; the elegant, refined, consistent John Murray; and so on through a series of nebulides till we reach the inspired Ralph Erskine, the prudent James Wardlaw, the fiery James Thomson, the literary Fernies, and the plodding, careful Allan M'Lean. Royalty listened to the first of these, and left the old palace while the second minister laboured.

The royal household bade farewell to Dunfermline in 1603, leaving behind them a strangely mixed medley of regrets and a trailing heritage of woeful remembrances.

In the "burrow town," and in civil and social and industrial affairs, all interest was centred in the crafts and guildry contentions, and in the epidemic of witchcraft which had now fastened, with fatal results, on the general mind of Europe. In this latter epidemic the Scots were sorely smitten, and the visitation did not cease its ravages till seventeen thousand innocent people had lost their lives. It continued from 1590 till the close of the eighteenth century, and there was no keener hand in this horrible hunt for innocent human blood than the King who left our palace in 1603. He was greatly assisted alike by the nobility and the clergy, and some of these have left behind them a mere memory of enduring repulsion for the persistency and ingenuity with which they pursued, persecuted and murdered the aged, the innocent, and illiterate. The processions to the Witch Knowe and the Witch Dub were perhaps less frequently witnessed in Dunfermline than in many other towns; but here, too, the cruel witch-finders came, and here, too, the preliminary tortures to extort confession were mooted, discussed, and practised.

So far as the "crafts and the guild brether" supplied that interest and excitement, which as human beings we all seek and hunger after,

the scribe of the weavers gives neither incident nor narrative. But we learn from other sources, notably the Records of the Convention of Royal Burghs, that the early years of the seventeenth century were not wholly without battle royal, and campaigns of caballing for place and power between the merchants and the workers.

In 1600, in satisfaction of complaints by craftsmen against the "brether of the guildrie," it was determined by the Convention "that ilk burgess of ane frie burgh may sell his wares to other friemen of the burgh at their pleasure, without ony offer being first made to his co-burgesses." In 1601, the same sapient assembly ordained "that nae duty be put upon claith or other stuffs made, or to be made within the realm, and nocht to be transported furth thereof." But they also advise that the "controlling and selling of the claith and stuffs should be committed to the magistrates of the burgh where the same is wrocht, and gif ony gifts (bribes) be passed in prejudice thereof that they be annulled and discharged."

In this same year of 1601, the Convention, authorised by the representatives of the burghs, engage one Gabriell Bischop, of Northwich in England, to settle in Scotland to instruct the Scots in the making of broad cloths and textile stuffs "be himself and his partners," for which the burghs undertake to pay him and his partners the sum of 3000 pounds (by instalments), with severe penalties against those burghs that might fail in paying their proportion of the charge.

But a new idea is sprung upon the reader of these Records when he comes to the year 1605. In that year the Convention met at Dumfries, and proceeded to business on ecclesiastical lines. After certain inquisition and inquiry, it was found that certain of the delegates from burghs were not certified as being of "the true religion." What the true religion was—except that it was preached in the parish church—we are not farther instructed than that "as defined be the Convention at Ayr" (1602). The definition given at Ayr is so meagre that we are still left in ignorance of what the "true religion" was, even as understood by these our forefathers. The Dunfermline Commissioner, one Patrick Stevenson, was one of those

whose religion was in doubtful form, and he should certainly have been sent north again had he not declared in unmistakable tones that, though his papers did not set forth the fact, he was still, and would continue to be, an adherent of the "true religion."

Though we are here mainly concerned with the weavers and their craft, it may not be amiss to note that Dunfermline, in 1612, seems to have been famous for its loaf bread, for the Convention of that year enjoins the burgh of Stirling "to suffer the burgh of Dunfermling to sell their bread in the [Stirling] market at the market time of day, provided that the twalpenny loaf wey twa ounces mair than the twal-penny loaf of Stirling, and be as sufficient bread."

CHAPTER IX.

*A three-cornered contest—The short reel—Torryburn "unfreemen"—
A quarrel—Dunfermline fined—Provost Wardlaw—Water Poet—
Counting threads—Auld times—Seditions—Tumults—Penny
weddings.*

THE Convention of Royal Burghs held at Linlithgow in 1599 passed an Act prohibiting the exportation of wool (and evidently also of linens) under the severe penalty of 500 merks. "James Fleming, sometime a burgess of Perth, was represented as amassing an intolerable quantity of wool" to transmit to Flanders, and the Convention commanded magistrates and others in authority to stop the ships that attempted to carry it. The city of Edinburgh being at the time (1600) accused of slackness in carrying out the Acts of the Convention, replied that the policy of restriction would be very prejudicial to the interests of the burghs. The burghs, however, would not be advised

out of their protective notions. The Privy Council took the matter up in the same year, and annulled the pretended Act as a usurpation of the royal authority. In this way the Convention and the Privy Council got ranged on opposite sides on this trade question.

The burghs seem to have stood firmly by the decision and attitude of the Convention ; and so we find the Dunfermline weavers craft in



St. Margaret's Cave, Dunfermline Glen.

November, 1613, ordaining "In presence of James Mackie, Alexr. Law, (Deacon) David Williamson, James Cairns, John Hutton and others of the brethern of the craft, That nane [of the members] shall carry or transport any kind of yearns of lint, furth out of this town or countrie, neither shall sell, under whatever colour or pretence, ony of the said yearns to any merchant, or other transporter of these yearns," under a penalty of ten pounds ; also that nane of the brethern

shall bear hame, or give again, any unwrought work under a penalty of fourty shillings." This game of cross purposes between the burghs, the Convention, and the Estates continued to manifest itself whenever occasion offered, and nothing shows better the weakness of the supreme authority in Scotland at this time than these bickerings of the burghs, the Convention, and the Privy Council.

A very pertinent complaint comes up from Dunfermline in 1615, when the Convention was met at St. Andrews, and when Robert Aitkyne was our representative. That worthy gentleman sets forth "That gritt hurt and damage is sustainit be traders in yairns through the insufficiency of the reel;" and the whole body of the commissioners present are enjoined by the moderator to see that those who come up to the Convention in the following year are fully instructed and learned in the question of short-reeled yarns. It would thus appear that the short reel was a trouble three hundred years ago, even as it is at the present day.

This question of the short reel came up again in 1625, and also in 1629 at Culross, when Sir George Preston was moderator. The Convention then ordained "That ilk burgh put the late Acts of Burghs, made anent the length of the reel, into execution; and that with such yarns as comes to their markets, that the magistrates try the length of the hesp, and cause the number of the threads to be counted, and such as are found to be faulty in number of threads or length of reel, the same to be confiscated and the inbringer punished exemplary."

The reel was a kind of skeleton wheel, having some eight spokes—the head of each spoke being fitted with a cross piece, and the whole being made to revolve by hand on a centre spindle. The periphery was made to measure ninety inches. If it was less the reel was short, and if it measured more the reel was too long—but this is never said to have occurred. Each length of the reel was called "a thread," and one hundred and twenty threads was called a haer, six of these being "a hesp."

But the "constant quantity," the never-failing element of the "rights and liberties" of crafts and guild, must not be forgotten.

While the Dunfermline delegate was anxious to draw attention to the short reel, he let the Convention also know that three individuals, "named Johne Hedderwick, Adam Sannders, and William Currore," who were indwellers in Torryburn—an unfree and non-privileged village—were exercising and "using the trade of merchandise, and usurping the liberties of free burghs," and the Convention at once issued an edict calling upon the three interlopers to desist from their unwarranted practices.

In 1616, these nefarious Torryburnians were reported as having surrendered, expressed their regret, and made the Convention happy. In the following year (1617), there seems to have been a severe case of strife between the "guild brether" and the craftsmen—and, strange as it may appear, the craftsmen were victorious. At the previous Michaelmas election of the council, the two parties had been in deadly grips over the election of a bailie, and somehow, James Mochrie, wobster, a member of the weavers craft, had been put into office. The sett of the burgh was examined, the Act of Parliament of 1469, and the ordinances of the burghs, when it was found that Dunfermline had contravened the parliamentary edicts on the subject, and set the law of the land at defiance. This could not be endured, and the burgh was mulcted in the sum of £100 Scots for non-attention to the burgh laws.

But fines in these days, and specially fines inflicted on burghs, had the frequent peculiarity of being deferred. The statutory penalties were adjudged against the offending community, but the payment was allowed sometimes to stand over till it became "ane auld debt," and was remitted or "forgiven." Thus, in the year succeeding that of the £100 fine, when the Convention was held at Dunfermline (7th to 10th July, 1618), and when Mr. Thomas Wardlaw and Mr. Thomas Aitkyne were the local delegates, these worthy gentlemen produced the form of election by which they had been guided in their procedure. This, on examination, was found to be even worse than the previous offence; and the "unlaw" or fine inflicted rose to the magnificent sum of £500; while the "said burrow" was ordained to

conform its election methods, and especially its elections at Michaelmas "in all time coming," to the Acts of Parliament and of the Convention enacted for guidance in such things.

In mitigation of this sentence, compeared Mr. Peter Law, dean of guild; Mr. Thomas Reid, and nine others, merchants and guild brether; and likewise Mr. Patrick Turnbull, baxter, and bailie of the burgh; and Andro Bennet, craftsman; who all declared they were quite willing and ready to obey the law of council election, and if the Convention would only lay that law before them, they would see to it that the burgh would not again offend. The Convention then "Considering the form of settlement, and considering also the state of the town, and that there has been divers seditions, tumults, and uproars fallen furth before betwixt baith the said pairties upon the election of their saids magistrates; and that this same matter has entertained great hatred and sedition amongst them, whereby the burgh has not been well governed in times past, being utterly out of good order, or of good example to others, it is necessary," etc. After thus delivering himself of a homily on the benefits and beauties of peace and order, the moderator, Mr. Thomas Wardlaw aforesaid, concluded by declaring that the Dunfermline Town Council must consist of sixteen members, nine to be chosen from the guildry, and seven from the craft. That the provost, the two bailies, the treasurer and dean of guild, must be chosen from the nine, and all the seven must be but common councillors. This being settled, the Convention agreed also to remit the fines, believing that the "guid toun" would behave better in future. In 1619, the form of election was found to be correct, and Dunfermline once more setting "ane guid example" to others.

At this time Thomas Wardlaw of Logie was provost of the burgh, and it is somewhat significant to find this gentleman on 29th December, 1615, being granted a license by the Privy Council, "to transport, either by sea or land, to England, or any other country, 200 stones weight of linen yarns, without skaith to person or goods for so doing." It would have been more satisfactory, so far as estab-

lishing the character of our local industry at this period, had the notice been of linen cloth, but the fact of being allowed to export a somewhat large quantity of flax yarns shows, with fair conclusiveness, that the production of linens was then one, if not the leading, industry of the place.

It will be noted that the instructions of the Convention of Royal Burghs are sometimes distressingly practical. Thus, when in 1629—the annual meeting being held in Culross—the magistrates are warned to put in force the Acts dealing with the question of the short reel, and pointing out that the magistrates must themselves try the length of the reel and count the number of the threads. It was certainly quite within the range of possibility to see that these Acts were not allowed to get into disuetude; but to do this by counting the threads in a “haer” or a “hesp” was a task either above the level of a provost’s ability, or beneath the dignity due to such exalted rank. The provost of Dunfermline since 1612 was the aforesaid Mr. Thomas Wardlaw of Logie, a gentleman of great activity and of many-sided resource. He was for a time M.P. for the town in the Scottish Parliament, was frequently commissioner from the town to the Convention of Royal Burghs, was an active and intelligent elder of the Established Church, and was withal the almost perpetual provost of the burgh.

His father was Sir Cuthbert Wardlaw, “who received in patrimony,” says Mr. Chalmers, “the lands of Balmule, about 3 miles north-east from the town. He married Catherine Dalgleish” of the Tunnygask family, “by whom he had a numerous progeny.” His eldest son, Henry, afterwards of Pitreavie and Balmule, was born in 1565; his second son, Robert, born 1567, afterwards of Whitefield and Touch; and his third son, Thomas, born 4th September, 1569, proprietor of Logie and provost, member of the Scots Estates, commissioner to the Convention; all as above. This same Thomas Wardlaw was also ellmosynar of St. Leonard’s Hospital, Dunfermline, a charity of which the very existence is now unknown to the average inhabitant. As ellmosynar and superior of the lands, he granted a

precept of infeftment of four acres to William Mudie and his spouse, Margaret Edison, on 4th April, 1618. These lands are comprised in the field where the warehouse at St. Leonards of the Messrs. Beveridge, Limited, now stands.

His marriage, says Mr. Chalmers, took place in 1601, and his family consisted of four sons and six daughters. One of the latter was married to George Bothwell of the Haugh—hence Bothwell-Haugh, the former name of Bothwell Street. Another was married to the Rev. Henry M'Gill, who was minister in the Abbey from 1622 to 1642; and it may be mentioned that a sister of Thomas Wardlaw was married to James Dalgleish of Tunnygask, and another to David Dewar of Lassodie, and thus was a collateral ancestor to Margaret Dewar, who was married to the Rev. Ralph Erskine in 1714.

Such a person, the reader will readily admit, could not be expected to stand in the market measuring the hank length, or counting slowly over the threads in a haer or hesp of yarn; and yet, when one remembers that this same Provost Wardlaw was the holder of a licence from the Privy Council, authorising him “to transport, either by sea or land, to England, or to any other country, 200 stones weight of linen yarns,” we begin to change our opinion. We find he is, in fact, a yarn dealer, and possibly as good a judge of spun thread and as competent an examiner as Bailie James Mochrie, who, because he was a weaver, was obnoxious to the merchants of the guild, and was accordingly turned out of the magistracy. Who the bailies were at this time, we do not know; nor whether they could assist the chief magistrate in his practical efforts to enforce the law of the short reel, by showing him how to count the threads and measure the defining circle.

It is evident, from various notices to be found in the registers of the Convention, that flax spinning as well as linen weaving, was, in the seventeenth century, carried on, not in mills or in any buildings resembling the modern factory or workshop, but in the cottages of the town's people, or homes of the farmer and village dwellers. The parcels thus spun—by the younger maidens, by the gaucy gudewife,

or the venerable "granny"—were necessarily small; but there are indications that dealers or collectors gathered the "wee pickles" and then exposed their larger lots in the markets for sale. Sometimes the farmer's wife or eident villager, would spin for private use, and in that case the product of the wheel would be sent to the customer weaver, who would, in due course, return it in the form of brown linen—plain, diapered or twilled—to be bleached by the burnie side, bookit, folded and stored in the kists of the household.

The markets then were open, booth-covered, public places, where spinners and weavers alike were bound to bring such quantities as they had for sale; and we have seen how strict were the guild and craft rules against forestallers and regrattors, *i.e.*, men who bought outside and inside the markets, so as to raise prices and make profit. It was to markets such as these that the magistrates were expected to resort, and to test the honesty of the traders in the matters of the short reel or "flokkit claith."

Here is a picture of these departed times, painted for us by the "Piper of Peebles," a real chronicler of the times:—

"Twa hunder year an' mair sin syne
 When fashions wer'na near sae fine,
 When common folk had scrimper skill,
 And gentles scarce had wealth at will.
 When sarks were stark, an' no that saft,
 And lennel worn wi' washin's aft,
 And some had ane, an' some had twa,
 And mony ane had nane ava.
 When wives wi' rocks and spindles span,
 And brawest lasses used nae can;
 When lasses wi' their rocks gaed out
 To ane anithere nicht about,
 A full lang mile o' grund an' mair,
 Sometimes no very free o' fear.
 On hand reels then they reeled the yarn,
 Before the use of wheel or pirn.
 But a' thing has a time atweel,
 A time to flourish, time to fail,
 So to the end of my Old Tale."

What were the mischanterers that had in 1618 befallen the town, and had caused the commissioners of Convention to say that of late there had "been divers seditions, tumults and uproars fallen furth betwixt baith pairties upon the election of their saidis magistrates; and that this same matter (the council elections) has entertained (promoted) great hatreds and sedition amongst them, whereby the burgh has not been well governed in times past, being utterly out of good order." What these references mean, we know not, and—unless the minutes of the guildry explain matters—we fear may not now in any way be set forth.

At this time, the "penny waddin" was an institution of great renown, and promotive of immense fun and long hours of revelry—Sandy Dempster, the fiddler, being, according to Dr. Henderson, the presiding genius of these hilarious and uproarious gatherings. Late wakes were also a dearly cherished custom of the time; and from the "streikin" of the corpse to the burial and "dairgie," the occurrence of a death in a family was the signal for the beginning of a series of bacchanalian excesses that must have shocked the decencies of the commissioners, and rived the prudence and spent the resources of many a family.

But the "seditions and tumults" were evoked neither at penny weddings, nor by deathly visitations; they were simply the manifestations of popular indignation at the way in which the annual Michaelmas council elections were carried through, and the means by which the guildry and merchants kept possession, from year to year, of the official seats at the council table. These popular expressions of antipathy to meanness and trickery, constituted the "seditions and tumults" of the Convention.

We may note, however, that in September of this year of 1618 (the very month of the Michaelmas elections), came to Dunfermline the once well-known, though now forgotten, John Taylor, yclept the Water Poet. He and the redoubtable Ben Jonson had set out on a footstep and purse-empty journey to Scotland in the preceding month of July. We have no record of Jonson being in Dunfermline,

though shadowy traditions exist of himself, and Shakespeare too, having been once at least in the town. Taylor arrived in Edinburgh on 13th August, and spent a number of weeks there, and in Leith, amid that sort of company—wassailers and supper sorners—that pleased him best. He crossed from Leith to Burntisland in September, and walked a-foot or rode per horseback, to our good town.

In his *Pennyless Pilgrimage* he gives full, curious, and amusing details of his journey. Finding himself at Burntisland, he is taken in hand by "a gentleman named Master John Fenton, who did bring me on my way six miles to Dunfermline, where I was well intended to lodge at Master John Gibbs his house (Gibb was then keeper of the palace, and his house formed part of the building), one of the grooms of His Majesty's bedchamber; and, I think the eldest servant the King hath withal. I was," continues Taylor, "well entertained there by Master Crighton at his own house, who went with me and showed me the Queen's Palace, a delectate and princely mansion. Withal I saw the ruins of one ancient and stately built Abbey, with fair gardens, orchards and meadows, belonging to the Palace; all which, with fair and goodly revenues, by the suppression of the Abbeys, were annexed to the crown. . . . There was also a very fair church which, though it be very large and spacious, yet it hath, in the former times, been much larger."

After spending some time in admiring the Abbey and the Palace, and what remained of the monastery, he hies him west to Torryburn, and visits the coal works of Sir George Bruce at Preston Island. He was taken down the shaft; and saw sufficient to rouse the energies of his short-robed and skittish muse:—

"I would I could describe it well!
A dark, light, pleasant, profitable hell,
And as by water I was wafted in,
I thought that I in Charon's boat had been,
But being at the entrance launched thus,
There men I found, instead of Cerberus;
Some in a hole with baskets, some with bags,
Resembling furies or black insufferable hags,"

and so on, to interminable scatter of detail.

Taylor was born in 1580, so that he was thirty-eight years old when he came here. He died in 1654. He was, in his younger days, and for some years, a wherryman on the Thames. It was while thus engaged that he began to compose and sell his rhyming rhapsodies, and it was from this, his early occupation, he got the name of the Water Poet.

CHAPTER X.

*Beginning of the seventeenth century—The Reformation—The land—
Beggars and slaves—Colliers, salters, weavers—Dunfermline races
—Conscience and Urquhart Brigs—Prelates and Presbyterians.*

THE beginning of the seventeenth century was fraught with movements of the deepest importance to the people of Scotland, and especially the commons—the industrial masses of the population. Forty years had come and passed since the ancient Church was overthrown, and the Reformation of religion introduced. During these forty years, a constant, though shifting and varying, struggle had been waged by the party of Church reform on the one hand, and the landed and privileged aristocracy on the other. The object of this struggle, the prize for which the two parties fought, was possession of the lands and properties formerly held by the Catholic Church, and now, by the events of 1560, thrown into the arena of contention, and made the magnet of the greatest possible variety of motives in the hearts and minds of the different claimants.

The aristocracy, such as it was, had no purpose to serve but the feeding of a naked and unbridled acquisitiveness. The power which the possession of land gave, and the wealth which its rent roll yielded, formed the twin temptations and double idol of the landlord class.

They claimed, of course, in individual cases, under a vast variety of ingenuous and disingenuous pleas, but this broad issue appealed to the commonsense of the people—the lands in dispute had been the property of the national Church, had been administered for national religious and Church purposes, and ought still, though the form was changed, to have belonged to the Church of Scotland.



Regality Court-house, Nethertown : Removed, 1862.

The Church reformers claimed possession of these lands that the preachers of the gospel might have the means of living, that the administration of the Church's affairs might be secured, that the buildings might be maintained, that the education of the people—through parish schools—might be provided for, that the poor in every

parish might be decently housed and fed. The Church, the school, and the poor, were held by the Protestant reformers to be the true inheritors of the patrimony of the ancient Church. That there should have been so long and so fierce a quarrel, under claims so widely different—so evidently coloured by selfishness on the one hand, and by justice and philanthropy on the other—shows how shallow were the pious pretensions of multitudes who externally were warm supporters of the Reformation.

It is needless to say that the landed interest—supported as it was by royalty, and backed up in many cases by actual possession—eventually defeated the Church party, kept fast hold of the larger part of the ecclesiastical properties and, while aggrandizing themselves, robbed the general population of that which rightly belonged to them. The struggle of the first forty years succeeding the Reformation, did not stop there. It was continued into the succeeding century, and every means taken to increase the spoil which the land-seizers had already obtained, and to diminish the fraction which had at last been secured for the Church, the school, and the poor. The struggle, indeed, goes on even yet, and must ever do, so long as the Church has any claim whatever on the rent-subjects of the country. A privileged class may be created and maintained, but never can be satisfied—and this applies to nobles and clerics alike.

The fighting and scheming, and planning and conspiring, for possession of the Church patrimony, was one of the most degrading and shameful periods in our history. No sooner had the ancient Catholic Church lost hold of the land (1560), than the scramble began. The proposal made to Queen Mary (1561) to make provision for the Protestant ministers, was met with the reply that “it did not seem right in the sight of Her Majesty to part with her own patrimony.” The nobles followed the cue thus given with respect to the lands they had already seized. These, they held, “were their own patrimony.” In vain did the dependent ministers supplicate the Privy Council for some kind of provision for living. The years 1560 to 1572 passed away ere any relief was given, and until the Parliament of Perth had

conditioned the meed of sustentation, with the admission of bishops into the Church, a concession on the part of the clergy not shaken off till 1738.

But there were other movements—not less important, though possibly more obscure—and affecting the fate and fortunes of the Scottish people, and specially of the industrial classes, to even a higher degree than those we have been describing. If the landed aristocracy seized the property of the Church, the school, and the poor, and made financial capital out of the rent rolls of lands that rightfully belonged to others, their example of selfishness was rapidly followed by the very parties who cried out against the injustice of the landlords. These landlords enriched themselves at the expense of the Church; and now the dignitaries of that Church resolved to enrich themselves at the expense of the labouring poor. The cry of the Reformation had been the Right of Private Judgment; and now the very men who had raised that cry, who had fought and schemed and suffered, for individual freedom of choice in matters of belief, turned round and began a long series of legislative Acts, intended to crush out all exercise of personal freedom in things social and industrial. The working classes of that time were to be reduced to serfdom, to slavery; while Churchmen and noblemen were alike to be concerned in this strange and repulsive task.

Under the pretext of reducing the abounding vagrancy of the day, it was determined to enslave the vagrant, and with him all who could be legally forced into that designation. “The principle of compulsory service to a private owner,” says an able writer in the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1899, “as the most appropriate and natural remedy for vagrancy, had been already sanctioned in 1579; and the principle of perpetual servitude was adopted in the amending Act of 1597.” By these Acts, a vagrant could be seized, put to labour and bound for a year, while his children, if he had any, were to be retained till the age of eighteen or twenty-four years in bondage at public works, or in private enterprises, as they happened to be put to the one or the other. These laws were committed for administra-

tion to the magistrates in towns, and to kirk sessions in the rural parishes. In this way, the bailies and kirk sessions "were authorised to apprehend all vagrants and vagrant children found within their borders. To imprison them or put them in the stocks, or proceed against them with a summoned jury in a law court, and have them (possibly) beaten with stripes, branded with hot irons, or handed over to slavery for life, to any chosen member of the community who would employ them.

In 1600, the Scots Parliament passed an Act requiring presbyteries to exercise greater vigilance over the kirk sessions, and compel them to see that "the former Acts" were rigidly enforced. In 1605, the Convention of Estates—taking the place of Parliament—enacted that all masterful beggars found and declared to be such after the 20th of August, may be "taen be ony man," and he "may put his burning iron upon them, and retain them as servants," "and gif ony of them escape, the owner may have repetition of them as of any other gudes." By this Act, to which thirteen Protestant prelates were privy, any wandering vagrant could be apprehended, and if proved by sheriff or bailie to be a beggar, could be branded with a burning iron, and held as cattle or goods were held.

The next year (1606), coalmasters and saltmasters were armed with the power of apprehending, without seeking the sanction of a magistrate, and of making serfs or slaves of those they apprehended—the person so seized being possibly an idle, yet honest man seeking employment.

Scotchmen of the present day may well be excused if they are found to be sceptical as to the possibility of their industrial ancestors of three hundred years ago, being thus treated by the same class of men that were eminent in promoting the Reformation. The inconsistency of seeking to free the mind from the trammels of superstition and misleading dogma, while striving to rivet the chains of physical—industrial—slavery, must be painfully evident to every honest and reverent thinker.

The serfdom of the Scottish collier was created by the social

legislation of the period immediately succeeding the Reformation. One of these enactments deprived all the hired labourers of Scotland, section after section, of their rights of free migration in search of better conditions of employment ; while another rendered all unhired labourers, not only beggars and sorners or gypsies, but even the innocent unemployed man who was simply out of employment—liable to be cast into prolonged or perpetual slavery, to any employer who would employ them. By this drastic form of compulsion did Scottish parochial authorities rid themselves of the poor and idle, and the necessity of supporting them. In this way the whole industrial population of Scotland would in time have been deprived of their freedom, and reduced to slavery.

The influence of the Earl of Winton, then a great man at Court, and one of the most extensive owners of coal heuchs and salt pans—was strenuously exerted to get this new law into force. His reasons were curious. He maintained that if men were not forced into the pits the business would soon be lost, for men of their own free will would never attempt such an occupation.

In 1607, the powers given to the coal and salt masters were extended to the owners of metal mines, while special and state-favoured nobles had the powers of these Acts conferred upon them as individuals. Various amending enactments were issued during the next ten years, and in 1617, when James VI. was about to visit Scotland, an Act of Parliament was hurriedly passed, giving employers of labour the legal right to seize all orphans and the children of the poor, put them to labour, and retain them as serfs till they reached the age of thirty years. In 1621, these drastic and atrocious powers were given to "All his majesties lieges, to take, apprehend, and employ, in their works, whatsoever loose and masterless men and women, whom they shall find within their bounds." Even farm-servants, by this Act, were bound as serfs to their masters and farms. (*See Edin. Review*, Jan., 1899.)

Thus the legalising and regulating of slavery as a social condition of the Scottish people continued, and thus were the labouring classes

of Scotland, during the three or four generations that succeeded the Reformation, reduced from their ancient condition of independence to the liability of being apprehended, branded, and treated as slaves. Their own countrymen, their own social and spiritual guides, thus sought to demoralise and degrade the producers and wealth-creators of the country.

Thus, in the Act of 1641, the colliers are accused of drinking and debauchery in celebrating the holidays of Pasch (Easter), Yule, and Whitsunday, and therefore these holidays must be taken from them, since their past conduct has been "an offence to God and to the prejudice of their masters." It was therefore enacted that colliers' bearers, salters, etc., work the whole six days of the week, under a penalty of twenty shillings for every idle day.

While the Protectorate continued, the fitful flood of legal oppression was arrested, but no sooner had the Restoration come round than the Scottish legislators of the time were found at their old practices of enslaving the people. Even after the Revolution of 1688, and when the century was drawing to a close, the so-called enlightened reign of William and Mary was blurred and blackened by the *virus* of enslavement.

We know how all this shameful chapter of mean, mistaken, and cruel legislation came to a close. As an economic institution, serfdom—because of other and unperceived industrial changes—became as unprofitable as it was immoral; and then its end came rapidly. But the eighteenth century had run to its final year ere the last Acts of repeal and abolition of slavery were passed into law, and the Scottish peasant or artizan could no longer be stigmatised and wince under the hateful name of a serf. The Acts of 1775 and of 1799 put finality to our era of Scottish bondage, and the nineteenth century began with a clean sheet of freedom to the working-man. But we are anticipating by a long stride, and must now return to our assigned task.

"Freedom has a thousand charms to show
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know."

—*Cowper*.

It need not be supposed that because the movements we have been describing were national and not local bestirrings, that Dunfermline had no concern in them. Our town suffered and endured as every other industrial centre had to suffer and endure. The coal pits or "heuchs" in the vicinity were, in these days of three hundred years ago, worked and made profitable by men and women, and little children too, who were the slaves of the mine owners. These slaves were branded, as the Americans brand their cattle—with a hot iron—and collared, as we collar our dogs, with a necklet of iron carrying the name of the slave-owner. The owner of the mine, when he sold or transferred his holding, sold also his slaves with his other goods and chattels.

Even the weaving masters, who had boy or girl apprentices, could not be free of the charge of employing slaves, for, as we have seen, the private employer of labour, who desired to have that labour at the lowest possible cost, had such legal facilities for obtaining cheap or unpaid workers put within his grasp, as the average man could hardly resist. We may feel certain that our coal pits of these old times were "manned" with serfs, and we cannot escape the assurance that our weaving shops of the same period were not strangers to the voice of the bond slave.

But the picture of these ancient days is not all black. The social and industrial considerations of the time were indeed absorbing and severe, but there were also seasons and methods of enjoyment. As we have seen above, Alexander Seton had become Lord of Dunfermline, by his appointment as hereditary bailie of the Abbey and the Abbey lands. The Setons were then as gay as the Gordons of a later day, and knew how salutary and necessary it was to break up the monotony of labour, by the pastimes and amusements of leisure. The Setons had already introduced horse-racing at Haddington, their native region, and now resolved to give Dunfermline a taste of this aristocratic sport. He gave Dunfermline "Ane overgift of a Silver Rose Bell with His Majestie's name and arms graven there-

upon," to be run for annually, and to be retained in the custody of the magistrates and council.

It is the 19th April, 1610, a clear spring day, with a shimmering sun above the Pentlands. Prince Henry is now seventeen years of age; he is present in Dunfermline, and it behoved the Chancellor of the Kingdom, besides his gift of the bells, to see that this representative of the royal house was royally entertained. A grand horse race had to be run, and the meet is on the west road, at Conscience Brig. The course is to be along the highway, through the villages of Cairneyhill and Crossford, and the winning-post is set up at Urquhart.

The road to Dunfermline from the west found its track, in these days, through the flat fields eastward from Urquhart Brig, through Pittencrieff Woods, over the glen and into the town by the Palace yard. The mad and melancholy project of making Urquhart "Cut" and filling up our beautiful glen with rubbish, was not then thought of, and instead of the ugly and inconvenient approach from the west which we have to "put up with" now, the road was then easy, natural, tree-shaded, and lovely. It was accordingly along this road, by the old crooked Kirkgate, St. Catherine's Wynd, the Tower Brig, and so westward, that Provost James Reid, the Prince, the bailies and council, visitors and townsfolk, took their processional way to see the race on the Torryburn road.

In the gay procession the sightseer notes the halberdiers in front, the conical, crowned, broad-brimmed hat, the slashed doublet, the baggy "shorts," and buckled shoes, among the sword-girdled, horse-carried, and foot-walking gentlemen; the gay and flaunting dresses of the ladies, and the hodden grey and motley wear of the burgesses, guild brethren, and craftsmen of the town.

Crowds of the commonalty are already wending their way through Crossford, or taking their places on every coign of vantage along the two miles of roadway between the two brigs of Urquhart and Conscience. Through a double line of cheering and bonnet-tossing burghers and countrymen, the procession, from the town, moved to the west. There was furious galloping by the young bloods among the

gathering, and gentle and dainty ambling by their lady friends, now east, now west, as the preliminaries of the race were being arranged. Itinerant merchants hawked the groups with their tempting wares, while "tots" and drams of wines and ales were freely passed from hand to hand and gulped down to the healths of mutual friends. The rude, roystering minstrels of the time sang strongly-phrased ballads, and whispered unruly jokes amongst the maids and yokels. They were having a high old time of it, and were almost forgetting the race itself, when the two riders, with their high mettled horses, passed westward to the start. Then all was excitement, observation, and criticism, and each man made up his mind as to the contestants' chances of victory. These two, as we are informed by the Town Council minute of this date, were "David Boisswell, brother-german to Sir John Boisswell of Balmuto Castle (near Auchtertool) and Sir William Monteath of Kers, Knight (near Grangemouth)." Boisswell's horse was "ane brown horse," and Monteath's "ane dapple gray." We are not told which was the favourite, nor which had the "odds" in the betting, if there was any such weakness then, but we are told that "ye brown horse wan ye race frae ye dapple gray." How many heats were run we are not informed, nor how many hours of that 19th of April were given to the horse race of 1610. The gathered crowds broke up when the race was run, and Mr. Boisswell, with great ceremony, had the silver rose bells handed over to his keeping for a year.

We are not told whether bands of music headed the procession west, or gave enlivenment to the day's proceedings—though we may rest assured our forefathers would find some, if not ample means of giving gay and merry wings to the flight of the hours. It was in this same year that "our sovereign's dearest spouse," Queen Anne, made gift of £2000 Scots to assist the grammar, and to help the "sang, schools." Her royal ladyship evidently thought we required some improvement in music, and with the generosity of the elevated rank to which she belonged, provided for it. The benefits of this, her "morning gift," were confined to the folks of the burgh, as

indeed were all the privileges of rank, trade, and freedom then bandied about in the acts of council, guild and crafts.

This feeling of exclusion and restriction was found at times reaching down to the merest details of life. Thus, in the Convention held at Dunfermline, in July, 1618, it was enacted that all burgesses, to be considered such, must be constantly resident in the burgh they hailed from; and in 1623, Dunfermline was instructed to cause a certain burgess, resident in North Queensferry, to shift into the town, or submit to lose his "freedom." The Town Council obeyed the injunction, and reported next year that this "outlandish" burgess had returned with wife and family to the burgh, and so secured a continuance of his liberties. Perth was also in this year of 1624 enjoined to call in a burgess who had gone to live at Clackmannan, or to cut him off from the city's rights and privileges.

But while Dunfermline took a constant and lively part in these "small things of life," her craftsmen and guildsmen were not yet wholly given over to sordid considerations. The ministry of the Rev. Andrew Forrester supplied a never-ending series of shifting and varying scandals; and we may feel sure that all "kirk-gaun folk" were glad when John Murray was (1615) appointed to the second charge, and made to add some serious dignity to the ministry of the Abbey; and exultant were they all, when the Rev. Andrew, frightened out of his wits, gave up his charge, and took himself out of the way.

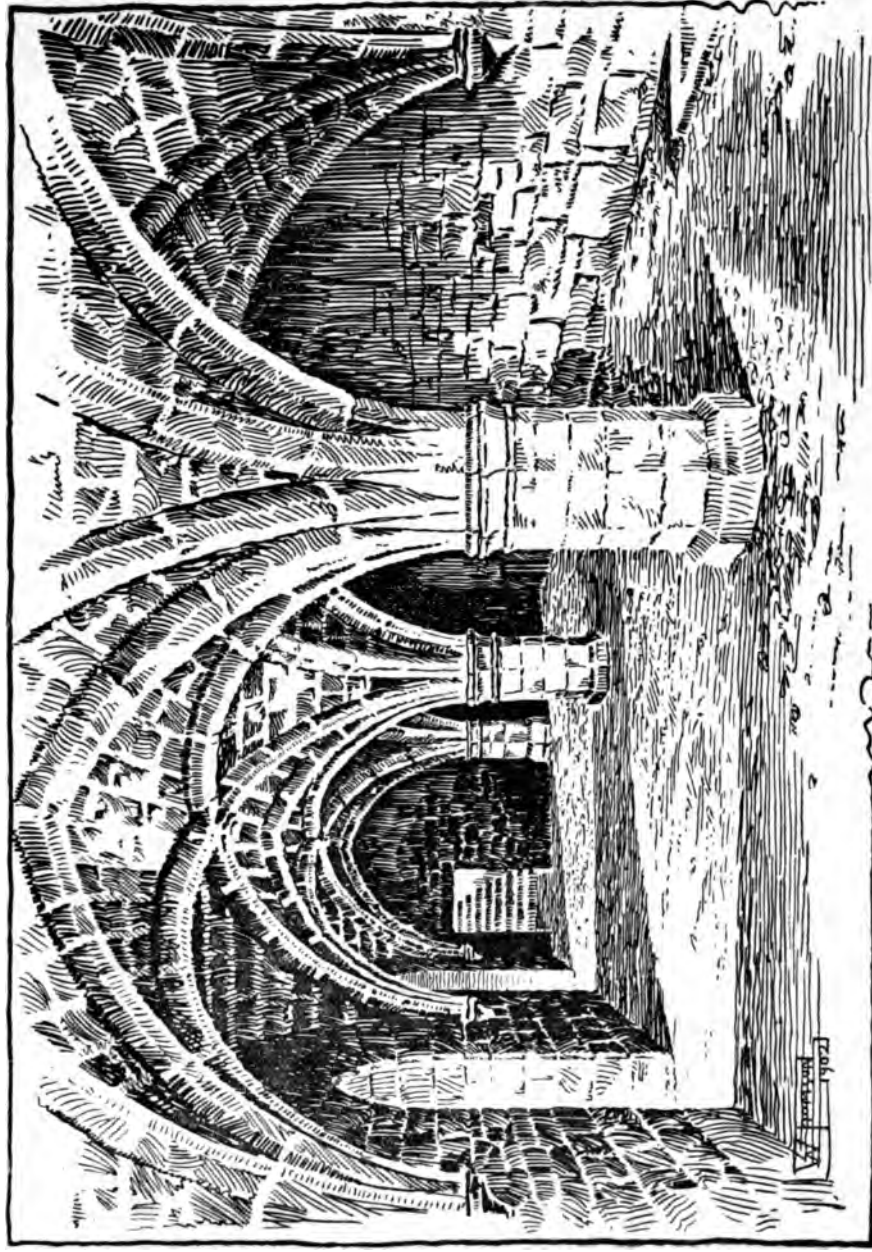
CHAPTER XI.

*Ye great fire — Rebuilding the town — Prelacy and Presbytery —
Bleachers and lyme — Cloth widths — The Covenant signing.*

HURRYING forward to take up our weaver minutes, we note a suggestive entry in the Convention proceedings of 6th July, 1624, wherein it is intimated that "Dunfermling is granted license to abide frae the General Convention for five years." The reason of this license was the calamitous fire which broke out on 25th May of that year, and burnt down about three-fourths of the "auld gray toun." This great and destructive conflagration is not even referred to in the Town Council records, and we are wholly dependent upon outside notices and incidental allusions for information as to its ravages. Dr. Henderson, in his *Annals*, has gone so fully into this matter of our terrible calamity, that we need refer no farther to it here than to quote the following from the kirk session records of Kinghorn. The date is 27th June, 1624, and is in these words:—

"The whilk day intimation was made publicly out of the pulpit, of the pitiful stait of Dunfermling, according to ye information [given by] ye Commissioners, viz., the Laird of Pitfirrane and Mr. Thomas Wardlaw; and for the better gathering in of the benevolence to be given to their helpe. Ordains the hail elders of the session to be warnit against this day 8 days, that the collectors may be nominat to that effect; and this to be intimate out of the pulpit this day aucht days, that baith them of the burgh and of the landward may be warnit to prepare their benevolence against the [time] the collectors come to them the week following."

Here we have two of our territorial lairds going round the burghs and parishes of Fife, and, like two magnificent mendicants, pleading the cause of burnt-out Dunfermline. Doubtless, this deputation to



The King's Wine-cellar, Dunfermline Palace.

Kinghorn was only one of several other deputations from our burgh, telling of our doleful condition, and showing our need of assistance, among the royal burghs and landward parishes all over the south and east of Scotland. There was neither post nor post-office worth speaking of in 1624. Messages had then to be carried by appointed persons, and delivered by the living voice. The reader can hardly picture to himself—except by way of a humorous imagination—the lairds of Pitfirrane and Logie going forth in 1903, as their ancestors did in 1624, to gather helping subscriptions for our ancient burgh.

In these early days, however, we still maintained the idea of interdependence among parishes and burghs; and the duty of mutually helping each other in calamitous visitations. It was this idea which gave rise to the Court of the Four Burghs seven centuries before, and which expanded into the Convention of Royal Burghs, still existing. Note too, that this notion of federation among communities is peculiar to Scotland. England never entertained it. Her burghs were indeed chartered, but each stood alone, and ordained, enacted, and administered, without regard to any other corporation, city, town or parish in that kingdom.

In Dunfermline, and after the fire, we gathered our subscriptions, and went on with vigour, rebuilding the town. The burgesses might then be seen, from morning to night, cutting down the Garvock woods, and shaping the trunks and branches into couples and rafters, while wrights and joiners sawed and planed, and put together the doors and floors, and fronts and windows. Within four years we had re-erected our burned-out schools, houses, dwellings; and made the town once more as it had formerly been. The gaiety of the community once more returned; Sandy Dempster played his fiddle, and uproarious penny weddings waked the nights and roused the mornings of Dunfermline, in these restored old times. The King came (1633) down from London to see us. The glories of the old palace were renewed for a time, to lapse again into silence and neglect till, twenty years after, the second Charles came to wriggle over and at last to sign the Dunfermline Declaration. Both Kings went away in due

time, but the "abounding of witches and warlocks in the town and Torryburn," kept us lively and active in the kirks and the courts, till this nightmare condition of the mind died out among our forefathers.

The sponging ministry of Andrew Forrester had come to an end in the Abbey Church, and John Murray, a man of a fine, firm, and fruitful spirit reigned in his stead. Murray, however, refused to befool himself with the genuflexions and mental reservations of the Articles of Perth, and was therefore banished (1622) by order of the King's Commission. He was succeeded by Harry Makgill, a man who has left no fame behind to mark the character of his ministry, farther than that, like the Vicar of Bray, he was willing to don the garb and forms of the Episcopal *regime*, or cut off his buttons and become at call, a simple Presbyterian. He obeyed the Articles of Perth so long as obedience was required by law, and he accepted the Presbyterian harness of 1638, when the democratic forms of worship triumphed over that of the prelatic. So disgusted were "the powers that be" in those days, and so indifferent the laity, that the ordinances at the Abbey were for three years after his death, that is, till 1645, laid on by ecclesiastical apprentices named Assistants; but in January (15th) of that year, the two Assistants were transformed into collegiate ministers, and the Abbey became a collegiate charge, Messrs. Robert Kay and William Oliphant being admitted to the first and second charges respectively.

The term collegiate, applied to churches where more than one minister is engaged, had its origin in Romanist times, when collegiate charges, with a provost, president or dean, and a number of clergy, taking the place of the one parish priest, were founded in important centres. But a number of the collegiate charges now existing were, like this at Dunfermline, founded after the Reformation. The movement to provide a second minister for Dunfermline Abbey Church was begun in 1643 by a recommendation of the Provincial Assembly of Fife. The heritors of Dunfermline met on 5th April of that year, and, after due deliberation, agreed to bear the burden of a second charge, "Lord Charles Erle of Dunfermlyng," giving his willing

consent to "ane sic guid and godly wark." Long delays, however, ensued, and it was not till January, 1645, that the two clerical apprentices, Robert Kay and William Oliphant, were made into collegiate ministers.

These two divided Prelatic forms and Presbyterian simplicity between them; so that the congregation had choice, by watching forenoon and afternoon services, to vary their weekly devotions as inclination prompted. The later Stewarts strove hard to build up a kind of automaton Kirk, where the puppets could be set in motion by strings pulled from one centre, and where the entertainment would always be staged to suit the royal fancy. They failed, as they deserved to fail, though the struggle against absurdity and intolerance cost the life of many a good man, and made the national experience, for three generations, an experience of bitterness, shame, and suffering.

In Dunfermline, we did not fight hard on either side. At first we exercised patience and endured much; and latterly we were content to see the first and second charges given respectively to Prelacy and Presbyterianism. We had no Church riots, and if the one preacher railed fiercely against the other, we took it as a matter of course; and went on as if nothing had happened, pursuing the drifts of our crafts and guilds, keeping steadily at our occupations of dyeing, and weaving, and waulking, and doing our best to keep the emoluments and benefits of each local industry within our own craft-consecrated hands. So, specially was it with our linen webs and wobster craft.

The Parliament of 1639, being anxious to encourage the manufacture of linens, passed an Act with that purpose in view. "After reciting," says the author of *Mediæval Scotland* (p. 48), "that linen had now become 'ane of the pryme commodities of this kingdome, whereby many people are put to worke, and money is brought within the same; which, pairtly throughe the deceet used by the bleicheres in lymeing thereof, and pairtly by the uncertainty of the breadth, is lyklye to come in contempt abroad, to the great prejudice of this kingdome;' therefore it was forbidden for anyone to sell linen cloth of less breadth than one ell, if the price per ell was ten shillings or

above ; or of less than three-quarters of an ell if the price was under ten shillings. Bleaching with lime was forbidden under heavy penalties, and all linen was to be presented in the market by the 'selvedge, and not by the rige.'"

In keeping with the behests of this enactment, we find the members of the Dunfermline weavers craft meeting together on 17th November, 1639. The meeting place is the Abbey Church, and one John Izatt appears to be deacon and president of the meeting. At this meeting it was enacted "That in all time coming, all cloaths for sale, or to be transported to market shall be made by them of the breadths as follows, viz. :—That all Good Dornicks for table and bed use, shall be full two yards of breadth when whitened. That all serviettes of that quality shall be full three-quarters of a yard, when whitened ; and that all common or ordinary table and bedcloaths shall be yard-and-half broad, when whitened ; And all common or ordinary serviettes, shall be three-quarters of a yard broad when whitened ; And that all Dornick serviettes shall be half-yard wide when whitened. Likewise, it was statute and ordained the said day, that all the said cloaths shall be made of new sorted yearns, and sufficiently wrought, and that under pain of fourty shillings."

The provisions of the Act, and the reference to our foreign trade in linens, supplies the reason of its enactment. Our foreign customers had found that our linen goods were not always of the width marked on them, and had only one way of explaining the discrepancy. To assign, as an explanation, that it was the custom of the trade, could not satisfy the Flemish merchant, who paid from the invoice and expected to get his calculated value. This feature of the trade in linens—as well as of other textiles—in foreign markets is not unknown even in modern times, and when the foreign linen draper claps his metre on the goods offered him by a Scotch manufacturer, he can hardly get rid of the idea that he is being cheated if he finds that the goods do not come up to the nominal measure. Now-a-days we prefer to let buyer and seller settle these matters as best they can between them ; though in old times we had to back up honesty by an

Act of Parliament. On the side of morals it would almost seem as if we should prefer the ancient method; though, on the score of convenience, the nineteenth century arrangement may quietly be preferred.

The reference in the Act to limeing the goods when bleaching is a somewhat strong statement of an aversion to the use of lime, which continued with weavers and housewives down to the earlier years of the last century. The heavy penalties decreed against those who made use of lime very generally prevented its being used in Scotland; but did not prevent manufacturers of linens from sending these to Holland, where the lime was not forbidden, and where the process of bleaching was far more quickly performed. In Dunfermline and elsewhere the bleaching process was dependent on the natural agencies of air, light, and moisture. The cloth was spread out on fine pasture surfaces, called bleaching-greens, and here was soused with water several times a-day, turned and shifted till, after several months, it was thoroughly whitened. In some places the process was hastened by dipping the cloth in a mixture of sour milk and water, laying it again on the green, watering it in the usual way; dipping it once more in the sour mixture, and so on till finished. In the absence of lime, we may conclude our Dunfermline weavers and manufacturers would be compelled to abide by the air, light, and water plan, with occasional help from the sour milk.

But other things besides this Act of Parliament troubled the weavers in 1639. The question of apprentices—another knotty sphere of occasional Scotch legislation—no less seriously engaged their attention. Some of these apprentices, it would appear, had obtained possession of their indentures sometimes long before their term of service had expired, and with these in their pockets had gone off elsewhere as finished linen weavers. This fraud on the trade must be put a stop to, and so the craft, at a meeting held on 10th December, 1639, decreed that “all apprentice indentures shall be put and kept in the said craft box until the expiry of the said apprenticeship; so that the deacon may see and understand that the whole

tyme of the apprenticeship is fulfilled." This decree is endorsed by a formidable list of eighteen officials and members, and ordained to stand for all time coming. The apprentice question comes up in different forms afterwards; till the craft changed the complexion of the whole ceremony of engagement by causing the young aspirant to textile honours to pay his "cans" and entertain by feast and wassail his new-found masters.

But while the weavers are thus quietly passing resolutions and determining the orbit of their industrial planet "for all time coming," what sort of business excitement or enterprise is going on outside? The year 1638 was, at Dunfermline, one of extraordinary enthusiasm and religious fervour. "During the months of March and April," says Dr. Henderson in his *Annals*, "the National Covenant, as drawn up by Alexander Henderson [of Leuchars] and Johnstone of Warriston, was subscribed at Dunfermline by the nobility, gentlemen, burgesses, and community." One can hardly, in these modern days of indifference, realise the intense anxiety of the people to adhibit their names to this extraordinary document. Country gentlemen carried copies [of its heading] in their pockets, town officials and town shopkeepers kept it lying handy on their desks and counters. On certain days long rows of people stood crowding forward at some handy office to get their mark or name upon the sheet; and in the Abbey, we can imagine the people crowding in at the north porch and out at the west door, as the procession moved in and out of the building.

CHAPTER XII.

War against the King—Witchcraft begins—The devil's mark—Strangled and burnt—Searchers and prickers—A warlock's trial—Restraining the persecutors—Who were to blame?—The King's conduct.

ALL this national and local enthusiasm was stirred into life, and wakened into being, by the conduct of the King—Charles I.—and his Government in Scotland. The fire and spirit of rebellion and resistance to authority had been kindled by the Jenny Geddes riots in Edinburgh of the year before. Since that time the national indignation had grown and swelled by every incident, in the long and wearying controversy between the King's ministers and his subjects north of the Tweed. Nearly a year had passed since Jenny's historic stool had been pitched at the head of the officiating priest in St. Giles, and now (May, 1639) we are arming soldiers and sending them off to the nearest scene of strife.

On the 1st of May, the Duke of Hamilton, as representing the King's authority, had sailed with nineteen ships into the Firth of Forth. On board he carried a small and ill-disciplined force of variously armed men. To meet these, a gathering camp was formed at Burntisland, and down to that point of watch and guard we sent our Dunfermline contingent of twenty-five men—these to be kept fully armed, furnished, and provided for by the town, while the camp was held. At the same time, and in obedience to an arrangement made by a popularly elected defence committee, we collected £400, and sent it on to swell the defence fund. Old Alexander Leslie, a general trained in the wars of the Continent, was selected as leader of the Covenanting forces. The Hamilton fleet and army soon found a safer harbourage than the



The Spinning Wheel.

Firth, and the Dunfermline folks watched with keen and warming interest those movements of the Covenanting army, which ended in the following year with the King's surrender at Dunse Law.

All this excitement, half ecclesiastical, half military, infused with a sense of devotion, and a willingness to suffer and make sacrifices in the cause of national right and national freedom, was going on in Dunfermline, as in other towns and burghs of Scotland, while the weaving craft of the town were settling, in narrow and detail fashion, the widths of their webs and the fortunes of their apprentices.

In all such periods of intense religious excitement, the earnestness of the moment runs here and there into bizzare extravagance ; the fears of the multitude hasten into superstition, and degenerate into persecution and cruelty. While in Dunfermline we were vowing our constancy to God, and sacrificing our people and our treasures to the cause of religious toleration and political freedom ; we were still turning a greedy ear to the whispered madness of witchcraft, and eagerly searching out the assumed authors of impossible crimes. While we were gallant enough to take our share in dangerous campaigns, and in the fierce and desperate struggles of the battlefield, we were no less capable of exhibiting the meanness and cowardice of persecuting and maltreating the weak and defenceless, of slaughtering our own fathers because they were deserted and feeble, and our mothers too, because ignorance and terror had marked them with the stain of imaginary evil.

But the Scotch people were not, in this matter, and at this time, by any means peculiar in their beliefs and practices. This strange hallucination, this repulsive disease of the mind, came first to us exactly as plague, pest, and cholera has come. It arose in the far East at least one hundred years before it reached our shores. When it got to Italy and to Rome in 1484, the Pope, Innocent VIII., issued a bull charging inquisitors and others to discover and destroy all that were guilty of witchcraft. This bull gave at once the clue and inspiration to every one who was cunning and cruel enough to make money gain from human agonies and death. It was

followed by many other bulls—each one giving a fresh impetus to cruelty, and an additional ground for terror-struck alarms. Victims were seized by hundreds in Italy, Germany and France, thrown into prison, tortured, maimed, and strangled to death, or burnt at the stake. Old women, as with ourselves, were the greatest sufferers, though young women and strangers, and even children of tender age, were made sacrifice to the dread and terrible delusion.

Witchcraft in Scotland was first given a status and sanction by the Act issued by Mary in 1563. It had the same effect in Scotland as the bulls of the Roman pontiffs had on the Continent. It raised the maniacal apprehension and fury of the people, and soon we had the dismal spectacle of the burning of men and women on the Castle Hill, Edinburgh, and elsewhere. This continued during the early part of the reign of James VI. On his return from Denmark with his Queen, in 1590, he settled down at home and set to work to root out the evil, by the slaughter of every suspected practiser of the art. Witch-finders became soon after the most noted and profit-making of occult professions. They were found in every parish; in every town and village they carried on their diabolical arts. If they became famous and were renowned for success, they were eagerly enquired about and hired, at high premiums, by parish authorities all over the country. Thus John Kincaid of Tranent, in 1649, is paid £6 by the parish of Stowe for the “broding of Margaret Durham,” and the burgh of Forfar, after paying a much larger sum for similar work, made him also a free burgess of the town, for his success in witch discovery. George Cathie, also of Tranent, was another of these professional witch-prickers. We find him operating in the parishes of East Lothian, in Lanark, in Peebles, Biggar, and other witch-infested quarters, carrying with him his needle, brods, awls, and other instruments of torture. In the last-mentioned place the Marquis of Douglas had (1649) collected eleven suspected witches, and Cathie was to “brod and test them,” and “he did prick pins in every one of them, and in divers of them the pin did gang in without pain,” and thus the witches were discovered!

The finding of the "Deil's mark" was the great object of the prickers' search. This mark, said the Rev. John Bell of Gladsmuir, "is sometimes like a blue spot or a little tet, or red spot like flea biting. Sometimes the flesh is sunk and hollow; and is put in secret places, as among the hair of the head, or the eyebrows, within the lips or under the armpits." Yes! such is a wise cleric's definition of the devil's finger prints!

How were those prints to be found? The pricker could find them whenever and wherever he willed: his awl was fitted into a hollow handle, with a relieving spring on the side, so that the needle or "broug" could be made at will to recede into the handle, while the pricker pretended it had penetrated the flesh. It could be made also, when the pricker chose, to stab and horrify and torture the poor, shivering, shrunken forms that stood naked and cowering before him. Need we wonder if many of these wretched, shunned, and solitary women chose to put an end to their own existence rather than submit themselves to the atrocious malignity of the times?

Lamont, in his *Diary*, under date December, 1649, tells us that "Mistress Henderson (of Pitadrow), sister of Fordell Henderson, in the Presbytery of Dunfermline, being delated (accused) by many of being a witch, was apprehended and carried to Edinburgh, where she was kept fast; and after her remaining in prison for a tyme, being in health at nicht, upon the morn was found dead. It was thocht and spoken by many, that she had wranged herself, either by strangling or by poyson, but we leave that to the judgement of the great day!"

Some twenty years before this, we had the trial of a warlock named Alexander Drummond, in the High Court of Justiciary, where he was found guilty of "using charms," and condemned to be strangled and burnt. He was executed in due course, with all the rigours which a terror-stricken and vindictive authority could inflict. Before his trial came on, he was paraded through Dunblane, Tillicoultry, Dunfermline, and Stirling, to be confronted with witnesses who might prove and connect his identity. A whole army of these from the shires of Perth, Stirling, Clackmannan, and Fife, went over to Edinburgh

(1629) to assist in his condemnation. Some of them, from our own district, we may mention :—Christian Dewar, daughter of the laird of Lassodie; Robert Paton, in the Powmill; John Ford, smith in Culross; Robert Anderson, brother to James Anderson of Pittencrieff; John Trumbull, son to And. Trumbull of Broomhill (now Hill House); James Hutton, and Catherine Walwood, Dunfermline; Thomas Lyal, Crombie; Meriorie Wilson, Dunfermline; Nicol Dewar, Dunfermline, his wife, and his wife's sister; and many scores of people, as well men, women, and children, went across the ferry to assist in the condemnation of a friendless and lonely old man.

In the summer of 1643, and in Dunfermline, our clerical guides and civil authorities were deep in the troubles and trials of witchcraft. Enquiries innumerable were being made, wardings and prisonings followed, and the almost invariable accompaniments of threats and torture may be assumed to have been practised. Six of our townswomen, Grissel Morris, Margaret Brand, Katherine Elder, Agnes Kirk, Margaret Donaldson, and Isobel Millar, were tried (doubtless in the old Regality Court House, East Netherton Street), condemned, and executed in the loan at the foot of the Witch Knowe. They were carted to the place of execution, tied to the stake above a pile of firewood, strangled, and then burnt to ashes. Two of the intended victims, like the Lady of Pitadrow, died miserably in prison; and it is recorded of one, Jonet Fenton, that she “she was brot to the Witch Knowe, being trailed and carted yrto, and castin into a hole yr without a kist” (a coffin). Well may Dr. Henderson say that the “superstitious bigots of the time were allowed to trail her along the streets [as a bag of manure might be] till, finding a cart at hand, . . . she was thrown into it and carted to the hole.”

Such scenes as these make one blush for the humanity of these days, and wonder to find that a bastard religious fervour, and the nameless terrors of an indefinable scare, should have blotted out, changed, and transfigured all the finer and more tender feelings of our race. The weaving class in Dunfermline, by far the larger section of the community, were kept informed, by elders and minister, by

messengers and letters, of all that was going on elsewhere; and themselves took a deep interest in the witch huntings of the time, the trials and burnings of witches and warlocks in the Loan. These surroundings we are apt to lose sight of as we sit and quietly read over the dull, dry, feelingless records of the craft. The weavers' scribe, who was often an official person, writes down the decisions of his masters with all the requisite exactness, but with such absolute negation of all outward things, that the little knot of weavers sitting in the dim light of the Auld Kirk Session-house, might almost be regarded as the only "little wheen" in existence at that time.

One is apt to conclude, from the clipt and crabbed form of our Kirk Session Records, that the prosecution of these poor witches was dictated by the terrorism and superstitious fear and unrest of the time; but a careful reading of the *Registers of the Privy Council* will throw a different and more lurid light upon these ghastly and atrocious proceedings. A study of these *Registers* makes it more and more clear that it was the rich, the educated and influential members of society that incited to, and conducted these *auto da fas*. Landed gentlemen, magistrates of burghs, and ministers, were continually applying for commissions to hold courts, and to try those hapless men and women whom they had already imprisoned; and whom, for personal reasons, for power and influence, or even for money rewards, they were bent upon bringing to a miserable and horrible death.

In October, 1624, the Privy Council found it so necessary to restrain and restrict these fierce witch hunters from the hall, the castle, and the manse, that their lordships passed a resolution making a preliminary examination and consent of the bishop of the diocese necessary, before application for a commission could be entertained:—
"For samuckle as sundry commissions has been sought from the Lords of Secret Council, against persons suspect of witchcraft, thir years bygane, and that upon some ditties and informations given in against the said suspect persons, wherethrough the said Lords has been very oft troubled be [the] importunity of those who soght these saids commissions, and who constantly affirmed that all the ditties and

informations were [easily provable]; whereas many of them were obscure and dark unto the saids Lords—Therefore it is thought . . . expedient to ordain that in times coming all depositions, ditties, and informations to be given unto them and upon which commissions [sought to be issued] against witches, salbe first presented to the Bishop of the Diocese, to be seen and considered by him, . . . and upon his report to the Council the said Lords sal grant or refuse said commissions.”

The reference here to the bishop will sound strange in Presbyterian ear. It should be remembered, however, that the Scottish Church at this epoch was legally, and by edict of the King, Episcopalian in form. James VI. had, in 1610, and in pursuit of his usual Church dealings, set up an hierarchy of bishops. The first set of bishops which Scotland knew after the Reformation, 1572 to 1592, were playfully and scornfully referred to as “tulchans,” *i.e.*, make-believes. The second phalanx, those of James’s appointment, were simply tolerated, until they became intolerable to Scottish religious feeling, and were then swept off in the Glasgow General Assembly of 1638.

It need not, however, be supposed that because the bishops were in office and in the place of power while the worst and cruelest phase of the witch-burning hallucination was passing, that they were specially responsible for the atrocities of the time. Some of them took an active part in the shameful persecutions, but the chief offenders were adherents of another creed—a creed where the voice of the people was much more potent. In fact, the delusion of the time was a national disease. All classes were affected, and the people of Scotland as a whole must be held responsible for this, the blackest episode in our history.

We generally, now-a-days, accept the statement that the belief in witchcraft was a cruel and degrading superstition, that the Church of the seventeenth century was the leading instrument of persecution, and that most of the sufferers were aged, poor, unprotected women. We seldom, however, search into the details of causes or of cases, nor study the ever-varying forms of accusation levelled against the victims.

The Act of Mary, dated 4th June, 1563, was intended to purge the country of diabolical influences ; it had, however, but little effect till her son, James VI., had returned from his matrimonial expedition in 1590. The ship in which the timorous and credulous monarch was conveyed home, having met with some rough weather on the way, he concluded at once that witching influences were at work, striving to wreck the ship and prevent his return. He reached home at last, however, and had hardly touched his native land ere he commenced to put all engines of law and force in motion to find out and exterminate the entire race of those who had sold themselves, as he put it, to the prince of evil and were practising against his royal person.

The King encouraged persecution wherever it could by any means be initiated and pursued. He gathered all the learning he could muster, and wrote (1599) a book on *Demonology*, to prove the truth of all his absurd beliefs. From the year of his return from Denmark till his death in 1625, there were thirty-five trials for witchcraft before the Court of Justiciary, while from that date till 1640, only eight trials are reported. From 1640 to 1660, there were thirty trials, though the Cromwellian officers did all they could to discourage the insanity of the hour. After the Restoration, persecutions grew more and more numerous—no less than twenty persons being doomed to death in the Justiciary Court in the year 1661. The *virus* came to us as a disease of the mind, and we entertained and encouraged its ravages. But King James gave the persecutions the *eclat* of national sanction, and the virulence and cruelty of national and irresponsible force. He and his successors ranged the whole national power against an imaginary evil, and did to death, by means too horrible to be described, a roll of seventeen thousand innocent men and women.

CHAPTER XIII.

The weaving trade—Debits and credits—Kirk sessions—Weavers fitful rules—Improving the weaving trade—The weavers' seat in the kirk—Inside the auld kirk in 1650—Craft stringency—Technical education in 1641—Meetings in Abbey—Kinds of cloths.

KEEPING in mind what we have said in Chapter IX. as to the enslaved condition of the poor among the industrial classes at the opening of the seventeenth century, the records of the weavers' craft, touching apprentices and taskmasters, will be read with greater intelligence. From the year 1633 to 1671, we have in these minutes little more than a dry, lifeless list of the lads who are taken on to learn the "art, craft, and mystery" of weaving, with the names of the taskmasters who were to teach them their trade, and to stent their work.

In this, the earliest of the minutes that refer to these two classes in the trade, we find that apprentices were taken bound to serve for "four years, and one for meat and fee." This period of service has, in 1639, increased to "six years, and one for meat and fee;" though in 1641, the apprenticeship period is reduced by one year; and the five years are again in this same year reduced to four years in all. This continues till 1645, when the period of apprenticeship is once more made "five years, and one for meat and fee."

It would appear from the precautions taken as to these apprentices, that it was difficult to fix the average boy for so many years, to the "four stoops of misery." In 1650, the weaving craftsmen enacted that each apprentice, before being taken on by any master, must find two cautioners who were to sign a bond, mulcting themselves in heavy penalties should the engaged apprentice "break his time" or "breach his conditions." The trade must have been in splendid

condition at this period, to have enabled the craftsmen to impose such onerous and complicated conditions in the learning and teaching of such a simple calling. In this same year of 1650, it is recorded, under the same conditions, that George Young has engaged James Malcolm as an apprentice to the working of dornicks, and that a fee of £3 (Scots) has been paid. The same fee is charged up to the year 1671.

From 1655, up to the year 1682, another skeleton list appears, this time, of the freemen of the craft. In the first year some six entries are made, with varying numbers for the years that follow, up to the last one given above. In 1665 Jasper Smith is passed through all the forms, takes the oath of fidelity, and is made a freeman of the craft by the payment of four merks (equal to £2 13s. 4d.), and in the same year John Ferguson obtains the coveted distinction, by the payment of £28 (Scots). In 1667 the question of legitimacy becomes an element in the minutes, and the "natural" sons are evidently caused to pay a larger fee as entry money to make up for the indulgence of their parents! In the year named, "James Stark, lawful son to Robert Stark," "Andrew Collyear, lawful eldest son to Robert Collyear," and "Adam Robertson, lawful eldest son to Andrew Robertson," are made freemen of the craft.

It is interesting to note that, in 1670, "Robert Reston, Deacon-Convener of Kirkcaldy, was made freeman with the weavers of Dunfermline;" and we also note with interest of a different sort, that in 1679, "Thomas Williamson was made free to sit in the weavers' seat for his lifetime," and paid for the privilege.

In 1673, at Michaelmas, Robert Peirson is chosen deacon, along with John Neilson as boxmaster, or treasurer.

In 1674, the weavers met in the kirk and chose the same deacon Peirson, with John Neish as boxmaster; and these officials continue in office till 1680; when Robert Stark is chosen boxmaster in succession to Mr. Neish.

The finances of the craft are indicated in the credit balances of the years 1682 and 1683. These amount to £21 3s. 5d. and £12 7s.

Scots respectively, being equal to about £1 15s. and £1 sterling. These items, as we go on, may be made to yield a little more of the picturesque and reflective, than at first sight they seem likely to supply. They are taken from the original minute books of the Incorporation.



The Plague Stones, Pitbauchlie.

The great scourge of the middle ages called the plague, and which travelled from the farthest Indian shore with unswerving constancy till it touched the British Isles, reached Dunfermline in the early part of the year 1645. From various sources we conclude that this fell disease manifested its presence in the town in April, and continued its ravages till December. During that eight months, about one-half of the population must have perished. Many of the inhabitants erected huts in the fields and, if smitten by the great enemy, were buried in the field corners, in woods, and waste places; with rude cairns or large flat flagstones to mark the resting-place of the plague-stricken. Dr. Henderson mentions one of these latter, which was placed at the "Holm Nook," about three hundred paces east of Pitbauchlie farm, where the writer of this has often seen it. The idea of burying in the fields was induced at first by the overcrowding of the churchyard, and latterly by a belief that graves containing plague victims would always also contain the disease, and be the means of spreading it, if at any time they were opened. It was therefore necessary to bury the dead of the plague, where the grave would not again be disturbed. So great was the terror inspired by this visitation, that the jail was thrown open, and the hapless inmates let loose on the community. All passage of men or women by Queensferry was forbidden, while Inchcolm, Inchkeith, and Inchgarvie, were transformed into prison-houses for those who had been, or those who were suffering from the sickness, or its effects.

The kirk session records, as quoted by Dr. Henderson, show that as late as October and November, the virulence and fatality of the disease was still increasing. All trade and commerce was at a stand, and, says the record, "many tradesmen put to penury for want of commercing and handling of geir and money, whilk was then dangerous to use, and little alms collected; therefore it was thought fitt that meit should be given to the poor for their present help." The same record informs us that £240 Scots was paid for meal "for the ordinary and extraordinary poore of the town;" and even in December, weekly and monthly collections were made for the poor and the sick, "to

help them in their great indigencie and necessitie, during this time of the plague."

A few entries from the kirk session records as copied for us by Dr. Henderson, will add somewhat to our social and industrial, as well as ecclesiastical items of information regarding this period. These records inform us that on November 17, 1640, the session "gave to Robert Adams and his wife, wha had their webb of plaidine, of 20 ells, brunt with Lowry Wilson's house—four pounds."

Under date 9th March, 1641, "That day, ordained that nane water their webbs in the kirkyaird, and if ony be found therein, ye bellman to cast thame out."

On 12th November, 1643, "That day :—William Lambe, Webster, in name of the rest of his craft, and for himself, being now deacon of his craft, desyrit of the elders libertie to tak down the stane wall at the bak of their seat in the east end of the kirk, and instead thereof, to build up a bak of timber to their seat, whilk was granted be the said elders." The smiths about the same time applied for a similar privilege, and were allowed by the elders to carry out the alteration. Their seats were on the north wall, east end.

In 1646, Thomas Elder, deacon-convener, is enrolled as the elder of the 2nd quarter, that is :—"from James Hutton's house on the south side of the town, eistward to the eistport," and James Mudie, Webster, is mentioned as one of the deacons of the Abbey congregation.

On 3rd June, "Mysie Bonnar, spouse to William Bowie, Webster, is found guilty of cursing and slanderous speeches—fined £3 and ordained to stand at the Cross or tron, on ane public market-day, with a paper on her head segnifying her cursing and blasphemies," etc.

On 11th February, 1673, Andrew Wardlaw, waulker, is cited to appear before the session for bringing home a load of cloth on the Sabbath: 17th February, Andrew Wardlaw compeired, and confessed his sin in bringing hame a load of cloth on his hors on the Sabbath, "and was ordained to mak his repentance on his knees before the session, whilk he did."

Under date of 8th August, 1676, one John Drysdale "leaves to the town and burgh of Dunfermline, for the use of the common good thereof, the sum of 400 merks Scots money, resting in the hands of James Mercer of Kirkland, by bond, and the sum of 100 merks money forsaid, resting to him by George Stirk, weaver, in Whitefield of Pittencrieff by bond, etc."

The weavers, in this first half of the seventeenth century, seem to have considered the question of apprentices, and the conditions under which they were to be allowed to learn the trade, one of the first importance to the craft. We find the corporation, on 1st December, 1647, inhibiting members of the craft, from making any second or ulterior arrangement with their apprentices, "in prejudice of their first indenture, under a penalty of twenty pounds money Scots;" and no freeman is to be allowed "to fee, hire or conduce any other freeman's servant without his master's license, first had and obtained, under the pain of twenty pounds; and if any apprentice shall remove from his master's service, before the expiry of his apprenticeship, he shall have nae benefit thereof as an apprentice." These somewhat binding stipulations are made still more stringent in the following year, when the freemen of the craft bind themselves not to engage any apprentice except with consent "of the deacon and his remanent brethern;" and that all apprentices shall be obliged at their entry, to pay two dollars—"ane to the box and the other to be spent at the binding," all under a penalty of £5 to the box.

These provisions, the frequent changes, their increasing severity, and the arbitrary form in which they appear, would indicate either that the trade during these years was exceptionally lively, or that some seriously disturbing element had been introduced into the business.

The stamping, or sealing of each piece of cloth, had been going on for many years; but King James VI., anxious to make more money than this legal process yielded, devised and passed, in 1612, a new and necessarily more exacting customs measure, the monopoly of which he gave to Archibald Primrose, whose son was clerk to their Lordships

of the Privy Council. The King, pressed for coin and currency, did his best, between his necessities and his inclinations, to encourage and promote the trade of the country, and specially, under this last Act, the export side of our commerce. His son, Charles I., too, in 1625, and again in 1633, pressed the burghs (as an aggregate and by means of the Convention) to put forth their best efforts to increase the bulk and value of the manufactures of Scotland. So far as the linen trade of this parish was concerned, King James and the Privy Council, as we have seen, had, in 1606, granted to Nathaniel Udward a twenty-one years' patent to make "all sorts of linen cloth sic as has nocht heretofore been made in Scotland, according to the best making and usual form, as it is made in Holland." Mr. Udward was taken bound to import experts "from beyond seas" and to "set up a perfect trade and form for the making of all sorts of linnen claiths."

What were the kinds of linen cloth "sic as has nocht heretofore been made in Scotland," we do not know, and cannot guess. The manufacture of linen—probably, plain, diaper, and dornick—had been carried on for centuries before this Scoto-Dutchman had been granted his twenty-one years' monopoly. Even laying aside Hollinshed's statements (circa 1560), that the apparel of the ancient Scots was hosen of linen and woollen, we are all familiar with the story of the camp retainers at Bannockburn (1314), who came down from the hill behind the Scottish forces, wrapped in shirts and smocks, and showed white linen garments outside of their ordinary dresses, and also bore aloft a display of linen bannerets. Udward, however, was evidently intended to fill the office of a teacher rather than of a worker, and his workshops would therefore be regarded more as places for technical instruction than as mere workrooms where new fabrics in fine linen were woven. Neither should we forget that, in 1641, a Royal Executive Commission was set up in Edinburgh for this, amongst other purposes, desiring that "In every shire a [technical] school should be erected in one or other of the burghs, at the expense of the fixed-on burgh, and that every parish within the shire should send either one or two boys, according to the valuation of the parish,

to be taught, for seven years, 'all sorts of working cloth or seys,' spinning, weaving, waulking, litting, and dressing." (*See* Chapter I.)

The reader will be able, from these reminiscences, to trace some consistency between the efforts of the weavers to raise the standard of stringency with their apprentices and the exertions of the Government, to which we have here referred. There was also the vagrant, or sturdy beggar, element of disturbance. For no doubt, in the chances then frequently occurring of obtaining cheap labour, through the parish and burgh authorities under the various enslaving Acts, there would always be a number of master weavers willing to forget the higher interests of the craft for the gain to be yielded by a wageless and unbound apprentice. Where such trade delinquencies occurred, the members of the corporation, watching the corporate interests, would be constantly tempted to frame new and more restrictive rules for the preservation of their privileges. These delinquencies of the grasping and unfaithful craftsmen may very fitly be accepted as explaining the seeming arbitrary changes we have noticed in the bye-laws quoted.

The lists given of the freemen entered and "made" in each year, contain no feature of interest beyond the rather curious stipulation of paying a dinner fee, in spending which, it may be presumed, the "remanent brethren" would find the means of meeting the expense of a drinking bout. These dinner splotes become more noticeable when we reach a period nearer our own time, and we shall then have the privilege of listening to and surveying the "spread." The distinctions drawn between lawful and unlawful sons, and the differences of fees and privileges between sons and sons-in-law, are points common to all the crafts (and still hold good in our local guildry), and need not be referred to here.

The fraternal feeling of our wobsters is shown in the cordial acceptance as a member, of Robert Reston, the deacon-convener of the trades of Kirkcaldy. This feature of their general conduct has already been noticed in the welcome accorded in 1705 to John Finlayson, the deacon of the Paisley weaver craftsmen, and we will find the same feeling manifested in 1783 in accepting Robert Kellock, the

deacon of the Inverkeithing weavers, and in other and more curious instances of fraternal goodwill.

The privilege accorded to Thomas Williamson, who, in 1679, was life-rented as a sitter in the weavers' seat, discloses much more in the way of information, than at first reading could be perceived. It teaches, for one thing, that the weaver craft had been so long established, and in possession of a specified part of the kirk accommodation, that the members could honour their officials or distinguished freemen, with the gift of a life-long sitting in it. Life-renting in any particular possession comes only after many generations have felt and enjoyed the privilege or benefit which it is proposed to bestow. That the seat was in the east end of the old Abbey is proved by the extract already given from the kirk session records. In that extract leave is sought by the deacon of the craft and from the session, "to tak down the stane wall at the back of their seat in the east end of the kirk, and instead thereof, to build up a bak of timber," etc. The weavers kirk seat—placed just behind, or to the east of the joiners seat—would thus appear in these early days, to have been where the steps, which conduct to the present house of worship, are now placed.

From other sources we have seen that the kirk session occupied seats or standing room, in the north-east corner of the kirk, and we may justly conclude that an important incorporation such as the weaving craft, would not be placed in the south-east corner, where the huge Norman pillars and the remains of the abbots' seat would interpose between them and the pulpit. Thus we may picture to ourselves the seat of the local weavers as being in the centre of the east end of the old Abbey Church, just where now the steps are placed that lead up to the level of the present church. If we conclude that this seat was simply a boxed-in space with long, low, fixed forms—as indeed is evident from the language of deacon Williamson—we can see it and its occupants with its stone-wall backing, set hard up against the rough, rude partition wall, which divided the ruins of the psalter kirk from the occupied Abbey.

At the era of the Reformation, as Dr. Edgar points out in his delightful book on *Old Church Life in Scotland*, there were no seats of any kind in our churches ; and the first attempts to provide these restful accommodations, was in the form of single-seat stools. These gave way eventually to forms, and these again to "dasks," or enclosed seats. During these variations of the kirk sedilia, the richer classes would sometimes distinguish themselves and their rank, by occupying chairs during divine service. These were either left in the floors of the kirks, or were carried "back and fore" by servants. At the time of which we are treating, the Abbey of Dunfermline may be imagined as fairly well provided with sitting accommodation, some parts of it in a rather uncommon fashion for those days.

One "Robert Sharp, wright in Pittencrieff," and in the year 1647, "gives in to the minister and elders of the kirk session, a statement of the haill particulars of the seats and classes within the new laft buildit be him, and John Sharp, his brother at the north-east end of the said kirk, for the greater ease and comfort of ye said kirk session." It was then minuted that Mr. Sharp should receive the stents or purchase money for such as took possession. Likewise, in case said seats shall be long in setting, "the said Robert shall have power to tak only rent therefor, conform to the Act of Parliament, fra those that shall be lang in entering thereto. Likewise the said Robert is content herewith, and obliges himself not to trouble or grieve the session herewith for ony further payment to him, for the laft and seats therein ; and he recivit the key thereof." [And the said Robert shall have charge of the said seats] "providing that those who shall enter to the seat and rooms, shall go first to the session and get their license, and act thereupon," etc. From all which it is apparent that active efforts had been made to provide our churches with seats, some thirty-three years previous to the time when Thomas Williamson obtained by payment his right to a sitting in the weavers' loft for the remainder of his life.

The reader will here keep in mind that the weaving craft, and possibly the other crafts as well, held their ordinary meeting and dis-

cussed the minutæ of their trade affairs in the venerable Abbey. This need not be wondered at, though it bears a somewhat sacreligious aspect in these our latter days, since even certain sports and pastimes were allowed within the sacred precincts in these early times. In country parishes, where farmers and shepherds attended with their dogs, these latter were usually relegated to a particular section of the kirk, which, in consequence, was called the "dog end." Here the colliers would sometimes fall out, cause a tremendous uproar, and bring the beadle with his rod of correction from his snuff-box and his seat. It was in the "dog end" that the cock-fights were carried through, and when at last people began to realise the hideousness of such desecration, these cruel and barbarous contests were removed to the school-house, where, for generations, they were fought out.

The commonest trade matters were discussed in the kirk, and not seldom, after much fierce wind-baggery and ebullition of angry passions, settled into form for the time being. There these weavers sat, above the graves of the long dead abbots, kings, princes, and princesses, and talked of prices and earnings, of heddles and treddles, of dornicks and diapers, of their craft rules and of their annual jollifications when the feast of St. Michael came round. Their indifferentism inside the sacred fane was not belied by their conduct outside; for we find that, in 1641, the weavers saw nothing amiss in their practice of bleaching their webs in the old churchyard and above the graves of their kith and kin, and to persist in doing so till driven off by the officers of the session. Here, too, we have made a mighty advance upon the decencies and practices of our forefathers of two hundred and fifty years ago. This question of bleaching will come up in repeating fashion as we go on; and possibly we may have then to conclude that the weaving community, from constant difficulties in the way of obtaining the necessary green and space, had some excuse for whitening their webs above the mouldering bones of their ancestors. That they were a highly respectable body of men, is shewn in the fact that one of them, at least, is mentioned at this time as being an elder in the Abbey congregation.

Of the kinds of cloth woven in the town at this time (1640), we find from the kirk session entry anent the burning of the dwelling-house of Lowry Wilson, that "Robert Adams and his wife," for their loss therein of their "webbe of plaidine of twenty ells, got four pounds;" and that other entry where "Andrew Wardlaw, waulker," is brought before the session (1673) for "bringing hame a load of cloth on the Sabbath;" we find from these entries that the weaving capabilities of our craft were not confined then to linen or flaxen fabrics; and though we had been working dornocks and other linens, it is clear from the above citation that wools and woollens were then also included in the staple of the town's textile manufactures.

CHAPTER XIV.

St. Michael's Feast—Prince Robert—William Schaw—Money—The Queen's firemen—King James's visit—The Palace—Lady Anne Halkett.

THE annual meeting of the weaving craft, as of other crafts and guilds, was held at Michaelmas term. The Feast of St. Michael, or rather, of the Archangel Michael, was held on, or as near as possible to, the 29th September. Why this date has been chosen, as that on which it was alone proper to celebrate the glories of this angelic saint, we do not pretend to know. It has been for ages a "feast" of the Church of Rome, it is also a recognised holy day of the Church of England; and its observance has crept into the industrial and social life of the Scottish people, though widely separated from both these prelatical denominations. The saint, or however else we may regard him, is mentioned five times in the scriptures, and always in a war-like

character. Daniel takes notice of him three times, and in each case as fighting for the Jewish Church against the pretensions of Persia. St. Jude represents him as fighting with the devil about the body of Moses; and St. John gives him the position and character of a general, warring at the head of his angelic host, against the dragon and his battalions. From this general character of a warrior, it was easy for the early Church to portray him as leading forth the loyal angels in the legendary assault upon the rebels in heaven, led into active insurrection by Lucifer. As we all know, this last conception was made the groundwork by Milton, of his *Paradise Lost*, and thus the story of Michael the angel has come to be embalmed in the sublime poetry of Milton's masterpiece.

So completely was this idea of St. Michael's warlike character woven into the popular mind, that the chief men of the Church in the Middle Ages had no difficulty in persuading the people of their power to show the very weapons with which he actually fought and the warrior harness in which he appeared. He was represented as clad in coat of mail, with a nimbus, or glory, round his head, and a dart in his hand, trampling on the fallen Lucifer. The red velvet-covered buckler used by the saint in his ever-memorable struggle was shewn in a church in Normandy till 1607, when the Bishop of Avranches forbade its farther exhibition.

When we go beyond the Christian ideals, and seek some explanation of these saints' days and saintships from our pagan ancestors, we find a prevailing belief in the power of certain deities, of fates, genii, and such like unseen, but cordially accepted, powers. These notions were readily adopted by the early Christian Church—the revolting pagan deities being substituted by saints and angels, and the old pagan ceremonies and rites given a new and higher significance. The days or dates were not changed, but the whole conception of each occasion was transformed and clothed afresh in the ideas, forms, and conceptions of the higher faith.

In this way it came about that every country, town, trade, occupation, or person had each its own aerial or spiritual protector in the

economy of the Christian Church. England had St. George ; Ireland, St. Patrick ; and Scotland, St. Andrew. Edinburgh had St. Giles ; Glasgow, St. Mungo, and Aberdeen, St. Nicholas. So with the different trades : St. Crispin championed the shoemakers ; St. Clement, the tanners ; St. Goodman, the tailors ; and St. Eloy, the blacksmiths ; while St. Severine protected the weavers. All these, however, combined in looking to St. Michael as the bulwark of the weak, the helper of the helpless, and the strong tower of the assailed.

Under similar notions, when the essential interests of the people, the rights and liberties of communities, were sought to be protected by the spiritual as well as by the temporal powers, the aid of St. Michael was earnestly prayed for, and ceremoniously invoked.

When the magistrates of a town were elected, they were looked upon as guarding the rights and privileges of the people, and were put in the keeping and comradeship of St. Michael, and elected on that saint's festal day. When the merchants elected their dean, they chose the same day, and, looking upon him as their St. Michael, they caused him to "take his oath to maintain and defend their liberties and privileges ;" and when the trades had fixed their deacons on St. Michael's day, they took them bound to fight for and maintain the privileges of the crafts. And thus the weaving craft, following the same ancient idea, held their annual meetings on Michaelmas Day, chose their deacon, set their house in order, and invoked the saint.

The period over which we have passed, and in which the weaver craft minutes were written, present us with many various, curious and interesting pictures. In the first year of the seventeenth century, and in the early days of that year, a prince, named Robert, was born within the palace in the glen. His father, King James, was proud of his little son, and piled honours and titles upon the unconscious babe, so that future generations might have something to remember him by. Alas ! alas ! how illusory are the hopes even of kings. The child was born on 18th February, baptised with great ceremony on the 2nd of May, and sickened and died on the 27th of the same month. This wee mite of humanity was mournfully enclosed in his

little coffin, and buried in the north aisle of the old Abbey. No one can point to his nameless grave, but doubtless Queen Anne would visit the sacred spot, and shed many bitter tears over her lost child.

The following year, king death visited William Schaw, and carried away one of the most skilful and gallant men of his time. He, too, was buried in the north aisle, and a finely carved and elaborate monument erected to his memory. That monument was, in 1794, removed to the bell rope room at the foot of the steeple, because its higher parts prevented the light of a window falling on the pulpit Bible. That monument, because of its white marble monogram, is known to every schoolboy of the town, and few of these but have traced its mystic lines. "He was an accomplished man," says Dr. Henderson, "and held in the highest esteem by his sovereign, and by all who were honoured with his friendship;" and the Rev. R. S. Mylne, in his *Master Masons under the Crown of Scotland*, tells us that "Schaw was a man of wide culture, who played a prominent part in the development of Freemasonry, was appointed (1590) Master of Works to the Crown, apparently through the kindly influence of Queen Anne. The principal seal, in this instance, has not been preserved. His signature, however, is of frequent occurrence in the early record of the Incorporation of St. Mary's Chapel, Edinburgh."

When King James went north to Denmark in search of his bride, he left behind a series of instructions with William Schaw, to have the palace and the Queen's jointure house, repaired and remodelled, ere his return, so that when the newly-wedded Queen came to Dunfermline, all things might be ready for her reception. "In the month of May, 1590, he was paid £400 by His Majesty's precept, for reparation of the house at Dunfermline, before the Queen's Majesty passing thereto." So greatly liked was this Master Mason by the Queen, that she raised him to the position of Royal Chamberlain, and gave him frequent marks of her royal favour. About the year 1594 the restoration of the Abbey, then greatly decayed, was, as we have seen, committed to his charge.

In this same year of 1594, Schaw is found sending alabaster and "a thousand 'steen' of lead" with a view to the better adornment of the castle of Stirling. In November, 1599, he presents his account for "various works executed on Holyrood-house;" and he sends James Murray, the master wright from Dunfermline to Edinburgh, to pay the wages of the workmen, the sum paid being £60 18s. 4d.; "and for drink given to the wrights at their idle hours, 34 shillings, which I made a difficulty to allow, until the master wright should let my Lord Treasurer know the cause of this giving."

His death came suddenly; though the nature of his disease has not been recorded. In the midst of his activities he was cut off, dying on 18th April, 1602, to the great grief of his royal and attached patrons.

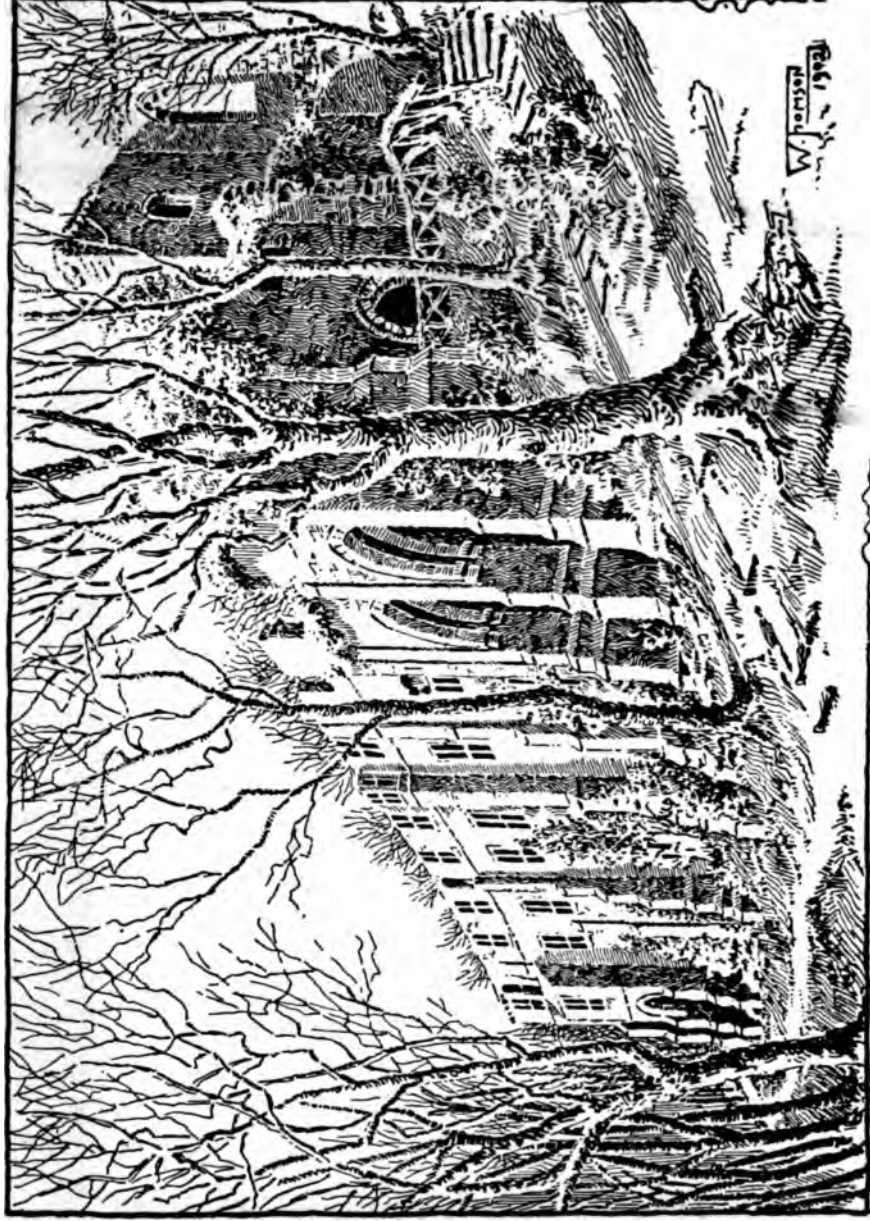
In April, 1603, the Royal Family bade farewell to their residences in Scotland, and began that slow-staged and greatly-assuming "progress" to London, of which the chronicles of the time are full, down to the smallest details. The palace at Dunfermline was given in charge to Alexander Seton, Lord Dunfermline, and Sir Henry Wardlaw of Pitreavie, Her Majesty's Chamberlain (in succession to William Schaw). For a time, Lord Dunfermline made the palace his residence, and when he went south in the discharge of his duty as tutor to Prince Charles, this ancient dwelling of the Scottish Kings was given over to the care of Master Johnne Gib and other superannuated servants and pensioned domestics. One of the latter furnishes us with a curiously interesting and household episode.

It is well known that "James Sext," when he found himself to be the probable occupant of the English throne, and that ere long he would be a double King, found also that he was desperately pressed for that which troubles the best of us at times—he was in want of ready money. The letters which he wrote at the time to the richest of his Scottish subjects, and specially to a number of the Fife lairds, would furnish amusing reading in these later days, had we space to reproduce them. Here we are necessarily barred from that pleasure, and have to content ourselves with the scrap of illustration

afforded by the episode above referred to: James and his retinue had hurried off to the south in the early days of April, and entered London on the 6th May amid the universal plaudits of the people.

Just two days before this, on 4th May, and in presence of the Privy Council in Edinburgh, James Ogilvey, "Fyreman to Her Majesty" Queen Anne, presented a petition for payment of his wages. He had come, he informed their Lordships, from Denmark with the Queen, and had "servit Her Grace continuously sen her coming to Scotland, trewly and lealaly, praisit be God! without ony kind of reproach," and "there was allowed to me yearly 10 dollars (£28 Scots) of fee, together with twa stand of claiths, or else £50 by the same. Nevertheless, I have receivit in payment of the same sinsyne, allanerly, the sum of threescore pounds [whilk treatment] is express against equity, reason, and conscience." He craved the Council either to pay him such sums "as may sustain myself, my wife and mony bairns," or else "allow him to wait upon Her Majesty in her passage to England," in other words, to intercept her "progress" and crave her on the highway for his long unpaid arrears of wages. He assures the Council he has no other means of living save the exercise of his gifts as a fireman, that Her Majesty had promised him satisfaction that he would be paid his wages, and that so long as he behaved himself he should be retained, "nor put out of his room during his lyfetime." James' suggestion of intercepting Her Majesty on her way south, did not recommend itself to the Council, and their Lordships ordained him to receive from the Comptroller of the Royal Household, the sum of 6s. 8d. (Scots) daily, in time coming and during his lifetime. So that James Ogilvey was now assured of a living for himself, "his wife and his mony bairns;" and to be retained to look after the fires and the chimleys of the deserted Scottish palaces, and specially that one, we may feel sure, to which Queen Anne was so much attached.

There was more money in the Royal Stewart hands when, fourteen years after, James came north to see and converse with, and, if possible, to convert his Presbyterian subjects in Scotland. The preparations for this royal visit in May and June, 1617, were what Dominie Sampson



The Palace Ruins, Dunfermline.

would have referred to as on a prodigious scale. If the British army had been on march into the Highlands to repress a universal clan-rising, no greater preparations could have been made. The resolution of James to go north seems to have been taken "all of a sudden," and the administering authorities in Scotland were given little more than a "fiddler's warning." When the intimation at last was given, the Volsian dovecots were greatly and vehemently fluttered. All this is strongly evident in a minute under date 20th February, 1617, of the Privy Council. Here we have a crying case of urgency. The palaces of "Holyrood-house and Dumfermling" have to be repaired and made ready for the King and his court, retinue, and retainers; and all by the month of May ensuing. Their Lordships of the Estates declare there is hardly time to get anything ready, and certainly no time for delay.

All private men's works must be allowed to stand and wait the execution of the royal preparations. So far as Dunfermline was concerned, they direct letters to be sent forthwith to "John and Thomas [the surnames are here strangely omitted], masons, burgesses and indwellers in Culross, to address themselves and their workmen to His Majesty's needs at Holyrood-house within 48 hours; . . . and to that at Dunfermline within 24 hours." These master builders and their men are assured they "sal be kindly and weel usit, and sal receive honest and thankful payment for their services." Think not, however, gentle reader, and ye grave and grim trades unionists of the now time, that these masons, trained and exercised and made perfect in the quarries of Longanet, that the Estates gave them any manner of choice in the matter! No! The men were ordered to turn on their skill and energies to the reparation of the royal houses "under penalty of rebellion and being put to the horn," and so being made liable to imprisonment, fines, disabilities, and banishment, as the less or more irresponsible courts might decide.

Tremendous preparations were made in Fife and elsewhere for the removing, conveying, and carrying of His Majesty's bed and "chaumergear," furniture, fancies, and general luggage. Our county

was divided into four "precincts," and these into parishes and districts. All the "plewlands" were counted, and "ane horse" assessed and requisitioned for each "plew." A general constable was chosen for each "precinct," and a particular constable for every parish. William Wallat figures as the "general" for Dunfermline Presbytery, and his territory is assessed for thirty horses, and eke as many more men.

And what happened after all this excited and multifarious preparation? "On the 15th May, King James cam to Edinburgh, thair-after cam, by water, to Kinghorn," landing at Prettycur, where we may imagine the "general" constable of the district had his men, horses, graith, and fittings, waiting on the King. But slight help from the imagination will enable us to follow the King northwards. His ponderous carriage, his gay courtiers, the caparisoned horses, and jingling of arms and harness, followed up by a multitude of pack-horses, country lairds, and rural hinds. "He cam to Falkland, and, on 21st May, being a Wednesday, cam over the watter of Dundee, and so to Dudhope, and sleepit there." From that back to Falkland, and thence to Dunfermline, hunting, hawking, and coursing for days together at each place. Wilson, a writer of the period, says that—

" James took such recreations by the way,
As might best become the day ;
And he sometimes pruned the hours of light,
By lengthening out the hours of night.
For what with hunting, hawking, racing,
Each night kept still the daylight chasing ;
The sun still saw the horses prancing,
And lamps gave light to feasts and dancing."

In the howe of Fife while in Falkland, and in the valley of the Lyne while at Dunfermline, the King spent his "holiday at home" with as lively a spirit as any youth of twenty-five, though he was now double that tale of years. The weaver citizens of the time would turn out to see their King, to follow the chase, and shout as each blunderbuss wakened the echoes round the house and holms of Logie.

“ And still when ony hare would fa’,
They’d rend the air wi’ loud huzza,
The King, the King, he beats them a’.”

Passing on to 1633, with King James already eight years in his grave, we have another and different sort of royal visit to the King’s house at Dunfermline. In that year, and on 4th July, King Charles I. came to the place of his nativity. Charles was of a wholly different character from his father: with greater dignity, deeper thought and seriousness, finer manners, and more evident refinement, but he wanted the friendly feeling, the free and honest bearing, the straightforward speech which made his ancestors, James IV. and James V., so loved and honoured by their subjects. Charles remained but one brief day in the house of his birth; and even that was given, not to enquiries as to his people of high rank or of poor estate, but to the solemn fooleries and vain ceremonies of the Crown.

Sir Robert Kerr of Ferniehirst (who rebuilt Ancrum House, Roxburghshire, in 1558) was present with the King; and he, in presence of a great gathering of nobles and lairds, with ladies fair observant, was touched by the King on the shoulder with a sword, and then His Majesty called out, “Rise, Earl of Ancrum, Lord Kerr of Nesbit,” etc. The attendant herald then stepped proudly up to the balconied window above the great entrance door, blew a fierce blast on his trumpet horn, and made proclamation to all whom it might concern, that “Charles, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, had that day created,” etc.; and blowing loudly by his horn once more, he retired within the palace. This ceremony of honour was repeated some six times ere the fountain thereof ceased to flow. Then all sat down to dinner, talked in stately fashion, clinked their glasses, passed compliments to and toasted the ladies, and comforted, at once, their physical and intellectual man. The King and his company passed the night under the old roof, and, taking horse, went clattering out of the courtyard, with a warm sun above them, on the following day, the 5th of July.

The palace at this time was as yet entire, and the crowds of citizens who crammed themselves into the open space in front, saw the King's house complete and whole as it was left by the architect and master mason of 1540, and by William Schaw. Whoever will set himself at the south-west extremity of the "walk" or footpath under the noble wall of the palace still standing, will notice as he looks along its varied outline, that the architect of 1540 had aimed at making the wall, as far as possible, a balanced and symmetrical structure. The high oriel "annunciation" window, still standing on the east end, was balanced by one, then built, above the blind arch, and large, projecting window of the west. The blind arch itself was evidently intended as a complement to the still existing and ancient arches of the old palace. If we carry this idea of symmetry to the front, as completed by William Schaw, we may fitly call up the appearance of the courtyard as it showed itself to our ancestors who crowded into it as the guests arrived and the herald twanged his trumpet horn on 4th July, 1633.

The visitor, as he comes from the south, sees, ere he reaches the first archway or "pend," and on his left, a range of low-set outhouses or mews of the King's house. On his right is the stately wall of the monastery as it still exists. When he passes under the guard-tower and through the first archway, his eye ranges along the front of the palace on the one hand, and the fragments of dormitory buildings on the other. The archway he has just passed through is balanced by that of Queen Anne's house, which bounds the courtyard on the north. The front line of the palace is broken by projecting oriels, balconies, and corbels, to the north and south of the grand entrance; and, while gaily-caparisoned steeds and guards stand round it, he passes the open door, looks into the lofty hall, and then, sweeping his glance along the exterior, he notes how fairly—yet not in dull and blank imitation—each feature in wall, tower, turret, and roof, gives friendly balance to corresponding parts. He steps through the upper archway, and, giving a parting look on the constabulary buildings on

the west, he turns into St. Catherine's Wynd, and leaves the palace old behind.

We had no further visit of royalty till Charles II., in the days of Cromwell and of fierce contendings over Covenants and Creeds, came down from Speymouth in July and August, 1650, to make show of fight and faction for the crown his father had lost the year before. The grim Commissioners of the Kirk were with him there; his sooth-fast entertainer, Lord Dunfermline; the great Maccallum More of that time, with his politico-religious henchmen; keen Jacobites, who knew nothing in statecraft but their handfasting to the old race of kings; bouncing, love-making cavaliers, and low-browed, solemn-faced men with dirk and dagger. All these, with handsome, aristocratic matrons and gay young ladies from castled halls, made up the company that crowded the royal tables while Charles II. was with us in 1650. That dreaded and somewhat curious document, "The Dunfermline Declaration," was laid before the King, talked over, debated, discussed, writhed and squirmed over on the part of Charles, till at last, on 16th August, he shut back his conscience, and uttered the mouth-words, "I am satisfied," and signed, as he cursed, this last engaging document of the Kirk.

Lady Anne Murray, afterwards Lady Halkett of Pittferrane, was there also, anxious for her brother Will, for herself, and also that the King might not forget her father's (Mr. Thomas Murray) services to the royal family, when the late King was but a boy and her father his teacher. This Lady Anne has preserved for us some delightful touches regarding the King's visit at this time to our palace in the glen. On the day of his departure, she tells us how "presently after the King had dined, when His Majesty had taken leave of my Lady Anne Erskine (her ladyship's niece), he [the King] came to me and said, 'Mrs. Murray (the style of address then common, even for young ladies)—Mrs. Murray, I am ashamed I should have been so long a-speaking to you, but it was because I could not say enough to you for the service you did my brother [the Duke of York]; but if ever I can command what I have a right to as my own, there shall be noth-

ing in my power I shall not do for you ; ' and with that the King laid his hand upon both mine as they lay crossed upon my breast, and I humbly bowed down and kissed His Majesty's hand. After some other discourse, the King honoured me with the farewell he had given to the other ladies, and immediately went to horse." And so thus went away the last of our royals from the King's house at Dunfermline.

While these great and notable personalities came and went, the weavers were holding their occasional and annual meetings in the old Abbey, writing down the names of their newly entered freemen, and drinking elsewhere over the events with the fees paid by the new entrants. They were busy also with their obdurate and flighty apprentices, exacting conditions and fees ; and again, making merry with the resultant coin. They were watching their taskmen and guarding their privileges, while they grumbled over the cesses paid under King James' Customs Act of 1612. Their waulk-mills on the lower reaches of the Lyne burn, and their bleachfields, or rather greens, in the churchyard at the Newrow and on the slopes of the Tower Hill, were being noted by the session, and the workers pulled up when found engaged in clandestine operations on the Sabbath day.

The ministerial work of the Kirk, the bossing of the preachers by Government, and the drilling of the people by the parish incumbents, continued as before to wax and wane in point of interest, and to change its aspect as the times and rulers also changed. David Ferguson was now but a memory, and gentle John Fairfoul was also nearly forgotten. Andrew Forrester was "weel awa'," and John Murray, who had refused the instructions of the Octavians and sought to guide himself by conscience, had been long a stranger to the parish. He had suffered much and long for his opinions before he came to Dunfermline, and his settlement here was brought round by the kindly offices of the first Lord Dunfermline. He was deposed in 1622 for non-adherence to the Articles of Perth. Banished to the parish of Fowlis in Strathearn, he died at Prestonpans in 1632. He was of

the Murrays of Tulibardine, and the monument he erected to the memory of his wife, who died in 1620, is still preserved in our Abbey Church.

Harry MacKill gave no one any trouble. He came as a Prelatist in 1622, became a Presbyterian in 1638, and died in the odour of sanctity in 1642. Samuel Row came in with the full Presbyterian tide of 1638, and remained for a time as a colourless assistant to his easy-going chief, Harry MacKill. Robert Kay appeared as a Presbyterian in 1645, turned his coat in the persecutions of 1662, found then the place too warm, resigned his charge, and went to Stow in 1665.

With Mr. Hay came William Oliphant, in 1646, and these two were the first duly recognised colleagues as ministering in the first and second charges. The names of William Peirson, Thomas Kyninmont, Alexander Munro, Alexander Dunbar, John Balneaves, and Robert Norie, carry us forward to the Revolution of 1688, with a placid conformity to the preferences of either side—the Prelatic or Presbyterian—as power and influence prevailed. The Church being now collegiate, it was an easy matter to set one incumbent aside to please those that fancied the role of the bishop, and to retain the other for the more democratic members of the aggregate Church. This double harness continued down to 1710, when singleness of purpose under Presbyterian forms became our one and only rule of faith.

One hundred years marked the period of oscillation in the Scottish Church. From the time that James introduced the bishops in 1610, the advantages of position were all with the Episcopalian. This ecclesiastical leaning gradually changed, and place and power came to the Presbyterians in 1638 with the Glasgow Assembly. Steadily, though much slower, the tide ran back, and we were in danger of becoming undiluted Prelatists, when we at last settled down to Presbyterian forms and functions in 1710.

Most of these see-sawing changes in ecclesiastical position and religious profession would be matter of personal observance to many

of the older weavers, and we can easily imagine how, in the weaving-shops, their tongues would wag and their wit be sharpened at the expense of those who so readily tacked to either side, and in defence of those who, like Fairful and Murray, sacrificed their living for the truth as they saw it.

Many other era-making events in the town's history claimed the attention, and excited the keenest interest in the common breast, during the first eighty years of the seventeenth century; and while the weavers were writing up the poor, dull, scrappy minutes of their meetings, Queen Anne's Bounty had been donated to the Grammar School. She had built the tower bridge, and authorised repairs and re-building of parts of the Abbey. Ben Jonson and Taylor, the Water Poet, had been "amang us takin' notes." The Regality Court-house, in which many terrible cases were tried, had been built in 1621, and then came the fearful fire of 1624, which reduced the greater part of the town to a mass of smoking ruins. The splendid spirit of devotion to the town's interest animating the conduct of all classes was now abundantly displayed. The kindness and generosity of associated burghs and parishes all over the country was no less proven in deed and thought. So that, by the year following, the great calamity had been nearly repaired, and we are then found building a new Grammar School in the burgh.

Then came the era of the Covenant, with its burning earnestness and fierce passions, that seemed to swallow up all other considerations, till the plague of 1645 drew us back from the heated consideration of theologic points to the contemplation of those life-and-death issues, which forced themselves upon us with the advent of this dreaded scourge. The battle of Pitreavie, the occupation of the town by Cromwell's Ironsides, and the ten years' rule of the Commonwealth, brought round at last the Restoration (1660), when the man who was, ten years before, hustled into the necessity of signing the Dunfermline Declaration, was now monarch of the three kingdoms.

We rejoiced long and loudly over the event, made songs and sang lustily about the "Auld Stewarts back again." Our rejoicing was too

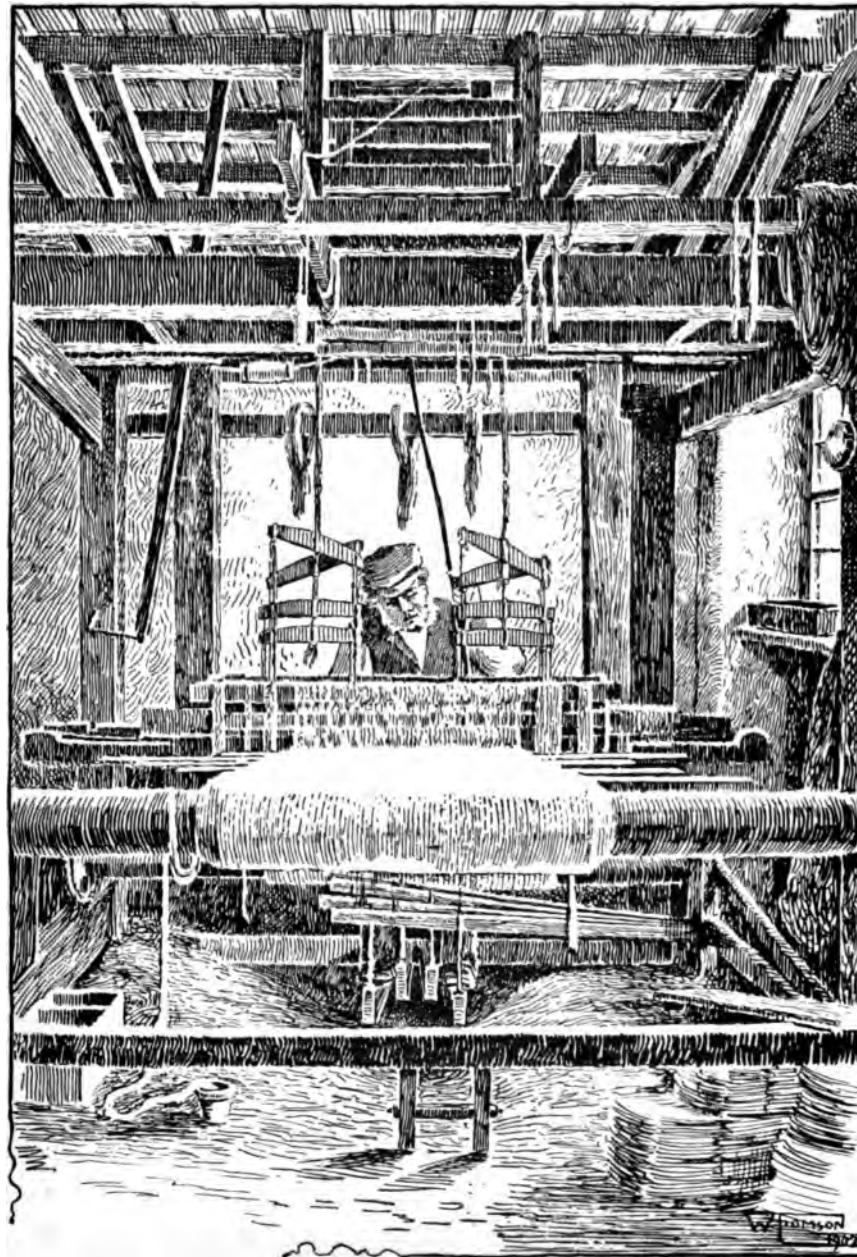
early, not only too early but wholly misplaced. The "Merry Monarch" wasted no time in showing both his teeth and his claws, and proving he had neither sense of right nor feeling of compassion. His captains of persecution have been screened and whitewashed by the scribes and chroniclers of royal and aristocratic brutality, but the efforts of a Scott, an Aytoun, or a Napier must pale before the solid, unswerving judgment of an outraged people.

The Hill of Beath gathering of 1670 was at once an illustration and a proof of the cruelty and bad policy of the Government and the King. The atrocities of that and succeeding years were never relaxed till the tyrant breathed his last in 1685, and the Revolution had come in 1688. Then, indeed, the land breathed with some measure of freedom, and the royal family we had nursed and followed and worshipped for eleven generations was banished for ever from the country and the people they had scourged.

CHAPTER XV.

Mortcloths—Conveners' court—Earl of Murray's death—Forbes of Pittencrieff dies—Charges for mortcloths—Mortcloth society—Ten years left out of minutes—Last years of Protector Cromwell—Middle of seventeenth century—Craftsmen—Condition of the people.

TURNING again to the minutes of our craft, we find, under date 19th of August, the following suggestive receipt:—"We, Peter Buist, deacon, and the remanent brethern of the baxsters (bakers) grants to us to be fully and completely payed of Robert Stark, deacon of the weavers, and remanent brethern, of their craft, of the sum of £80 (Scots) due by them unto us for their part of the mortcloths, and dis-



Handloom for Weaving Plain and Twilled Linen.

charges them and their successors—of the foresaid soum ; and oblidges us and our successors in our craft to warrand this our discharge at all hands, by thir presents : Subscribed with our hands at Dunfermline the nyneteen day of August, 1657. Peter Buist, deacon." Witnessed by David Turnbull and John Donald.

The provision of mortcloths for general use by burghal or parochial communities was long a matter of unsettlement, involving, in some places, most unseemly disputes, and in others, necessitating the interference of the civil power, in the shape of legislative enactments. The general law on the subject (*see* J. H. Kinnear's *Glenbervie*) may be given thus:—The kirk session, by immemorial usage, may acquire the exclusive right to let out mortcloths to hire within the parish ; and charging dues therefor. Corporations or private associations may, by similar usage, acquire a joint right to let out mortcloths for hire ; but, except where such right has been acquired, no individual nor association can do so to the prejudice of the kirk session.

That this was clearly understood in Dunfermline, and that the kirk session, helped by the magistrates, had maintained its legal rights, is evident from the kirk session record of date 14th November, 1642 : "That day, the provost and baillies, in name of ye rest, gave their old mortcloth to be re-drest and made up for the use of the poor," a new one being got, evidently, for regular use, and to be the joint property of the council and the kirk. In 1643, the parish of Lasswade had two such funereal coverings in use, and one hundred years later, Tillicoultry kirk session is found hiring out its mortcloths to the parishioners.

The conveners' court, on behalf of the seven trades, seems to have acted as a central authority in the matter of controlling and financing the mortcloths. The method of accounts seems to have been as careful as it was exact. Each craft boxmaster kept an account of the lendings to members and charges exacted. Each Michaelmas day, 29th September, or near to it, the various trades rendered an account of their intromissions with the mortcloths, with a statement of the parties and sums owing for use of the cloths.

The use of the mortcloth, and control of the conveners' court, is traced as far back as 1686, when an enquiry as to mortcloth debtors is made, and certain parties are requested to "pay up what is resting" (owing). There is after this a long silence, the year 1734 being reached ere these palls are again mentioned. In 1736, the court find that their "midling cloth is turned very bare," and they "appoint the deacon convener to buy as much velvet as be another clothe;" and in 1739 an entirely new mortcloth, with a silken fringe, is provided for the trades.

In this year, the seventh Earl of Murray died, and it may not be without interest to learn that at his funeral the coffin was covered with the mortcloth of the Dunfermline trades; and several years after, when Colonel John Forbes of Pittencrieff died, the same funereal trappings were borrowed from the crafts.

The charges for the use of the mortcloths were at first, and necessarily, very small. In 1760, the conveners' court fixed the scale thus:—"For the best cloth, 5s. sterling; for the second, 3s.; for the third, 1s. 6d.; and for the half-sized cloth, 1s. sterling." In this year, the court expended £16 in procuring a new mortcloth—an article of which the reader would doubtless have wished to see a description. The clerk of the court has not, however, enlightened us on that point, and we must go elsewhere to find descriptions of the coffin trappings in which our fathers were carried to their graves in the past centuries.

The origin of the mortcloth it is now impossible to discover. When the dead body, in old Catholic times, was carried to the church yard, the coffin was rested on a kind of table under an archway, called the lichgate. This was at the entrance of the sacred acre, and here a preliminary service was said or chanted over the dead, the coffin meantime being covered with a pall, an Anglo-Saxon word, which we in Scotland converted into the French form of mortcloth—but to trace the origin of these would take us too far a-field.

In Dunfermline, the supply of a common mortcloth for the parish seems to have been as elsewhere, and at first an established prerogative

of the session, then the joint property of the session and the council ; and again, by the craft minutes we have quoted, a matter left in the hands of the seven trades. How long it continued under this control, it is now impossible to say ; but we may conclude that in the gradual decay of the corporations, the mortcloth management would pass into the hands of a mixed and public committee acting for a general body of proprietors. We find, in point of fact, that a mortcloth society was instituted in Dunfermline on 15th October, 1830, and continued in existence up till the opening of the cemetery in 1863. Its first officers were William Black, preses ; James Campbell, treasurer ; Peter M'Naughton, secretary ; and Andrew Murray, officer. The guildry had also a mortcloth reserved to its own members ; but this, too, wore out of fashion, and at last was no less worn out of all decent fabric. Its last officer—who was also tyler to the freemasons—was Robert Drysdale, who died in August, 1887.

The scribe of the weavers, and no less their bookkeepers have, by the indifferent performance of their duties, left the anxious modern enquirer both too long and too much in the dark. The next time these worthies speak out in these minutes, leaves a tantalizing gap of ten years, and the period between 1657 and 1667, in the books of the weavers, has no record. It is needless now to enquire the reason for this hiatus. Some period of depressed trade, or some continued fit of craft callousness, may have furnished excuse to the local scribe for ignoring the need of “black on white” for the doings of the wobsters ; some little blaze up of civil war within their limited borders, may have “dorted” the clerk for a decade : “sic things have been afore” in Dunfermline with even more important books than those of the weavers’ craft.

We regret the absence of the craft record of this eventful decade, because, in the words of a fair chronicle, we should have learned how the local intelligence of Dunfermline viewed the social and political events then passing into history, and how it expressed itself thereon. In the first of the neglected years (1657), the great Protector was still living, and ruling with an iron hand the destinies of Scotland. The

common people were still suffering from the dearth of the two years preceding, and striving to keep soul and body together with drinks and foods we should hardly now offer to dogs or swine. Our forefathers had deplored these "visitations of God," and tried to avert a repeat of the calamity by proclaiming fast days, and pretending to repent of their imputed sins. The good harvest of 1657 proved a more potent form of relief than any number of fasts or insincere pretence of remorse for alleged transgressions.

"Poverty and scarcity of money," says Nicol in his *Diary*, "daily increased, by reason of the great burdens and charges imposed upon the people, which constrained them to sell not only their lands and estates, but even their household geir, insight, and plenishing, and some their claiths and habulyements." Such was the state of matters when the century was in its fifth decade—it grew worse as the years went by.

The hard, unsympathetic rule of the Puritans came to an end in 1659. Even in Scotland, there seems to have been a feeling of relief, since we find the citizens of the auld grey toon, on 21st June, 1660, returning, in solemn fashion, their thanks to God for having in His great mercy restored the House of Stewart to the throne. General rejoicing and bonfiring, with repulsive excesses in drinking and wassail, marked the occasion—though in Scotland a sombre shade of apprehension mingled with the common hilarity.

When Charles was crowned at Scone in the same year of his visit to Dunfermline (1650), George Douglas was the officiating clergyman, and preached the coronation discourse. "It is good for our King," he said, "to be wise in time, and know that he receiveth this day a power to govern, but a power limited by contract. There must be no tyranny on the throne." Charles swore on that occasion that all matters civil should be settled by the Parliaments of the Kingdoms, and all ecclesiastical causes by the Church. We know now how he spurned his own oath, and laughed at those who were simple enough to believe him. He is called in England the merry monarch, because of his profligacy; and he is remembered in Scotland for his ruthless

cruelty. In Dunfermline, his birthday (1663) was celebrated with a growing feeling of dread—the recent tyrannical Act of Uniformity filling the future with the darkest apprehension. The “killing time,” already begun, was destined to continue its atrocities till the King’s end came in 1685.

It is hardly possible, in the first years of the twentieth century, to conceive how the common people lived in the middle of the seventeenth. The “Condition of the People” was not then the absorbing question it afterwards became. The common lot were left to their own hard fortunes, and their own weak devices, to make life endurable. In the towns, the artizan and mechanic, subject to constantly recurring periods of idleness and want, were ever on the verge of starvation. In the rural districts, the lot of the poor was worse even than their brethren in the towns. The visitations of famine to which we have referred were regarded through the spectacles of superstition, as the judgments of God, and the patent causes of dearth and disease were pushed aside to make way for the wildest and most absurd conclusions. The land was undrained, untended, and uncared for. The fields—if fields they might be called—were without fences, and hedges and dykes were unknown. Cattle wandered anywhere unless herded and watched. The ploughs were great, rude wooden contraptions, drawn by half-starved oxen, or meagre, skin-and-bone horses.

The soil yielded so poor returns that vast tracts were left in a state of nature, to become in time covered with furze and heather. Superstition dogged the steps even of the cultivator, and no farmer would dare to yoke a plough till Candlemas came, so great was the reverence for ancient forms and the dictates of ignorance. Weeds grew in the fields because of Adam’s fall, and to remove them was to cross the doings of Providence. When Church sacraments came round, great crowds of the devout would desert their occupations and attend several of these in succession—sleeping in barns and stables, or in the open air, till kirk sessions did not know what to do with the numbers. Beggars abounded everywhere, wandering in crowds or long itinerat-

ing files through the villages, or haunted the lonely farm-houses, imposing themselves on the terror-stricken inmates. Acts of Parliament or of the Privy Council, made at first to suppress the swarming vagrancy of the land, ended at last by enslaving the idler, the sturdy beggar, the collier, the salter, and even the honest and industrious artizan, who might happen to be out of work.

Craftsmen, however, when we turn to their records, are found going on in the same dry and somewhat dreary routine of their incorporated existence, and as if everything was going well with the country and with the dwellers in the towns. Though the weavers have left no scribe-work of their incorporated life during the decade of 1657 to 1667, the chronicles of the hammermen of the burgh are happily still to the fore, though in ragged habilaments. The thread of connection here is still found, in the binding of apprentices and the making of freemen—and with these duties the never-failing function of drinking and fuddling on the advent of every new entrant. The extant minutes of this craft begin with the first years of the seventeenth century, with the laying down of craft laws to themselves and explaining to all and sundry the order of their sitting in the box-seat of the hammermen—a seat evidently reserved for the freemen, and quite apart from those set by public roup to unfree persons. To all entrants is administered an oath of fidelity and a sworn obligation to secrecy, an oath no less binding on every weaver entrant during the same period.

The hammermen became virtuous in 1658, and gave up for a time the convivial habits of the past. On 23rd September of that year, "It is statute and ordained that in all time coming there sall naething be spent of ye common good belonging to ye craft, but that the funds be kept for the good and use of ye craft." Perhaps this was, in the abounding wretchedness of the time, but a virtue of necessity, arising from the absolute need of reserving the craft funds for the increasing number of the craft poor.

Esprit de Corps had evidently its value in these old times, since we find the hammermen in 1662 making discovery that "David Thomson

has been guilty of counter-valuing" (depreciating) the work of certain of his fellow-freemen, "whilk the hail craft did hold as a great fault, and therefore convict him, the said David, in ane unlaw (fine) of thirteen shillings and four pennies Scots—this being his first fault; and ordain that if ye said David sall, in ony time coming, find fault with ony freeman's work without coming first to ye deacon and craft, he sall be fined fourtie shillings Scots."

The following entry of 20th August, 1666, gives nearly the whole round of ceremony at the "admitting of ane freeman":—"Ye whilk day David Turnbull is admitted, and, having made his faith (oath) of fidelity and given his essay, he is accepted to ye liberties and priveleges thereof for ye hail craft, and ye hail cost to ye said David will be ye soume of £17 2s. 8d., to be paid at several times—pairt at Martinmas of this year of God and pairt at Candlemas 1667, besides 60 merks and a half the said David has to pay to ye hail deacons for his liberty of ye mortcloth, ye whilk he promised to observe." The phrase "to ye hail deacons" informs us, as we afterwards find, that the conveners' court was then in existence, and controlling among other things the use of, and payments for, the mortcloths.

The hammermen, as this craft was collectively designated, was made up of blacksmiths and tinsmiths, watch and clock makers, armourers and peutherers (workers in pewter), saddlers, lorimers and spurriers—lorimers making the general metal part of horse harness and the spurriers reserving to themselves the heel-gear of the riders. The locally celebrated John Adie, who was a ruling elder among the crafts in these times, and whose death in 1713 was lamented by a local poet in elegaic verse, was a spurrier to trade, and, in keeping with his calling, was a man of sharp temper and somewhat fierce disposition. He got into a hot quarrel with his colleagues on Michaelmas term (26th September), 1772, and "fell out into many malicious speeches against ye deacon and almost every particular member of ye craft by straikeing many great blows with his nieves upon the table, and crying out in fierce words, to the disturbance of our meeting." John was fined thirteen shillings and fourpence, and ordained to come up again

before the trade to acknowledge his fault. He came up on the following evening, before a full meeting of his fellow-freemen, but "when callit upon to acknowledge his fault, he did not only refuse to give any obedience to ye deacon, but strak again upon ye table, and with fierce words did again refuse obedience. Ye craft therefore ordain the deacon to deal with him." How the deacon dealt with John we are not informed, but the mutinous member appears again at the bar of the craft on 21st November, and being still in what the record calls "a distemper" and refusing to obey the deacon, he is heavily fined "for his past misconduct and also for his present miscarriage."

All this, the reader will bear in mind, took place within the walls of our venerable Abbey Church—the common place of assembly for trade and guild meetings in the seventeenth century. John Adie died on 17th June, 1713, after serving the trades as deacon-convenor for the long period of twenty-four years. Here is how the poet of the time bemoans his death:—

"Death, why so dreadful? why so void of pity?
 Could'st thou not spare the Guardian of our City?
 The kind repairer of our shipwreckt state,
 Who managed our affairs at such a rate,
 That while he steer'd the Helm so many Years,
 He drain'd the Ocean of our deep Arrears;
 Till, on the Shoar of Wealth, this pilot set,
 Our drowning Fortunes, through the waves of Debt.
 Thus, our politick Guide, our civil Fort,
 Did first our State restore and then Support.
 Such candour in so calm a breath did dwell,
 As fitted him to rule so long, so well.
 His Place is left, in vain his match to borrow,
 The Town's envelop'd with great Clouds of Sorrow;
 His merits call the Muses all to stop,
 And rear his Trophies on Parnassus' Top."

Let us now return to our weavers, whose records, we found, had skipped a whole decade of years, while probably a few years more would have been allowed to slip unnoted by, had not the selfish and

somewhat narrow trade interests of the craft prompted the insertion of the next minute. It is entirely made up of a declaration, voluntarily made by one of the younger members, to wit, Alexander Bonnar, younger, weaver and burgess of Dunfermline, who, on 22nd January, 1667, thus speaks out:—

“ I bind and oblige me, never to Teach nor Instruct any man or woman, directly or indirectly, in any pairt or pairts of my calling ; and especially in Coverings-Working, except my own servants ; and obliges me never to transgress after the date hereof, and that under the penalty of One Hundred Pounds Scots money, as witness my hand ; and consents that these presents be inserted and registered in the books of the Council and Session, or any other book competent within this Kingdom, with *fifteen pounds* of liquidat expenses for registration hereof. With my own consent, Alexander Bonnar.”

The “coverings” here mentioned must not be confounded with the “covers” of more modern times. These latter were of cotton, and cottons were not made here in 1667. They may possibly, however, have been of coloured materials, and if so, most likely of woollen or “worsted” fabrics. In any case, we may conclude that the goods were of a new make, and but lately introduced, a conjecture which would to some extent explain the jealousy of the craft members. This jealousy is, of course, in these ancient crafts, constantly cropping up, and is an almost permanent exhibition. The restrictions, conditions, and payments enforced upon and enacted from members, taskmen, masters, and apprentices, all point in the same direction. The oaths sworn at the admission of members, and especially the binding declarations of the deacons and conveners, were all instances of this same narrow feeling.

There was also the town and district feeling—the fear lest the trade, by the teaching of others, might be taken away to other quarters. We find Edinburgh, for example, complaining in 1654 to the commissioner of burghs, that Dunfermline—with some other towns—had been levying specially heavy customs duties on those merchants who frequented the local markets at that time, and who traded,

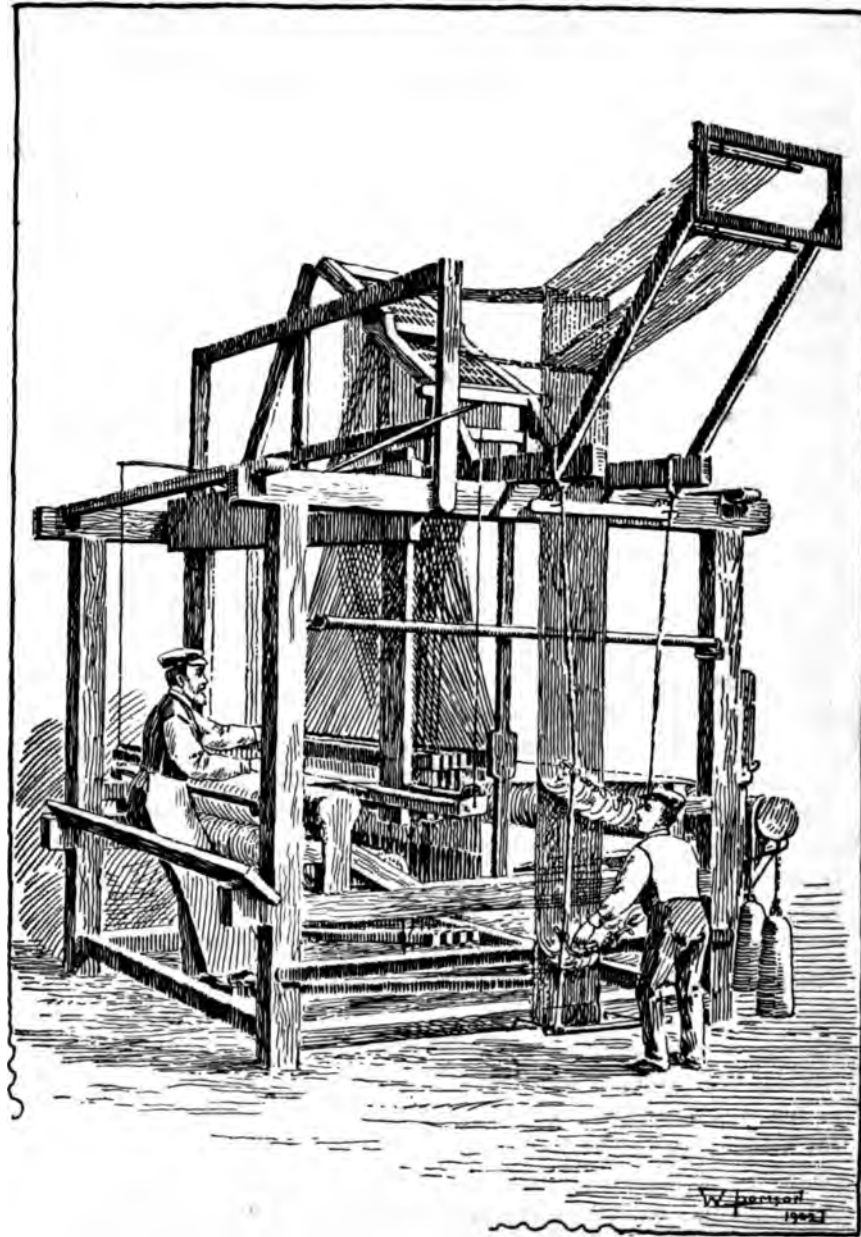
among other things, in Scottish cloath fabrics. We touch the same sore when we come, in the weavers' minutes, across such entries as this of 26th September, 1670 : " That every freeman's son, or those who marry freemen's daughters, shall pay for their freedom, in money and for a dinner, the soum of ten marks, Scots, and no more." This sum of ten marks, equal to about twenty-five shillings sterling, would finance the liquid side of a fairly good spread, in those early economical days, to the deacon and his committee, and to rejoice in their " freedom " with the wages of restriction.

CHAPTER XVI.

Textile legislation—Dead Clothes Act—The Meal Tax—Act of 1693 re linens—A Puritan describes in 1650—Condition of the people about 1650—Country and town life contrasted—Close of the century—Dearth and desolation in Dunfermline.

OUTSIDE the weavers' minute book, and making up in some measure what it omits, we find traces of the progress of the weaving industry in various and very different quarters. The efforts on the part of Parliament, the Privy Council, and the Convention of Burghs, were largely a mere groping in the dark, and the line of procedure among these bodies took at times the most curious and unexpected turns. Thus the Scottish Parliament in 1686, decided that every dead person must be wrapped and buried in linen, under a penalty of £200 for common people, and £300 if a nobleman.

In these old times the "kisting" of the dead was observed with much more ceremony and solemnity than now. Before this saddening ceremony took place, the body was still looked upon as forming one of the family ; but the kisting or encoffining was accepted as the first



Drawboy—Damask Handloom as used before introduction of Jacquard Machine.

step in the train of events by which the loved one was to be removed for ever from sight. Then the minister or elder, or both, were present, as they were at the funeral, to offer up a suitable prayer, and preside at the religious services of the day.

In the second session of the Parliament of 1686, the Act above referred to was passed. The preamble declared that the purpose of the Act was to encourage the linen trade, and enacted that no person whatsoever, of high or low degree, should be buried in any shirt, sheet, or anything else, except in plain linen, or cloth of hards; spun and woven within the kingdom. All foreign-made goods, and the use of all silk, hair, woollen cloth, or gold or silver ornament was forbidden, under the penalties given above. One half of the penalty was to go to the informer and the other half to the poor. For the better detection of evasions of the Act, every minister was bound to keep a register of all persons buried in his parish. Either he or an elder of the church was bound to be present at the kisting, and to obtain and furnish a declaration as to the clothing of the dead—no exceptions being allowed even in the cases of persons dying of loathsome, infectious, or contagious diseases. In a large or populous parish it became impossible to fulfil the provisions of the Act. After nine years governmental efforts to make the Act effective, an amendment of a still more drastic nature was passed (1695), but as years went by the absurdity of its provisions was gradually acknowledged; it fell into disuetude, and was finally abolished in 1707—the year of the Union.

Whether Dunfermline and its weaving craft were influenced by this Act the record saith not, but we know that, thirty years before the passing of this dead clothes enactment we had a regular market for the sale of cloth, and principally, we must conclude, the cloth made in the town and by its weavers. The cloth designated “hards” in the Act is a mis-spell for “haran,” a kind of coarse plain linen cloth which, in one style or another, was always woven where linen cloth of any kind was part of the staple trade. The mention of *serviettes* and bed and table linens a century before this period, and

the more recent introduction of dornicks may convince us of the prevalence of a district linen trade, and also that this trade, in its simplest form of "haran" was always part of the town's industrial forms. The local markets, we may farther remark, were from a very early period—as far back as the reign of David I.—the customs opportunity of the tax collector. The prime agent in these collections was the King's Chamberlain. His chief duty in life was the collection and distribution of the taxes. A large part of the revenue at this period was drawn from the burghs, in one form or another; and we may feel sure that this matter of the sale and use of haran would neither be overlooked nor uncharged.

"In December, 1684," says Mr. Warden (*Linen Trade*, p. 428), "while strenuous efforts" were being made "to prevent the free importation of English woollen cloths into Scotland, a petition came from those interested in the linen manufacture, complaining of the usage which had lately been experienced by Scotchmen selling linens in England. Hitherto there had been a free trade for Scotch linen weavers in the south, and as from 10,000 to 12,000 persons were employed in such weaving, the results were important, not merely to the workers, but to the landlords, for the payment of their rents, and to the Government, as each 1000 to 1200 packs exported to England paid a custom of £3 sterling. Latterly, however, the men selling Scotch linen in England had been taken up and whipped as malefactors, and many were obliged to give bonds that they would discontinue their traffic. The [Privy] Council recommended the Secretary of State to interpose with His Majesty." This was done, and a freer intercourse ensued; though the Scots forgot, in this case, that their enactments against the introduction of English woollens were as severe as anything devised by the English against linens. Neither should we forget that the Convention of Royal Burghs, in 1691, expressed their thanks to the Earl of Melville and the Master of Stair, for "putting a stop to a new project of erecting a linen manufactory within the kingdom," this "new project" being an enterprise set on foot by certain Englishmen, to establish a linen manufactory in Scot-

land. The scheme was only defeated for a time, the same being set up three years afterwards; but so pleased were the burghs with the result of their efforts, that they made a present of 2000 merks to each of the two Secretaries of State, and £50 as a gratuity to the Under Secretary, "for their services." Such were the corrupt and narrow commercial tenets of those times.

A curious and appropriate commentary on our commercial notions at the end of the seventeenth century is furnished by our Burgh Records of date 6th January, 1694. This contains an enactment that "in all time coming each bag of meal" bought from persons that are not inhabitants, to be sold by the meal sellers, "the seller shall be obliged to pay two shillings Scots for each bag." Our sapient forefathers did not, or would not, see that the two shillings extra must ultimately be paid by the common inhabitants of the burgh, who were of necessity the consumers. The same feeling is discovered in the general formation of monopolies at this time—a commercial epidemic which even the linen trade did not escape—as we find, in 1693, that a manufactory was then set up in Leith, with a variety of privileges, and a guarantee of exclusive protection for twenty-one years. The workmen of this company were much the same as serfs, and the concern was granted a seal of its own, to stamp and seal each piece of cloth made; while powers and privileges of an extraordinary kind were granted to their bleachfields at Bonnington and Corstorphine. Acts of Parliament of a more general sort, for measuring and sealing linens, were passed in 1700, 1701, and 1703.

The Act of 1693 (Thomson's *Acts of Scot. Parl.*), while it contains a considerable element of fresh enactment, is mainly a consolidating and confirming measure. It ratifies and confirms all former Acts touching the linen trade in Scotland, except so far as these have been amended or repealed. It forbids the exportation of "any lint of native growth," or linen yarn of any kind, under the penalty of confiscation of all such yarns seized in any attempt to evade the law, and of all other goods packed with them. All public servants conniving at such practices were to be deprived of their offices and declared

incapable of again holding office. All yarns to be sold must be made up in hesps of twelve cuts each ; and the kind of reeds the weaver must use are designated and described. The width of webs in the loom, and when bleached, and the degrees of thickness ; the length of each piece and half-piece, and the stamping and sealing of each, are all detailed with a painful and wearisome particularity. The fees for stamping are set down at 8d. and 4d., for pieces and half-pieces. " And for that effect, there sal be in each burgh where linen is in use to be sold, ane honest man, weel seen in the trade of [weaving] linen cloth, appointed by the magistrates to keep the said seal " and receive the rates. If he refuses to stamp he may be fined ; and if he stamps inferior pieces, wanting in any of the elements mentioned in the Act, he may be still more heavily fined. This Act specially ratifies the " Dead Clothes Act " of 1686, and mentions that it remains quite lawful to make dornicks, damasks, table linen, " and all manner of linen cloth made for private use, within the kingdom."

As Dunfermline was a royal burgh, and one where " linens were in use to be sold," this act of 1693 must have seriously affected the trade of our town. Between the restrictions of the crafts and the government's conditions of preparation, manufacture, and sale, it must have been a task of immense difficulty for any one concerned in the trade to keep within the limits of the law ; and when we remember that the raw materials of the " right making of linen cloth " were in almost every case drawn through the hands of government-grant monopolists, we cease to wonder at the vexatious limitations and conditions of the craft members, and we cease also to wonder at the slow expansion of such a hide-bound business as this of the textile trades.

The conditions of social life in Scotland in the middle of this seventeenth century have been so graphically written by a private soldier in the army of Protector Cromwell that we may be excused quoting some of his statements in illustration of the times. If his pictures are coloured by prejudice and overdrawn by reason of national dislikes, we may still readily accept as true much of this roundhead's story. He seems to have travelled mainly, or solely, in

the lowlands, and his observations are only applicable to the Lothians and the east coast counties. He says, "It is usual with them (the Scots) to talk religiously, and to make a great show of piety . . . and the next moment to lie, curse and swear without bounds or limit." He says farther, the Scots "are void of civility, and monstrous for their ingratitude." The women were the "most ill-favoured and dirty that can be imagined, and look like witches," and he does not wonder at this since "they are made to toil and moyle for their husbands in all those things that are most proper for men." The houses of the poor are "low cottages without any goods or household stuffs, full of annoying smoke and noisome smells." In many places the "children and cattle live and sleep under the same roof—the houses have but one chimney, with an iron grate to burn their coles, set in the middle of the floor, with the husband, wife, and bairns set round it." The lairds, he says, "have spacious houses of stone, with manifold accommodation, but with few or no glass windows—those that have are glass in the upper half and wood below."

That these observations of the fighting Puritan were a near approach to truth, may be assumed from authentic statements we can still reach as to the social life of the Scottish people when the century was drawing to a close. We have endeavoured to give a picture—sad and sombre enough—of our social condition in the middle of the century. That condition was somewhat improved by a short succession of better seasons and more generous harvests; but the latter years of the century renewed and intensified the sufferings of the past. "The seasons," says a writer in the *Scottish Review* for October, 1895, "had been bad since 1696, the crops were wrecked by blasts, storms, and inhospitable conditions of the atmosphere, and the poorer classes were in misery. The summers were ruined by drenching rains, and the winters by frosts and snows. Sheep and oxen perished by thousands, while the rural population were dying of want and the diseases which precede or accompany this form of suffering. Men and women fought with each other for morsels of food. Men were

often seen carrying corpses single-handed along the country roads to the sacred God's acre. On the roadsides dead men were to be found with morsels of unswallowed food in their mouths. Dying mothers with starving infants were no less common. People were sometimes found crowding to the churchyard—to be near it when they died."

That this picture, while overdrawn, is not altogether imaginary, may be proved from town and session records of the time. Thus, in the parish of Cullen, in Banffshire, on 8th May, 1699, the church officer is paid 14s. 6d. for "making poor folks' graves." On 10th July he is paid "for burying several poor who had died of the famine, and were brought dead to the churchyard;" and on 7th August of the same year this officer is again paid "for burying some poor objects—died through the scarcity."

Prophets of the Donald Cargill pattern pointed to the people's sufferings as tokens of God's wrath; and uttering fiercely-conceived prophecies of greater sufferings yet to come, they added spiritual terrors of the wildest kind to the physical wretchedness of the congregations. In the height of the scarcity the Privy Council were compelled by the teachings of nature to abandon their narrow "protective" policy, and to permit the free importation of grain. Public officials searched out all hidden stores of food, and exposed these to public sale. Every one was forced to thresh his grain, and bring it to market. Foresters were denounced by the Church, and cursed by the priesthood. Prices current were read from the pulpit, while fast days were appointed, and endless prayers were made in every parish.

Fletcher of Saltoun, writing in 1698, draws a fearful picture of the life lived by the Scottish people in the years immediately preceding that date. Beggars crowded the highways, and, finding no food in the rural districts, swarmed into the towns, till the magistrates were overpowered, and even overawed, by their numbers. The religious excesses of the time were matched only by its moral delinquencies. The *Book of Perth*, or any other record dealing with doings of kirk sessions, will furnish proof and illustration of what is here advanced.

The houses they lived in were, in the rural districts, neither conducive to decency, morality, nor comfort; were badly lighted, badly drained, dirty and repulsive, indeed were more like cattle shelters than human dwellings. In the towns they were little better; though example, and the small ambitions of the common burgess, helped towards better walls and roofs outside, and the claims of domestic life inside. The furniture and furnishings of the dwelling were fitted only to necessity, made no pretence to ornament or luxury, but were rude, coarse, and clumsy. The means of locomotion were furnished by nature; and journeys, long or short, by young or old, by the aged or infirm, had but one means of accomplishment—the limbs.

In the same year in which Fletcher penned his *Discourse of Government* and tried to delineate the social condition of his countrymen (1698), we find the Town Council of Dunfermline, in the peculiar wisdom of the time, furnishing certain privileged beggars with distinguishing badges, so that those who were not so provided might be driven off “to the next landward parish.” The minute is dated 5th February, and runs thus:—“The counsel ordered the thesaurer to cause run 36 badges, to the effect that they may be delivered to the poor within the burgh, to the effect they may beg through the town upon Tuesdays and Saturdays each week, and also ordains the constables and officers to carry of the strangers, beggars, forth of the town to the next landward.” Such extract as this may convey some notion of urban life in the closing years of the seventeenth century.

Carts were then rude and clumsy, and borne on wheels of wood made in a solid frame of cross planks, cut as nearly to the circle as possible, with a hole in the centre, and made fast on the wooden axles. Farmers were “thirled,” or bound to go to certain defined mills with their grain, and the miller at the thirl mill (Woodmill, near Dunfermline, was one of these) dominated the fortunes of the farmers round; and the poor lessee of the land, between the miller and the landlord, was crushed, when they chose, as between the upper and the nether millstone. The rents were mainly paid in kind, and

the landlord kept his barns and stores for meals and grains and general produce.

While these conditions of life prevailed among the Scottish people, it need not be matter of astonishment if they showed an anxiety to know something about another world. The churches were usually crowded; and when the sacramental time came round, the gatherings were beyond all calculation. So mad was the rage for these "preachings," that town and country people would linger on, sometimes from the Thursday's "preparation" till the following Tuesday, when they returned home—their health wasted, their morals ruined, and their minds filled with confused memories of wines and watchings, preening and praying, illicit intercourse, and wild debaucheries.

The sufferings from pestilence in 1645, and from famine in 1657-60, were equalled, if not excelled, by the agonies with which the century closed and gave as a legacy of woe to that succeeding. We have adverted to the narrow and mistaken economics of our civic rulers in 1694, when a financial embargo was laid upon meal brought to the burgh by outsiders. This year, it will be remembered, gave the first of a series of bad or ruined harvests, when a long period of intense want and suffering set in. Three years afterwards, we read under date 18th May (1697):—"Which day the treasurer (of Dunfermline), having represented that he was straightened for monie to do the touns affairs, the council ordered the treasurer to borrow from David Adie 600 merks Scots (£33 6s. 8d. sterling), and to give bond in name of the communitie, bearing annual rent (interest) from Whitsunday last." This indicates that some abnormal cause was then operating to deplete the treasury of the town. This cause is clearly set forth in the minute of October 5th of the same year, when the bailies intimated to the burgesses—"That they have paid the public cess out of the common good, for relief of the inhabitants in this time of dearth."

This dearth assumed, by the following year, the aspect and proportions of a crushing famine. On 5th July, 1699, "The council order the treasurer to give, in charity to the poor inhabitants, forty

pounds Scots," and appointed honest men in the different quarters of the town to bring in lists of the poor householders who do not come out and beg to them." Such are the written evidences of this period of famine in Dunfermline. They are short, meagre, and unsatisfactory ; but, when compared with the weavers' minutes of the same time, are fulness itself. One may search through these craft chronicles in vain for the slightest indication of social or domestic life in the burgh, or the condition of comfort or indigence of the common people. Yet we need not wonder at this when the Town Council records have not a single word about the great fire which consumed three-fourths of the town in 1624. If an excuse can be found for the town clerk then, surely something may be said on behalf of the weavers and their clerk.

CHAPTER XVII.

Trade protection in 1702—The town in 1700—Properties—The Collier Row in 1700—The trade in 1713—A friendly society—The weavers admitted to the council.

THE Scottish legislature began the eighteenth century with that scatter of enactments affecting trade to which the people had been treated during all the preceding sixty years. Our Scottish M.P.'s, or rather Commissioners, as they were then named, began the new cycle in almost a democratic fashion. An Act had been passed in 1653, giving the Crown the right and prerogative of "ordering" and controlling trade, whatever that might mean. In 1701, Parliament repealed this Act, abolished the King's supremacy in trade matters, since the same had proved a hindrance to our success in matters commercial. They also, and once more, forbade the "importation of all kinds of woollen cloths ; and of all stuffs of any kind made of wool, or

wherein there shall be any woollen threads woven"—"excepting flannel alanerly." Our sapient legislators of that time then proceeded to decree that no one should be allowed to export the article wool.

It was a pure hide-bound policy of protection all round, being blind to the fact that by so doing they were hindering the very thing they desired to promote, and robbing the very people they desired to enrich. Of course they, in so doing, were only echoing the conclusions of the general mind, and of the crafts and guilds then dominating the industrial world. In 1703, we find them once more nibbling at the same unsatisfactory subject. Here a slight relaxation of the former Act is permitted, and three ports—of which Bo'ness is one—are allowed to indulge the luxury of exporting wool; and some few days after, they limit the trial-time of their new legislation to one year.

It need not be assumed that this legislation in wools did not affect the fortunes of our local weaving industry. We are apt to conclude, without collecting our proofs, that the weaving of linen fabrics has always been our exclusive performance in this line, forgetting the evidences furnished by the kirk session minutes quoted in a previous chapter, that woollen fabrics, as well as linen, were woven by us when the previous century had reached its seventh decade. No doubt linen has, evidently, always been our strong point, but waulkmills were built only for woollen fabrics, and waulkmills were part of our industrial fittings in those days.

Dr. Henderson describes, from his ever-convenient "MS. Notes," the appearance of the town when the eighteenth century opened. "There were," he says, "a great many houses in Dunfermline that had timbre-built, second and third stories, with heather and furze roofs." He might have added that many were roofed with gray-stone slates, and a few with the familiar red tiles. "The timbre stories were reached by means of uncouth outside stairs of every imaginable shape," and these stairs projected so far into the street that they nearly met in some places, leaving only a narrow way in the middle for cart and barrow and pedestrian traffic. Outside of the

Annals, we learn that in the centre of the street was a roughly-paved footpath, or "candle," while at the sides and behind the stairs—in the kennels, as these were named—the filth and fuilzie of the town was gathered. From the upper windows, after nightfall especially, were often emptied the slop vessels and "ulzie pots" of the inhabitants, and those in the streets below kept a sharp look-out, and "bolted" the narrower parts with uncommon speed. These stair-back middens were bad in winter time, but they were much more offensive in the hot months of summer. "Dirt bodes luck," says the lazy proverbialist; but in Dunfermline, as elsewhere, their product was an offence to the eye, annoyance, and disease.

The population of the town is taken at 2000; all, more or less, steeped in the poverty and want which we saw prevailing when the previous century finished. The habiliments of the men were bonnets and plaids, knee breeches, rough hosen, and thick-soled shoes. The women wore the mutch for head-gear, a gown and shoulder shawl, and, like Jenny Nettles, were often found "trippin' lichtly barefoot." The food was scarce and rough, but wholesome. Oat cakes, girdle bannocks, parritch, and kail, with a rare taste of meat, or of baker's bread, formed the scale of common life when the eighteenth century began. The burgh, like its people, was steeped in poverty. In 1701, an application was made to the Convention of Burghs for financial aid, the magistrates stating that trade was decayed, the inhabitants poor, and the houses falling and ruinous; that the town's taxes yielded only about £300 Scots, that the common good amounted only to £1293 Scots, and that their coal business caused more outlay than profit to the burgh.

To add to the misery of their poverty, the townsfolk had also to lament the divisions in the Kirk. The first charge, by the deposition of Simon Coupar in 1693, had for years been vacant. Mr. James Graham had been put in to fill the gap, but he too (in 1696) was deposed. Both these gentlemen, however, had been allowed to go on preaching under suffrage till 1701, when Mr. Coupar disappears, and Mr. Hugh Kemp takes his place. He too went away (1705), and as

he went forth of the north porch, the women sat on the gravestones and wept. Then Mr. Graham, who was really the minister of the Episcopal section, had the field all to himself till 1710, when he died. From that time, the Presbyterians were supreme : Mr. Thomas Buchanan holding the first charge from 1711, till his death in 1715 ; and his colleague, the celebrated Ralph Erskine—who was inducted to the second charge in 1711—succeeded Mr. Buchanan, having for ministerial helpmate, Mr. James Wardlaw, the two pulling well together for a time, and then felt it necessary, as we shall see, to pull in opposite directions.

The general poverty of the town, however, can hardly be said to be reflected in the minutes of the weavers' craft. These philosophic shuttle drivers continue to record the important fact that the "box pennies" (of 3s. 4d. each) and the "fees" (of 4s. 10d.) continue to be paid, and we are left gratuitously to infer that the "remanent brether" made themselves jolly on each pecuniary occasion.

In 1707, the craft comes out in something of a new line—they proceed to purchase property. "On 5th July, 1707, the whilk day John Wilson reported that, conform to the trades' order at last meeting, he had bought frae Janet Jack, her tenement and orchard yard at ye Damhead, and had entered into a contract with her to pay four hunder and sixty merks (£240 sterling), therefor, against Lammias. The trade approved of the deacon's bargain, and ordered the deacon to raise as much of the first and readiest of the trade's money as will pay the price ; and if need be, warrant him for completing of it. Attested by us :—John Gregor, William Inglis, Robert Macbeth, James Williamson, John Black, John Izatt, James Morris," and twenty others.

Two months after the settlement of this bargain, the craft (on 23rd September) sett in tack "to John Inglis that orchard beneath the Dam of Dunfermline, belonging to ye said weavers, and that for a year, to begin at Martinmas nextocome," and "obliges themselves to putt him in peaceable possession thereof," and he "to pay to us as rent, the soun of fourteen pounds, six shillings and eightpence

yearly." Two cautioners are accepted, and the document is signed by three of the brethren and two witnesses. This orchard is again sett in tack on 17th November of the year following, to James Cumming at



Orchard Cottages at "The Goat," Damside, Dunfermline.
Anciently the Property of the Weavers' Craft.

the same rent. Then does this little possession of the weaving craft disappear from the records, and their successors are left to wonder what was done with it.

The property which most nearly corresponds with the phrases of description used in the above deeds, is that tenement on one, or perhaps then on both sides of the overflow stream from the dam, and which was known to our immediate ancestors as "The Goat." If this supposition be correct, we have here a chance of comparing the taste and feeling of two hundred and fifty years ago with that we are now exhibiting.

The spreading orchard with its summer blossoms and autumn fruits was surely, alike in its beauty and sweetness, a greater glory to its owners and keepers than the unsightly piles of city rubbish and refuse we have raised on that once beautiful spot. The glen, in truth, was originally capable of being made a haunt of beauty and a joy for ever, so far as our town was concerned; but, instead of cherishing and enriching this lovely, circling hollow, we have spent the energies of three generations to make it hideous and ugly. A former laird of Pittencrieff began it one hundred and thirty years ago. The common people and the common highway were too near his mansion, and must be shifted. Fired with the one idea, and playing with a council weak and facile as any we have had in modern time, he carried out his ill-conceived design, blurred the finest feature in our scenic setting, and so set an example which other tasteless philistines have sedulously followed.

The weaving craft seems at this time to have possessed more land and tenement property than we might at first suppose. We find them, for example, at a meeting in May, 1704, negotiating a commutation scheme connected with a property in "ye Colyeraw." The weavers seem to have, in previous years, been paying for this property a ground annual—Mr. William Wilson of Logie—to the amount of £4 Scots. This, Mr. Wilson had suggested, might be bought up, and the weavers at once agree to his proposal, and "unanimously ordain Alexander Hart, their present deacon, in their name," to close the bargain. The meeting at which this transaction was arranged, is designated as ane "fully convened anent ye managing of their land affaires." The result of the meeting shows that however distressful

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the times may have been, the weavers were not without money, and were not wanting in enterprises either.

The "Coilyer Row," *i.e.*, Bruce Street, was a very different locality then to what it is in these modern days, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The mill dam then existed for the Heuch Mills only. It was then a large and beautiful sheet of "crystal waters clear," where pike and perch were rife, and where minnows sported under the grassy banks, The little dam too—alas! now only a memory—was there to serve the needs of man and beast. From this latter flowed the mill lade to the south. No "public works" or factories then sought its aid, and the lade flowed clear and limpid down the Collier Row open all the way, and in front of the east side houses. Leaving the Row, it crossed the High Street in front of the ancient townhouse—which then stood where Bridge Street begins—dived under the buildings on the south side, and re-appeared in the Maygate. The west side of the Row presented open spaces, where vernal bleaching-greens sloped downwards to the burn. At the head of the Row, where the now U.F. Church, and farther up, the drill hall, is built, were houses and weaving shops with steep, hanging gardens, and rapid descents to the sylvan margin of the Tower Burn, and the entrance to St. Margaret's Cave.

From the period of the dates given in the preceding extracts, the financial side of the weavers' craft begins to show more freely and to bulk more largely in the minutes. We shall see shortly that the weavers were comparatively in easy circumstances, so far as money was concerned, that the craft was prospering, and each individual occupant of the "seat tree" in fairly comfortable keeping. This fact, to the average reader, may appear strange, since it comes into view immediately on the back of the severe and persistent dearth which, beginning in 1695, continued well into the first decade of the next century. The explanation is as natural as it is easy.

England and Scotland were no longer separate nationalities, with varying interests and contending fiscal policies. The year 1707 and the Act of Union had put an end largely to our fiscal retaliations.

"The Union," says Mr. Warden (*Linen Trade*, p. 431), "produced remarkable effects on the industry and trade of Scotland. . . . The duties which had existed on the exportation of Scotch linen to England were removed, and there was immediately so large an increase to that branch of the national industry that it was said it seemed the poor could want no employment. Englishmen came north and established works for sail-cloth, damasks, and other linen articles heretofore hardly known in the north; and thus, it was remarked, there was as much employment for the poor as in the best days of the woollen manufacture. The colonial trade was also opened up to Scottish enterprise by the Union, and cargoes of Scotch goods, including linens, went out to America in great quantities in exchange for colonial produce, . . . thus creating, as was then said, a prodigious vent for linens and other goods. The quantity of linen made in Scotland in 1710 was 1,500,000 yards."

In 1720 a public newspaper, quoted by Mr. Warden, states there was annually exported from Scotland into England the value of £100,000 in white linen and as much in brown, the flax being of a quality which gave it a preference over similar products of both Ireland and Germany.

The weaving craft seem to acknowledge the soothing effects of the good trade and smiling fortune which came to them with the first decade of the eighteenth century. There is no more about property for a time, but evidently they look upon themselves as above the need of that charity they so gratefully received but a few years before. On 10th October, 1709, they specially meet and enact a penalty of three pounds against any member who shall "upbraid, or cast up, to any man, in public or in private, whether member or stranger," that the same is, or has been, in receipt of the incorporation's charity. This edict is signed by Patrick Hatton—a surname which afterwards became "familiar as a household word" in the person of David Hatton, more lovingly known as "Flutorum" (*see Mechanic's Magazine*, 1832).

The meetings of the weavers now became more frequent and the

minutes more regular, though the meagre style and dry, sterile composition is only departed from when personal concerns crop up, or trade affairs of superior moment demand a full and biting record. They are still holding their ordinary and annual meetings in the Abbey Church; and here on Michaelmas term of 1712, we find them discussing their financial condition.

The income for that year has been £568 9s. 2d., and the expenditure £476 6s. 2d., leaving a fair balance on the right side of £92 3s. In 1713 the credit balance amounts to £75 1s. 2d., the following year to £95 2s. 4d.; and so on till 1719, when the balance in favour reaches the handsome item of £136 5s. 8d. It is down to £3 12s. 2d. in 1718, but it rises to £210 18s. 10d. in 1720; it is down to £30 13s. 1d. in 1727, and shows the goodly figure of £189 19s. 2d. in 1729. During this period of sixteen years, the weavers were adding annually about ten members to their little community.

There is a slight and shadowy adumbration, as Carlyle would say, of the happy condition of the weaving trade at this period in the record for 19th December, 1718, where the brethren ordain that no one is, after that day, to be at liberty "to vot in the trade affairs but he who is qualified to give ane essay (or proof in a piece of cloth of the applicant's own weaving) of their employment as weavers . . . and na man to sign or subscribe for the freedom of the craft, but such as are appointed, their deacon to sign all presents (documents) in their name."

I have referred, in Chapter VI., to what appears to have been an original charter of our local weaving craft, and quoted from Brown's *History of Paisley* a series of remarks as to the desire, among trade incorporations at the beginning of the eighteenth century, to secure for their members the benefits of friendly association for the aged, sick, and poor among their number. Mr. Mercer, in his *History of Dunfermline*, states, mistakenly that "The ancient society of weavers, was instituted in 1740, and became a purely friendly society in 1793." It would have been more satisfactory had the authority for this statement been given, since it seems to run counter to all we can learn

outside as to the probable date of such an origin, and all we can find inside the weavers' craft minutes to support the assertion. The union of the Crowns, and political influences, had so altered and weakened the Scottish forms and claims, that certain ancient trade immunities and privileges could no longer be enforced, and the craft members were thereby induced to resort to a "friendly society" form of constitution, and this for the purposes stated above. If this suggested reason and time of origin could be accepted, we have at once an explanation of the appearance in the early years of the nineteenth century of the prominent financial statements given above; while, without some such acceptance, the new form assumed by the weavers' minutes becomes inexplicable. We therefore incline to the belief that the Weavers' Friendly Society, an addition to the ancient craft, was formed shortly after the Union, and as a part of the Weavers' Incorporation.

To obtain a legal position for such a society, it was necessary to obtain a fresh charter, or seal of cause, from the Town Council. Our council records inform us that the local weaving craft obtained such a grant in 1708, of which no copy can now be had, but, as the matter is of interest as assisting us to understand the after-position of the weaving craft, we give one obtained by the weavers of Paisley in 1702. The document is long and wordy, but its essence is found in the following extract:—

"Considering that in all tymes, and in all incorporations, there are still indigent and necessitous persons, wanting means wherewith to supply their outward necessities. The number of them is, at this tyme, much increased and augmented by the great dearth; and considering that the most proper and effectual way and means to prevent and supply the indigent and necessitous persons, is by the members of ane trade entering a society and gathering a common purse out of which the poor and indigent children of any person hereafter subscribing may be brought up, and put to such calling or trade as their sex, age, and inclination shall lead them, and the poor and indigent persons may be supplied as need shall require. Having therefore, for

preventing of several abuses in the said trade, conform to the severall laudable Acts made, and to be made by the said provost, bailies, and council in their favours [the weavers have] entered and bound themselves in a society, to be constituted of the persons representative following :—Ane boxmaster or collector, two key keepers, and eight masters of the trade—to be elected by poll and plurality of votes”—of the weavers, burgesses within the burgh. Such was the constitution of the Paisley Weavers' Friendly Society, instituted in 1702; and their deacon, John Finlayson, visited Dunfermline in 1705, to confer with and be honoured by our local wobsters—the conferring, in all probability, being about the starting of a similar “friendly” in Dunfermline. Mercer's second date, of 1792, would be consistent if altered to 1708. The whole question is confused by the conflicting dates given by Fernie and Mercer in their histories of the town, all of which has been lifted by Dr. Henderson into his *Annals* without any examination as their inconsistency.

The most important event in the history of our local staple trade was the introduction of damask weaving by James Blake in 1719, and it cannot be doubted that James was one of the greatest local benefactors known in our town's history. The story of how he managed to secure the secrets of damask weaving, and to convince the Drumsheugh weavers that he was only a kind of “natural,” seeking diversion, has been so often told that we may be excused for omitting a repeated recital here. That James Blake was a man of originating powers far beyond the average, is proved, not only by his carrying in his mind the detail structure of the damask loom to Dunfermline, but also, and as much, by the delicate work he accomplished on his loom while working in the tower above the pends; and if ever his townsmen conclude, in their own minds, to raise monuments of honour to their industrial heroes, James Blake should have the first and grandest of them all. The outcome of his weaving operations in the pended tower is described in detail by Dr. Henderson, showing he was the equal in ingenuity of device to any of his predecessors, and much in advance of any of them in the application of mechanics.

Another special milestone year in the history of our weavers was that of 1724. In that year a Committee of the Convention of Royal Burghs met in Dunfermline. They were in session here on 23rd September, and their mission was mainly to make clear to the magistrates the provisions of the Decreet Arbitral, which re-arranged the "sett," or constitution of the burgh, such way as to admit representatives of the trades to have a place at the council board. Under the old provisions of the Act of 1469, the existing council had the power—which it invariably exercised—of electing itself into the new council, so that there were sometimes long periods during which no new members were admitted to the council. It was only in cases of party "outcasts," of deaths or removals, that fresh municipal aspirants had any chance.

The arrangement of the Convention provided that:—On the Thursday previous to each Michaelmas term, the council convene and appoint the different trade corporations to assemble their members, and from these to select a leet of four, and submit these to the council on the same day. On the following day (Friday) the council to review the lists—of four each—select two of the four in each case, and send these back to the different trades, with instructions to return these two as their delegates to the council. On the Saturday, the deacons (newly chosen) of the eight trades are presented to the council. Those who have been re-elected by the trades retain their places at the council, while those who have not secured a place are politely bowed out. The council also on this occasion choose out two new merchant (guildry) councillors and two craftsmen, either as new craft councillors or as members of the old council. On the Monday following all this "wailing oot," the council again meet—in all twenty-six members—and appoint a provost, two bailies, a dean of guild, and a treasurer. Two of the merchant councillors who have not been chosen for any office, and two of the craft councillors who have been similarly abandoned, are then removed, so that the council may be reduced to the statutory limit of twenty-two members. This new form of complicated selection continued in force for one hundred and

ten years, and till it was superseded by the Burgh Reform Act of 1835 (*Mercers' History*, p. 310). The new council thus contained—provost, two bailies, dean of guild, twelve guildry, and ten trade councillors. The new form was intended by the Convention to give the trades a fair chance of getting a place at the council, and the framers of the new device believed its provisions could not be evaded. We may have occasion to find that even under the *regime* of 1724, there were still loopholes and weak points by which designing men could manage to keep their friends or cliques inside, while they pushed others outside the council chambers.

Under the conditions of the new enfranchisement, the weavers met on 24th September, 1724, and agreed to a leet of four, “conform to the new set of the burgh.” “They elected to be upon the said leet Thomas Cousine, Andrew Robertson, David Morris, and John Willson.” On the next day (Friday, 25th September) the council returned the leet, and indicated the two chosen out of the four. These two were John Willson, deacon, and George Stark, boxmaster.

Thus was inaugurated the new manner of fixing up the council; and every year after this, till the spell was broken in 1835, did the Dunfermline craft of weavers, and the other incorporations, continue yearly, as Michaelmas came round, to get their two representative men within the charmed circle of the Town Council.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Frauds in the linen trade—Doves' dung bleaching—Calendering is begun 1726—Boycotting the miller—A bleaching field opened—The King's Park in 1731—Virtue of abstinence.

IN Dr. Henderson's *Annals*, under date 13th February, there is recorded a meeting of the magistrates and council, called to consider

the evil and to find a remedy for prevailing frauds in the linen trade of the town. This meeting is somewhat remarkable, since we find the weaver craft had had the same subject under consideration but a few days before. The weavers' minute, the date being 5th February, 1725, states that the members of the trade, in consequence "of the great abuse committed by many in making use of lyme and doves' dung in whitening cloth and linen yarn, notwithstanding of the many laudable Acts of Parliament made thereanent, prohibiting and discharging such abuses," enact and ordain "that no member of the craft mak use of lyme or doves' dung in whitening linen cloath or linnen yarn after the date hereof, under a penalty of £2 Scots." Members are to be held liable if his wife or his servant should be found guilty. Any member informing upon another will receive half the fine when the accused is found guilty; and no member is, after date, to work up any yarn whitened by the lime-dung process.

The Town Council record, after an introduction touching the heinousness of the process, proceeds to declare unanimously:—"We will this year, and in all time coming, put the laws into execution against all who shall commit such frauds or abuses, either by working insufficient cloath or of ill-sorted yarn, or by bleaching the said cloath or yarn, whereof it is made with lyme," etc.

What was the essential and serious objection to this process beyond that of its filth and unseemliness, is not stated, and we are left to guess, as best we can, what was the real ground of objection to the bleaching process involving "lyme and the dung of doves." The Dutch people at this period were esteemed the best bleachers in the trade. Their centre was at Haarlem, and thither a large part of the brown linens and finer linen fabrics made in Scotland during the first half of the eighteenth century, were sent. The process preferred by the Dutch, was that of steeping in potash lye, boiling, steeping under pressure in sour milk, and finishing on the grass—the whole process requiring about six months to finish.

The Government of the day, represented by the Parliament of Great Britain, seem to have been no less concerned than our local

authorities with regard to "frauds" in the linen trade. A very anxious desire had taken hold of our rulers to encourage and build up a strong trade in native Scotch linens, and that these should be as excellent in the matter of purity as in fabric and finish. Hence the Act of 1727, which exhibits a tendency to traverse the whole field of textile (linen) production, and to guard every avenue of deterioration. Penalties are pronounced against the importation of bad hemp on flax seeds. The Act denounces the frauds of the spinner in cheating the weaver and manufacturer, by the ancient devices of the short reel and the short count. More than a century before this time, the commissioner from Dunfermline to the Convention of Royal Burghs, as we have seen, had bitterly complained of the short reel frauds, and the Convention, acting thereon, had fixed heavy penalties against "all and every one" that should perpetrate this bit of cheating. The Act of 1727, however, goes into the most minute details, and binds the weaver in the selection of his yarns, in the evenness of his fabric, in the fastness of his dyes, also in the matter of bleaching, and specially against the use of dovecot deposits and lime. "Hen pen and auld maister," though then freely made use of by the common peasantry of Scotland, was now to be banished from the bleachfield. It was a dirty, and in some respects a revolting practice; but we ought to remember that the "auld maister" element, at least in dyeing processes, was patent to every one's eyesight—and to another sense also—up to the sixth decade of the nineteenth century in Dunfermline.

This year of 1727 was the natal year of the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of the Fisheries and Manufactures of Scotland. The main duty of this Board was to distribute a fund—amounting in the first year to £4000 in promoting these industries. This was carried out by giving prizes for inventions and improvements in tools and processes, and in meeting expenses of certain experimental enterprises aiming at improvements. The vigour of its earlier years was given by the Board chiefly to the linen trade; and an examination of Warden's extracts of the minutes, will show the thoroughly

practical character of its proceedings. Schools for spinning were to be established in the Highlands, and other schools for the dressing of flax, and spinning it into fine yarns for cambrics, in other parts of the country. Encouragement was given to all practical attempts at improving processes of bleaching, of weaving, and of finishing linen cloth.

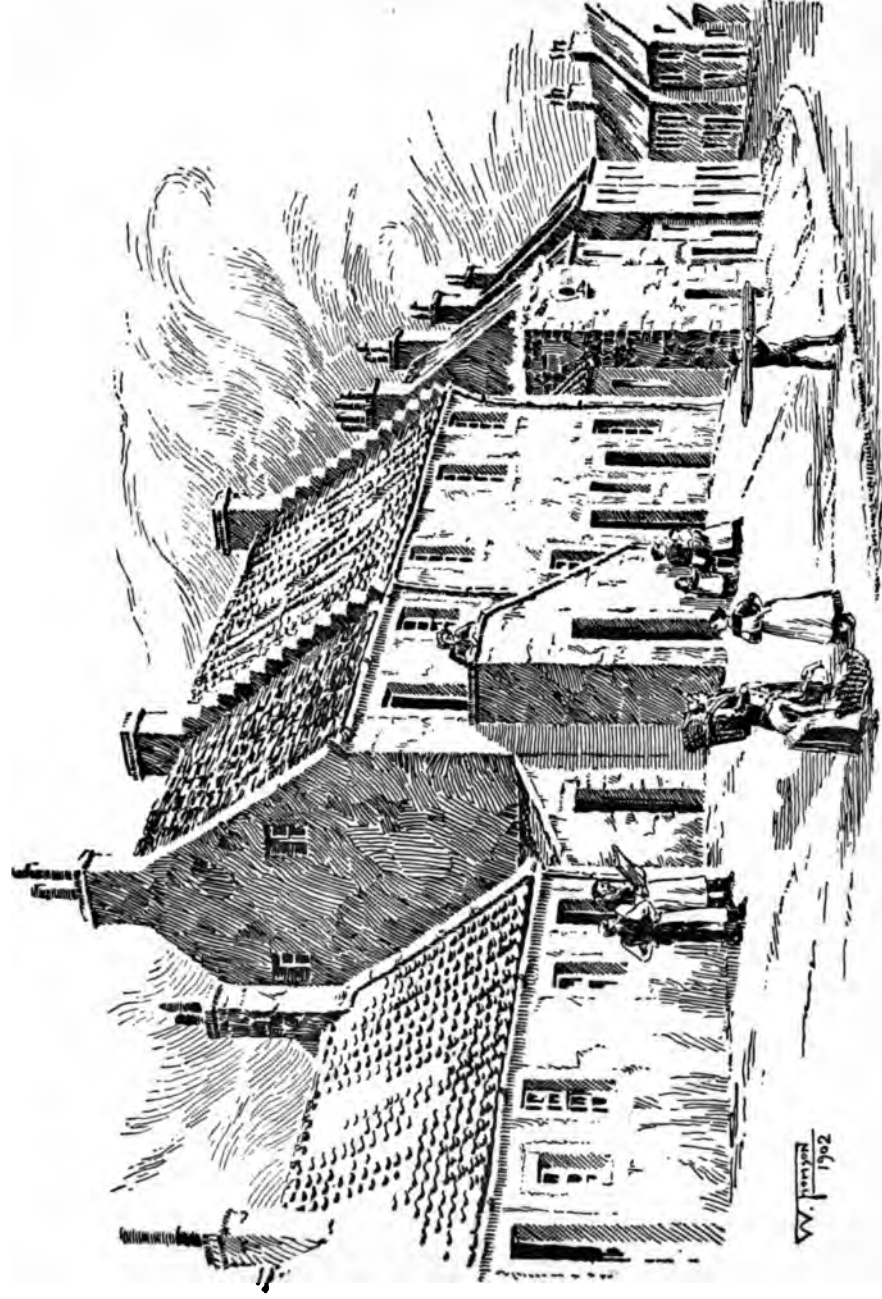
Dunfermline not only shared in the benefits, but came forward strongly to assist the Board in its efforts. We find that, in 1731, a deputation from Dunfermline waited on the Board to inform its members that they had inspected a new diaper loom at Cameron, near Edinburgh, and found it superior to any in use. The Board ordered one to be fitted up in Dunfermline. The old loom required the aid of a "draw-boy" to assist the weaver; the new loom enabled the weaver to do this himself. The same man who had invented this diaper loom—Richard Holden—had also devised a method of whitening coarse linens with kelp, and the Board proposed (1732) to fit up one at Dundee, and also one at Dunfermline; and on towards the end of the century (1797) ten guineas were awarded to Henry Meldrum of Dunfermline (the seamless shirt weaver) for improvements in weaving marseilled quilting with coloured sprigs. David Bonnar, Robert Macgregor, and again Henry Meldrum, were, in after years, the recipients of sums from the Board.

It is time, however, we were returning once more to our weavers' craft minutes. Last time we bespoke they were met to denounce an ancient and unclean method of bleaching. We find them now, in April, 1726, met, as usual, in the Abbey, discussing the *pros* and *cons* of how and whether they should buy "George Stark his tenement of houses and land at the town end." The deacon had already informed the meeting that the property in question could be had for two thousand merks (about £111 2s. 0d.). "And the trade hereby ordain the said deacon to uplift the heall money resting to them, and to borrow as much money and to give bond in the trade's name for the same, and [in due time] to pay these bills granted for the said tenement and lands." The new muniment chest of the weavers, in which

was stored their multifarious papers, books, banner cloths or colours, emblems, and insignia of the trade, was made this year, and just after acquiring the property as above—doubtless the accumulating title deeds and property papers had prompted the purchase of a new and larger chest. This property was that situated at the top of the Newrow, east side, where for long years the weavers carried on an important process in the finishing of linen goods. In the Town Council records for 21st March, 1735, we find that the weavers' corporation have rebuilt this property, that they have placed a calender in it, and now request the council to recognise and allow "certain windows on the south gavill thereof, by east ye corner of John Donaldson's house." The council, however, having regard to the said John Donaldson's heirs, refuse meantime to sanction "the weavers' lights." This property remained, with its calender, in the hands of the weavers for over one hundred years, and will come in for notable observation ere we reach the end of these curious records.

From calendering, we go back to bleaching. Things have greatly advanced since the doves' dung controversy, and now we find (9th July, 1731) the Town Council is being addressed by Thomas Cousine, deacon of the weavers, to the effect that "the manufacturers of linnen cloath in this town were under a great disadvantage by reason of the want of a bleaching field, and that the fittest place about the town for that was the King's Park" (Abbey Park). The council, having considered the said representation, "appoint Bailie Wilsone to write to the Marquis of Tweeddale in name of the council, and desire that his Lordship would be pleased to allow the town as much ground in that park as will serve for a bleaching field; and that his Lordship would use his interest with the tenant, to quit his tack of that ground; and appoints the baillies to represent the said affair to the Trustees [of Board of Manufactures] that they would use their interest with the Marquis to procure it."

Whether the Marquis "used his interest" with the tenant, we do not know, but there is a note of anticipated opposition and "tap-



House—with outside stair—where Tradesmen's Library was first stored, Nethertown, Dunfermline.

thrawnness" in the earnest desire of the weavers that "interest" should be brought to bear upon the tenant.

That note of warning was fully warranted, as the conduct of Mr. Alexander Miller, tenant of the Heuch Mills and "possessor" of the King's Park, proved. He refused to listen to any proposal, he held by his tack, and defied the weavers. They, on their side, turned their heaviest batteries of retaliation against the miller, who, by the way, was also a maltster. The weavers could not very well get at him through his meal and flour, but they saw a clear plan of revenge through the medium of his malt. Some daring genius conceived the idea, and no sooner was it born into spoken words than means were taken to put it into execution.

A meeting of the craft was held on 31st March, 1732, after every possible means had been taken, and taken in vain, to persuade and conciliate the obdurate miller. They took the matter into consideration, dilated on the hardships they were suffering for want of a bleach-field, and on the ungracious and selfish conduct of this maltster-miller in refusing them a bit of the King's Park. They were in a high heroic mood, and they did "statute, enact, and ordain that no member of this incorporation shall drink ale after the 10th day of April next to come, either publicly or privately, that is made of the malt ground at any of the mills possessed by the said Alexander, under the penalty of £1 Scots to be payed to the trade's box by each person who drinks ale made from the malt ground as aforesaid.—David Morrison, Deacon."

The virtue of self-denial, sung of in prose and poetry and praised in psalm and sermon, has rarely met with higher appreciation or nobler example than that now shown by the weavers! To shut off supplies for all time coming of what was doubtless the finest brew in the town, required not only the virtues of abnegation, but a heroic and dauntless resolution. It should not be forgotten that at this time the drinking of ale was a social necessity, and every man who wished to stand well in the community must give himself up to indiscriminate and all-round drinking of the nappy. Simon Lord Lovat

had just been listening to Ralph Erskine's preaching against the drinking habits of the time, and was so impressed with the reverend gentleman's manner of delivery that he had it made into a song and set to music, the opening lines running in these happy numbers—

“ Ye drinkers of Dumfarlin,
While o'er your ales ye're quarrelin',
Like thirsty tykes ye're snarlin',
Nor mind your wabs to win.”

Yet, while the weavers sang and enjoyed the Lovat rhymes, they could summon up courage sufficient to bar them themselves against all access to the Heuch Mills ale. Verily, heroism breathed in our ancient sires!

The bleachfield question was not a subject likely to sleep, nor one over which the weavers could feel content. They held another meeting in the session-house, and in the same year thrashed the subject down to the bare straw, and then faced the situation. They found the miller, under the influence and deprivations of the liquid boycott, had softened down, and offered terms. He and the said Marquis would no longer oppose the idea of a bleachfield in the King's Park, but the weavers must take the whole, and not a part of, the ground. The craft accepted the olive branch, and did “ Hereby empower the deacon [David Morrison] and Thos. Cousine (and nineteen others named) to agree with the Marquis and the tenant as they shall think fit, and to do everything thereanent in name of the whole trade, as if the whole members were present . . . and orders the deacon in their name to sign this their Act.—David Morrison, Deacon.” The boycott was removed, ale flowed fully and freely once more, and the settlement of the bleachfield furnished and sanctioned a luxurious opportunity for ale and eloquence.

The bleachfield thrives! At a meeting of the council, held on 26th December, 1732, “ Baillie Wilson informed the council that Mr. Hugh Forbes, advocate, desyred him to acquaint the council that the ‘ Trustees and Commissioners for Improvement of Manufactures ’ had agreed to allow the town two hundred pounds (£200) sterling to enable them to prepare the bleachfield.”

Workmen were at once employed, and operations, we may feel sure, were rapidly pushed forward. The ground, being formerly part of the Abbey Gardens, would require but little levelling; but buildings had to be erected, and culverts formed to bring water from the Heuch Mill lade. These operations required a long time to carry out; but we find that on 7th March, 1735, the Town Council "appoint several of the members to oversee the building of four canals in the bleachfield with stones on each side and on the bottom; and that the same be fallen about as soon as may be."

CHAPTER XIX.

Inverkeithing weavers in 1670—The bleachfield described—The town's lade—Death of the "present" deacon—Conveners' Court Guildry v. the Bakers' Craft—John Chalmers enters the guildry—Charities of hammermen, and wrights and coopers—The Sabbath day—Linen trade in spinning and weaving—Social and moral conditions in the eighteenth century—Gillespie's deposition.

THE prosperity of the weaving trade in Dunfermline in the first half of the eighteenth century seems to have spread to Inverkeithing, as we shall presently see. These two wobster communities had, as far back as 4th December, 1670, entered into a treaty, offensive and defensive, for the preservation of their trade rights and privileges. The reciprocity part of this treaty, so far as one can make it out, granted to the members of the two incorporations the privilege of entering each other's territory for the purchase of yarns or sale of cloth without being called on to pay the box pennies which, in the absence of a treaty, would have been exacted. This treaty seems to have worked well for over sixty years; but now, in 1733, on 8th

January, Robert Kelloch, deacon of the sea-coast weavers, appears in the session-house and sets forth, to the weavers assembled there, that certain freemen of the craft in Dunfermline had been of late making



Clerk Black's House, High Street.

a practice of carrying to Inverkeithing, and selling there, the cloth woven by unfreemen, and in this way defrauding the south burgh weavers of their box pennies. The Dunfermline weavers, fired with

the gravity of the situation, proceeded at once to "statute and ordain that, in all time coming, no freeman weaver of Dunfermline shall take into the town of Inverkeithing the cloth of any person who is not incorporate with us, in order to prevent ye paying boxpence to ye weavers of Inverkeithing, carried either by themselves, their bairns, or their servants, under no pretence whatsoever," under a penalty for each piece of fourty shillings Scots; "and ye above fine to be uplifted by warding [putting in prison] or laying them off the trade and discharging their work till payment of ye fine."

Having thus settled their difference with Inverkeithing, our local weavers proceed to settle quarrels among themselves. It seems these had become, in the good trade of the time, both too frequent and too trifling, and the deacon, with his constituents, tired of petty complaints, lays down the law (5th February, 1734) that any one, after date, coming up with a complaint, must pay into the box the sum of thirty shillings Scots money, unforgiven, "to be disposed of by the Deacon and the quorum as they think fit." Whether this drastic enactment brought peace and concord within their borders, we can only guess, as the chronicle sayeth not. But, getting quit of these quarrels in general, they are not freed from "tumults and debeatts" over the claims of "natural sons and daughters." These seem to have been so numerous at this time as to have exhausted the patience of these patient weavers, till, at their meeting in the Abbey, in December, 1734, they shut out these unconstitutional democrats altogether, and put them in the ranks of the ordinary uncollateral Amalakites. Here is the edict:—"The Trade, after serious consideration of the foresaid affair, They, for preventing Tumults and Debeatts that might arise in time coming; Statute, enact and ordain, that no naturall sons or daughters, shall enjoy any of the said craft priveleges, as sons or daughters, But shall, if entering as aprentices, journeymen, or freemen, pay the whole dues contained in our Seall of Cause, as neutrals."

Before leaving altogether the air of the bleaching green, it may not be uninteresting to notice that the ground appropriated for this

purpose was evidently rented either wholly or partly by the Town Council. The negotiations for acquiring a part of the King's Park were, in the beginning, a matter of joint discussion between the council and the craft, and though the wording of the weavers' minute would lead the reader to believe that this trade corporation was undertaking the entire responsibility of the lease, the making of overtures to the Marquis and the construction of the canals by the council show beyond doubt that the council had a deep, if not the entire monetary interest in the bleaching field. In the council records, as quoted by Dr. Henderson, several contracts are given that prove beyond cavil that a bleaching green, or field, was considered to be a public necessity, and therefore an institution the council was bound to provide. The council was then, however—though curiously constituted—more democratic than now, and in much closer touch with the people.

The means by which the canals in the King's Park bleachfield were fed, has now been almost entirely forgotten. That supply came from the Heuch Mills lade, and since these mills were owned by the same landlord as the land of the King's Park, it was easy to arrange for a water supply to the bleaching croft. The lade, as it comes along and under the Maygate, bends into Abbot Street, and then turning suddenly to the south, pursues its way under the Carnegie Free Library and St. Margaret's Hall, down to the mill.

The point at which it turns to the south, marks the site of the east end of the whilom abbot's fish pond—a small artificial sheet of water which once covered the ground to the east of the abbot's house. From this point a culvert was led off eastwards and south, crossing diagonally under the properties on the east side of St. Margaret Street, under the roadway called "The Bleach" (now Abbey Park Place), and so down into the King's Park, where now the Bank of Scotland with its gardens is situated. The overflow—for the water was always running—was carried by another short culvert under the ground where now the south bowling-green is found, and appeared in a constant outflow into the Common Vennel (Priory Lane now).

Here it continued to rush out, clothed in icicles during the winter, and glittering clear and bright in summer days, till about the year 1867, when it was "diverted," put out of sight, and made to serve the purpose of filling the huge gas tank (now removed) finished that year on the south side of Priory Lane.

The outflow was for generations of great local usefulness, but as the water became more and more impure, and as other sources of water supply were introduced, it was parted with without regret, as our old shoes, odorous and unsightly, are first disused, then buried out of sight. The bleachfield as a council favourite comes into view once more in 1744, when that sapient conclave find that the bleaching ground is in great danger of losing its honest reputation "through the proprietors of houses on the west side of the Newraw that have ane entry or door on the east dycke of the bleachfield (Abbey Gardens wall). And that the masters or possessors of ye said tenements can nocht account or answer for their servants, their fidelity. Ordered all doors at the back of such houses to be closed up by the first of April next." We should not like to infer that the Newraw weavers were bleachfield thieves—though the proceedings of the council raise that suspicion—for this kind of theft was then looked upon as one of the worst felonies possible; and in the year following this action of the council, the Parliament of George II. enacted that any one stealing cloth from a bleachfield to the value of ten shillings, had committed a capital crime, and was liable to be hanged or banished for life.

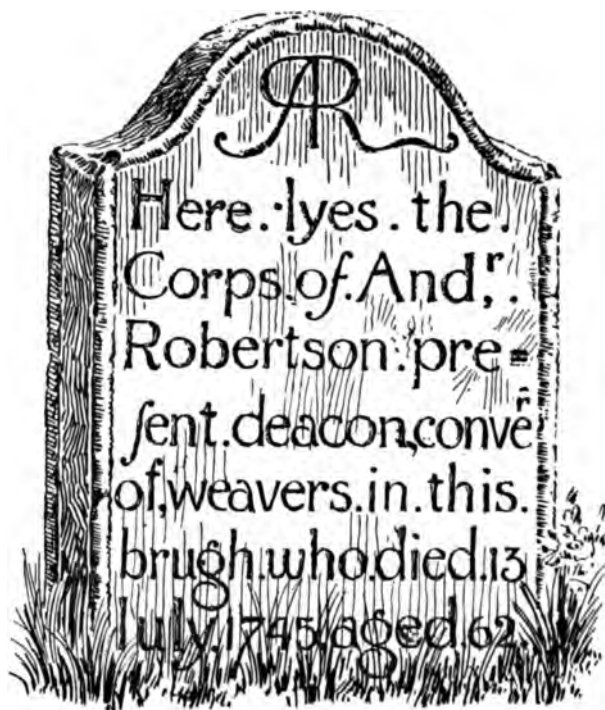
Time is at once the great healer and the great revealer. It proved so with the weavers in these early days. When this bleachfield business came first before us, the weavers seemed to have vowed eternal enmity to the maltster of the Heuch Mills in particular, and to brewers in general, by their far-reaching and virtuous resolution to abstain from the drinking of ale. Only six years have passed since, and already all this hostility seems to be forgotten. On the 6th May, 1738, "William Morris, brewer in Dunfermline, not ane handy labourer in the weaver trade and craft," applied to the weavers to be admitted a freeman with them, "as the said William might have privelege of

malting within the burgh. Upon which application the trade ordained the deacon to admit the said William freeman with the craft." (This William Morris was proprietor of Brieryhill, now part of the public park. He died in 1785, as attested by a marble tablet inside the Abbey.) It never rains but it pours; and the weavers, having found how agreeable it was to have one maltster in their company, deemed it proper, on 17th December, 1741, to have another, and so admitted within their charmed circle one more brewer of ales and blender of beers. Still another brewer was admitted a weaver in May, 1749; and the last of the fermenting tribe, Peter Syme, takes the oath and is sworn in at Michaelmas term following. The weavers are now happy, or may be supposed so. They can bid defiance to the Heuch Mill and all other maltsters, and drink their own craft beer, none daring to make them afraid.

In 1738, one of the weaver councillors died while in office; and the craft, with the council, proceeded at once to make up the long leet and the short one, and to elect a new councillor "for the umquhile James Young." In 1745, a similar vacancy occurs. The weavers are still meeting in the Abbey Church; and there they met on 15th August to lament the death of Andrew Robertson, their deacon and councillor, and to proceed towards putting a living man in his place. The usual steps were taken and usual ceremonies gone through, and the council selected John Ker in Mr. Robertson's place.

Dear reader, note well this once-living Andrew Robertson. His headstone still stands bravely up in the old churchyard on the north side of the Abbey. Search it out and read thereon—"Here lyes the corps of Andrew Robertson, *present* deacon and convener of the weavers of this burgh, who *died* 13th July, 1745." Andrew must have been a great man in his day, and mighty among the weavers. When he was admitted a freeman, we cannot now decipher. He was, however, chosen as boxmaster (purse keeper) to the weaving craft in 1722. He was councillor in 1724, 1726, 1730, 1741, 1743, and on till his death as above. He, as deacon, presided at the weavers' Abbey Church meetings in 1725, 1726, and 1727; and again in 1742 and

1743. We know no more of Andrew than that he is the "present" deacon of the weavers; and, as such, he will endure as long as his little sandstone monument beats off the wasting tooth of time.



Tombstone of the "present" Deacon Convener of the Weavers' Craft :
Dunfermline Abbey Churchyard.

Before he died, and while he was yet in office as deacon and councillor, he had the pleasure of introducing the first reed-maker named in our local weavers' annals. "On 12th May, 1743, Charles Roy, a reed maker, was admitted freeman with ye corporation of weavers in Dunfermline, he having given his oath of fidelity—and also his missive to serve ye trade first, and to reside here for the mending of reeds—and all dues payed.—Andrew Robertson, Deacon."

“Blessed is the people whose annals are without interest,” says some lazy philosopher of the bygone time. If so, blessed were our weaver craftsmen for the next ten years. They go on all through this decade as if the new web was always ready to twist on to the thrum of the old one, and as if nothing could disturb the even tenor of their existence. They continue to record the names of their elected councillors, deacons, and freemen, but refrain from crowding the memory of the future reader with any detail, however interesting, of their proceedings. They do not even indicate why they and the other trades had been excluded from the Auld Kirk, and compelled to seek new ground and set up their tents elsewhere. At the September meeting of the trades, 1740, a densely crowded gathering had been held in the Abbey; when lo! one of the galleries, being loaded beyond its capacity and strength, gave way and fell. What all the excitement was about—unless it were the prevailing dearth—we do not know, and the craft minutes do not tell us; and had not the *Caledonian Mercury* set it down in print, we should never have heard of the catastrophe. Next time we meet the weavers we will find them far removed from the Abbey Church, in which they were never again to hold their meetings.

While the weavers are exhausting their energies in the “making” of apprentices, admitting of freemen, and in swallowing the “speaking drinks,” and eating “banquets” on the entry of each new hand—while this is going on and consuming the ten years after 1745, we may possibly see how craft life in the town and among other craftsmen was being enjoyed. The conveners’ court was the centre and soul of that life in these early times, and the doings of this court go so far back, we have lost sight of its origin, though its birth year was probably 1420. It was made up of the deacons of the eight incorporated trades—to wit, weavers, hammermen, masons, wrights, bakers, shoemakers, tailors, and fleshers—deacons of these crafts, with their “conjuncts,” made up the conveners’ court. The first extant minute carries the date year of 1686, and the next of 1690. Both of these minutes are transcribed from an older book, and bear the impression

of a long-continued society. The regular minutes—all we now have—begin with 1733 and run on to 1772, covering thus a period of forty years.

The standing of this court was marked to some extent by the standing and character of its clerks. The first of these that we know of was Adam Rolland of Gask—a notary of high standing in the town. He died in 1743, and was succeeded by William Wilson, Town Clerk, who died in 1748—his office in the conveners' court being taken by James Wilson, who was also Town Clerk, and well-known to the founders of the Queen Anne Street U.F. Church. James Wilson was succeeded by David Black, who was in office when the last extant minute was written in 1772.

Some time before the weavers leave off instructing us, we find an interim clerk, to wit, John Adie—Mr. Rolland being unwell—taking notes at a meeting of the conveners' court on 11th February, 1737; and we find also that James Blaik, founder of the damask trade of the town, was then a member of that court. A widow, Isabell Turnbull, is before the court for not paying interest on a sum of seventy merks borrowed from the convener funds, and James appears in the amiable light of pleading for the widow, and persuading the court to grant her request and relieve her of a year's payment. In the October meeting of this year the mortcloths, six in number, are carefully examined and arrangements made to have them all put in "order of fitness for use."

Two years after this, at the Michaelmas term of 1739, the guildry had taken the field against two members of the baxter (baker) craft "for retailing of wine in their own houses and receiving payment therefor." This could never be tolerated—a mere baxter, acting as a merchant, could not be endured. The guildry issued a decreet and raised a horning against the offenders. The case hangs fire for about a year, when the conveners' court declare they will defend the bakers' case to the last. This seems to have cooled the guildry, for we hear no more of the affair.

The famine of 1740 is now, however, within the precincts of the town, and the first four months of the year were marked by great and

general suffering. The guildry had already commissioned cargoes of grain from England, and the council (25th April, 1741), believing that the efforts of the generous merchants will not suffice to meet the common need, commission a fourth part of the cargo of the ship *Success*, which arrived in the port of Limekilns on the 8th June. The good feeling engendered 'twixt crafts, guild, and council by their mutual efforts to help the poor during the famine, was interrupted by another law case, which ran on from November of 1742 till the same month of the following year, when the Court of Session found a verdict for the trades, and expenses for the guildry, though the conveners' court discovered they had a bill of £473 Scots to pay. A bald list of functions, and of changes in the convenery, succeed the law case, and 1748 is reached ere the crafts and conveners' court "gather their feet" again. In this year a splendid set of flags—"colours," they are called—are commissioned from a famous flag painter at Bo'ness, the total cost running up to over £50 Scots.

It was inconvenient, not to say unfortunate, that, just when the conveners' court had exhausted its ready money in furbishing up a set of fine "colours," the shoemakers should, in the unlucky moment, put in a claim for 200 merks, lent to the court some time before. A meeting is hurriedly called, and the box is found to be empty! The court then, making a virtue of necessity, summon at once their own creditors to pay up, call upon the cautioners, do diligence upon their bills, or threaten a process of horning—and, after all failed, "the collector was authorised to borrow 100 merks from any hand he can get it from."

But legal contentions came from all quarters in these craft and guild times. In the summer of 1720, John Chalmers, a master weaver, a "cork" of his day, had joined the guildry, and, according to rule, should at once have renounced his former calling. But he went on, he and his journeymen, as if nothing had happened. This was too much for the weavers, and (though their minutes are silent on the matter) they proceeded to prosecute Chalmers before the bailies, and these worthies fined John in £30 Scots. Chalmers was not to be

done; he appealed to the Lords of the Circuit, and his case came before that tribunal on 22nd September following, though how it was settled we have not been able to discover.

Leaving the conveners' court, the guildry, and the weaver craft in the meantime, with their pregnant illustrations of social life in craft times, let us see what the hammermen craft have to say in matters of their every-day experience. In the actings of the deacons, when assembled under the convener, there was, in all the crafts, a great deal of merry-making and drink-consuming at other peoples' expense. This practice seems early to have attracted the attention of the smiths, who, in September of 1687, "having considered the mony extortionate and exorbitant expense the said craft hath been at, with ye hail deacons at their meetings, and charging the same upon ye craft: Therefore, with the advice and consent of ye hail craft, we propose, statute, and ordain that in all time coming no deacon, nor ony other person, sall charge upon ye craft ony expense made at their meetings, unless it exceed the sum of 13s. 4d." Though the hammermen could thus stringently impress the virtue of abstinence upon others, they were careful to preserve the privileges of the change-house for themselves, for even the church seats could not be set to the tacksman without (1690) a luck penny to drink success to the Sabbath sitters.

This condition of things among the hammermen was not without result, and affected even the deacon himself. At a meeting of the craft in May, 1706, we find the deacon, forgetting the dignity of his office and falling into abusive speeches, called one of the members, James Robertson, a knave and a villain, for which he was promptly fined by the members present in the sum of thirteen shillings and fourpence. The deacon repeated his abuse of the suffering Robertson on 4th August following, and was fined in the sum of thirty-two shillings Scots. These petty squabbles are quite in keeping with the feelings engendered and hatreds stirred and preserved by the close and narrow policy pursued by all the crafts, and by the guilds as well. An instance is given in August, 1708, when Charles Swinton apologises to the craft for selling certain hooks of English make. A

large number of similar cases are from that time retailed in the minutes, with enforced appearances at the burgh courts and the infliction of grievous "unlaws" or fines, a big portion of which seems always to have gone to the change-house.

We are not to conclude, however, that the policy of the crafts was wholly or always selfish. We trace from the beginning of the eighteenth century evidences of an annual subscription in aid of the general poor of the town, and the Town Clerk's receipt for £3 Scots, received by him as collector for the poor, as part payment "of ye money which ye said incorporation of ye smiths are to give for helping to maintain ye poor," speaks for itself. This, and similar sums, is apart altogether from the practice, common to all the crafts, of maintaining or assisting their own poor—evidences of which occur in the hammermen and other minutes up to the close of craft life in the town.

The hammermen seem no less to have been public-spirited men in another way. When the Town Council conceived in 1764-5 the idea of bringing a supply of water into the town, the smiths at once agreed to pay their proportion of the cost. Robert Scotland, who was a notable councillor of the time, was appointed collector of the subscriptions, and he signs this receipt on 21st September, 1765: "Received from John Reid, boxmaster, £10 sterling, being in full of the Dunfermline Corporation of Smiths' subscription to the Dunfermline Water Scheme." The same gentleman acknowledges a second subscription of £2 10s. to the same scheme in 1772. After all accounts were settled, which was not till 1774, the total cost of the water scheme of 1764-5 was found to be £1745 13s. 10d., when the old joint water committee in this year demitted their functions to the keeping of the Town Council.

The excellences of the smiths, such as they were, are even more conspicuous in the annals of the wright and coopers. These annals are comparatively modern, running from 1752 up to 1815. Perhaps the most constant feature in these joiner minutes is the element of charity. There are two terms set apart each year to meet

and consider, and, as far as possible, to meet the wants of the craft poor. These terms are June and November, *i.e.*, the summer and winter distribution of clothing or money gifts. These times of largess are continued with unvarying regularity till 1810, when the corporation was rapidly approaching its end.

In public matters connected with the progress of the town, the wrights are ready always with their assistance. We have mentioned in connection with the smiths, the water scheme of 1764. We find from a minute of 6th November of that year, that the wrights and coopers subscribed £20 sterling—a fair sum when we consider the other sums subscribed for this purpose by different public bodies: the Town Council gave £150, the guildry £100, the conveners' court £20, the weavers' craft £50, and the brewers of the town agreed to give £50 annually for six years to make the scheme a success.

In the town, ecclesiastical excitement and the public indignation roused by the treatment meted out to Rev. Thomas Gillespie, crowned all other causes of thought for the time. The anti-burghers are still, as each succeeding Sabbath comes, tramping out to Cairneyhill, and the kirk of the burghers is waxing strong in Queen Anne Street. The influence of dissent is, however, but little felt, and the main resort for "braw drest folk on Sabbath day" is still to the Auld Kirk.

Outside stairs and odorous streets still offend both eye and nose. There is no drainage to speak of, and the gutters overflow with every shower. Grocers and publicans are one and the same, and the hours of business run often into the small hours of the morning. There are no coaches, no means of public conveyance, scarcely anything for travel but "shanks' naigie." There are no railways, no tramways even, and the streets are noisy with long, interminable strings of rude, coal carts, mingled with horses carrying bags of coal slung over their backs. With a ceaseless cracking of whips, rattle of wheels, and rancous shoutings of the carters and drivers, the long, worm-like procession moves daily down the Collier Row and Kirkgate, or down the long swing of the Coal Road, making its way to Limekilns harbour.

CHAPTER XX.

Dearth of 1741—The Union and linen trade in 1707—Kinds of cloth woven—Funerals and brewing in Dunfermline—Preachers of fiery doctrines—The “Marrow” controversy—Sacramental occasions—A penalistic Church.

LOOKING back over the first half of the eighteenth century, and as it presented itself in our local annals, we find a strangely varied and bizarre panorama of institutions, progresses, and incidents. So strange, indeed, as to cause us, in these modern times, to open our eyes not only with astonishment, but with absolute doubt as to the reality and truth of what we trace as facts. We have already referred to the impetus which the Union of 1707 gave to the linen trade all over the country and to our own branch of it in particular. The increasing activity continued, with variations, for over thirty years, and up till the time, in 1741, when the energies of the country had to be diverted from industrial affairs to the more pressing problem of the threatened famine of that year.

The burgh records show that the council had, in conjunction with the guildry, freighted a cargo of grain (from the Continent, doubtless), chartered a vessel, the *Success*, to the port of Brucehaven, whence the grain was carried to the grinding mills in the district and ultimately sold, at the lowest possible figure, to the starving people. It may not be amiss to recall the fact that the tolbooth, or town-house of these times, had an apartment set apart for conducting sales such as the one referred to, and having all the apparatus of a provision dealer's shop. This arrangement in the tolbooth must be regarded as a continuation, or survival, of those much more ancient times when, under the laws of the Four Burghs Court, the town as a whole was looked upon as an association, while the council were regarded as simply the

managers of its affairs, down to the detail of buying and selling, of storing grain in barns built and owned by the corporation. The spirit of these "laws" occasionally manifests itself in modern burgh life, as we may perceive when we reach the third decade of the present (eighteenth) century, and call our thoughts to far-off times, when communal existence, if less elegant and refined, was based on lines at once more rational, social, and natural.

The spreading revival of the linen trade in the years succeeding the Union was patent not only to those engaged in it, but to every observer of social or political events. Wodrow, writing in 1725, says—"This summer there seems to be a very great inclination throughout the country to improve our manufactory, and especially linen and hemp. They speak of a considerable society in Glasgow, of the most topping merchants, who are about to set up a manufactory of linen which will keep six hundred poor people at work." A lady, born in 1714, and quoted by Mr. Warden (*History of Linen Trade*, p. 433), had left a set of reminiscences of her early days—1730 to 1740—where she says—"Linens being everywhere made at home, the spinning executed by the servants during the long winter evenings, and the weaving by the village wobsters, there was a general abundance of napery and underclothing."

Mr. Graham, in his recently issued book on *Social Life in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, points to the linen trade extension of this period. Speaking of the years succeeding 1730, he says—"The linen industry was felt to be a source of prosperity owing to its trade with England. Every farm, minister's manse, and near every laird's house, parcels of ground were devoted to growing flax; and the making of yarns was becoming an increasing occupation in every household and village. While ladies and their maids spun for the home, the poor did so for the market. In country towns the master weaver had his six-loom shop attached to his cottage; and while he plied his own loom, his journeyman wrought at the others, for which they paid a weekly rent. He [carried around his own cloth, and] called at the houses of the gentry, farmers, and peasants, to buy their yarns; and

this he and his men wove into checks and sheetings. The webster bartered his stuffs when bleached and finished at the doors of his customers for more home-made yarns, carrying these home on his own or his pony's back." He then goes on to describe the "customer weaver" of these bygone days, and draws a touch of sad conclusion when these notable characters, and days with freedom fraught, had alike to give way to factories and machines.

Of the kinds of cloth woven at this period in Dunfermline, we may conclude from various notices that checks and stripes formed a part—though possibly a small one—of the staple trade of the town. Bengals, *i.e.* plain cloth stripes, and ticks even, may be assumed to have been woven. Dornicks and dices—distinguished only by degrees of fineness—were also well known to our weavers. Sheetings and other white goods, twilled and plain, and damasks may be accepted as making up the round of our fabrics in linen in the eighteenth century.

The houses in which the weavers worked were dwellings of one and two stories. The looms were invariably on the ground floor, with the master weaver "but an' ben," or in the flat above. The windows were small and the lights dim, while the roofs were of thatch—straw or heather—gray-stone slatings, or of tile. The houses were not "deafened" between the shop below and the dwelling above, so that the conversation and disputes of the men were as easily heard above as the pirn-wheel was below, and when the weaver's pirn-box ran empty, he simply rapped the sword of his lay, or shouted upwards the magic word, "shot, sho-ot, shot," when the winder came hurrying down to serve his need and keep the shuttle going. The weaver started afresh, singing as he did so—

"Wha'er would hae a feckfu' winnin',
He e'en maun keep the shuttle rinnin'."

The consummation of the Union, and the more frequent intercourse with England, led to many improvements alike in the art of weaving and of finishing the goods for the market. These tendencies towards neatness and elegance became very marked about 1730, and

continued till the paralysing effects of the dearth in 1741 dulled at once the energy and the spirit. We have already adverted to the united efforts of Parliament, the Town Council, and the weaver's craft, to banish the old and effete system of bleaching, and to introduce a cleaner and better method. The enactments of these different bodies were backed up by the offering of prizes and premiums to the inventors of improvements—offered by the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of manufactures. The crusade against the use of dovecot deposits was the result of a growing knowledge of the sweeter ways made use of in other countries.

One James Adair from Belfast, proposed, in 1728, to the Board of Trustees, to set up bleachfields on an improved plan in Galloway; and while the idea was fully approved, the Board devoted £2000 to assist in the establishment of these fields in various weaving districts. Of this sum, as we have seen, Dunfermline obtained a tenth part, or £200, on the settlement of the King's Park affair in 1732. In this same year, Mr. Robert Holden, also from Ireland, introduced his method of bleaching by the use of kelp, and this proving a decided success, and excellent preparation for the "crofting" (*i.e.*, grass exposure) part of the process, added still farther to the general impetus towards improvement and refinement. Thus the linen trade of Scotland, and of our own district, continued to grow in public favour, and to increase the number of its patrons all over the country, and abroad too, though there was still a vast field of industrial enterprise as yet to be occupied. Writers up to 1737 continue to complain that the young men of Scotland were forced, by want of suitable employment, to seek their fortunes in other and distant lands, and to apply themselves there to new and strange conditions of life.

As to the social and moral condition of our town's people in the eighteenth century, these may be said to have been made up of extremes; for while we held to doctrines of extreme abstention, we only emphasised their need by practices of gross indulgence. Mr. Graham, in the work we have already quoted, tells us that the ancient social tax of drink providing, or of drink money, prevailed in every

function of life. From the cradle to the grave—at christenings, marriages, kirkings, marketings, and all sorts of bargain making, and domestic arranging, the bottle, the “greybeard” and the “quaich” were bound to be produced. Even in the small fry of life’s obligations, of fetching and carrying, of doing and helping, the ale caup was an ever present concomitant. It was always given and always expected, and its estimated value was fairly well expressed by pensioner Jimie Burnewind when asked by the provost’s lady, “Wull ye tak’ your dram i’ th’ noo, Jimie, or wull ye hae’d when ye come back frae the well?” “Aye, mem, there’s a heap o’ sudden deaths at this time, I’ll better tak’ it before I gang.”

The Scottish funeral was at this period an occasion always set apart for extraordinary libations. When death occurred, no matter what the hour, the bellringer with his dead bell, was sent round the town, announcing in solemn tones the death of the umquhile Peter Macweaver, who “departed this life at the pleasure of the Almighty at midnight this mornin’; Rest his saul!” When the funeral was to be announced, the same functionary wended his way through the echoing streets declaring the hour of the lifting, and inviting all and sundry to attend the same. Intimation was then conveyed, by rapid and circuitous methods, to all the district round, and many who never spoke to, and did not know the defunct, hastened to attend his obsequies. The street in front of the house, as well as the house itself, would often be filled with the attending crowd. These, before the coffin was lifted, were taken into the house in relays, and presented with the cup of brimming ale. At the finish of the ceremony, and when the grave had been closed over poor Peter’s remains, his friends, relations, acquaintances and admirers—as many as could possibly be served—returned to the “dergie,” when a substantial meal was put on tables, chest tops, and improvised boardings, and the “goodwife of the house” pressed the smoking viands upon each willing guest. It was then said that a Scotch funeral was merrier than an English wedding. It was ruinously costly to the relatives of the deceased; but this was little thought of by the happy-hearted partakers of the

funeral good cheer who, contented and joyous, picked their way home by streets and country lanes, laughing and talking over the adventures of the day.

The town was at this time famous for its ales—the stronger potations of whisky were then less common. We had breweries at the Rhodes, built for that purpose in 1695, another on the west side of the Newrow, a little below the entrance to Canmore Street, and built in the same year. Others were in the High Street, in the



Rev. Ralph Erskine's reputed Manse, Clark Wilson's Close.

Rotten-Row, and at the Heuch Mills. So that there was no want of the nappy ales our forefathers affected to prefer, nor of the penny wheeps when cheaper thirst maulers were wanted.

It may appear strange that the Church at this period, and with these somewhat rude and gross forms of indulgence going on around it, should have continued to preach and helplessly maintain a doctrine of austere refraining from even the pleasures of life. The most fearful penalties were pronounced against the sinner, even when his "sin" was a mere assumption, and at worst a trifling peccadillo.

The human race was represented as in a state of hopeless and natural corruption: that wickedness was continuous, and goodness of any kind entirely impossible to any man. The clergy represented God as constantly "punishing" man, and as having prepared for our hapless race the horrors of an endless state of torments.

Before the Rev. Ralph Erskine left the Establishment, and before it could be said that the *virus* of Secession had affected his theology, he poured forth his soul in the following dreadful form:—"What must it be to be banished from Almighty God? But where must they go? Into everlasting fire. Oh, what a bed is there! No feathers, but fire; no friends, but furies; no ease, but fetters; no daylight, but darkness; no clock to pass away the time, but endless eternity. Fire eternal is always burning, it never dies away. Oh, who can endure everlasting fire?" This must not be taken as a sudden and impromptu burst of passion, or a forgetful rush of denunciation. It was spoken in 1727, and when his *Sermons and Sonnets* were published, in 1764, the same ideas were found embedded in rhyme:—

" Unending years of torment must I spend,
And never, never, never at an end.
In boiling waves of vengeance must I lie?
Oh, could I curse this dreadful God and die.
Oh, must I lie in torturing despair,
As many years as atoms in the air?
When these run out, as many to ensue
As blades of grass on hills and dales that grew."

The weavers, in the period we have been considering, passed through all the phenomena of the birth, growth, and settlement of Secession. Mr. Hog of Carnock published, in 1718, that era-creating book, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, and this began the fermentation. The book was far too mild in its presentation of God's will, and not half severe enough about His decrees. The leaders of the Church took alarm. The General Assembly of 1720 formally condemned the book and its doctrines. Three years before, in 1717, the same

Assembly had denounced the doctrine "That the gospel gives the sinner immediate access to Christ," and now (1720) being thoroughly warmed up to the fighting point, they prohibited the preaching or teaching of the *Marrow* doctrines; and remitted to the pastors to instruct their congregations never to read the *Marrow* or any books of a similar kind. Thomas Boston (he of the *Fourfold State*) brought this decree of the Assembly before the presbytery of Selkirk, from whence it found its way to the synod of Merse and Teviotdale.

By this time the *Marrow* had become, among the Scottish people, second only to the Bible. Boston (who was well known in Dunfermline district) and those who held with him, including James Hog of Carnock, Ralph Erskine and James Wardlaw of Dunfermline Abbey, James Kid of South Queensferry, and others to the number of twelve, protested, in 1721, against the previous action of the Assembly, and gave strong and cogent reasons for their protest. The Assembly was not to be gainsaid. A Commission was at once appointed to "deal" with the recusants, and this Commission prepared a series of word puzzles for the twelve apostles of tenderness. Answers were made to each puzzle, but the Commission was not satisfied, and the "Marrowmen" were called up and solemnly rebuked in the Assembly of 1722. The Assembly, however, not being supported by the people, the victory lay with the Evangelicals. The controversy continued for years after, the "Marrowmen" constantly growing in numbers till, in 1733, the Secession Church was formally put together at Gairney Brig, our own parish minister, Rev. Ralph Erskine, formally joining the little band in 1737.

Dr. Henderson, in his *Annals* under date 1738, tells us there was then "much religious contention in Dunfermline and locality." This was due to the fact that the Rev. Ralph Erskine, one of the Abbey Church ministers, had, as above, given in his formal agreement with the brethren of the Secession. He was greatly beloved of his hearers, and the uncertainty of his position kept alive the points of controversy which had been less or more in the public mind for the previous fifteen years. Subscription lists were carried round the town in 1739 for

money to erect a meeting-house for the Seceders, as they fully expected the General Assembly of that year to tell the reverend gentleman he could no longer be permitted to preach from an Established Church pulpit. As the polemical fever rose and swelled, the subscriptions became more and more liberal till, according to our worthy annalist, the sum of about £1060 was collected. In 1740, the Rev. Ralph was formally deposed from his position as a minister of the Establishment. He, however, held to his pulpit, and preached in the Abbey for two years longer.

Mr. Wardlaw, though he adhered to the Marrowmen, had finally made up his mind to continue in the ancient fold, and to have nothing farther to do with the united brethren. Mr. Erskine, on the other hand, was committed to their connection and identified with their communion. He had fitted up a tent of some homely form, where now the St. Andrews Church stands; and though he preached at least one sermon each Sunday in the Abbey, he also conducted Sabbath services in the tent he had got fitted up in Clerk Wilson's yard. Mr. Wardlaw (of the Abbey) generally came to hear his colleague preach, and did not fail to rend the argument and illustrations in pieces when his turn came. Mr. Erskine did no less for Mr. Wardlaw; and thus the original doctrinal controversy became a personal one. The congregation became divided into two strongly opposing parties, who escorted their respective ministers to the church, guarded the church doors, and even resorted to physical force, till the unseemly scenes were brought to an end by Mr. Erskine giving up all further attempts on the Auld Kirk pulpit in 1742.

The sacramental occasions were a notable feature of the time we are running over. These were stirred into abnormal observance by the "Marrow" controversy, and the bitterness of the feud between the "Moderates" and the "Evangelicals" had kept the fire alive, and fanned it into still fiercer flame. We are told on authority of the Revs. Messrs. Erskine and Wardlaw of the Abbey, that in 1730 the number of examinable persons in the parish was six thousand—a number so large that Dr. Henderson seems to throw a shade of doubt

on its truthfulness. We find there were only 5000 persons in all in the parish in 1713, 8552 in 1755, and 8960 in 1786 ; so that the clerical calculation seems to take in more than the parish limits.

The gatherings on these communion occasions were far beyond anything of which the present generation can have any idea. The business of this annual sacrament began on the Thursday preceding the sacramental Sabbath. Long discourses were preached to patient audiences on the forenoon and afternoon of that day. Saturday was also given to two portentous preparation sermons, when it was supposed the people were sufficiently impressed with the solemnity of the sacred rite, whose observance was to be carried through on the following day. On the Sabbath, according to Mr. Erskine, services began about eight o'clock in the morning and continued till midnight, the discourses being long and tedious, and divided and subdivided till the original idea was frittered away in threads and frills and gossamers of argument—one of Mr. Erskine's sermons counting no less than sixty-four divisions, without counting in the "application" and "the few words in conclusion." People would walk twenty miles to hear Mr. Erskine, find their bed in the churchyard, and waken up among the tombstones. When he went to preach at Ceres, near Cupar, people came in their thousands to hear the great preacher ; and when the Secession discussion was at its height, the faithful would walk from St. Andrews to Abernethy to have a chance of marking in their souls the true and saving gospel of the united brethren. No class of the community canvassed more keenly, or discussed more warmly than the weavers the points of sacramental theology ; though, like wise men, they took no notice of it in their business affairs, and never allowed its polemics to trouble their trade life.

In those days, people seldom stirred from home, and the visiting of distant cities was rarely undertaken. One reason for this was the state of the roads. The streets in our towns might be bad, as they often were, but the country roads were simply beds of mud and mire in rainy weather, full of treacherous holes and deep continuous ruts. Over these, the tumbler cart—with wooden wheels of two feet

diameter, rudely shapen out of cross planks and fastened to the axle—might occasionally be seen, though the pack-horse and panier pony were the common agents of transit. At this period, long strings of these pack-horses, laden with grain, might be seen passing along the west road to Carnock, or to the Woodmill—the farmers being “thirled” or bound to carry their grain to these, or other estate mills, to get it ground into meal. Even coal was carried from the pit heads in the same way, and possibly stones from the quarries.

People cared little for showers of rain in these bygone times. It was well they were indifferent. There were no umbrellas till near the close of the period, when some one, having been in the capital, brought over a sample to excite the wonder and derision of the men, and the admiration of the ladies. We have no record as to who brought the first umbrella here, but we know that the first umbrella-maker choose linen for his fabric, and possibly a bit of Dunfermline Hollands clothed the first set of ribs seen in our streets. If one could venture a guess at the name of the valiant man who first showed up in our midst in a circular hand-tent, we should fix on the “present deacon” of the weavers. Umbrellas are always with us now, and rains are nearly always “present,” as the immortal deacon wished to be. He joined with the rest of the weaving craft in boycotting the ale of the Heuch Mills, and as the drinking of tea became fashionable just after that non-liquidacious event, there is no saying but Andrew Robertson may also have ushered in the Chinese weed, and taught the superior virtues of Cowper’s “Cup that cheers but not inebriates.”

But the Church was severely penalistic with trifles. The “Sabbath Day” was, with sacramental days, the special occasions for picking up the perpetrators of wee sins. The Sunday in Scotland acquired, under the reign of the Secession, a degree of austerity surpassing that of the Jews in their most ceremonious times, and had its prototype in the Puritanical Sabbath of New England. Going to church was not a matter of choice, it was one of compulsion. Our kirk session records of the eighteenth century are marked all through with instances of assumed aberation from the law and the gospel, and the Churches’

methods of punishment. Officers and elders were sent round the streets, or to the villages and farms during divine service, to apprehend or report upon cases of Sabbath breaking. The civil powers assisted the clerical, and sent out "seizers" to lay hold on delinquents. Sometimes the minister himself, when he got a colleague to preach for him, would make the rounds, accompanied by an elder, to spy with his own eyes the sins of his absentees. Here one man is found romping with his bairns; another, as the minister peeped through the window, was detected kissing his wife; two men were found drinking ale; and one was found with his coat off, as if he were going to work; and still another was seen eating a hearty dinner—not at all like a Sabbath day. All were pulled up before the session or the Kirk, and "repentances" enforced upon each. The Wesleyans were said at this period to forbid the use of beer, and to smash the barrel if it was found "working" on Sunday—the Scots were a close second to this.

Houses built in these days were invariably furnished with a small closet for the private devotions of the head of the house. Even in town houses, where space was scarce, and architectural difficulties severe, the closet was still provided. Sometimes these were made entirely of wood, and projected from the walls. A very fine specimen was attached to the back of the house, 43 High Street, before being pulled down in 1882; and another was found on the gable of the reputed "manse" of Rev. Ralph Erskine in the Ho' Boy's Close, previous to its removal about 1894. The use of these closets gradually died out. People were none the worse, and a more practical purpose was found for the rooms. They are never seen now, and are entirely forgotten, like many another reminder of the Marrow and Secession days.

CHAPTER XXI.

Weavers leave the church—They go to the Tolbooth—The first “Combine” for meal—Provost Wedderburn—Yarn boiling—Bleaching done elsewhere—Honorary members.

THE year 1754 marks the last meeting of the weavers in the Abbey Church. The other trades, so far as we can learn, shared the same fate, and were compelled to look round and seek shelter elsewhere. The weavers had always been consistent supporters of the church, and we are at a loss to account for this sudden parting. No doubt the rise of secession, and “the lifting of their lines” by many of the members, had something to do with the change. Let that abide!

In its youthful days, the Presbyterian Church had taken the commonest affairs of men into its keeping; and if it managed them badly, they were none the less held as part of its sacred trust. In another way, and in a double sense, the Church had taken the trades into its bosom, and nursed them with such nursing as she could give. The effects of this close association of kirk and workshop were sometimes happy, sometimes otherwise; but the general tendency and impetus given by this connection may be detected in that sermon of strong, practical, good sense preached in Leith by the Abbey minister, Mr. David Ferguson, in 1571. The separation of utility and religion, which we have now to chronicle, indicated the beginning of a greater change than even Churchmen measured. Since then the Church has gained immensely in elegance and refinement, but steadily lost in directness and power.

The Michaelmas meeting of 1755 was held (25th September) in the house of “John Harley at the East Port.” No important business is reported as having transpired. They elected their leet of four members—to wit, Archibald Harley, James Aleson, John Harley, and

James Philp—and the council selected the two last as weaver councillors for the year.

The next meeting—that of September 23, 1756—is held in the Townhouse, which in the minutes is called the Tolbooth—a name which recalls those far-off, half-barbarous ages when towns like Dunfermline were only in embryo, and consisted of houses made of wood and wattles, and when the King's tolls or cesses were paid in a wooden booth, where lodged the King's collector. By and bye this booth, in times of emergency, became the centre of the wigwam city, where the wisest men were sent to meet as councillors, and to act—not in a rhetorical sense, but in real and tangible form—as fathers of the city. Here, then, the weavers met on 23rd September, 1756.

This Townhouse or Tolbooth was of three storeys. It stood across what is now the east end of Bridge Street, and had a spreading fantail outside stair in front. The upper storey was of wood, and was used as a debtors' prison; the middle storey contained the council chamber and town clerk's offices, etc., and the lower storey was used as store and sale-rooms; while behind were dark and dismal apartments where prisoners were detained, and where in the previous century witches were "dealt with" and tortured. The usual formality of selecting a leet of four names was gone through, submitted to the council, and the chosen two—James Aleson and James Alexander—sent back to the weavers. Among the freemen of the craft present that day was one Ralph Miller, whom Dr. Henderson refers to at page 621 of his *Annals*. Ralph was born in January, 1728, so that he was something over twenty-eight years when he entered with the weavers. He was sent to the council, and acted as deacon in 1792 and 1793. He lived to a great age, dying, according to Dr. Henderson, on 10th March, 1826, something over ninety eight years old. He gave to the Doctor many of the statements which are recorded in the *Annals*, under cover of MS. notes. He had a good memory; the Doctor often interviewed the old man, and "between them twa" managed to rescue not a little of the town's history, at a time when Ralph and youth were one.



Old Townhouse, Dunfermline—1769-1875.

In 1757, as we learn from the *Annals*, there was much scarcity of meal, so much so that the council, at a meeting held on 22nd January of that year, expressed the opinion "That the proper way to keep down prices in this season of dearth, and to have the inhabitants supplied with meal at a moderate price, will be for the town, the gildrie, and the corporations of the burgh to join in the commissioning of victual from England or elsewhere it can be had. And the council, for their part, agree to take £100 sterling share of said victual." Thereafter, a committee was appointed to work out details.

Three months after this we find from the burgh records that on 2nd April a letter is read "from John Wilson, stationer, informing the council what the different committees had done concerning the purchase of oats. And, particularly, that they, through the good offices of Mr. Alexander Wedderburn, provost, had procured from Mr. George Chalmers, corn merchant in Edinburgh, 368 bolls, three firlots of oats, at fifteen shillings sterline per boll, which oats were now delivered at Lymkills and sent to Shiresmill and to different mills about, in order to be made into meal." Other 610 quarters of oats were purchased on 8th April from merchants in London at sixteen shillings and sixpence per quarter, and one more cargo on 25th April of the same year. These purchases, and intended sales, were put in the hands of a committee to fix prices and arrange methods of sale.

The weavers, in their usual callous way, take no notice of this recurrence of dearth and scarcity, but continue to jot down the mere names of their chosen freemen—deacon and councillors—as if future generations would necessarily know as much as they did of passing events and of visitings of famine and disease. They tell us nothing, for example, of deaths among their fellow-craftsmen from a malignant fever, which then carried off many of the inhabitants. Even their own financial affairs are sometimes forgotten. As when the burgh in November, 1755, finds itself in straits for money to pay for repairs on the Abbey, the rents of the Heuch Mills, the town cess, etc., and applies to the "corporation of weavers to borrow the sum of £40

sterling"—the minutes of our websters betray no knowledge of the matter. The fact, however, shows, and many of the craft entries also show, that the weavers were not in any ways "hard up" at this period.

The provost mentioned above, Mr. Alexander Wedderburn, was one of the most brilliant and questionable men of his time. He was only twenty-one years of age when elected as provost. He belonged to the Wedderburns of Westerhall in East Lothian, had been trained as a lawyer in Edinburgh, and had shown a most unmistakable aptitude for the higher reaches of his profession.

As was the custom of that time, young lawyers in search of a practise or an appointment, looked to the General Assembly as a gateway to fame and fortune. To obtain an entrance here, it was necessary that some parish session should appoint the aspirant as its representative in this, the annual Parliament of the Kirk. Young Wedderburn, about 1754, got himself appointed in this way to be ruling elder for Inverkeithing parish, an appointment which was soon thrown up, by reason of disagreement on some one of the irritating questions then before the Church tribunals. Thrown out at Inverkeithing, he came up to Dunfermline, and was soon, by influences we need not describe, raised to the dignity, first of ruling elder, and then of provost of our city. This was in September, 1755. He continued to reign as our civic sovereign till 1758, when, in consequence of a rupture with the rulers of the Court of Session over a personal matter in which an advocate named Lockhart was involved, he threw up his appointment as a Scottish solicitor, flung off his gown and wig, and at once set out for England. He resigned his provostship in Dunfermline, set himself to study as an English barrister, was soon accepted by his fellow benchers, and lifted into a practice. He rose rapidly in fame and business in London, was in due course (being by this time an M.P.) appointed Attorney-General, then Solicitor-General, then Lord Chancellor. He was then ennobled by the title of Lord Loughborough, and finally as Earl of Rosslyn. He died suddenly, after one of the indulgent suppers of the time, about the new year of 1805. At his death, George III. is reported to have said,

"He has not left a greater knave behind him in my dominions." He lies in the crypt and under the dome of St. Paul's, London.

In 1759, sayeth the "MS. Notes" of Dr. Henderson, there were about two hundred and sixty looms in the town, about twenty being damask, and three hundred in the landward parts of the parish. These were, according to Mercer's *History*, devoted to the weaving of ticks and checks in the winter, and to table linens in the summer months. The table linens were sent to be bleached at Maryburg, near Kinross; to Glorat, near Campsie, Stirlingshire; and to Keirfield, and latterly to Luncarty in Perthshire. The goods, when finished, were carried by the manufacturer on his own back, or that of a pack-horse, to the markets of Kirkcaldy, Edinburgh, Stirling, Glasgow, and other centres of sale. In 1760, our enterprising producers of linen goods found their way to London, where large sales were made, and where suggestions were received for adapting the "makes" to the Metropolitan taste. Trade was soon after opened up with the principal towns in England, though the difficulties of reaching these by foot or carriage were so great as to operate as a serious bar to extending the business. The hawker of soft goods was at this period a social element of great importance, and his experiences, as he tramped over Scotland and south into England, enabled him to gather a fund of racy anecdote and marvellous story which he retailed, with ever-expanding additions, in the weaving shop and at the street corners.

The business of yarn boiling may also be said to have taken its rise about this time in the town. The council are recorded to have let, in 1762, and for one year, "to Andrew Bowie, weaver here," two small houses at the north-east corner of the Kirkgate, where now the large corner building is erected. This business of yarn boiling grew into importance, and was afterwards, up to the middle of the present century, a well-known industry of the town. By this process, the colour of the yarn, as it came from the spinner, was slightly lightened, while the firmness and toughness of the thread was also improved. It was long carried on by the Birrel family in St. Margaret's Street, and in Bothwellhaugh Street by Provost John Ker.

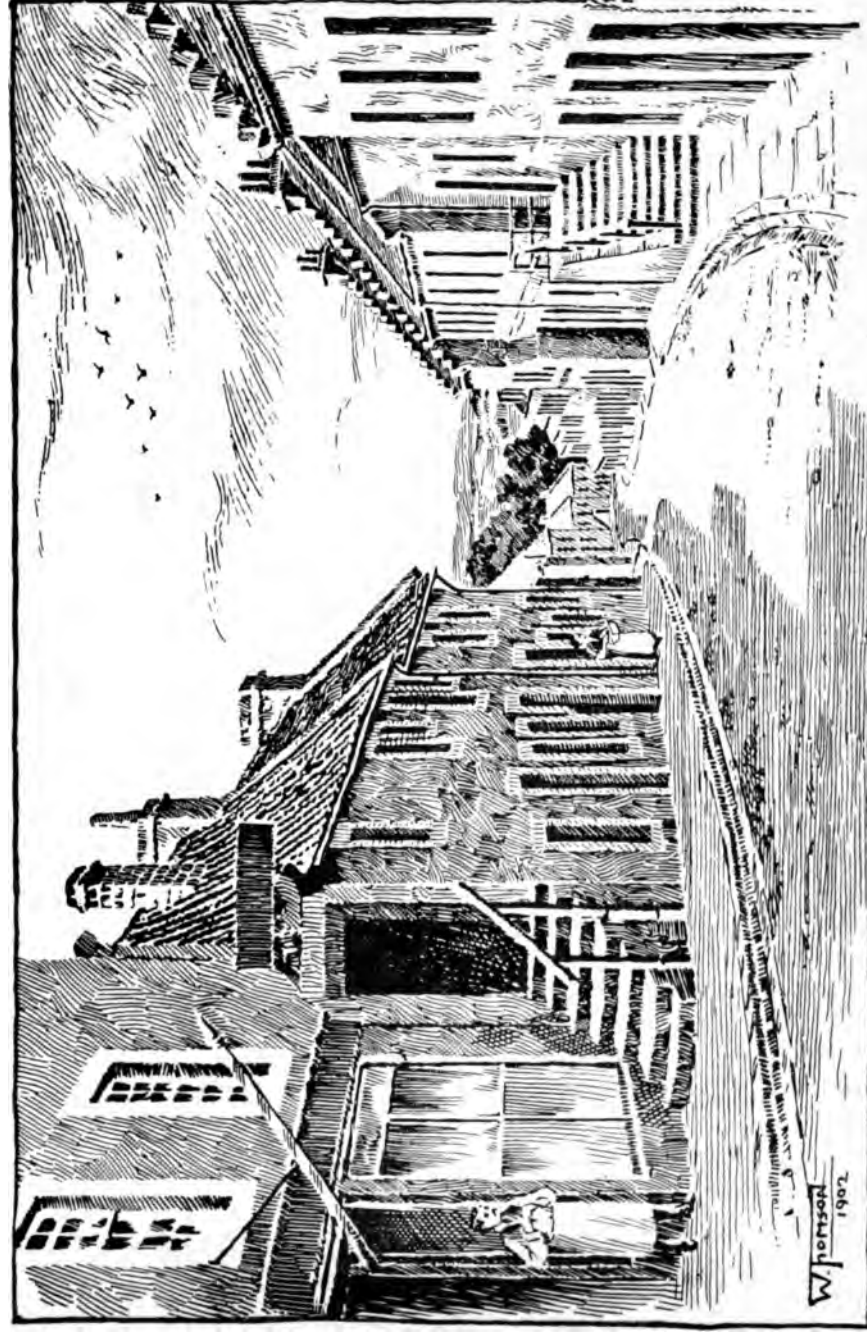
According to our weavers' minutes, we learn that, at a meeting preliminary to the Michaelmas one of 1759, one William Meldrum was admitted a freeman of the craft. William Meldrum, known in his later years as "Auld Eighty-four"—from being deacon in 1784—was a staunch adherent of the Relief Church during the ministry of the Rev. James Smith. He lived in West Nethertown Street, a little above the Girth Brig, and in due course got married and became the father of four sons. One of these was his namesake, William Meldrum, the well-known teacher, whose tombstone in the old churchyard informs the passer-by that he was born in 1776, and that he died in 1848, at the age of seventy-two years. During half a century he pursued with a fervour and constancy as marked as it was generous, earnest, and sincere, his high calling as a teacher. He was a born instructor, and held to his calling in the East (Brucefield) Mill School till 1828, and in the Nethertown till age and weariness of physical resource caused him reluctantly to resign his life's work. The other sons of our freeman were Henry, David, and James. Of these, the first made his name long famous in the trade by his production of the seamless shirt. The other two have also life-stories of interest, which need not here be told.

Adam French was deacon, and James Alexander was the craft councillor, when, in 1761, "the incorporation of weavers met in the Tolbooth of Dunfermline, and agreed to put their two houses above the calender, possessed (tenanted) by Petter Ireland and John Stevenson, to publick roup for seven years, from Martinmas of this year till Martinmas, 1768." These two houses formed the property at the top of the Newrow, on the east side, where, three years before (1765) a public well had been placed to distribute the water of the Headwell scheme, then introduced, and which scheme was "financed" jointly by the council, the guildry, and the weavers' craft, and other corporations. The two houses referred to, along with the calender house lower down the street, had now been in possession of the weavers since 1726, and had evidently been occupied by employes connected with the calender, but who, in consequence of changes in the trade, could

now be dispensed with. These changes are shadowed forth in the refusal of the council, seven years before, to renew the lease of the bleachfield in the King's Park. Bleaching, it was found, could be better done elsewhere, and, in consequence, there was less of the calender and fewer skilled hands wanted in the town.

The great scarcity and dearth of 1757-8, to which we have already adverted, seems to have long continued as a financial millstone round the necks of the working class of the town. We have little in the way of record as to these matters of debts and duns, but a flash of light is let in upon both debtors ("dyvours," then called), by the case of a poor cobbler named Andrew Burt, who, it seems, had, in the times of distress, been served with the meal purchased at that time to serve the dire needs of the people. Burt had been unable to meet his charges, he had been often appealed to and threatened in vain, and his cautioners had also been approached, but the meal debt, whatever it was in amount, remained unpaid in 1761. By this time the patience of the vendors was exhausted, and the weavers empowered "their present deacon to join with the town, and to deliver a process against the said Andrew and his colleagues for refunding of the deficiency."

Noting still farther the changing aspects of the linen trade in our town, and the shifting fortunes of the weaving craft, we reach the year 1762. By this time it had become apparent to the weavers that, as their bleaching business had moved by natural causes out of the town, so also must the calendering and finishing leave the hands of the weavers. So urgent had the matter become, that the incorporation held a special meeting on 9th June, 1762, and there, after ruefully discussing the whole question, resolved "to put their callender and their hot and cold cylinder, with the cylinder-house, to public roup, within the Tollbooth of the burgh on the 30th day of June next-to-come, and the incorporation appoints a coram," consisting of the deacon, the boxmaster, and three others, to see it carried through. The appointed day came round, when the bidding started at a reserve



Calender Houses, Newrow.

of £32 sterling; and, after a contest of some duration, the calender-house, etc., was knocked down to James Aleson at £40 per annum.

The crop of cereals of 1755 had been as poor in quality as it was scarce in quantity, and the year's produce had been nearly eaten up when the year ran out. The following year (1756) had been cold and wet throughout the spring and summer. Much of the land had not even been sown; and the miserable crops were largely rotted and lost. In the desperation of the time, the Government passed an Act to mitigate the duties on corn, and to forbid—in the interests of economy and to save the grain—the manufacture of wine and spirits from home grains, a device which everybody knew would have no effect in relieving the dearth and want of the hour.

The conditions of actual famine spread all over the country. The justices held meetings in places as far apart as Aberdeen and Lanark, and, with the colour-wisdom of the blind, inhibited retailers from raising prices and merchants from exporting their grain—both movements being equally futile—since prices would not keep down, and there was no grain in the country either to distil or export. The magistrates of Edinburgh, obeying a more practical impulse, collected subscriptions and imported grain from foreign ports to be put on sale, at non-profit rates, to the common people.

In Dunfermline, we find traces of the famine in the movements of all our public bodies. In the crafts, the abject condition of the poor and needy—and that included the whole of the industrial class—excited the liveliest interest and solicitude. The hammermen's minutes record a meeting of the craft on 7th April, 1757. At this meeting the deacon refers to the dearth, and states he has been to a meeting of the Commissioners appointed to take charge of the matters concerning "the corn that the guildry and the trades [with the council] bought for the use of themselves." The proportion of the cost due against such trade was to be got out, and security for payment to be given to the said Commissioners.

It is to be regretted that more abundant details of this period of suffering are not given in the craft and convener minutes. It is clear,

however, that, despite the want of direct statement in the craft chronicles, the whole of the trade incorporations took shares in the enterprise of importing grain, and took, also, an earnest part in its distribution in the spring months of 1757.

CHAPTER XXII.

The old Tolbooth—Bleachfield at Brucefield—Noble craftsmen—Colonel James Erskine—Election of 1774—Rev. James Thomson and lying—Political doings in Dunfermline in 1774—Sash and ribbon fever—Weavers' flag—The trades on King's birthday.

THOUGH the business of cloth finishing seems at this time to have been leaving the town, the occupation of the weaver appears, from the increased number of freemen annually admitted, to have been in a highly prosperous condition. The annals of the craft for the next six years are but the chronicling of the recurring Michaelmas formalities of admitting freemen, feasting over the fees, electing their deacon, and keeping up their connection with the conveners and the burgh, by going through the annual ceremony of choosing their councillors. In 1768, the Tolbooth is being pulled down to make way for a new one, and to permit the Laird of Pittencrieff to carry through his scheme of shifting the west road, filling up a part of the glen, and forming the atrocity of Bridge Street. While these things are being brought into being, the weavers apparently shift about from house to house, and, like Noah's dove, find no abiding place of rest.

In 1769, we discover a bleachfield established at Brucefield, for on 15th February of that year "Mr. Andrew Skirving, bleacher in Brucefield, near Dunfermline," is admitted a freeman of the craft of weavers,

took his oath, and was admitted to all its privileges, "for former favours done to the said incorporation." Whereabout on Brucefield estate this bleaching-green was situated, it were idle to speculate, though we know that a work of this kind did long exist just to the west of the present mansion and south of the farm, down to about 1850.

In September, 1781, in an account of the Perth circuit cases of that year, that of David Thomson, miner, Borrowstounness, obtains special notice in newspaper reports. David had been caught stealing cloth from the bleachfield of Mark Stark & Company at Brucefield. He was also accused of a second attempt at cloth stealing from the same place, when he was seized and held fast by the watchman's dog. The theft of two diaper table cloths—the second attempt at stealing—and his being of bad fame, were all proved against him, when their lordships sentenced him to be imprisoned in Perth prison for fourteen days, and then to be carried from Perth to Dunfermline and whipped through the streets of that town, and afterwards banished from Scotland for five years—which sentence, we doubt not, was carried into execution.

It may here be added that Mr. Stark succeeded Mr. David Campbell, manufacturer, who, starting in the linen trade in 1760, made a fortune, in a few years, of £7000, and then retired to enjoy it. Mr. Stark began in 1776, and, besides carrying on the business of a linen manufacturer, set up at Brucefield, in the same year, a set of beetling mills and other appliances for bleaching his own and the cloth products of other manufacturers in the town. The mention of a beetling apparatus shews the use of a water-wheel, and this fixes the position of the field just to the south of the present farm steading, where, from about 1836 to 1850, it was carried on as a yarn bleachfield by the Messrs. Paterson.

Dr. Chalmers (at page 338, Vol. I., of his *History of Dunfermline*) has a note on this period of our weaving industry. He states that the British Linen Company established a large weaving concern in the town in 1749, when there were four hundred looms in the parish ;

yet, in 1763 there were only some ten or twelve damask looms within the same limits; and, in 1778, not above twenty looms were given to this kind of fabric. These numbers must be, to some extent, a matter of estimate, since no record giving these details at this period exists.

The years 1770, 1771, and 1772 of our chronicles bring forth nothing beyond the ordinary annual business of accepting freemen, swearing them in, and dining on the fees; finishing up by agreeing to their two councillors for the following year. In the last of the years mentioned, David Blake, a son of the introducer of damask weaving, is numbered among the knights of the shuttle.

In 1773, the weavers get into what they would doubtless call "braw" company. On 30th November of that year, "by appointment of the Incorporation of the Weavers of Dunfermline, the Right Honourable Captain James Erskine, from Alloa, was admitted a freeman of the craft.

On 30th November, 1774—"On the whilk day, by appointment of the Incorporation of Weavers in Dunfermline, James Francis Erskine, Esq., of Forest, was admitted a freeman weaver of the said incorporation." This latter gentleman was brother to John Francis Erskine, Esq., in whom the ancient title of Earl of Mar was restored by command of George IV., in 1824. "Colonel" James Erskine was a keen politician, and worked with enormous zeal in the local election of 1774—he and others importing great bitterness into the contest, as we shall see. At the close, however, Colonel Campbell, the successful candidate, made a speech in Dunfermline, in which he expressed the hope, and in the most strenuous terms of entreaty, that an entire oblivion of all past animosities would ensue, and that they would bolt the gates against all farther fanatic controversy.

The visit of these scions of the house of Erskine had more under it than might at first appear. The election of 1774, and particularly that of the Stirling burghs, being at hand, it behoved all whom it might concern to be "up and doing" and working for the "interest" each had espoused. The candidates were Captain Masterton of Clackmannan and Colonel Campbell of Inverneil. Captain Masterton held

a Government appointment as Barrack Master-General at the time. He had hastened down from London, and arrived in Edinburgh on 27th April, and rode from thence post haste to Clackmannan to prepare himself and work up the zeal of his friends and henchmen towards the coming election. All parties being ready, and all legitimate weapons properly sharpened, the closing work of the contest was begun.

On 13th October, the council had assembled in the Townhouse at eleven o'clock forenoon, and with them were the friends of the two candidates "promiscuously" gathered together. The choice of the burgh delegate (whose vote went for the whole town) was the business in hand. The friends of Captain Masterton made choice of—*i.e.*, nominated—Provost John Wilson; and those of Colonel Campbell gave their preference for Mr. John M'Laurin, advocate, Edinburgh. For the purpose of purging the meeting of all election weaknesses, the oaths against bribery and corruption were put to the members of council separately and particularly. This course was evidently needed, for when the soul-searching words of the oath were put to James Kinloch, deacon of the butchers, he hesitated. Pressed for an answer to the question, "whether he had received any sum or sums of money, or other form of reward, he answered negatively; but, upon recollection, he said his wife had told him that she had received from the hands of Captain James Francis Erskine two five pound notes, which he was then ignorant of; but though he was now fully informed of the same, it should have no influence upon him in the election." Most people would conclude at once that the Captain's £10 would have some influence upon the honest man's vote, and might even twist his political vision.

How the council vote went we do not know and need not concern ourselves; but in the final heat for the winning post, Colonel Campbell was returned M.P. for the Stirling district of burghs, and Captain Masterton was left out in the cold.

It would appear from the sequel of events that the minister, Mr. James Thomson of the Abbey, had taken great interest and concern

in this fight for the honour of being M.P. He had indeed been noting and recording the party promises and treacherous conduct of his own members; and, when the election was over, he concluded to speak out and give them a bit of his mind. He chose for his text the words (from Eph. iv. 25)—“Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye truth, each one with his neighbour, for we are members one with another.” After introducing the subject of lying in general, and political lie-making in particular, he continued in this fashion:—“Having thus explained to you, my brethren, the different kinds of lying by which we may hurt either our neighbour, or sin our own souls, will any man pretend to tell me that, after being informed by three indisputable witnesses, that that man (pointing to a certain person in the congregation) does not lie; and will any one pretend to maintain that he had not engaged to support Colonel Campbell’s interest when he was voted into the council by the friends of Colonel Campbell alone, and had not a single vote from the other party? I am convinced that these gentlemen had more wisdom and judgment than to bring, in this way, any man into the council of Dunfermline unless they had got the most convincing promises that he would stand by them and the interest of Colonel Campbell; yet, notwithstanding, he did not so much as give them a single vote.” [Here Mr. John Scotland rose up and told the preacher he was uttering gross lies and falsehoods.] “There is another species of lying,” Mr. Thomson continued, “that with a view to hurt and defame the character of our neighbour—as for one to say such and such a one has got money from Colonel Campbell to induce them to support his interest, and that his brother has receipts for the sums! Yet that very man, upon being examined anent such defamatory assertions, would deny having said such things [here Mr. David Scotland rose and informed Mr. Thomson he was telling great lies]; and you, Robert Scotland (Laird of Middlebank?), you have wrote a paper which appeared in the *Caledonian Mercury* giving me the epithet, ‘An old military blunderbuss’—a name which I glory in, having lived fourteen years in the army, where I was always happy. . . . You term me ‘a blustering blunder-

buss,' which I refuse, and will refer to the whole congregation if that cap does not more properly fit your head than mine." The discourse went on far beyond this, but sufficient is here given to show its nature and the bitterness which the recent political trickery had left in the burgh.

The gentlemen thus attacked—father and two sons—raised an action in the Court of Session, and on appeal, in the House of Lords, against the minister. In both courts they were successful. Robert Scotland was adjudged £5 damages, and John and David jointly £250. Mr. Thomson had also to pay expenses, restricted to fifty guineas, so that he got off on the very easiest terms.

The Rev. James Thomson was the son of a farmer at Carnbee. Got his degree at St. Andrews in 1717. Was licensed by the Presbytery there, 30th October, 1723; and served as chaplain in the 26th or Cameronian regiment for fourteen years. He came to Dunfermline on 5th May, 1743, and in the fashion of the time was a keen politician. This bent towards the worst kind of worldly wisdom led him to take not only a keen, but a fierce and fiery interest in the election of 1774; and to indulge his passionate animus in the sermon from which we have quoted. He was a big, strong man, with a trumpet-toned voice that searched every corner of the old Abbey Church when he preached. He took his turn in the pulpit and stuck to his prelections till he had reached his eighty-ninth year. He died in October, 1790, when ninety-one years of age.

The paper which Mr. Thomson, in his discourse, referred to as appearing in the *Caledonian Mercury*, saw the light in that ancient print on 21st October, 1774. The writer, Robert Scotland, says that he and his friends had worked, in this election, in the interests of Col. Archibald Campbell since Lammas of 1773, and up to the close of the election at Michaelmas, 1774. He absolutely denies that he or any of his friends ever received any sum of money, fee, gift or reward "from the Baronet hinted at, nor from any of his connections, to induce him to take any political direction," "and that every publication, report, or insinuation to the contrary, by whomsoever related,

whether from the pulpit by a blustering blunderbus of an old military chaplain—a ‘peep sma’ orator—and every such-like busy-body, is false and slanderous—and I challenge all mankind to adduce evidence to prove a single instance of my having ever suggested to, or solicited any person to any interest but that of Col. Campbell.”

Three days after the appearance of this letter, namely, on 24th October, one “Pillory” offers sarcastically his services to Robert Scotland, “in consideration of his faithful services to Col. Masterton,” and hints at a gift “of 600 guineas to himself and a kirk in Edinburgh to his brother; both scarcely a sufficient recompense for his taking in his grey-headed father, to break his faith in Col. Campbell,” and for his attempt to “seduce the gentlemen at Dunfermline” from their political attachments. Such were some—a fair sample—of the political amenities of the time. Another writer, taking the narrative form in his letter, appears on 5th November (*Caledonian Mercury*), and relates how an agent of one of the candidates in the said election got himself quite suddenly converted in front of a magical mirror. The agent in question met with another at dinner, “No. 1 dining at the expense of No. 2. After dinner No. 2 gives No. 1 a dissertation on the elements of an election, which consist of one thing—‘Man, mind thyself.’

“‘By the bye,’ said No. 2 to No. 1, ‘your wig is badly set—you’ve been in too great a hurry with it this morning. Pray step into the next room and have your dress put right. You will find a mirror there and all other needfuls. And, I may say, in a word, that you will find on the left side a glass with a bundle of papers, which, pray, look at, and if you have any use for them, put them in your fob.’ No. 1 entered the mirror room, found the papers, and found, too, they were bank notes to the value of £100 sterling. He fobbed them and returned to No. 2. ‘Have you got your obtrusive wig put right now?’ ‘Yes, of course I have, and am quite pleased with myself now.’”

Such is a farther sample of the literature and the temper of the political contests of one hundred and thirty years ago. We are better

now. Whatever progress, or the want of it, we have made since 1774, our politics are—like our religious convictions—much less fierce, more reasonable and tolerant.

The election matters of 1774 did not, however, end with the decision in the law courts, or with the publication of letters in the newspapers. When the Presbytery of Dunfermline met on 5th April, 1775, a committee of enquiry into the disturbance in the Parish Church was moved for. It was seconded, spoken to, and rejected—the moderator intimating to Mr. Thomson that they find nothing censurable in his conduct, and encouraged him to go on “in the work of the Lord.” The same motion came up again in the Dunfermline Presbytery in September, 1775, and again on 8th May, 1776, in a writing called “an instrument.” But the Presbytery were evidently firmly set to have no enquiry, and delayed the whole matter, though the mover (Mr. Spence) took out a protest and tabled his shilling. The General Assembly of 1776 were next honoured with a hearing of the case. Complainers and members of Presbytery were heard, papers were read, and parties were listened to at the bar; then, after full deliberation, the complaints were dismissed.

The case was heard of all over Scotland; it was discussed at every manse fireside, and debated in every session. It was long and keenly canvassed, all through the loom shops and at every street corner of Dunfermline. But the reverend gentleman survived it all. He served in his pulpit for twenty-four years after, and died in peace at a ripe old age.

Though the pictures of craft life we generally meet with are decidedly grey in tone, there are times when the social sky brightens and a touch of colour and glow of the picturesque is thrown across the scene. Thus the court of the convener on Michaelmas day, 1766, is found in high flight and fine feather. On this occasion the members enact that the “deacon-convener for the time being shall, in making the public parade through the town on the King's or Queen's birthdays, wear and have on, as a badge of honour and respect, the red-and-white sashes or broad ribbons belonging to the court;

and the court declares that all future conveners, by their acceptance of office, do subject themselves to this Act."

Even the Town Council had become infected with the sash-and-ribbon fever. In the same year of the convener's decoration, the staff-man or town-keeper of the burgh, it is agreed, shall be put in uniform. So the council vote their officer "a new coat, a new bonnet, two new shifts, and other necessities for his back and bed; and the council recommend the said officer to be faithful in his office, and particularly to keep the town clear of sturdy beggars, and to obey his masters in all lawful orders." The conveners' court are "at it" again two years after, namely, on 24th June, 1768, when it was "agreed that David Kilpatrick, their officer, shall get a new coat and hat at the court's expense, to be worn by him on any occasion extraordinary, or as ordered by the court; and appoints Deacon Graham, Deacon Anderson, and Deacon Turnbull to assist the convener in purchasing the said officer's coat and hat."

On all these "extraordinary occasions"—King's birthdays, election times, and party processions—the weavers' flag was sure to be hung out. Whatever the original flag may have been, we learn from Henderson's *Annals*, and otherwise, that James Blake, among other excellent work, wove a set of colours, *i.e.*, flags, for his wobster brethren. It was a solid sheet of silk damask, woven with different patterns on the two sides, and carrying the legend, in bold, gold lettering:—

FOR THE WEAVERS OF DUNFERMLINE, 1734,

and the weavers' motto—

TRUST WITH TRUTH,

and bearing their ensign—a boar's head, with a shuttle in its mouth. On the other side was the rampant Scottish lion, surrounded with thistles with a crown at the head, a St. Andrew's cross and the motto—

Nemo me impune lacesset.

Let us picture, if we can, the turn-out of the trades on the King's birthday, when George the Third was King. It is the 4th of June,

and the sun is high, though it is not yet high noon. Flags wave from the windows of the new Townhouse, the provost, bailies and councillors appear in their best "braid claith," and the mass of citizens crowding round are but little behind them. So far as the trades are concerned, it is no more a case of dull, sad, rayless hodden grey, but a scintillating show of colour, and tint, and tone. Sashes, ribbons, aprons, and broad phylacteries to the conveners, with braided coat, shining hat and buckled shoon to the officers, and to the remanent brethren a back covering of the passing green, russet, or brown, decorated with great, shining buttons. A big, broad, blue bonnet, gun-mouthed breeches, ribbed stockings, and thick-soled, broad-bottom feet coverings. With prancing naigs to head the procession, the cavalcade moves to the Cross, where the provost for the time drinks to the health of the King, casts the glass high in the air, and lets it fall to pieces on the causey, "that it ne'er may serve a meaner end." Then move off the skirling pipes and the screaming hautboy to ride the marches ere the day be done.

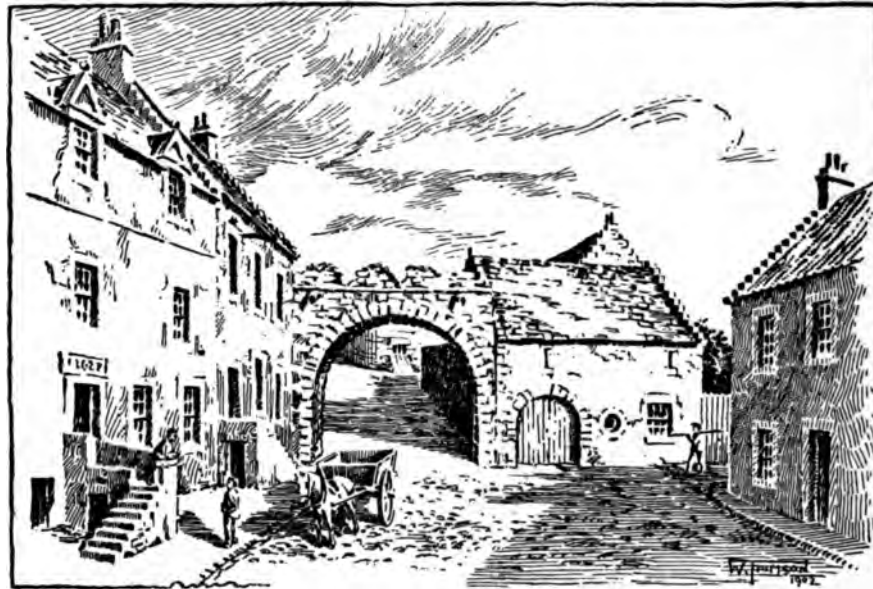
CHAPTER XXIII.

The Townhouse of 1772—"Popish" bill of 1779—Dearth of 1782—Noble conduct of the crafts—Ecclesiastical changes—Food prices of 1771—New freeman entries—The Hunts—James Francis Erskine of Mar—The Earldom of Mar—County roads in 1790.

IN 1771, the predecessor of the present Townhouse was finished—all but the steeple, which was also in fair way of being set up. This steeple was a mere matter of wood, and was set on the top of its attenuated tower in the style of an extinguisher out of use. When no longer required—about one hundred years after—it was cleared of its

blue slates, and simply lifted down. The Townhouse was at first of only two stories, but a third was in time added to its dignity. It survived till 1875.

With the new Townhouse came the new Bridge Street—the first, and greatest, of our disfigurements of our original glen of beauty. Pennant came, in his general *Tour in Scotland* (1772), to see us at



The Mill Port, Collier Row, Dunfermline : removed, 1754.

this time. He reckons our numbers at six to seven thousand, and tells us that we were then weaving damasks, diapers, checks, and tickings; and keeping a thousand looms going. It was evidently a fairly good time, for the weavers had engaged the Townhouse as a hall of assembly, and danced there with joy till they roused the ire of the “unco guid,” who moved that the dancing be abolished; but the council, needing the rent, and seeing no harm in the exercise, voted to continue the pleasures of the terpsichoreans.

The dancing in the Townhouse was succeeded in 1774, as we have seen, with dancing through the streets "in a tumultuous manner with drums beating and colours flying." Our fathers were then losing their heads in political delirium, and the magistrates who wished, but failed, to stop the "dancing balls" of 1772, now found their opportunity, and dancing was stopped, indoors and out.

The new clock in the Townhouse tower was now (1775) measuring the hours; and the council would fain take time by the forelock, and begin a new era with a "new plan for the education of the youth of the burgh," but we kept the old drummer and the old piper still going round, and we still thought so much of the old-world, foot-fastening stocks, that we had this ancient instrument of torture securely fixed on the wall of the Townhouse "just aboon the black-hole window."

To please "the powers that be," we railed at the "rebels" in America in 1775, and we mourned in want and woe when the war brought depression upon us in 1777, and stopped our looms. The conveners' court then prayed the council to cause the officers to wear black bands at funerals; and so black bands and halberts became the funereal trappings of the day.

The "Popish Bill" of 1779 put us good Protestants in a frenzy of meaningless rage. We petitioned the council, we invoked the Church, and we helped to send the fiery cross of religious hate and fanaticism all round the land, till it concentrated in London, and burst like a tornado of fire and flame in the great metropolis, causing immense wreckage of property, stoppage of business, and the loss of hundreds of lives.

We had a different sensation when Paul Jones, in 1778, came up the Firth, and spread terror all round our shores; and we were glad to learn that good Mr. Shirra of Kirkcaldy had prayed the wild rover out of the seas. Our national poet visited us in 1787, when Charlie Short-house was gravedigger; and Charlie, showing the flat stones that—as he thought—covered the grave of the Bruce, saw the poet, with sacred fervour, kneel down and kiss the cold, dull slab.

We were just then beginning to cast off the shell of our antique framing. We were hearing lectures and having scientific exhibitions, and "going in" for easier, lighter, higher, and gayer literature. We set up our first public library (1789); and, as this dull, half-dead, and wholly dormant century drew to a close, we heard, though faintly, the celestial voices saying, "Let there be light."

But man, in fate and fortune, is dominated by the stomach! Progress is slow and advance is laggard when the larder is empty and the sense of hunger cries incessantly for relief. The condition of the Scottish people in the last quarter of the eighteenth century seemed to have grown steadily worse. We had food riots all over the northern and middle lowlands. The military were called out—not to feed, but to shoot down, the hungry populace. Garrisons were planted in the towns; fines, imprisonments, and transportations followed. Repression was the order of the day, remedy was little thought of; and so the swelling masses of social misery grew larger daily, and suffering steadily widened her borders.

When the crops of 1782 were found to be an almost entire failure, and when the people were in a state of destitution impossible to describe, the Government eased off once more the fiscal corn duties—and believed they had done a great work? But city corporations, Churches, bankers, magistrates of towns and commissioners of counties, from Aberdeen southward to Lanark, were striving by every practical means to supply the food that hungering life demanded.

In Dunfermline, the trades combined and formed themselves into a temporary provision society, made enquiries in Holland as to prices of grain in that country, and commissioned cargoes of oats from home ports and from Ostend. They appointed a committee of management with salesmen to distribute, laid down the rule of ready money on non-profit rates of charge, and so strove in a united, humane, and reasonable method to meet the period and incidence of distress.

Of this famine period Dr. Chalmers has no record, and Dr. Henderson is equally silent in his *Annals*. The wrights and coopers, however, have left their testimony to the fact that on Friday, 11th

October, 1782—"The meeting took into their serious consideration the present dearth and scarcity; and seeing that the other incorporations in the town are resolving to join in bringing in meall or victual, and contributing out of their stocks for that purpose; they resolved and agreed to contribute eighty pounds sterling, along with the other incorporations, out of their stock."

On 21st October, the deacon lays before the wrights a proposed purchase of 100 bolls of oatmeal, and its proportionate cost—at 16s. 5d. per boll—to the corporation. This sum being found, the trade agree that half the quantity falling to their share should be sold to members, and half to outsiders, at 1s. 1½d. per peck, not above one peck at one time to be sold to each family." On 35th April, 1783, the committee in charge reported their intromissions, and the banking of the money realised by sales. On 2nd June, the members agree to "sell the remainder of their meal, by turns," and without charge. On 30th August, the selling of the meal still goes on "to every person that pleases" at 1s. per peck—the dearth is evidently becoming less intense—yet, in February and October of 1784, the meal committee of the wrights and coopers are still at work. Then in March, 1785, we reach the day of reckoning—the bank (of Scotland) is seeking its own. But, in these "hard-up" times money cannot be got. The year 1786 passes ere the last efforts are made to collect the last of the meal debts, and the new year of 1787 is reached ere the meal accounts are finally settled.

The minutes of the hammermen contain a record very similar to that of the wrights, though they seem to have been engaged in a larger and more important enterprise, namely, the importing from Ostend of 1000 bolls of corn. In January, 1783, we find the trade, "considering the scarcity of corn in the town, agreed to lend out of their stock [funds], for the purpose of supplying the incorporation with meal, the sum of £80 sterling."

In February, the tailors' craft agree to join the wrights and hammermen, and to contribute, "as the other trades have done," to bring oats and meal to their brethren and to the townsfolk.

All this is going on among the crafts of the burgh, yet, for some unknown reason, the weavers' chronicles contain no statement on the matter. For five years the operations of subscribing funds, providing food, and collecting sale sums, goes on ; and the weavers, who must have been the largest factors in the enterprise, are silent about it. They continue, in placid equanimity, the absorbing occupations of "making" apprentices and freemen, indulging in mildsprees on the advent of a new entrant, and, as antetypes of Mark Tapley, forget the hardships of the hour, and make merry while they may.

In alluding in a previous chapter to matters outside of the craft minutes, we have necessarily passed over many interesting occurrences in which they would be either deeply involved or of which they would necessarily be the excited and earnest beholders. The disputed settlement at Inverkeithing, and the founding of the Relief Church in 1752-3, has been recently, in jubilee and other celebrations, brought so prominently before the Dunfermline public that further reference is unnecessary. The introduction of our first water scheme (in 1765) was a move of first-rate sanitary importance, but belongs more to our municipal than to our industrial history. The building of a new Townhouse and the construction of Bridge Street may also be ranged under this category.

Dr. Henderson refers to riotous proceedings in the town, and to the turning out of "meal mobs" in 1770 ; but the prices of domestic articles, which he quotes as ruling at the time, do not show like famine rates. The quartern loaf was 5d ; the pound of meat, 3½d. to 4½d. ; fresh butter, 22 ounces, from 4d. to 6d. ; meal, 5d. to 6d. per peck ; pot barley, 1d. per lb. ; potatoes, 4½d. to 6d. per lippie ; soap, 6d. to 8d. per pound ; and such like rates. The weavers (with draw-boy), according to Mercer, earned at this time (1772) about £30 annually, the other trades were in proportion, and the professions were then supported on sums of equal modesty and attenuation. For fifteen years succeeding 1775, we have no record of interest, except to those who wish to see the names of their ancestors in the weavers' list of freemen. In 1791, a slight accession of attractiveness sets in, and

the neat-handed clerk who writes the minutes gives more care than before to the movements of his grey goose quill. In that year, and on 15th September, "Martin Meldrum, son-in-law to William Meldrum, burgess and freeman of Dunfermline, is admitted a freeman of the incorporation of weavers." Martin lived in a house built from the ruins of Queen Anne's jointure house in 1796, and the curious may still find it in Nethertown Broad Street, opposite the foot of Reid Street. Martin was for many years the keeper of a merry-going change-house there, and acted as "provost of the Nethertown races" till the second decade of the nineteenth century. The town's drummer of those days, and when the race period came round, paced through the streets, rattling his half-burst drum, warning all and sundry "that all particulars of the aforesaid races could be had from Mr. Martin Meldrum at his change-house in the Nether Toon."

The entries of freemen are numerous beyond precedent in this year of 1791—no less than twenty-five new names being added to the roll. These are now nearly all unrecognisable. One, John Barnet, lives in Black's Park—and we ask, in passing, where was Black's Park. Two of these new entrants, William Inglis and his son William, both live in Paisley; and James Black hails from Dunning, in Perthshire; so we conclude that the weaving trade must then have been lively in Dunfermline to draw applicants for admission from such distances.

Among the other casual entries, we find that on 14th September "Alexander Hunt, merchant, Dunfermline, was admitted a freeman with the incorporation of weavers, and gave a sufficient essay (a piece of cloth woven by the applicant), and paid his dues and gave his oath as use is." His son William, also a merchant in Dunfermline, acquired the estate of Pittencrieff in 1800 for £31,000. He was succeeded by his eldest son, William, in 1807, who lived till 1812, and was succeeded by his brother James. James died in 1858, and Pittencrieff acknowledged James A. Hunt as proprietor. He died in 1890, when the present gallant colonel became laird. He has now reigned twelve years as "Superior" of the burgh, and done several things by which he will be remembered. The first three lairds were weavers

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and manufacturers, and we have seen that the father of the first was able to weave and exhibit a sample of his own handicraft.

On the same year in which the Hunt family claimed connection with the weaving craft, a much greater personage had that honour conferred upon him. The minute to which I refer is dated 12th April:—"Which day the deacon and remanent members of the Incorporation of Weavers, for the esteem and affection which they have and bear to John Francis Erskine, Esquire of Mar, and to John Floyer Erskine, Esquire, his son, do admit and receive both of them as honorary freemen of the said incorporation, by delivering to each of them a ticket signed by the clerk, testifying said admission to the said freedom. They accepted thereof in a very genteel manner; and, in testimony of their esteem and affection for said incorporation, presented and delivered a very handsome seal of the ancient arms of their family, cut upon a large block of Scots white pebble stone, set in silver, which the incorporation accepted with many thanks," etc.

The senior person here introduced to the weavers of one hundred and thirteen years ago, and to our readers of to-day, was a descendant of the most ancient peerage in the Scottish list—the Earldom of Mar. That title, with the Mar estate, were forfeited in 1715 by John, the eleventh earl, taking part in the Chevalier rising of that year. The rebellious earl escaped to the continent after the battle of Sheriffmuir, in company with the Old Pretender, and died abroad in 1732. His only son, Thomas, was Commissary of Stores at Gibraltar at this time, but came home and was returned M.P. for Stirlingshire in 1747, being elected also the same year for the county of Clackmannan. His uncle, the Hon. James Erskine of Grange, having amassed a fortune by commerce, bought back from Government the forfeited estates belonging to the Mar peerage. These he presented to his nephew, Thomas, who died in 1766, leaving a daughter Frances, who married a son of the uncle James above referred to. The first fruits of this union was the birth of the above John Francis Erskine, Esq. of Mar, who was born in 1741, and who visited the weavers of Dunfermline as above related. He had married Frances, only daughter of Charles Floyer, Esq.,

Governor of Madras, hence the name Floyer attached to the son who accompanied his father and had audience of the weavers in the Townhouse of Dunfermline in 1791. There would doubtless be a dominant reason for the repeated visits of these members of the Mar family to Dunfermline, but the explanation is not given in the minutes of the weavers, and we have not been able to discover it elsewhere.

There were at this time (1792), about twelve hundred looms employed in the town. The weavers seem to have had, generally speaking, plenty of work, though the virus of competition was evidently beginning to have its effect upon the habits of the weavers and the circumstances of the trade. The meetings of the craft, which had hitherto been held during the day, were now invariably held in the evening. The annual and other gatherings took place in the Townhouse, which had become a common meeting-house for nearly all public meetings outside of the churches. The names of the admitted freemen and officials now become familiar to us from what we know of themselves or their descendants. In September, 1794, "David Paton, son of Andrew Paton," and "John Couper, son to George Couper," are enrolled in the big book of the weavers. The first is a name familiar to every citizen of the auld gray town as father of the late Joseph N. Paton, and grandfather to the eminent artist, Sir Noel Paton. David was born in 1766, so that he was twenty-eight years of age when he joined the weavers; he died in 1844, as faithfully recorded by Dr. Henderson (*Annals*, p. 652). John Couper will less readily occur to the memory of even the older denizens, though the family were for generations closely connected with the weavers' association, and well known to every member of the craft. John Couper was weavers' councillor in 1798, and his son George was boxmaster or treasurer from 1826 till 1830.

On 12th September, 1793, the weavers are found to have worked themselves into a state of anxious, if not indeed furious, opposition to "A Bill proposed by the heritors of Fife for repairing the roads in the county, for abolishing statute labour, and for substituting a tax instead." They consider the same oppressive, and seek the help

yet, in 1763 there were only some ten or twelve damask looms within the same limits; and, in 1778, not above twenty looms were given to this kind of fabric. These numbers must be, to some extent, a matter of estimate, since no record giving these details at this period exists.

The years 1770, 1771, and 1772 of our chronicles bring forth nothing beyond the ordinary annual business of accepting freemen, swearing them in, and dining on the fees; finishing up by agreeing to their two councillors for the following year. In the last of the years mentioned, David Blake, a son of the introducer of damask weaving, is numbered among the knights of the shuttle.

In 1773, the weavers get into what they would doubtless call "braw" company. On 30th November of that year, "by appointment of the Incorporation of the Weavers of Dunfermline, the Right Honourable Captain James Erskine, from Alloa, was admitted a freeman of the craft.

On 30th November, 1774—"On the whilk day, by appointment of the Incorporation of Weavers in Dunfermline, James Francis Erskine, Esq., of Forest, was admitted a freeman weaver of the said incorporation." This latter gentleman was brother to John Francis Erskine, Esq., in whom the ancient title of Earl of Mar was restored by command of George IV., in 1824. "Colonel" James Erskine was a keen politician, and worked with enormous zeal in the local election of 1774—he and others importing great bitterness into the contest, as we shall see. At the close, however, Colonel Campbell, the successful candidate, made a speech in Dunfermline, in which he expressed the hope, and in the most strenuous terms of entreaty, that an entire oblivion of all past animosities would ensue, and that they would bolt the gates against all farther fanatic controversy.

The visit of these scions of the house of Erskine had more under it than might at first appear. The election of 1774, and particularly that of the Stirling burghs, being at hand, it behoved all whom it might concern to be "up and doing" and working for the "interest" each had espoused. The candidates were Captain Masterton of Clackmannan and Colonel Campbell of Inverneil. Captain Masterton held

a Government appointment as Barrack Master-General at the time. He had hastened down from London, and arrived in Edinburgh on 27th April, and rode from thence post haste to Clackmannan to prepare himself and work up the zeal of his friends and henchmen towards the coming election. All parties being ready, and all legitimate weapons properly sharpened, the closing work of the contest was begun.

On 13th October, the council had assembled in the Townhouse at eleven o'clock forenoon, and with them were the friends of the two candidates "promiscuously" gathered together. The choice of the burgh delegate (whose vote went for the whole town) was the business in hand. The friends of Captain Masterton made choice of—*i.e.*, nominated—Provost John Wilson; and those of Colonel Campbell gave their preference for Mr. John M'Laurin, advocate, Edinburgh. For the purpose of purging the meeting of all election weaknesses, the oaths against bribery and corruption were put to the members of council separately and particularly. This course was evidently needed, for when the soul-searching words of the oath were put to James Kinloch, deacon of the butchers, he hesitated. Pressed for an answer to the question, "whether he had received any sum or sums of money, or other form of reward, he answered negatively; but, upon recollection, he said his wife had told him that she had received from the hands of Captain James Francis Erskine two five pound notes, which he was then ignorant of; but though he was now fully informed of the same, it should have no influence upon him in the election." Most people would conclude at once that the Captain's £10 would have some influence upon the honest man's vote, and might even twist his political vision.

How the council vote went we do not know and need not concern ourselves; but in the final heat for the winning post, Colonel Campbell was returned M.P. for the Stirling district of burghs, and Captain Masterton was left out in the cold.

It would appear from the sequel of events that the minister, Mr. James Thomson of the Abbey, had taken great interest and concern

in this fight for the honour of being M.P. He had indeed been noting and recording the party promises and treacherous conduct of his own members; and, when the election was over, he concluded to speak out and give them a bit of his mind. He chose for his text the words (from Eph. iv. 25)—“Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye truth, each one with his neighbour, for we are members one with another.” After introducing the subject of lying in general, and political lie-making in particular, he continued in this fashion:—“Having thus explained to you, my brethren, the different kinds of lying by which we may hurt either our neighbour, or sin our own souls, will any man pretend to tell me that, after being informed by three indisputable witnesses, that that man (pointing to a certain person in the congregation) does not lie; and will any one pretend to maintain that he had not engaged to support Colonel Campbell’s interest when he was voted into the council by the friends of Colonel Campbell alone, and had not a single vote from the other party? I am convinced that these gentlemen had more wisdom and judgment than to bring, in this way, any man into the council of Dunfermline unless they had got the most convincing promises that he would stand by them and the interest of Colonel Campbell; yet, notwithstanding, he did not so much as give them a single vote.” [Here Mr. John Scotland rose up and told the preacher he was uttering gross lies and falsehoods.] “There is another species of lying,” Mr. Thomson continued, “that with a view to hurt and defame the character of our neighbour—as for one to say such and such a one has got money from Colonel Campbell to induce them to support his interest, and that his brother has receipts for the sums! Yet that very man, upon being examined anent such defamatory assertions, would deny having said such things [here Mr. David Scotland rose and informed Mr. Thomson he was telling great lies]; and you, Robert Scotland (Laird of Middlebank?), you have wrote a paper which appeared in the *Caledonian Mercury* giving me the epithet, ‘An old military blunderbuss’—a name which I glory in, having lived fourteen years in the army, where I was always happy. . . . You term me ‘a blustering blunder-

buss,' which I refuse, and will refer to the whole congregation if that cap does not more properly fit your head than mine." The discourse went on far beyond this, but sufficient is here given to show its nature and the bitterness which the recent political trickery had left in the burgh.

The gentlemen thus attacked—father and two sons—raised an action in the Court of Session, and on appeal, in the House of Lords, against the minister. In both courts they were successful. Robert Scotland was adjudged £5 damages, and John and David jointly £250. Mr. Thomson had also to pay expenses, restricted to fifty guineas, so that he got off on the very easiest terms.

The Rev. James Thomson was the son of a farmer at Carnbee. Got his degree at St. Andrews in 1717. Was licensed by the Presbytery there, 30th October, 1723; and served as chaplain in the 26th or Cameronian regiment for fourteen years. He came to Dunfermline on 5th May, 1743, and in the fashion of the time was a keen politician. This bent towards the worst kind of worldly wisdom led him to take not only a keen, but a fierce and fiery interest in the election of 1774; and to indulge his passionate animus in the sermon from which we have quoted. He was a big, strong man, with a trumpet-toned voice that searched every corner of the old Abbey Church when he preached. He took his turn in the pulpit and stuck to his prelections till he had reached his eighty-ninth year. He died in October, 1790, when ninety-one years of age.

The paper which Mr. Thomson, in his discourse, referred to as appearing in the *Caledonian Mercury*, saw the light in that ancient print on 21st October, 1774. The writer, Robert Scotland, says that he and his friends had worked, in this election, in the interests of Col. Archibald Campbell since Lammas of 1773, and up to the close of the election at Michaelmas, 1774. He absolutely denies that he or any of his friends ever received any sum of money, fee, gift or reward "from the Baronet hinted at, nor from any of his connections, to induce him to take any political direction," "and that every publication, report, or insinuation to the contrary, by whomsoever related,

whether from the pulpit by a blustering blunderbus of an old military chaplain—a ‘peep sma’ orator—and every such-like busy-body, is false and slanderous—and I challenge all mankind to adduce evidence to prove a single instance of my having ever suggested to, or solicited any person to any interest but that of Col. Campbell.”

Three days after the appearance of this letter, namely, on 24th October, one “Pillory” offers sarcastically his services to Robert Scotland, “in consideration of his faithful services to Col. Masterton,” and hints at a gift “of 600 guineas to himself and a kirk in Edinburgh to his brother; both scarcely a sufficient recompense for his taking in his grey-headed father, to break his faith in Col. Campbell,” and for his attempt to “seduce the gentlemen at Dunfermline” from their political attachments. Such were some—a fair sample—of the political amenities of the time. Another writer, taking the narrative form in his letter, appears on 5th November (*Caledonian Mercury*), and relates how an agent of one of the candidates in the said election got himself quite suddenly converted in front of a magical mirror. The agent in question met with another at dinner, “No. 1 dining at the expense of No. 2. After dinner No. 2 gives No. 1 a dissertation on the elements of an election, which consist of one thing—‘Man, mind thyself.’

“‘By the bye,’ said No. 2 to No. 1, ‘your wig is badly set—you’ve been in too great a hurry with it this morning. Pray step into the next room and have your dress put right. You will find a mirror there and all other needfuls. And, I may say, in a word, that you will find on the left side a glass with a bundle of papers, which, pray, look at, and if you have any use for them, put them in your fob.’ No. 1 entered the mirror room, found the papers, and found, too, they were bank notes to the value of £100 sterling. He fobbed them and returned to No. 2. ‘Have you got your obtrusive wig put right now?’ ‘Yes, of course I have, and am quite pleased with myself now.’”

Such is a farther sample of the literature and the temper of the political contests of one hundred and thirty years ago. We are better

now. Whatever progress, or the want of it, we have made since 1774, our politics are—like our religious convictions—much less fierce, more reasonable and tolerant.

The election matters of 1774 did not, however, end with the decision in the law courts, or with the publication of letters in the newspapers. When the Presbytery of Dunfermline met on 5th April, 1775, a committee of enquiry into the disturbance in the Parish Church was moved for. It was seconded, spoken to, and rejected—the moderator intimating to Mr. Thomson that they find nothing censurable in his conduct, and encouraged him to go on “in the work of the Lord.” The same motion came up again in the Dunfermline Presbytery in September, 1775, and again on 8th May, 1776, in a writing called “an instrument.” But the Presbytery were evidently firmly set to have no enquiry, and delayed the whole matter, though the mover (Mr. Spence) took out a protest and tabled his shilling. The General Assembly of 1776 were next honoured with a hearing of the case. Complainers and members of Presbytery were heard, papers were read, and parties were listened to at the bar; then, after full deliberation, the complaints were dismissed.

The case was heard of all over Scotland; it was discussed at every manse fireside, and debated in every session. It was long and keenly canvassed, all through the loom shops and at every street corner of Dunfermline. But the reverend gentleman survived it all. He served in his pulpit for twenty-four years after, and died in peace at a ripe old age.

Though the pictures of craft life we generally meet with are decidedly grey in tone, there are times when the social sky brightens and a touch of colour and glow of the picturesque is thrown across the scene. Thus the court of the convener on Michaelmas day, 1766, is found in high flight and fine feather. On this occasion the members enact that the “deacon-convener for the time being shall, in making the public parade through the town on the King’s or Queen’s birthdays, wear and have on, as a badge of honour and respect, the red-and-white sashes or broad ribbons belonging to the court;

and the court declares that all future conveners, by their acceptance of office, do subject themselves to this Act."

Even the Town Council had become infected with the sash-and-ribbon fever. In the same year of the convener's decoration, the staff-man or town-keeper of the burgh, it is agreed, shall be put in uniform. So the council vote their officer "a new coat, a new bonnet, two new shifts, and other necessities for his back and bed; and the council recommend the said officer to be faithful in his office, and particularly to keep the town clear of sturdy beggars, and to obey his masters in all lawful orders." The conveners' court are "at it" again two years after, namely, on 24th June, 1768, when it was "agreed that David Kilpatrick, their officer, shall get a new coat and hat at the court's expense, to be worn by him on any occasion extraordinary, or as ordered by the court; and appoints Deacon Graham, Deacon Anderson, and Deacon Turnbull to assist the convener in purchasing the said officer's coat and hat."

On all these "extraordinary occasions"—King's birthdays, election times, and party processions—the weavers' flag was sure to be hung out. Whatever the original flag may have been, we learn from Henderson's *Annals*, and otherwise, that James Blake, among other excellent work, wove a set of colours, *i.e.*, flags, for his wobster brethren. It was a solid sheet of silk damask, woven with different patterns on the two sides, and carrying the legend, in bold, gold lettering:—

FOR THE WEAVERS OF DUNFERMLINE, 1734,

and the weavers' motto—

TRUST WITH TRUTH,

and bearing their ensign—a boar's head, with a shuttle in its mouth. On the other side was the rampant Scottish lion, surrounded with thistles with a crown at the head, a St. Andrew's cross and the motto—

Nemo me impune lacesset.

Let us picture, if we can, the turn-out of the trades on the King's birthday, when George the Third was King. It is the 4th of June,

and the sun is high, though it is not yet high noon. Flags wave from the windows of the new Townhouse, the provost, bailies and councillors appear in their best "braid claith," and the mass of citizens crowding round are but little behind them. So far as the trades are concerned, it is no more a case of dull, sad, rayless hodden grey, but a scintillating show of colour, and tint, and tone. Sashes, ribbons, aprons, and broad phylacteries to the conveners, with braided coat, shining hat and buckled shoon to the officers, and to the remanent brethren a back covering of the passing green, russet, or brown, decorated with great, shining buttons. A big, broad, blue bonnet, gun-mouthed breeches, ribbed stockings, and thick-soled, broad-bottom feet coverings. With prancing naigs to head the procession, the cavalcade moves to the Cross, where the provost for the time drinks to the health of the King, casts the glass high in the air, and lets it fall to pieces on the causey, "that it ne'er may serve a meaner end." Then move off the skirling pipes and the screaming hautboy to ride the marches ere the day be done.

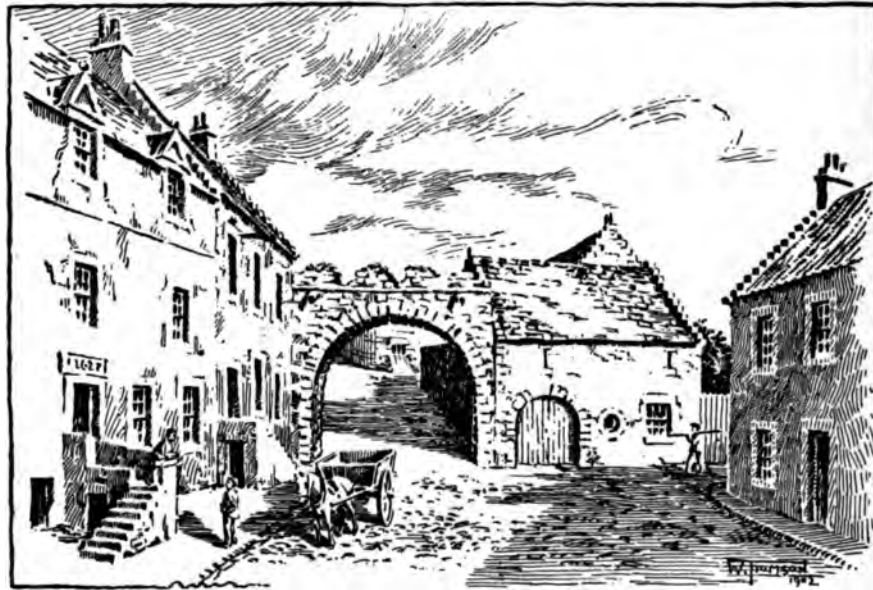
CHAPTER XXIII.

The Townhouse of 1772—"Popish" bill of 1779—Dearth of 1782—Noble conduct of the crafts—Ecclesiastical changes—Food prices of 1771—New freeman entries—The Hunts—James Francis Erskine of Mar—The Earldom of Mar—County roads in 1790.

IN 1771, the predecessor of the present Townhouse was finished—all but the steeple, which was also in fair way of being set up. This steeple was a mere matter of wood, and was set on the top of its attenuated tower in the style of an extinguisher out of use. When no longer required—about one hundred years after—it was cleared of its

blue slates, and simply lifted down. The Townhouse was at first of only two stories, but a third was in time added to its dignity. It survived till 1875.

With the new Townhouse came the new Bridge Street—the first, and greatest, of our disfigurements of our original glen of beauty. Pennant came, in his general *Tour in Scotland* (1772), to see us at



The Mill Port, Collier Row, Dunfermline : removed, 1754.

this time. He reckons our numbers at six to seven thousand, and tells us that we were then weaving damasks, diapers, checks, and tickings ; and keeping a thousand looms going. It was evidently a fairly good time, for the weavers had engaged the Townhouse as a hall of assembly, and danced there with joy till they roused the ire of the “unco guid,” who moved that the dancing be abolished ; but the council, needing the rent, and seeing no harm in the exercise, voted to continue the pleasures of the terpsichoreans.

The dancing in the Townhouse was succeeded in 1774, as we have seen, with dancing through the streets "in a tumultuous manner with drums beating and colours flying." Our fathers were then losing their heads in political delirium, and the magistrates who wished, but failed, to stop the "dancing balls" of 1772, now found their opportunity, and dancing was stopped, indoors and out.

The new clock in the Townhouse tower was now (1775) measuring the hours; and the council would fain take time by the forelock, and begin a new era with a "new plan for the education of the youth of the burgh," but we kept the old drummer and the old piper still going round, and we still thought so much of the old-world, foot-fastening stocks, that we had this ancient instrument of torture securely fixed on the wall of the Townhouse "just aboon the black-hole window."

To please "the powers that be," we railed at the "rebels" in America in 1775, and we mourned in want and woe when the war brought depression upon us in 1777, and stopped our looms. The conveners' court then prayed the council to cause the officers to wear black bands at funerals; and so black bands and halberts became the funereal trappings of the day.

The "Popish Bill" of 1779 put us good Protestants in a frenzy of meaningless rage. We petitioned the council, we invoked the Church, and we helped to send the fiery cross of religious hate and fanaticism all round the land, till it concentrated in London, and burst like a tornado of fire and flame in the great metropolis, causing immense wreckage of property, stoppage of business, and the loss of hundreds of lives.

We had a different sensation when Paul Jones, in 1778, came up the Firth, and spread terror all round our shores; and we were glad to learn that good Mr. Shirra of Kirkcaldy had prayed the wild rover out of the seas. Our national poet visited us in 1787, when Charlie Short-house was gravedigger; and Charlie, showing the flat stones that—as he thought—covered the grave of the Bruce, saw the poet, with sacred fervour, kneel down and kiss the cold, dull slab.

We were just then beginning to cast off the shell of our antique framing. We were hearing lectures and having scientific exhibitions, and "going in" for easier, lighter, higher, and gayer literature. We set up our first public library (1789); and, as this dull, half-dead, and wholly dormant century drew to a close, we heard, though faintly, the celestial voices saying, "Let there be light."

But man, in fate and fortune, is dominated by the stomach! Progress is slow and advance is laggard when the larder is empty and the sense of hunger cries incessantly for relief. The condition of the Scottish people in the last quarter of the eighteenth century seemed to have grown steadily worse. We had food riots all over the northern and middle lowlands. The military were called out—not to feed, but to shoot down, the hungry populace. Garrisons were planted in the towns; fines, imprisonments, and transportations followed. Repression was the order of the day, remedy was little thought of; and so the swelling masses of social misery grew larger daily, and suffering steadily widened her borders.

When the crops of 1782 were found to be an almost entire failure, and when the people were in a state of destitution impossible to describe, the Government eased off once more the fiscal corn duties—and believed they had done a great work? But city corporations, Churches, bankers, magistrates of towns and commissioners of counties, from Aberdeen southward to Lanark, were striving by every practical means to supply the food that hungering life demanded.

In Dunfermline, the trades combined and formed themselves into a temporary provision society, made enquiries in Holland as to prices of grain in that country, and commissioned cargoes of oats from home ports and from Ostend. They appointed a committee of management with salesmen to distribute, laid down the rule of ready money on non-profit rates of charge, and so strove in a united, humane, and reasonable method to meet the period and incidence of distress.

Of this famine period Dr. Chalmers has no record, and Dr. Henderson is equally silent in his *Annals*. The wrights and coopers, however, have left their testimony to the fact that on Friday, 11th

October, 1782—"The meeting took into their serious consideration the present dearth and scarcity; and seeing that the other incorporations in the town are resolving to join in bringing in meall or victual, and contributing out of their stocks for that purpose; they resolved and agreed to contribute eighty pounds sterling, along with the other incorporations, out of their stock."

On 21st October, the deacon lays before the wrights a proposed purchase of 100 bolls of oatmeal, and its proportionate cost—at 16s. 5d. per boll—to the corporation. This sum being found, the trade agree that half the quantity falling to their share should be sold to members, and half to outsiders, at 1s. 1½d. per peck, not above one peck at one time to be sold to each family." On 35th April, 1783, the committee in charge reported their intromissions, and the banking of the money realised by sales. On 2nd June, the members agree to "sell the remainder of their meal, by turns," and without charge. On 30th August, the selling of the meal still goes on "to every person that pleases" at 1s. per peck—the dearth is evidently becoming less intense—yet, in February and October of 1784, the meal committee of the wrights and coopers are still at work. Then in March, 1785, we reach the day of reckoning—the bank (of Scotland) is seeking its own. But, in these "hard-up" times money cannot be got. The year 1786 passes ere the last efforts are made to collect the last of the meal debts, and the new year of 1787 is reached ere the meal accounts are finally settled.

The minutes of the hammermen contain a record very similar to that of the wrights, though they seem to have been engaged in a larger and more important enterprise, namely, the importing from Ostend of 1000 bolls of corn. In January, 1783, we find the trade, "considering the scarcity of corn in the town, agreed to lend out of their stock [funds], for the purpose of supplying the incorporation with meal, the sum of £80 sterling."

In February, the tailors' craft agree to join the wrights and hammermen, and to contribute, "as the other trades have done," to bring oats and meal to their brethren and to the townsfolk.

All this is going on among the crafts of the burgh, yet, for some unknown reason, the weavers' chronicles contain no statement on the matter. For five years the operations of subscribing funds, providing food, and collecting sale sums, goes on ; and the weavers, who must have been the largest factors in the enterprise, are silent about it. They continue, in placid equanimity, the absorbing occupations of "making" apprentices and freemen, indulging in mild sprees on the advent of a new entrant, and, as antetypes of Mark Tapley, forget the hardships of the hour, and make merry while they may.

In alluding in a previous chapter to matters outside of the craft minutes, we have necessarily passed over many interesting occurrences in which they would be either deeply involved or of which they would necessarily be the excited and earnest beholders. The disputed settlement at Inverkeithing, and the founding of the Relief Church in 1752-3, has been recently, in jubilee and other celebrations, brought so prominently before the Dunfermline public that further reference is unnecessary. The introduction of our first water scheme (in 1765) was a move of first-rate sanitary importance, but belongs more to our municipal than to our industrial history. The building of a new Townhouse and the construction of Bridge Street may also be ranged under this category.

Dr. Henderson refers to riotous proceedings in the town, and to the turning out of "meal mobs" in 1770 ; but the prices of domestic articles, which he quotes as ruling at the time, do not show like famine rates. The quartern loaf was 5d ; the pound of meat, 3½d. to 4½d. ; fresh butter, 22 ounces, from 4d. to 6d. ; meal, 5d. to 6d. per peck ; pot barley, 1d. per lb. ; potatoes, 4½d. to 6d. per lippie ; soap, 6d. to 8d. per pound ; and such like rates. The weavers (with draw-boy), according to Mercer, earned at this time (1772) about £30 annually, the other trades were in proportion, and the professions were then supported on sums of equal modesty and attenuation. For fifteen years succeeding 1775, we have no record of interest, except to those who wish to see the names of their ancestors in the weavers' list of freemen. In 1791, a slight accession of attractiveness sets in, and

the neat-handed clerk who writes the minutes gives more care than before to the movements of his grey goose quill. In that year, and on 15th September, "Martin Meldrum, son-in-law to William Meldrum, burgess and freeman of Dunfermline, is admitted a freeman of the incorporation of weavers." Martin lived in a house built from the ruins of Queen Anne's jointure house in 1796, and the curious may still find it in Nethertown Broad Street, opposite the foot of Reid Street. Martin was for many years the keeper of a merry-going change-house there, and acted as "provost of the Nethertown races" till the second decade of the nineteenth century. The town's drummer of those days, and when the race period came round, paced through the streets, rattling his half-burst drum, warning all and sundry "that all particulars of the aforesaid races could be had from Mr. Martin Meldrum at his change-house in the Nether Toon."

The entries of freemen are numerous beyond precedent in this year of 1791—no less than twenty-five new names being added to the roll. These are now nearly all unrecognisable. One, John Barnet, lives in Black's Park—and we ask, in passing, where was Black's Park. Two of these new entrants, William Inglis and his son William, both live in Paisley; and James Black hails from Dunning, in Perthshire; so we conclude that the weaving trade must then have been lively in Dunfermline to draw applicants for admission from such distances.

Among the other casual entries, we find that on 14th September "Alexander Hunt, merchant, Dunfermline, was admitted a freeman with the incorporation of weavers, and gave a sufficient essay (a piece of cloth woven by the applicant), and paid his dues and gave his oath as use is." His son William, also a merchant in Dunfermline, acquired the estate of Pittencrieff in 1800 for £31,000. He was succeeded by his eldest son, William, in 1807, who lived till 1812, and was succeeded by his brother James. James died in 1858, and Pittencrieff acknowledged James A. Hunt as proprietor. He died in 1890, when the present gallant colonel became laird. He has now reigned twelve years as "Superior" of the burgh, and done several things by which he will be remembered. The first three lairds were weavers

and manufacturers, and we have seen that the father of the first was able to weave and exhibit a sample of his own handicraft.

On the same year in which the Hunt family claimed connection with the weaving craft, a much greater personage had that honour conferred upon him. The minute to which I refer is dated 12th April:—"Which day the deacon and remanent members of the Incorporation of Weavers, for the esteem and affection which they have and bear to John Francis Erskine, Esquire of Mar, and to John Floyer Erskine, Esquire, his son, do admit and receive both of them as honorary freemen of the said incorporation, by delivering to each of them a ticket signed by the clerk, testifying said admission to the said freedom. They accepted thereof in a very genteel manner; and, in testimony of their esteem and affection for said incorporation, presented and delivered a very handsome seal of the ancient arms of their family, cut upon a large block of Scots white pebble stone, set in silver, which the incorporation accepted with many thanks," etc.

The senior person here introduced to the weavers of one hundred and thirteen years ago, and to our readers of to-day, was a descendant of the most ancient peerage in the Scottish list—the Earldom of Mar. That title, with the Mar estate, were forfeited in 1715 by John, the eleventh earl, taking part in the Chevalier rising of that year. The rebellious earl escaped to the continent after the battle of Sheriffmuir, in company with the Old Pretender, and died abroad in 1732. His only son, Thomas, was Commissary of Stores at Gibraltar at this time, but came home and was returned M.P. for Stirlingshire in 1747, being elected also the same year for the county of Clackmannan. His uncle, the Hon. James Erskine of Grange, having amassed a fortune by commerce, bought back from Government the forfeited estates belonging to the Mar peerage. These he presented to his nephew, Thomas, who died in 1766, leaving a daughter Frances, who married a son of the uncle James above referred to. The first fruits of this union was the birth of the above John Francis Erskine, Esq. of Mar, who was born in 1741, and who visited the weavers of Dunfermline as above related. He had married Frances, only daughter of Charles Floyer, Esq.,

Governor of Madras, hence the name Floyer attached to the son who accompanied his father and had audience of the weavers in the Townhouse of Dunfermline in 1791. There would doubtless be a dominant reason for the repeated visits of these members of the Mar family to Dunfermline, but the explanation is not given in the minutes of the weavers, and we have not been able to discover it elsewhere.

There were at this time (1792), about twelve hundred looms employed in the town. The weavers seem to have had, generally speaking, plenty of work, though the virus of competition was evidently beginning to have its effect upon the habits of the weavers and the circumstances of the trade. The meetings of the craft, which had hitherto been held during the day, were now invariably held in the evening. The annual and other gatherings took place in the Townhouse, which had become a common meeting-house for nearly all public meetings outside of the churches. The names of the admitted freemen and officials now become familiar to us from what we know of themselves or their descendants. In September, 1794, "David Paton, son of Andrew Paton," and "John Couper, son to George Couper," are enrolled in the big book of the weavers. The first is a name familiar to every citizen of the auld gray town as father of the late Joseph N. Paton, and grandfather to the eminent artist, Sir Noel Paton. David was born in 1766, so that he was twenty-eight years of age when he joined the weavers; he died in 1844, as faithfully recorded by Dr. Henderson (*Annals*, p. 652). John Couper will less readily occur to the memory of even the older denizens, though the family were for generations closely connected with the weavers' association, and well known to every member of the craft. John Couper was weavers' councillor in 1798, and his son George was boxmaster or treasurer from 1826 till 1830.

On 12th September, 1793, the weavers are found to have worked themselves into a state of anxious, if not indeed furious, opposition to "A Bill proposed by the heritors of Fife for repairing the roads in the county, for abolishing statute labour, and for substituting a tax instead." They consider the same oppressive, and seek the help

dent upon manufactures—the mendicant army continued to swell its numbers, and to augment the persistency of its appeals.

The proclamations against beggars found its complement in proclamations against political agitations. These continued to be issued at closely recurring intervals, and to be marked by growing fierceness of fulmination. In 1792 Henry Dundas, the Secretary for Scotland, gave notice to the sheriffs of counties and the magistrates of burghs, “to exert themselves to suppress diverse wicked and seditious publications, now industriously dispersed, with the view of exciting discontents, tumults and disorders in the realm.” While this proclamation was yet being read, a great meeting was held in Glasgow ostensibly to express loyalty to the King and Government; yet at which this amendment was put, and by only a narrow majority defeated—“That nothing could strengthen the executive powers more than a perfect cordiality between the governors and the governed, and that a well-timed reform both in Parliament and the internal government of the Royal Burghs of Scotland would have a happy tendency to promote this very desirable object.” Instead of listening to lessons of wisdom such as this, the Government proceeded to extremities. They arrested Thomas Hunter, a solicitor in Glasgow, William Skirving of Kirkcaldy, and the other illustrious heroes of reform whose names are inscribed on the martyrs’ monument in the Calton Churchyard of Edinburgh—a monument to commemorate political virtue, and no less to perpetuate the memory of political oppression.

What were called Secret, and sometimes “Corresponding,” Societies, having a purpose or reform, or of radical change, were formed in all our large towns, or wherever the industrial element had gathered in our communities. In Dunfermline, as in other manufacturing towns, disaffection was freely expressed, and the disaffected formed themselves into one of these dreaded associations. Its meetings were held in a schoolroom in the Maygate, and its proceedings had the baneful yet necessary character of complete secrecy. Dr. Henderson has given (*Annals*, p. 531) what may be called the street-corner definition of the aims of this society, and he maligns at once the intelligence of the

reformers, and the purpose of this association, in his references to their intended division of the neighbouring estates.

Levellers formed indeed a section of the agitating ranks of those days—as wild schemes are always hatched in periods of suffering—but levelling was not the purpose of the Corresponding Societies. Their purpose was political, social, and industrial reform. This was clearly proved by the outburst of patriotic fervour which manifested itself all over the country in 1797-8, when the fatherland was threatened with invasion, and when overflowing public meetings were held in Dunfermline and every other town in Scotland, to devise measures to subscribe, to help, and by any means to swell the ranks of the country's defenders, and to make sure that an invader's foot should never rest in peace on our soil.

The trials of 1793-4, and the lives of the reforming heroes who were then banished to foreign shores and treated as felons, all went to show that preservation and not destruction of the commonwealth and its government was the object of the reformers of a hundred years ago. And if it be true, as quoted by Dr. Henderson from the council records, that the weavers were (1796) shut out of the Town-house because of their reforming tendencies, the act must be attributed more to the fears of the council than to the characters of the men.

No less need be said of David Black and James Paterson, weavers in Dunfermline, who were summoned to Perth Circuit in 1798, accused of "sedition and as being members of a seditious society called United Scotsmen, and of having administered unlawful oaths and engagements," and where Paterson was banished for five years beyond seas and Black was outlawed for non-appearance. But the cry for reform, the widespread desire for movements towards justice and equity—rooted as it was in the distress of the people and in the minds of their leaders—was not to be stilled till the concessions of 1819, 1832, and 1846 had found a place on the statute book. It was a long wait, but the fruit of that waiting has taught us the wisdom

of continued effort, and to work and wait for the greater reforms that are to come.

The physical discomforts and deprivations due to the evil legislation of the time were augmented and embittered by the local conditions under which our citizens lived. In Dunfermline—judging of its features by the side-lights already referred to—our ancestors of a century ago lived in low, damp, and leaky houses, and were indebted to the freedom yielded by their occupations and the “caller air” for the fair level of health which the community maintained. The roughly-paved cante in the middle of the street, the crooked outside stairs protruding into the streets, the accumulations of city refuse in the kennels behind every projection, the pitching out from doors and windows of household liquids, and in the evenings of night soil,—while the pedestrian below kept on guard by bawling out “haud your hand,” and the gudewives answered by shrill warnings to “tak’ care” from the openings overhead—such conditions were alike inimical to physical health and to mental expansion or content, and had their due effect in moulding the minds and fashioning the conclusions of the people.

The weather, too, has much to do with the deeper faith in social leanings, and with the actual and forming influences that make a happy and contented, and withal an active and reasoning community. The weather at the close of 1789, and the first few months of 1790, was mild and beneficent beyond anything similar remembered in the past. The summer was warm, the autumn was fruitful, and the winter was as if our good city and our country had fallen into a heaven-blessed era of halcyon days. They, alas! were never again repeated. It was the year of the earthquake when, as some thought, the powers below, angry at the smiling heavens above, spent their Titanic forces shaking our portion of this terrestrial ball. The lovely weather of that year did not return, but rather deepened in harshness as the years ran past.

When 1793 was closing in, we had one of those terrible winters of snowfalls and frost-bitings that seem to mark the succession, not of

the equinoxes, but of the storm eras. The streets were breast and shoulder high in drifts, and the shivering citizens made way out of doors by cuttings and tunnels amid the deep-laid, whitening shroud of snow. The snowfall was succeeded by long-continued storms of "wind, snow-laden, and of rains, wind-driven" along the Fifian shore. Ten and fourteen degrees of frost chilled the landmen, and froze hard the tempest-tossed mariner on the main. Shipwrecks were scattered all round our east coast, and the wave-made ruins of gallant ships lay breaking up at North Berwick, at Leith, at Royston, at Crammond island, and Tynningham Sands; while, as the days of storm sped on and the news came in, the west, as well as the east coast, was seen to have been visited by the devouring storm, for vessels ashore and breaking up were reported from every station from Cantyre to Cape Wrath. The wild elemental war was followed, as we might have expected, by keen, piercing, windless frosts, when Moncur Loch, and that of Clayacres, were for weeks as hard and firm as highways, and carried daily crowds of graceful skaters and noisy sliders, or of loud shouting, boisterous curlers from the farms around.

As the year 1794 began in storms, so it finished in the same fierce mood. From Christmas till the end of the first week in January, 1795, the blinding snow continued to fall till in our streets half the houses were buried in the drifts, and doors and windows on the lower storeys were no longer seen. How the summer fared, we know not, but no sooner had the autumn come again than the elemental strife began afresh. The newspapers of the period have for weeks a crowded list of disasters on sea and land. On this occasion, the storm fiend seems to have plied his desolating pinions all over the British Islands, as news of shipwrecks, torn-up trees, falling buildings, and loss of life, came in from all the coasts, and even from the shores of Ireland. November passed away, but the biting frost and snow came again as we ushered in the year 1796. No record have we of spring and summer, nor of the storm season of this year; but February of 1797 "filled the dyke" with black, bewildering storms of wind and rain, when the doleful harvest of storms and wrecks crowded

the pages of the contemporary papers, and filled many a heart with the sadness of despair.

Thus, generally speaking, and so far as the weather elements are concerned, we reach the end of the eighteenth century—in strain, and stress, and storm. Our harvests were destroyed, our food supplies were cut off, dearth and famine came on in the ghastly procession, and the sufferings of the nation became, or should have become, the biggest feature in our annals. A privileged governing class, sure of food themselves, cared little for the nameless crowds that were crying for bread. Our own supplies had been exhausted, but we could not, without leave of our governors, bring food-stuffs from abroad. The agricultural interest, *i.e.*, the landlords, must be protected, whatever may become of the people. The Corn Laws must be respected, though all else in life and property should be shipwrecked in their maintenance. These had been shaped in “greed and guile” in 1774, and had been “revised” in 1791, but their first form was hardly touched, even in outline, till the great measure (only half a measure, after all) of 1846, when the navigation barriers were finally broken down, and the food of the people permitted to enter the ports.

CHAPTER XXVI.

War and famine—The weavers help—Henderson of Fordel—Election in 1796—“Battle of Kinghorn”—Rescue and retreat—Luckie Skinner—The black hole—The lady witness—The return to reason.

THE great European war with France, in which Great Britain was the leading factor, had begun in 1793. George Washington had taken the reins of government in the United States for the second

now. Whatever progress, or the want of it, we have made since 1774, our politics are—like our religious convictions—much less fierce, more reasonable and tolerant.

The election matters of 1774 did not, however, end with the decision in the law courts, or with the publication of letters in the newspapers. When the Presbytery of Dunfermline met on 5th April, 1775, a committee of enquiry into the disturbance in the Parish Church was moved for. It was seconded, spoken to, and rejected—the moderator intimating to Mr. Thomson that they find nothing censurable in his conduct, and encouraged him to go on “in the work of the Lord.” The same motion came up again in the Dunfermline Presbytery in September, 1775, and again on 8th May, 1776, in a writing called “an instrument.” But the Presbytery were evidently firmly set to have no enquiry, and delayed the whole matter, though the mover (Mr. Spence) took out a protest and tabled his shilling. The General Assembly of 1776 were next honoured with a hearing of the case. Complainers and members of Presbytery were heard, papers were read, and parties were listened to at the bar; then, after full deliberation, the complaints were dismissed.

The case was heard of all over Scotland; it was discussed at every manse fireside, and debated in every session. It was long and keenly canvassed, all through the loom shops and at every street corner of Dunfermline. But the reverend gentleman survived it all. He served in his pulpit for twenty-four years after, and died in peace at a ripe old age.

Though the pictures of craft life we generally meet with are decidedly grey in tone, there are times when the social sky brightens and a touch of colour and glow of the picturesque is thrown across the scene. Thus the court of the convener on Michaelmas day, 1766, is found in high flight and fine feather. On this occasion the members enact that the “deacon-convener for the time being shall, in making the public parade through the town on the King's or Queen's birthdays, wear and have on, as a badge of honour and respect, the red-and-white sashes or broad ribbons belonging to the court;

and the court declares that all future conveners, by their acceptance of office, do subject themselves to this Act."

Even the Town Council had become infected with the sash-and-ribbon fever. In the same year of the convener's decoration, the staff-man or town-keeper of the burgh, it is agreed, shall be put in uniform. So the council vote their officer "a new coat, a new bonnet, two new shifts, and other necessities for his back and bed; and the council recommend the said officer to be faithful in his office, and particularly to keep the town clear of sturdy beggars, and to obey his masters in all lawful orders." The conveners' court are "at it" again two years after, namely, on 24th June, 1768, when it was "agreed that David Kilpatrick, their officer, shall get a new coat and hat at the court's expense, to be worn by him on any occasion extraordinary, or as ordered by the court; and appoints Deacon Graham, Deacon Anderson, and Deacon Turnbull to assist the convener in purchasing the said officer's coat and hat."

On all these "extraordinary occasions"—King's birthdays, election times, and party processions—the weavers' flag was sure to be hung out. Whatever the original flag may have been, we learn from Henderson's *Annals*, and otherwise, that James Blake, among other excellent work, wove a set of colours, *i.e.*, flags, for his wobster brethren. It was a solid sheet of silk damask, woven with different patterns on the two sides, and carrying the legend, in bold, gold lettering:—

FOR THE WEAVERS OF DUNFERMLINE, 1734,

and the weavers' motto—

TRUST WITH TRUTH,

and bearing their ensign—a boar's head, with a shuttle in its mouth. On the other side was the rampant Scottish lion, surrounded with thistles with a crown at the head, a St. Andrew's cross and the motto—

Nemo me impune lacesset.

Let us picture, if we can, the turn-out of the trades on the King's birthday, when George the Third was King. It is the 4th of June,

and the sun is high, though it is not yet high noon. Flags wave from the windows of the new Townhouse, the provost, bailies and councillors appear in their best "braid claith," and the mass of citizens crowding round are but little behind them. So far as the trades are concerned, it is no more a case of dull, sad, rayless hodden grey, but a scintillating show of colour, and tint, and tone. Sashes, ribbons, aprons, and broad phylacteries to the conveners, with braided coat, shining hat and buckled shoon to the officers, and to the remanent brethren a back covering of the passing green, russet, or brown, decorated with great, shining buttons. A big, broad, blue bonnet, gun-mouthed breeches, ribbed stockings, and thick-soled, broad-bottom feet coverings. With prancing naigs to head the procession, the cavalcade moves to the Cross, where the provost for the time drinks to the health of the King, casts the glass high in the air, and lets it fall to pieces on the causey, "that it ne'er may serve a meaner end." Then move off the skirling pipes and the screaming hautboy to ride the marches ere the day be done.

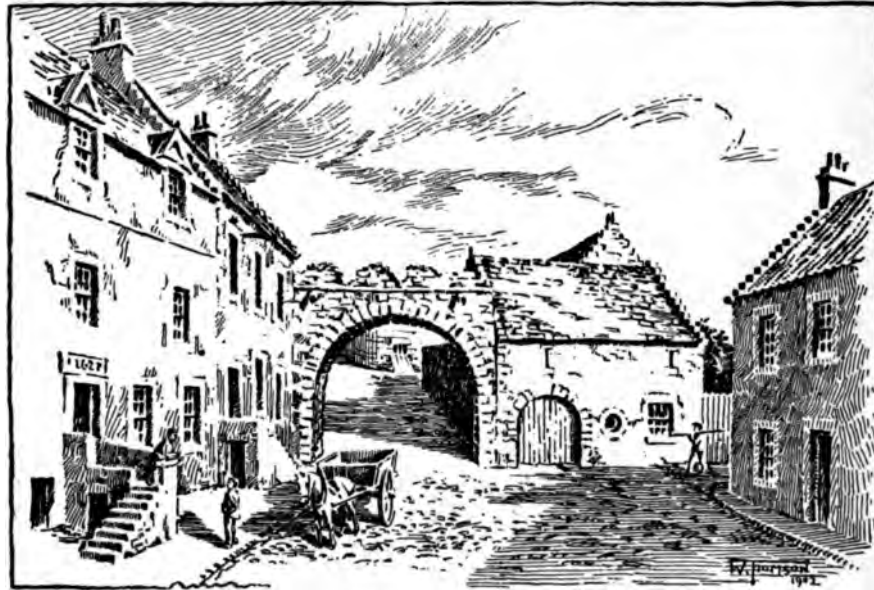
CHAPTER XXIII.

The Townhouse of 1772—"Popish" bill of 1779—Dearth of 1782—Noble conduct of the crafts—Ecclesiastical changes—Food prices of 1771—New freeman entries—The Hunts—James Francis Erskine of Mar—The Earldom of Mar—County roads in 1790.

IN 1771, the predecessor of the present Townhouse was finished—all but the steeple, which was also in fair way of being set up. This steeple was a mere matter of wood, and was set on the top of its attenuated tower in the style of an extinguisher out of use. When no longer required—about one hundred years after—it was cleared of its

blue slates, and simply lifted down. The Townhouse was at first of only two stories, but a third was in time added to its dignity. It survived till 1875.

With the new Townhouse came the new Bridge Street—the first, and greatest, of our disfigurements of our original glen of beauty. Pennant came, in his general *Tour in Scotland* (1772), to see us at



The Mill Port, Collier Row, Dunfermline : removed, 1754.

this time. He reckons our numbers at six to seven thousand, and tells us that we were then weaving damasks, diapers, checks, and tickings; and keeping a thousand looms going. It was evidently a fairly good time, for the weavers had engaged the Townhouse as a hall of assembly, and danced there with joy till they roused the ire of the "unco guid," who moved that the dancing be abolished; but the council, needing the rent, and seeing no harm in the exercise, voted to continue the pleasures of the terpsichoreans.

The dancing in the Townhouse was succeeded in 1774, as we have seen, with dancing through the streets "in a tumultuous manner with drums beating and colours flying." Our fathers were then losing their heads in political delirium, and the magistrates who wished, but failed, to stop the "dancing balls" of 1772, now found their opportunity, and dancing was stopped, indoors and out.

The new clock in the Townhouse tower was now (1775) measuring the hours; and the council would fain take time by the forelock, and begin a new era with a "new plan for the education of the youth of the burgh," but we kept the old drummer and the old piper still going round, and we still thought so much of the old-world, foot-fastening stocks, that we had this ancient instrument of torture securely fixed on the wall of the Townhouse "just aboon the black-hole window."

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The "Popish Bill" of 1779 put us good Protestants in a frenzy of meaningless rage. We petitioned the council, we invoked the Church, and we helped to send the fiery cross of religious hate and fanaticism all round the land, till it concentrated in London, and burst like a tornado of fire and flame in the great metropolis, causing immense wreckage of property, stoppage of business, and the loss of hundreds of lives.

We had a different sensation when Paul Jones, in 1778, came up the Firth, and spread terror all round our shores; and we were glad to learn that good Mr. Shirra of Kirkcaldy had prayed the wild rover out of the seas. Our national poet visited us in 1787, when Charlie Short-house was gravedigger; and Charlie, showing the flat stones that—as he thought—covered the grave of the Bruce, saw the poet, with sacred fervour, kneel down and kiss the cold, dull slab.

We were just then beginning to cast off the shell of our antique framing. We were hearing lectures and having scientific exhibitions, and "going in" for easier, lighter, higher, and gayer literature. We set up our first public library (1789); and, as this dull, half-dead, and wholly dormant century drew to a close, we heard, though faintly, the celestial voices saying, "Let there be light."

But man, in fate and fortune, is dominated by the stomach! Progress is slow and advance is laggard when the larder is empty and the sense of hunger cries incessantly for relief. The condition of the Scottish people in the last quarter of the eighteenth century seemed to have grown steadily worse. We had food riots all over the northern and middle lowlands. The military were called out—not to feed, but to shoot down, the hungry populace. Garrisons were planted in the towns; fines, imprisonments, and transportations followed. Repression was the order of the day, remedy was little thought of; and so the swelling masses of social misery grew larger daily, and suffering steadily widened her borders.

When the crops of 1782 were found to be an almost entire failure, and when the people were in a state of destitution impossible to describe, the Government eased off once more the fiscal corn duties—and believed they had done a great work? But city corporations, Churches, bankers, magistrates of towns and commissioners of counties, from Aberdeen southward to Lanark, were striving by every practical means to supply the food that hungering life demanded.

In Dunfermline, the trades combined and formed themselves into a temporary provision society, made enquiries in Holland as to prices of grain in that country, and commissioned cargoes of oats from home ports and from Ostend. They appointed a committee of management with salesmen to distribute, laid down the rule of ready money on non-profit rates of charge, and so strove in a united, humane, and reasonable method to meet the period and incidence of distress.

Of this famine period Dr. Chalmers has no record, and Dr. Henderson is equally silent in his *Annals*. The wrights and coopers, however, have left their testimony to the fact that on Friday, 11th

October, 1782—"The meeting took into their serious consideration the present dearth and scarcity; and seeing that the other incorporations in the town are resolving to join in bringing in meall or victual, and contributing out of their stocks for that purpose; they resolved and agreed to contribute eighty pounds sterling, along with the other incorporations, out of their stock."

On 21st October, the deacon lays before the wrights a proposed purchase of 100 bolls of oatmeal, and its proportionate cost—at 16s. 5d. per boll—to the corporation. This sum being found, the trade agree that half the quantity falling to their share should be sold to members, and half to outsiders, at 1s. 1½d. per peck, not above one peck at one time to be sold to each family." On 35th April, 1783, the committee in charge reported their intromissions, and the banking of the money realised by sales. On 2nd June, the members agree to "sell the remainder of their meal, by turns," and without charge. On 30th August, the selling of the meal still goes on "to every person that pleases" at 1s. per peck—the dearth is evidently becoming less intense—yet, in February and October of 1784, the meal committee of the wrights and coopers are still at work. Then in March, 1785, we reach the day of reckoning—the bank (of Scotland) is seeking its own. But, in these "hard-up" times money cannot be got. The year 1786 passes ere the last efforts are made to collect the last of the meal debts, and the new year of 1787 is reached ere the meal accounts are finally settled.

The minutes of the hammermen contain a record very similar to that of the wrights, though they seem to have been engaged in a larger and more important enterprise, namely, the importing from Ostend of 1000 bolls of corn. In January, 1783, we find the trade, "considering the scarcity of corn in the town, agreed to lend out of their stock [funds], for the purpose of supplying the incorporation with meal, the sum of £80 sterling."

In February, the tailors' craft agree to join the wrights and hammermen, and to contribute, "as the other trades have done," to bring oats and meal to their brethren and to the townsfolk.

All this is going on among the crafts of the burgh, yet, for some unknown reason, the weavers' chronicles contain no statement on the matter. For five years the operations of subscribing funds, providing food, and collecting sale sums, goes on ; and the weavers, who must have been the largest factors in the enterprise, are silent about it. They continue, in placid equanimity, the absorbing occupations of "making" apprentices and freemen, indulging in mild sprees on the advent of a new entrant, and, as antetypes of Mark Tapley, forget the hardships of the hour, and make merry while they may.

In alluding in a previous chapter to matters outside of the craft minutes, we have necessarily passed over many interesting occurrences in which they would be either deeply involved or of which they would necessarily be the excited and earnest beholders. The disputed settlement at Inverkeithing, and the founding of the Relief Church in 1752-3, has been recently, in jubilee and other celebrations, brought so prominently before the Dunfermline public that further reference is unnecessary. The introduction of our first water scheme (in 1765) was a move of first-rate sanitary importance, but belongs more to our municipal than to our industrial history. The building of a new Townhouse and the construction of Bridge Street may also be ranged under this category.

Dr. Henderson refers to riotous proceedings in the town, and to the turning out of "meal mobs" in 1770 ; but the prices of domestic articles, which he quotes as ruling at the time, do not show like famine rates. The quartern loaf was 5d ; the pound of meat, 3½d. to 4½d. ; fresh butter, 22 ounces, from 4d. to 6d. ; meal, 5d. to 6d. per peck ; pot barley, 1d. per lb. ; potatoes, 4½d. to 6d. per lippie ; soap, 6d. to 8d. per pound ; and such like rates. The weavers (with draw-boy), according to Mercer, earned at this time (1772) about £30 annually, the other trades were in proportion, and the professions were then supported on sums of equal modesty and attenuation. For fifteen years succeeding 1775, we have no record of interest, except to those who wish to see the names of their ancestors in the weavers' list of freemen. In 1791, a slight accession of attractiveness sets in, and

the neat-handed clerk who writes the minutes gives more care than before to the movements of his grey goose quill. In that year, and on 15th September, "Martin Meldrum, son-in-law to William Meldrum, burgess and freeman of Dunfermline, is admitted a freeman of the incorporation of weavers." Martin lived in a house built from the ruins of Queen Anne's jointure house in 1796, and the curious may still find it in Nethertown Broad Street, opposite the foot of Reid Street. Martin was for many years the keeper of a merry-going change-house there, and acted as "provost of the Nethertown races" till the second decade of the nineteenth century. The town's drummer of those days, and when the race period came round, paced through the streets, rattling his half-burst drum, warning all and sundry "that all particulars of the aforesaid races could be had from Mr. Martin Meldrum at his change-house in the Nether Toon."

The entries of freemen are numerous beyond precedent in this year of 1791—no less than twenty-five new names being added to the roll. These are now nearly all unrecognisable. One, John Barnet, lives in Black's Park—and we ask, in passing, where was Black's Park. Two of these new entrants, William Inglis and his son William, both live in Paisley; and James Black hails from Dunning, in Perthshire; so we conclude that the weaving trade must then have been lively in Dunfermline to draw applicants for admission from such distances.

Among the other casual entries, we find that on 14th September "Alexander Hunt, merchant, Dunfermline, was admitted a freeman with the incorporation of weavers, and gave a sufficient essay (a piece of cloth woven by the applicant), and paid his dues and gave his oath as use is." His son William, also a merchant in Dunfermline, acquired the estate of Pittencrieff in 1800 for £31,000. He was succeeded by his eldest son, William, in 1807, who lived till 1812, and was succeeded by his brother James. James died in 1858, and Pittencrieff acknowledged James A. Hunt as proprietor. He died in 1890, when the present gallant colonel became laird. He has now reigned twelve years as "Superior" of the burgh, and done several things by which he will be remembered. The first three lairds were weavers

and manufacturers, and we have seen that the father of the first was able to weave and exhibit a sample of his own handicraft.

On the same year in which the Hunt family claimed connection with the weaving craft, a much greater personage had that honour conferred upon him. The minute to which I refer is dated 12th April:—"Which day the deacon and remanent members of the Incorporation of Weavers, for the esteem and affection which they have and bear to John Francis Erskine, Esquire of Mar, and to John Floyer Erskine, Esquire, his son, do admit and receive both of them as honorary freemen of the said incorporation, by delivering to each of them a ticket signed by the clerk, testifying said admission to the said freedom. They accepted thereof in a very genteel manner; and, in testimony of their esteem and affection for said incorporation, presented and delivered a very handsome seal of the ancient arms of their family, cut upon a large block of Scots white pebble stone, set in silver, which the incorporation accepted with many thanks," etc.

The senior person here introduced to the weavers of one hundred and thirteen years ago, and to our readers of to-day, was a descendant of the most ancient peerage in the Scottish list—the Earldom of Mar. That title, with the Mar estate, were forfeited in 1715 by John, the eleventh earl, taking part in the Chevalier rising of that year. The rebellious earl escaped to the continent after the battle of Sheriffmuir, in company with the Old Pretender, and died abroad in 1732. His only son, Thomas, was Commissary of Stores at Gibraltar at this time, but came home and was returned M.P. for Stirlingshire in 1747, being elected also the same year for the county of Clackmannan. His uncle, the Hon. James Erskine of Grange, having amassed a fortune by commerce, bought back from Government the forfeited estates belonging to the Mar peerage. These he presented to his nephew, Thomas, who died in 1766, leaving a daughter Frances, who married a son of the uncle James above referred to. The first fruits of this union was the birth of the above John Francis Erskine, Esq. of Mar, who was born in 1741, and who visited the weavers of Dunfermline as above related. He had married Frances, only daughter of Charles Floyer, Esq.,

Governor of Madras, hence the name Floyer attached to the son who accompanied his father and had audience of the weavers in the Townhouse of Dunfermline in 1791. There would doubtless be a dominant reason for the repeated visits of these members of the Mar family to Dunfermline, but the explanation is not given in the minutes of the weavers, and we have not been able to discover it elsewhere.

There were at this time (1792), about twelve hundred looms employed in the town. The weavers seem to have had, generally speaking, plenty of work, though the virus of competition was evidently beginning to have its effect upon the habits of the weavers and the circumstances of the trade. The meetings of the craft, which had hitherto been held during the day, were now invariably held in the evening. The annual and other gatherings took place in the Townhouse, which had become a common meeting-house for nearly all public meetings outside of the churches. The names of the admitted freemen and officials now become familiar to us from what we know of themselves or their descendants. In September, 1794, "David Paton, son of Andrew Paton," and "John Couper, son to George Couper," are enrolled in the big book of the weavers. The first is a name familiar to every citizen of the auld gray town as father of the late Joseph N. Paton, and grandfather to the eminent artist, Sir Noel Paton. David was born in 1766, so that he was twenty-eight years of age when he joined the weavers; he died in 1844, as faithfully recorded by Dr. Henderson (*Annals*, p. 652). John Couper will less readily occur to the memory of even the older denizens, though the family were for generations closely connected with the weavers' association, and well known to every member of the craft. John Couper was weavers' councillor in 1798, and his son George was boxmaster or treasurer from 1826 till 1830.

On 12th September, 1793, the weavers are found to have worked themselves into a state of anxious, if not indeed furious, opposition to "A Bill proposed by the heritors of Fife for repairing the roads in the county, for abolishing statute labour, and for substituting a tax instead." They consider the same oppressive, and seek the help

yet, in 1763 there were only some ten or twelve damask looms within the same limits ; and, in 1778, not above twenty looms were given to this kind of fabric. These numbers must be, to some extent, a matter of estimate, since no record giving these details at this period exists.

The years 1770, 1771, and 1772 of our chronicles bring forth nothing beyond the ordinary annual business of accepting freemen, swearing them in, and dining on the fees ; finishing up by agreeing to their two councillors for the following year. In the last of the years mentioned, David Blake, a son of the introducer of damask weaving, is numbered among the knights of the shuttle.

In 1773, the weavers get into what they would doubtless call "braw" company. On 30th November of that year, "by appointment of the Incorporation of the Weavers of Dunfermline, the Right Honourable Captain James Erskine, from Alloa, was admitted a freeman of the craft.

On 30th November, 1774—"On the whilk day, by appointment of the Incorporation of Weavers in Dunfermline, James Francis Erskine, Esq., of Forest, was admitted a freeman weaver of the said incorporation." This latter gentleman was brother to John Francis Erskine, Esq., in whom the ancient title of Earl of Mar was restored by command of George IV., in 1824. "Colonel" James Erskine was a keen politician, and worked with enormous zeal in the local election of 1774—he and others importing great bitterness into the contest, as we shall see. At the close, however, Colonel Campbell, the successful candidate, made a speech in Dunfermline, in which he expressed the hope, and in the most strenuous terms of entreaty, that an entire oblivion of all past animosities would ensue, and that they would bolt the gates against all farther fanatic controversy.

The visit of these scions of the house of Erskine had more under it than might at first appear. The election of 1774, and particularly that of the Stirling burghs, being at hand, it behoved all whom it might concern to be "up and doing" and working for the "interest" each had espoused. The candidates were Captain Masterton of Clackmannan and Colonel Campbell of Inverneil. Captain Masterton held

a Government appointment as Barrack Master-General at the time. He had hastened down from London, and arrived in Edinburgh on 27th April, and rode from thence post haste to Clackmannan to prepare himself and work up the zeal of his friends and henchmen towards the coming election. All parties being ready, and all legitimate weapons properly sharpened, the closing work of the contest was begun.

On 13th October, the council had assembled in the Townhouse at eleven o'clock forenoon, and with them were the friends of the two candidates "promiscuously" gathered together. The choice of the burgh delegate (whose vote went for the whole town) was the business in hand. The friends of Captain Masterton made choice of—*i.e.*, nominated—Provost John Wilson; and those of Colonel Campbell gave their preference for Mr. John M'Laurin, advocate, Edinburgh. For the purpose of purging the meeting of all election weaknesses, the oaths against bribery and corruption were put to the members of council separately and particularly. This course was evidently needed, for when the soul-searching words of the oath were put to James Kinloch, deacon of the butchers, he hesitated. Pressed for an answer to the question, "whether he had received any sum or sums of money, or other form of reward, he answered negatively; but, upon recollection, he said his wife had told him that she had received from the hands of Captain James Francis Erskine two five pound notes, which he was then ignorant of; but though he was now fully informed of the same, it should have no influence upon him in the election." Most people would conclude at once that the Captain's £10 would have some influence upon the honest man's vote, and might even twist his political vision.

How the council vote went we do not know and need not concern ourselves; but in the final heat for the winning post, Colonel Campbell was returned M.P. for the Stirling district of burghs, and Captain Masterton was left out in the cold.

It would appear from the sequel of events that the minister, Mr. James Thomson of the Abbey, had taken great interest and concern

in this fight for the honour of being M.P. He had indeed been noting and recording the party promises and treacherous conduct of his own members ; and, when the election was over, he concluded to speak out and give them a bit of his mind. He chose for his text the words (from Eph. iv. 25)—“ Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye truth, each one with his neighbour, for we are members one with another.” After introducing the subject of lying in general, and political lie-making in particular, he continued in this fashion :— “ Having thus explained to you, my brethren, the different kinds of lying by which we may hurt either our neighbour, or sin our own souls, will any man pretend to tell me that, after being informed by three indisputable witnesses, that that man (pointing to a certain person in the congregation) does not lie ; and will any one pretend to maintain that he had not engaged to support Colonel Campbell’s interest when he was voted into the council by the friends of Colonel Campbell alone, and had not a single vote from the other party ? I am convinced that these gentlemen had more wisdom and judgment than to bring, in this way, any man into the council of Dunfermline unless they had got the most convincing promises that he would stand by them and the interest of Colonel Campbell ; yet, notwithstanding, he did not so much as give them a single vote.” [Here Mr. John Scotland rose up and told the preacher he was uttering gross lies and falsehoods.] “ There is another species of lying,” Mr. Thomson continued, “ that with a view to hurt and defame the character of our neighbour—as for one to say such and such a one has got money from Colonel Campbell to induce them to support his interest, and that his brother has receipts for the sums ! Yet that very man, upon being examined anent such defamatory assertions, would deny having said such things [here Mr. David Scotland rose and informed Mr. Thomson he was telling great lies] ; and you, Robert Scotland (Laird of Middlebank ?), you have wrote a paper which appeared in the *Caledonian Mercury* giving me the epithet, ‘ An old military blunderbuss ’—a name which I glory in, having lived fourteen years in the army, where I was always happy. . . . You term me ‘ a blustering blunder-

buss,' which I refuse, and will refer to the whole congregation if that cap does not more properly fit your head than mine." The discourse went on far beyond this, but sufficient is here given to show its nature and the bitterness which the recent political trickery had left in the burgh.

The gentlemen thus attacked—father and two sons—raised an action in the Court of Session, and on appeal, in the House of Lords, against the minister. In both courts they were successful. Robert Scotland was adjudged £5 damages, and John and David jointly £250. Mr. Thomson had also to pay expenses, restricted to fifty guineas, so that he got off on the very easiest terms.

The Rev. James Thomson was the son of a farmer at Carnbee. Got his degree at St. Andrews in 1717. Was licensed by the Presbytery there, 30th October, 1723; and served as chaplain in the 26th or Cameronian regiment for fourteen years. He came to Dunfermline on 5th May, 1743, and in the fashion of the time was a keen politician. This bent towards the worst kind of worldly wisdom led him to take not only a keen, but a fierce and fiery interest in the election of 1774; and to indulge his passionate animus in the sermon from which we have quoted. He was a big, strong man, with a trumpet-toned voice that searched every corner of the old Abbey Church when he preached. He took his turn in the pulpit and stuck to his prelections till he had reached his eighty-ninth year. He died in October, 1790, when ninety-one years of age.

The paper which Mr. Thomson, in his discourse, referred to as appearing in the *Caledonian Mercury*, saw the light in that ancient print on 21st October, 1774. The writer, Robert Scotland, says that he and his friends had worked, in this election, in the interests of Col. Archibald Campbell since Lammas of 1773, and up to the close of the election at Michaelmas, 1774. He absolutely denies that he or any of his friends ever received any sum of money, fee, gift or reward "from the Baronet hinted at, nor from any of his connections, to induce him to take any political direction," "and that every publication, report, or insinuation to the contrary, by whomsoever related,

whether from the pulpit by a blustering blunderbus of an old military chaplain—a ‘peep sma’ orator—and every such-like busy-body, is false and slanderous—and I challenge all mankind to adduce evidence to prove a single instance of my having ever suggested to, or solicited any person to any interest but that of Col. Campbell.”

Three days after the appearance of this letter, namely, on 24th October, one “Pillory” offers sarcastically his services to Robert Scotland, “in consideration of his faithful services to Col. Masterton,” and hints at a gift “of 600 guineas to himself and a kirk in Edinburgh to his brother; both scarcely a sufficient recompense for his taking in his grey-headed father, to break his faith in Col. Campbell,” and for his attempt to “seduce the gentlemen at Dunfermline” from their political attachments. Such were some—a fair sample—of the political amenities of the time. Another writer, taking the narrative form in his letter, appears on 5th November (*Caledonian Mercury*), and relates how an agent of one of the candidates in the said election got himself quite suddenly converted in front of a magical mirror. The agent in question met with another at dinner, “No. 1 dining at the expense of No. 2. After dinner No. 2 gives No. 1 a dissertation on the elements of an election, which consist of one thing—‘Man, mind thyself.’

“‘By the bye,’ said No. 2 to No. 1, ‘your wig is badly set—you’ve been in too great a hurry with it this morning. Pray step into the next room and have your dress put right. You will find a mirror there and all other needfulls. And, I may say, in a word, that you will find on the left side a glass with a bundle of papers, which, pray, look at, and if you have any use for them, put them in your fob.’ No. 1 entered the mirror room, found the papers, and found, too, they were bank notes to the value of £100 sterling. He fobbed them and returned to No. 2. ‘Have you got your obtrusive wig put right now?’ ‘Yes, of course I have, and am quite pleased with myself now.’”

Such is a farther sample of the literature and the temper of the political contests of one hundred and thirty years ago. We are better

now. Whatever progress, or the want of it, we have made since 1774, our politics are—like our religious convictions—much less fierce, more reasonable and tolerant.

The election matters of 1774 did not, however, end with the decision in the law courts, or with the publication of letters in the newspapers. When the Presbytery of Dunfermline met on 5th April, 1775, a committee of enquiry into the disturbance in the Parish Church was moved for. It was seconded, spoken to, and rejected—the moderator intimating to Mr. Thomson that they find nothing censurable in his conduct, and encouraged him to go on “in the work of the Lord.” The same motion came up again in the Dunfermline Presbytery in September, 1775, and again on 8th May, 1776, in a writing called “an instrument.” But the Presbytery were evidently firmly set to have no enquiry, and delayed the whole matter, though the mover (Mr. Spence) took out a protest and tabled his shilling. The General Assembly of 1776 were next honoured with a hearing of the case. Complainers and members of Presbytery were heard, papers were read, and parties were listened to at the bar; then, after full deliberation, the complaints were dismissed.

The case was heard of all over Scotland; it was discussed at every manse fireside, and debated in every session. It was long and keenly canvassed, all through the loom shops and at every street corner of Dunfermline. But the reverend gentleman survived it all. He served in his pulpit for twenty-four years after, and died in peace at a ripe old age.

Though the pictures of craft life we generally meet with are decidedly grey in tone, there are times when the social sky brightens and a touch of colour and glow of the picturesque is thrown across the scene. Thus the court of the convener on Michaelmas day, 1766, is found in high flight and fine feather. On this occasion the members enact that the “deacon-convener for the time being shall, in making the public parade through the town on the King's or Queen's birthdays, wear and have on, as a badge of honour and respect, the red-and-white sashes or broad ribbons belonging to the court;

and the court declares that all future conveners, by their acceptance of office, do subject themselves to this Act."

Even the Town Council had become infected with the sash-and-ribbon fever. In the same year of the convener's decoration, the staff-man or town-keeper of the burgh, it is agreed, shall be put in uniform. So the council vote their officer "a new coat, a new bonnet, two new shifts, and other necessities for his back and bed; and the council recommend the said officer to be faithful in his office, and particularly to keep the town clear of sturdy beggars, and to obey his masters in all lawful orders." The conveners' court are "at it" again two years after, namely, on 24th June, 1768, when it was "agreed that David Kilpatrick, their officer, shall get a new coat and hat at the court's expense, to be worn by him on any occasion extraordinary, or as ordered by the court; and appoints Deacon Graham, Deacon Anderson, and Deacon Turnbull to assist the convener in purchasing the said officer's coat and hat."

On all these "extraordinary occasions"—King's birthdays, election times, and party processions—the weavers' flag was sure to be hung out. Whatever the original flag may have been, we learn from Henderson's *Annals*, and otherwise, that James Blake, among other excellent work, wove a set of colours, *i.e.*, flags, for his wobster brethren. It was a solid sheet of silk damask, woven with different patterns on the two sides, and carrying the legend, in bold, gold lettering:—

FOR THE WEAVERS OF DUNFERMLINE, 1734,

and the weavers' motto—

TRUST WITH TRUTH,

and bearing their ensign—a boar's head, with a shuttle in its mouth. On the other side was the rampant Scottish lion, surrounded with thistles with a crown at the head, a St. Andrew's cross and the motto—

Nemo me impune lacesset.

Let us picture, if we can, the turn-out of the trades on the King's birthday, when George the Third was King. It is the 4th of June,

and the sun is high, though it is not yet high noon. Flags wave from the windows of the new Townhouse, the provost, bailies and councillors appear in their best "braid claith," and the mass of citizens crowding round are but little behind them. So far as the trades are concerned, it is no more a case of dull, sad, rayless hodden grey, but a scintillating show of colour, and tint, and tone. Sashes, ribbons, aprons, and broad phylacteries to the conveners, with braided coat, shining hat and buckled shoon to the officers, and to the remanent brethren a back covering of the passing green, russet, or brown, decorated with great, shining buttons. A big, broad, blue bonnet, gun-mouthed breeches, ribbed stockings, and thick-soled, broad-bottom feet coverings. With prancing naigs to head the procession, the cavalcade moves to the Cross, where the provost for the time drinks to the health of the King, casts the glass high in the air, and lets it fall to pieces on the causey, "that it ne'er may serve a meaner end." Then move off the skirling pipes and the screaming hautboy to ride the marches ere the day be done.

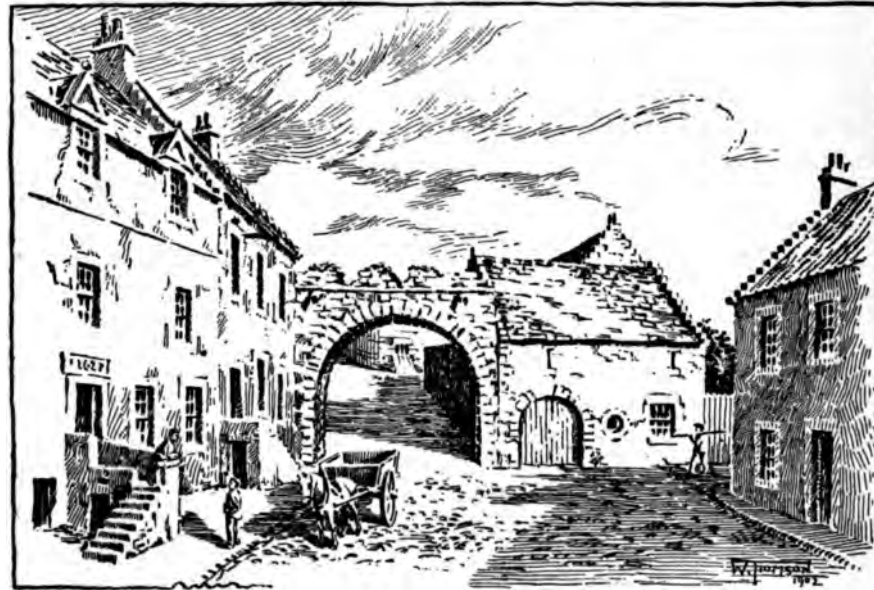
CHAPTER XXIII.

The Townhouse of 1772—"Popish" bill of 1779—Dearth of 1782—Noble conduct of the crafts—Ecclesiastical changes—Food prices of 1771—New freeman entries—The Hunts—James Francis Erskine of Mar—The Earldom of Mar—County roads in 1790.

IN 1771, the predecessor of the present Townhouse was finished—all but the steeple, which was also in fair way of being set up. This steeple was a mere matter of wood, and was set on the top of its attenuated tower in the style of an extinguisher out of use. When no longer required—about one hundred years after—it was cleared of its

blue slates, and simply lifted down. The Townhouse was at first of only two stories, but a third was in time added to its dignity. It survived till 1875.

With the new Townhouse came the new Bridge Street—the first, and greatest, of our disfigurements of our original glen of beauty. Pennant came, in his general *Tour in Scotland* (1772), to see us at



The Mill Port, Collier Row, Dunfermline : removed, 1754.

this time. He reckons our numbers at six to seven thousand, and tells us that we were then weaving damasks, diapers, checks, and tickings; and keeping a thousand looms going. It was evidently a fairly good time, for the weavers had engaged the Townhouse as a hall of assembly, and danced there with joy till they roused the ire of the "unco guid," who moved that the dancing be abolished; but the council, needing the rent, and seeing no harm in the exercise, voted to continue the pleasures of the terpsichoreans.

The dancing in the Townhouse was succeeded in 1774, as we have seen, with dancing through the streets "in a tumultuous manner with drums beating and colours flying." Our fathers were then losing their heads in political delirium, and the magistrates who wished, but failed, to stop the "dancing balls" of 1772, now found their opportunity, and dancing was stopped, indoors and out.

The new clock in the Townhouse tower was now (1775) measuring the hours; and the council would fain take time by the forelock, and begin a new era with a "new plan for the education of the youth of the burgh," but we kept the old drummer and the old piper still going round, and we still thought so much of the old-world, foot-fastening stocks, that we had this ancient instrument of torture securely fixed on the wall of the Townhouse "just aboon the black-hole window."

To please "the powers that be," we railed at the "rebels" in America in 1775, and we mourned in want and woe when the war brought depression upon us in 1777, and stopped our looms. The conveners' court then prayed the council to cause the officers to wear black bands at funerals; and so black bands and halberts became the funereal trappings of the day.

The "Popish Bill" of 1779 put us good Protestants in a frenzy of meaningless rage. We petitioned the council, we invoked the Church, and we helped to send the fiery cross of religious hate and fanaticism all round the land, till it concentrated in London, and burst like a tornado of fire and flame in the great metropolis, causing immense wreckage of property, stoppage of business, and the loss of hundreds of lives.

We had a different sensation when Paul Jones, in 1778, came up the Firth, and spread terror all round our shores; and we were glad to learn that good Mr. Shirra of Kirkcaldy had prayed the wild rover out of the seas. Our national poet visited us in 1787, when Charlie Short-house was gravedigger; and Charlie, showing the flat stones that—as he thought—covered the grave of the Bruce, saw the poet, with sacred fervour, kneel down and kiss the cold, dull slab.

We were just then beginning to cast off the shell of our antique framing. We were hearing lectures and having scientific exhibitions, and "going in" for easier, lighter, higher, and gayer literature. We set up our first public library (1789); and, as this dull, half-dead, and wholly dormant century drew to a close, we heard, though faintly, the celestial voices saying, "Let there be light."

But man, in fate and fortune, is dominated by the stomach! Progress is slow and advance is laggard when the larder is empty and the sense of hunger cries incessantly for relief. The condition of the Scottish people in the last quarter of the eighteenth century seemed to have grown steadily worse. We had food riots all over the northern and middle lowlands. The military were called out—not to feed, but to shoot down, the hungry populace. Garrisons were planted in the towns; fines, imprisonments, and transportations followed. Repression was the order of the day, remedy was little thought of; and so the swelling masses of social misery grew larger daily, and suffering steadily widened her borders.

When the crops of 1782 were found to be an almost entire failure, and when the people were in a state of destitution impossible to describe, the Government eased off once more the fiscal corn duties—and believed they had done a great work? But city corporations, Churches, bankers, magistrates of towns and commissioners of counties, from Aberdeen southward to Lanark, were striving by every practical means to supply the food that hungering life demanded.

In Dunfermline, the trades combined and formed themselves into a temporary provision society, made enquiries in Holland as to prices of grain in that country, and commissioned cargoes of oats from home ports and from Ostend. They appointed a committee of management with salesmen to distribute, laid down the rule of ready money on non-profit rates of charge, and so strove in a united, humane, and reasonable method to meet the period and incidence of distress.

Of this famine period Dr. Chalmers has no record, and Dr. Henderson is equally silent in his *Annals*. The wrights and coopers, however, have left their testimony to the fact that on Friday, 11th

October, 1782—"The meeting took into their serious consideration the present dearth and scarcity ; and seeing that the other incorporations in the town are resolving to join in bringing in meall or victual, and contributing out of their stocks for that purpose ; they resolved and agreed to contribute eighty pounds sterling, along with the other incorporations, out of their stock."

On 21st October, the deacon lays before the wrights a proposed purchase of 100 bolls of oatmeal, and its proportionate cost—at 16s. 5d. per boll—to the corporation. This sum being found, the trade agree that half the quantity falling to their share should be sold to members, and half to outsiders, at 1s. 1½d. per peck, not above one peck at one time to be sold to each family." On 35th April, 1783, the committee in charge reported their intromissions, and the banking of the money realised by sales. On 2nd June, the members agree to "sell the remainder of their meal, by turns," and without charge. On 30th August, the selling of the meal still goes on "to every person that pleases" at 1s. per peck—the dearth is evidently becoming less intense—yet, in February and October of 1784, the meal committee of the wrights and coopers are still at work. Then in March, 1785, we reach the day of reckoning—the bank (of Scotland) is seeking its own. But, in these "hard-up" times money cannot be got. The year 1786 passes ere the last efforts are made to collect the last of the meal debts, and the new year of 1787 is reached ere the meal accounts are finally settled.

The minutes of the hammermen contain a record very similar to that of the wrights, though they seem to have been engaged in a larger and more important enterprise, namely, the importing from Ostend of 1000 bolls of corn. In January, 1783, we find the trade, "considering the scarcity of corn in the town, agreed to lend out of their stock [funds], for the purpose of supplying the incorporation with meal, the sum of £80 sterling."

In February, the tailors' craft agree to join the wrights and hammermen, and to contribute, "as the other trades have done," to bring oats and meal to their brethren and to the townsfolk.

All this is going on among the crafts of the burgh, yet, for some unknown reason, the weavers' chronicles contain no statement on the matter. For five years the operations of subscribing funds, providing food, and collecting sale sums, goes on ; and the weavers, who must have been the largest factors in the enterprise, are silent about it. They continue, in placid equanimity, the absorbing occupations of "making" apprentices and freemen, indulging in mild sprees on the advent of a new entrant, and, as antetypes of Mark Tapley, forget the hardships of the hour, and make merry while they may.

In alluding in a previous chapter to matters outside of the craft minutes, we have necessarily passed over many interesting occurrences in which they would be either deeply involved or of which they would necessarily be the excited and earnest beholders. The disputed settlement at Inverkeithing, and the founding of the Relief Church in 1752-3, has been recently, in jubilee and other celebrations, brought so prominently before the Dunfermline public that further reference is unnecessary. The introduction of our first water scheme (in 1765) was a move of first-rate sanitary importance, but belongs more to our municipal than to our industrial history. The building of a new Townhouse and the construction of Bridge Street may also be ranged under this category.

Dr. Henderson refers to riotous proceedings in the town, and to the turning out of "meal mobs" in 1770 ; but the prices of domestic articles, which he quotes as ruling at the time, do not show like famine rates. The quartern loaf was 5d ; the pound of meat, 3½d. to 4½d. ; fresh butter, 22 ounces, from 4d. to 6d. ; meal, 5d. to 6d. per peck ; pot barley, 1d. per lb. ; potatoes, 4½d. to 6d. per lippie ; soap, 6d. to 8d. per pound ; and such like rates. The weavers (with draw-boy), according to Mercer, earned at this time (1772) about £30 annually, the other trades were in proportion, and the professions were then supported on sums of equal modesty and attenuation. For fifteen years succeeding 1775, we have no record of interest, except to those who wish to see the names of their ancestors in the weavers' list of freemen. In 1791, a slight accession of attractiveness sets in, and

the neat-handed clerk who writes the minutes gives more care than before to the movements of his grey goose quill. In that year, and on 15th September, "Martin Meldrum, son-in-law to William Meldrum, burgess and freeman of Dunfermline, is admitted a freeman of the incorporation of weavers." Martin lived in a house built from the ruins of Queen Anne's jointure house in 1796, and the curious may still find it in Nethertown Broad Street, opposite the foot of Reid Street. Martin was for many years the keeper of a merry-going change-house there, and acted as "provost of the Nethertown races" till the second decade of the nineteenth century. The town's drummer of those days, and when the race period came round, paced through the streets, rattling his half-burst drum, warning all and sundry "that all particulars of the aforesaid races could be had from Mr. Martin Meldrum at his change-house in the Nether Toon."

The entries of freemen are numerous beyond precedent in this year of 1791—no less than twenty-five new names being added to the roll. These are now nearly all unrecognisable. One, John Barnet, lives in Black's Park—and we ask, in passing, where was Black's Park. Two of these new entrants, William Inglis and his son William, both live in Paisley; and James Black hails from Dunning, in Perthshire; so we conclude that the weaving trade must then have been lively in Dunfermline to draw applicants for admission from such distances.

Among the other casual entries, we find that on 14th September "Alexander Hunt, merchant, Dunfermline, was admitted a freeman with the incorporation of weavers, and gave a sufficient essay (a piece of cloth woven by the applicant), and paid his dues and gave his oath as use is." His son William, also a merchant in Dunfermline, acquired the estate of Pittencrieff in 1800 for £31,000. He was succeeded by his eldest son, William, in 1807, who lived till 1812, and was succeeded by his brother James. James died in 1858, and Pittencrieff acknowledged James A. Hunt as proprietor. He died in 1890, when the present gallant colonel became laird. He has now reigned twelve years as "Superior" of the burgh, and done several things by which he will be remembered. The first three lairds were weavers

and manufacturers, and we have seen that the father of the first was able to weave and exhibit a sample of his own handicraft.

On the same year in which the Hunt family claimed connection with the weaving craft, a much greater personage had that honour conferred upon him. The minute to which I refer is dated 12th April:—"Which day the deacon and remanent members of the Incorporation of Weavers, for the esteem and affection which they have and bear to John Francis Erskine, Esquire of Mar, and to John Floyer Erskine, Esquire, his son, do admit and receive both of them as honorary freemen of the said incorporation, by delivering to each of them a ticket signed by the clerk, testifying said admission to the said freedom. They accepted thereof in a very genteel manner; and, in testimony of their esteem and affection for said incorporation, presented and delivered a very handsome seal of the ancient arms of their family, cut upon a large block of Scots white pebble stone, set in silver, which the incorporation accepted with many thanks," etc.

The senior person here introduced to the weavers of one hundred and thirteen years ago, and to our readers of to-day, was a descendant of the most ancient peerage in the Scottish list—the Earldom of Mar. That title, with the Mar estate, were forfeited in 1715 by John, the eleventh earl, taking part in the Chevalier rising of that year. The rebellious earl escaped to the continent after the battle of Sheriffmuir, in company with the Old Pretender, and died abroad in 1732. His only son, Thomas, was Commissary of Stores at Gibraltar at this time, but came home and was returned M.P. for Stirlingshire in 1747, being elected also the same year for the county of Clackmannan. His uncle, the Hon. James Erskine of Grange, having amassed a fortune by commerce, bought back from Government the forfeited estates belonging to the Mar peerage. These he presented to his nephew, Thomas, who died in 1766, leaving a daughter Frances, who married a son of the uncle James above referred to. The first fruits of this union was the birth of the above John Francis Erskine, Esq. of Mar, who was born in 1741, and who visited the weavers of Dunfermline as above related. He had married Frances, only daughter of Charles Floyer, Esq.,

Governor of Madras, hence the name Floyer attached to the son who accompanied his father and had audience of the weavers in the Townhouse of Dunfermline in 1791. There would doubtless be a dominant reason for the repeated visits of these members of the Mar family to Dunfermline, but the explanation is not given in the minutes of the weavers, and we have not been able to discover it elsewhere.

There were at this time (1792), about twelve hundred looms employed in the town. The weavers seem to have had, generally speaking, plenty of work, though the virus of competition was evidently beginning to have its effect upon the habits of the weavers and the circumstances of the trade. The meetings of the craft, which had hitherto been held during the day, were now invariably held in the evening. The annual and other gatherings took place in the Townhouse, which had become a common meeting-house for nearly all public meetings outside of the churches. The names of the admitted freemen and officials now become familiar to us from what we know of themselves or their descendants. In September, 1794, "David Paton, son of Andrew Paton," and "John Couper, son to George Couper," are enrolled in the big book of the weavers. The first is a name familiar to every citizen of the auld gray town as father of the late Joseph N. Paton, and grandfather to the eminent artist, Sir Noel Paton. David was born in 1766, so that he was twenty-eight years of age when he joined the weavers; he died in 1844, as faithfully recorded by Dr. Henderson (*Annals*, p. 652). John Couper will less readily occur to the memory of even the older denizens, though the family were for generations closely connected with the weavers' association, and well known to every member of the craft. John Couper was weavers' councillor in 1798, and his son George was boxmaster or treasurer from 1826 till 1830.

On 12th September, 1793, the weavers are found to have worked themselves into a state of anxious, if not indeed furious, opposition to "A Bill proposed by the heritors of Fife for repairing the roads in the county, for abolishing statute labour, and for substituting a tax instead." They consider the same oppressive, and seek the help

dent upon manufactures—the mendicant army continued to swell its numbers, and to augment the persistency of its appeals.

The proclamations against beggars found its complement in proclamations against political agitations. These continued to be issued at closely recurring intervals, and to be marked by growing fierceness of fulmination. In 1792 Henry Dundas, the Secretary for Scotland, gave notice to the sheriffs of counties and the magistrates of burghs, “to exert themselves to suppress diverse wicked and seditious publications, now industriously dispersed, with the view of exciting discontents, tumults and disorders in the realm.” While this proclamation was yet being read, a great meeting was held in Glasgow ostensibly to express loyalty to the King and Government; yet at which this amendment was put, and by only a narrow majority defeated—“That nothing could strengthen the executive powers more than a perfect cordiality between the governors and the governed, and that a well-timed reform both in Parliament and the internal government of the Royal Burghs of Scotland would have a happy tendency to promote this very desirable object.” Instead of listening to lessons of wisdom such as this, the Government proceeded to extremities. They arrested Thomas Hunter, a solicitor in Glasgow, William Skirving of Kirkcaldy, and the other illustrious heroes of reform whose names are inscribed on the martyrs’ monument in the Calton Churchyard of Edinburgh—a monument to commemorate political virtue, and no less to perpetuate the memory of political oppression.

What were called Secret, and sometimes “Corresponding,” Societies, having a purpose or reform, or of radical change, were formed in all our large towns, or wherever the industrial element had gathered in our communities. In Dunfermline, as in other manufacturing towns, disaffection was freely expressed, and the disaffected formed themselves into one of these dreaded associations. Its meetings were held in a schoolroom in the Maygate, and its proceedings had the baneful yet necessary character of complete secrecy. Dr. Henderson has given (*Annals*, p. 531) what may be called the street-corner definition of the aims of this society, and he maligns at once the intelligence of the

reformers, and the purpose of this association, in his references to their intended division of the neighbouring estates.

Levellers formed indeed a section of the agitating ranks of those days—as wild schemes are always hatched in periods of suffering—but levelling was not the purpose of the Corresponding Societies. Their purpose was political, social, and industrial reform. This was clearly proved by the outburst of patriotic fervour which manifested itself all over the country in 1797-8, when the fatherland was threatened with invasion, and when overflowing public meetings were held in Dunfermline and every other town in Scotland, to devise measures to subscribe, to help, and by any means to swell the ranks of the country's defenders, and to make sure that an invader's foot should never rest in peace on our soil.

The trials of 1793-4, and the lives of the reforming heroes who were then banished to foreign shores and treated as felons, all went to show that preservation and not destruction of the commonwealth and its government was the object of the reformers of a hundred years ago. And if it be true, as quoted by Dr. Henderson from the council records, that the weavers were (1796) shut out of the Town-house because of their reforming tendencies, the act must be attributed more to the fears of the council than to the characters of the men.

No less need be said of David Black and James Paterson, weavers in Dunfermline, who were summoned to Perth Circuit in 1798, accused of "sedition and as being members of a seditious society called United Scotsmen, and of having administered unlawful oaths and engagements," and where Paterson was banished for five years beyond seas and Black was outlawed for non-appearance. But the cry for reform, the widespread desire for movements towards justice and equity—rooted as it was in the distress of the people and in the minds of their leaders—was not to be stilled till the concessions of 1819, 1832, and 1846 had found a place on the statute book. It was a long wait, but the fruit of that waiting has taught us the wisdom

of continued effort, and to work and wait for the greater reforms that are to come.

The physical discomforts and deprivations due to the evil legislation of the time were augmented and embittered by the local conditions under which our citizens lived. In Dunfermline—judging of its features by the side-lights already referred to—our ancestors of a century ago lived in low, damp, and leaky houses, and were indebted to the freedom yielded by their occupations and the “caller air” for the fair level of health which the community maintained. The roughly-paved cante in the middle of the street, the crooked outside stairs protruding into the streets, the accumulations of city refuse in the kennels behind every projection, the pitching out from doors and windows of household liquids, and in the evenings of night soil,—while the pedestrian below kept on guard by bawling out “haud your hand,” and the gudewives answered by shrill warnings to “tak’ care” from the openings overhead—such conditions were alike inimical to physical health and to mental expansion or content, and had their due effect in moulding the minds and fashioning the conclusions of the people.

The weather, too, has much to do with the deeper faith in social leanings, and with the actual and forming influences that make a happy and contented, and withal an active and reasoning community. The weather at the close of 1789, and the first few months of 1790, was mild and beneficent beyond anything similar remembered in the past. The summer was warm, the autumn was fruitful, and the winter was as if our good city and our country had fallen into a heaven-blessed era of halcyon days. They, alas! were never again repeated. It was the year of the earthquake when, as some thought, the powers below, angry at the smiling heavens above, spent their Titanic forces shaking our portion of this terrestrial ball. The lovely weather of that year did not return, but rather deepened in harshness as the years ran past.

When 1793 was closing in, we had one of those terrible winters of snowfalls and frost-bitings that seem to mark the succession, not of

the equinoxes, but of the storm eras. The streets were breast and shoulder high in drifts, and the shivering citizens made way out of doors by cuttings and tunnels amid the deep-laid, whitening shroud of snow. The snowfall was succeeded by long-continued storms of "wind, snow-laden, and of rains, wind-driven" along the Fife shore. Ten and fourteen degrees of frost chilled the landmen, and froze hard the tempest-tossed mariner on the main. Shipwrecks were scattered all round our east coast, and the wave-made ruins of gallant ships lay breaking up at North Berwick, at Leith, at Royston, at Crammond island, and Tynningham Sands; while, as the days of storm sped on and the news came in, the west, as well as the east coast, was seen to have been visited by the devouring storm, for vessels ashore and breaking up were reported from every station from Cantyre to Cape Wrath. The wild elemental war was followed, as we might have expected, by keen, piercing, windless frosts, when Moncur Loch, and that of Clayacres, were for weeks as hard and firm as highways, and carried daily crowds of graceful skaters and noisy sliders, or of loud shouting, boisterous curlers from the farms around.

As the year 1794 began in storms, so it finished in the same fierce mood. From Christmas till the end of the first week in January, 1795, the blinding snow continued to fall till in our streets half the houses were buried in the drifts, and doors and windows on the lower storeys were no longer seen. How the summer fared, we know not, but no sooner had the autumn come again than the elemental strife began afresh. The newspapers of the period have for weeks a crowded list of disasters on sea and land. On this occasion, the storm fiend seems to have plied his desolating pinions all over the British Islands, as news of shipwrecks, torn-up trees, falling buildings, and loss of life, came in from all the coasts, and even from the shores of Ireland. November passed away, but the biting frost and snow came again as we ushered in the year 1796. No record have we of spring and summer, nor of the storm season of this year; but February of 1797 "filled the dyke" with black, bewildering storms of wind and rain, when the doleful harvest of storms and wrecks crowded

the pages of the contemporary papers, and filled many a heart with the sadness of despair.

Thus, generally speaking, and so far as the weather elements are concerned, we reach the end of the eighteenth century—in strain, and stress, and storm. Our harvests were destroyed, our food supplies were cut off, dearth and famine came on in the ghastly procession, and the sufferings of the nation became, or should have become, the biggest feature in our annals. A privileged governing class, sure of food themselves, cared little for the nameless crowds that were crying for bread. Our own supplies had been exhausted, but we could not, without leave of our governors, bring food-stuffs from abroad. The agricultural interest, *i.e.*, the landlords, must be protected, whatever may become of the people. The Corn Laws must be respected, though all else in life and property should be shipwrecked in their maintenance. These had been shaped in “greed and guile” in 1774, and had been “revised” in 1791, but their first form was hardly touched, even in outline, till the great measure (only half a measure, after all) of 1846, when the navigation barriers were finally broken down, and the food of the people permitted to enter the ports.

CHAPTER XXVI.

War and famine—The weavers help—Henderson of Fordel—Election in 1796—“Battle of Kinghorn”—Rescue and retreat—Luckie Skinner—The black hole—The lady witness—The return to reason.

THE great European war with France, in which Great Britain was the leading factor, had begun in 1793. George Washington had taken the reigns of government in the United States for the second

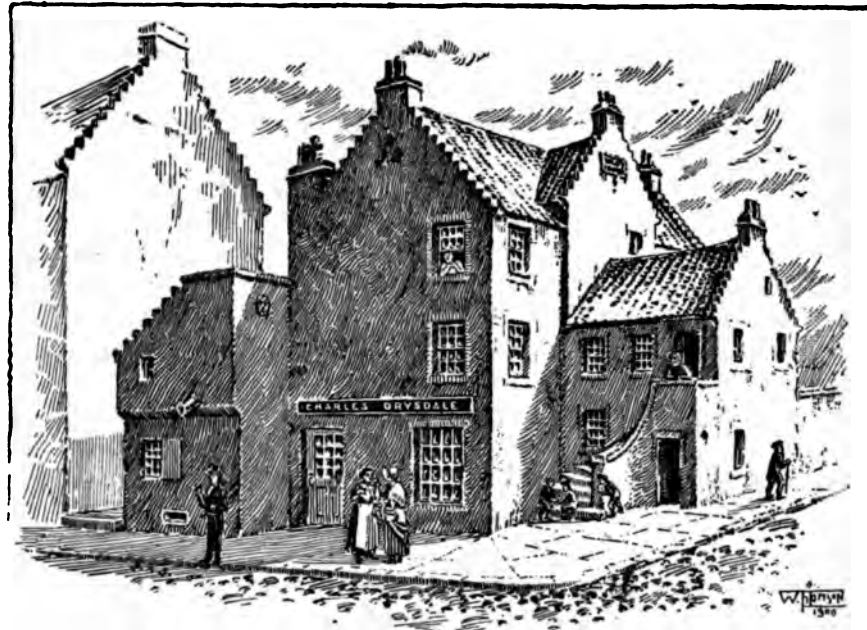
time, and the States had proclaimed its neutrality in the contest then begun. Our Government, guided by a lower and more circuitous wisdom, had plunged headlong into the tremendous struggle. Conventions had been signed between Britain and Prussia, and also with Naples. Battles and sieges had ensued, campaigns and expeditions, by land and sea, had been planned. We had seized the Cape, because the Dutch were leagued with France against us. We had extended the British empire in the West Indies and in the East, and we were steadily showing how mighty a nation we were. Soon the flames of war were blazing in every country on the Continent and in every quarter of the world. In two years we had reaped a harvest of glory and added territories of almost limitless extent to our dominions.

When we began this great conflagration, when our fleets first sailed and our armies first marched, we hailed the succession of incidents with shouts of joy and yells of triumph. But two years had scarcely passed when the country began to perceive that the conflict we had engaged in was to be costly beyond all precedent, was to mean the sacrifice of untold thousands of lives, and was to extinguish our trade and to starve our people. The King's coach, in October, 1795, was stopped in the streets of London by a famine-stricken crowd, crying out, "Bread, bread." Our people had now discovered that we were sacrificing everything worth retaining for empty possessions and the fleeting mirage of glory.

In Dunfermline, every one was already suffering from the terrible effects of the weather and of the war. As early as February, 1795, the weaving craft had met in the Townhouse, and, having adopted a resolution deploring the war, drew up a petition to Parliament praying for peace; and, on 24th November of the same year, the weavers commissioned their deacon, James Lawson, to press the council to adopt a resolution in favour of an honourable conclusion of the struggle. The council, however, refused to listen; and, so far as they were concerned, the conflict must still be continued. The weavers were not, however, to be driven off with one rebuff. They petitioned the

council in a body with the same purpose, only to meet the same refusal. Peace came not, and misery deepened into the agony of despair.

Outside the trades, and among the general public, subscriptions from the council, the guildry, and the crafts, to relieve the distress



Old Houses, where stood the East Port, Dunfermline.

and bring in supplies of food, were freely given. William Hunt, merchant, the future owner of Pittencrieff, gave £5, and lent £500 for six months, free of interest. He also advanced £3000 by way of loan, at a low rate of interest, to ensure success to the undertaking. A six months' supply was to hand early in April, and there was thus some prospect of food to the starving.

Meal was then selling at 3s. 6d. per peck, and the precious article was being retailed at the Townhouse windows, while the stock stored up in the girdle in Queen Anne Street was guarded by a sentinel fully armed with gun and bayonet. The conveners' court, following the higher example set by the council, sent a message to the weavers, asking them to help in a joint effort to provide grain and oatmeal for the starving poor "during the existing scarcity." This was in September, 1795, and we hear no more of this urgency of the people till the 11th of March following, when the weavers "Take into their serious consideration the present dearth and scarcity of meal, whereby the poor of this place in general are great sufferers, and being informed that the Town Council, the fraternity of the guildry, and the other incorporations in the burgh, as well as many of the inhabitants, have subscribed liberally with a view to give oatmeal to the poor at one shilling per peck. They not only approve of said Liberal Plan to assist the poor, but also authorise the deacon to subscribe £5 5s. to the said fund, and order the boxmaster to pay the same."

It is difficult to understand the conduct of the weavers at this time. The craft must have known that the scarcity of food during the autumn and winter of 1795 was pressing with tremendous severity upon the entire industrial community; yet they make no movement discoverable, and take no part in any general arrangement for relieving the poor and needy, till the above letter from the conveners' court rouses them to some form of acknowledgment. The voting of the five guineas is the total and disappointing result! They concluded that five guineas was the measure of their duty, and mere duty was made to stand good for that sympathy and sacrifice the community had a right to expect.

We go now from the general to the particular, and from the high levels of principle to the lower phases of expediency. An election is on hand: a burgh election has to be carried through, and at once our local mankind forget they are responsible beings, and forget also they are "free and independent electors." It is the 1st June, 1796, and

the weavers, met in the Townhouse, move into line and evolve the following minute:—"The which day the meeting, for the love, favour and affection, the honour and respect, which they have and bear to Sir John Henderson of Fordel, Bart., and William Hunt, Esq. of Logie; they admitted and received, and hereby admit and receive them as honorary freemen of the incorporation, with full powers to them to use and exercise the whole liberties, privileges and immunities thereto belonging, as fully and freely in all things competent as any other member ever did or can exercise or enjoy, either in time past or to come; and appoint the deacon, with the boxmaster and committee of the brethren, to wait on Sir John Henderson and Mr. Hunt, and to intimate their admission to them. And the meeting further unanimously agree, authorise, and empower the said Ralph Miller, with a committee, to wait upon the present deacon and inform him that the incorporation desires him, the said James Lawson, to vote for and chuse a delegate in the interest of, and who will befriend and elect Sir John Henderson as the member for this district of burghs to the ensuing Parliament. They appoint David Allester, Thomas Wilson, Thomas Hoggan, George Inglis and John Gibson as the above committee, and Adam Stewart, along with the said Ralph Miller [to make the presentation as said is]."

There is no concealment here; we know exactly how the weavers feel towards Sir John Henderson of Fordel and his opponent, the Honourable Andrew Cochrane Johnstone. The first stood for the "Whig" and the other for the "Tory" interest, as these things were understood then. The weavers were Whigs for the nonce, and stood by Sir John—and thereby hangs a tale.

In the excitement of the coming election everything else,—bad seasons, lost crops, even the want of work and consequent want of wages—are relegated to oblivion. The season of dearth is forgotten for the time. The weavers are giving all their energy to the election of an M.P. for the district of burghs, and even the want of meal and sufferings of the poor are forgotten. As already pointed out, the weavers were strongly Whiggish in their political leanings.

Their deacon had been instructed to act in all he did, in the Whig interest. It would appear that a majority of the council were of the same mind, and there was danger to the cause of "law and order" as represented in the person of the Tory candidate, the Hon. Andrew Cochrane Johnstone. If, however, a number of the councillors who were favourable to Sir John Henderson could be charmed away, and kept out of the town till the day for electing the burgh delegate (15th June) was past, all might yet be well. The subject was debated by the Johnstonites, discussed, canvassed, and finally agreed upon. Six councillors, including the provost, James Moodie, were to be enchanted by the political fairies of the time, and carried into a strange land, there to abide till the said delegate was named, chosen, and elected. (*See Kay's Portraits*, vol. ii.)

Where shall the six victims be carried to? Where is the charmed prison-house to be found? We shall see. At the time there was an innkeeper in Kinghorn, known by the name of Skinner, and he was happily married to a lady known to all and sundry by the name of Luckie Skinner. Skinner himself was a goodly man, as we shall see, but his gudewife had already proved that "the gray mare was the better horse." There was also a valiant man, a native of Dunfermline, abiding at this time in Kinghorn. He was town clerk of that ancient burgh, a keen Tory in politics, and being only forty years old he was an excellent champion for his party. Luckie Skinner was not a whit behind. So!

On the evening of the 13th June of this year of 1796, the six councillors aforesaid were asked, in quite a friendly way, to take a drive down to Kinghorn, to liquor-up to a mild extent, and to return after nichtfa'. "Man being reasonable," says Byron, "must get tipsy" at times, and the councillors, charmed with the syren tongue of their tempter, wound up their scruples, and agreed to go. What time they arrived, the record sayeth not; but we learn that the fateful six were put into a beautiful chamber having stanchioned windows, and elevated to the second storey. They were here supplied

with meat and drink, "fed like fechtin' cocks," and treated as if they were lords.

Next morning the citizens awoke and found they were undone. Six of Dunfermline's most honoured men had been trepanned and borne away under the shade of darkness, and were to all intents and purposes beyond the help of man. Enquiries were made in every quarter; "a' the airts the wind can blaw" were interrogated regarding the whereabouts of the missing fathers of the city. And they were discovered! The narrative of their seizure, abduction and detention was soon bruited abroad, and every citizen from the Back o' the Dam to the 'Spital Crosshead became aware of the horrid insult thrown in the face of their guid auld toon. Crowds of weavers from every street, and colliers from Fordel, with a contingent of saut-wives and other sutlers of the camp, formed rapidly into marching order, appointed the manner of their going and took to the road. They moved eastward to the Stewart Arms, down by Gardner's smiddy, and so by the back of Orrock Hill reached unobserved the confines of Kinghorn.

The hostelry of the Skinners was next and cautiously reconnoitred. The inn was a strong place, a veritable tower of strength to the Tory party. The prison cell of the six unfortunates was found to be at the end of a long trance, and this trance led out to a kind of gallery above the courtyard, and an outside stair led out and down to this level. The trance and gallery were guarded by a row of stout sentinels armed with cudgels, and breathing defiance in every look and movement. The Henderson party, in due form, summoned the garrison to surrender. The defenders replied in tones of defiance and derision.

*Then rushed the Whigs to battle driven,
Skulls were crashed and coats were riven,
And while hard blows were ta'en and given,
Loud roared the dreadful revelry.*

The attack of the Whigs failed; they were driven along the gallery and down the outside stair, while not a few on both sides were laid

sprawling and unconscious in the courtyard. This fierce attack was led by no less a personage than the renowned Colonel James Francis Erskine, with whom we struck up some acquaintance more than twenty years before, and who, a soldier and knight-errant of his party, had no sooner heard what was in progress at Kinghorn than he flung himself into the struggle and "foremost fighting fell," losing, in the depths of his personal disaster, both tails of his best wearable coat.

The garrison were victorious, but they were not triumphant. They knew that an attack in force would be made by the enemy, and they dreaded that coming hour. The vanquished were beaten, but they were not dismayed. They set guards all round the burgh to ensure against surprise, and to cut off reinforcements. Their line extended from Hochmalloch to the inn, from that again to the Gullet Brig, and from here to the Spa Well at Pettycur. Their arrangements were as complete as a skilful general could make them, and they breathed awhile ere they assaulted the Badajos before them. But none can tell what happen will ! The garrison, as already said, felt both uncertain and insecure, and had determined to assume the offensive.

Without a moment's warning, or sign of fierce intent, the garrison dashed along the gallery, down the aforesaid stair, and cut their way by desperate valour, through the ranks of the beleaguering Whigs. They gained the highway, dispersed the cordon at the Well o' Spa, and moved rapidly on Dunfermline. Here the council, that is the Johnstone party thereof, were waiting the hour to proceed with the election of a delegate, when lo, and behold ! William Wemyss of Cuttlehill, J.P., followed by Alexander Law, messenger-at-arms, and the six stowaways, entered the precincts of the chamber. All was confusion—confusion and dismay. The messenger-at-arms, turning to the assembly, announced his purpose, and produced his warrant.

One Alexander Macmillan, a sedan carrier from Edinburgh, had been severely wounded in the battle of Kinghorn. He was, in the opinion of Dr. James Davidson of Dunfermline, in danger of his life ; and all those engaged in that battle were now held liable

to arrest, and to future trial and punishment in due course of law. Of a truth and on the testimony of competent witnesses, six councillors of the town of Dunfermline were present at the battle, and were airt and pairt in the felonious assault; and so, in virtue of his warrant and office, he, the officer of the law, must now arrest, detain and imprison the said six members. As he uttered these last words he drew a pistol from his belt, like any knight of old, and offered to shoot any one who should oppose him. He thereupon seized the persons of Provost James Moodie, Robert Hutton (dean of guild), John Hutton (old provost), William Anderson (old treasurer), and deacons Charles Anderson and Robert Young, and dragged them from the council-room. They were hurried into post-chaises, and driven off—accompanied by a mob of miners on foot and gents. on horseback—to the Black Hole of Inverkeithing Jail, and there held fast till caution was found and entered in the books of adjournal at Edinburgh that they would stand their trial for the said wicked and felonious crimes of cutting and wounding Alexander Macmillan.

These unfortunate six come-and-goes were detained in the said Black Hole for a whole day, fed no doubt on bread and water and treated as delinquents of the deepest dye. They obtained caution as required, and breathed again ere nightfall the air of freedom. The caution trick was soon overcome. A swift horseman posted to the ferry, crossed and hurried on to the residence of an Edinburgh legal official at Crammond Brig, who signed the necessary papers. The horseman galloped back, re-crossed the ferry, got to Inverkeithing, and presented his papers to the jailer there, who lost no time in freeing his prisoners. In triumphant spirits, though on wearied limbs, they trudged their weary way to Dunfermline. They arrived in town about eight o'clock in the evening of the 14th June, and Provost Moodie at once issued his order to summon the council. It was a late hour, later perhaps than ever council met before or since, for the eleventh hour at night was striking in the tower over their heads as the members crowded towards the door.

That door, however, was not open, and the adventures of the day

were not yet over. For Bailie James Hunt, an adherent of the Fordel party, had possessed himself of the key of the chamber door, had locked it surely, and held it fast. The council were, however, men of resource as well as of war. They posted to the residence of the sheriff-substitute, and receiving a warrant to force an entrance, they brought round Mr. John Dunsyre, the town officer, Robert Taggart, town drummer, and Thomas Inglis, bailies' officer, and by help of these stalwarts burst open the council room door, and let the council enter in.

After taking the oaths of allegiance in the usual A B C style, and the council being thus duly constituted, and all the members—after so many tribulations—present, and fully qualified, and the roll being called, they elected and made choice of James Moodie, provost of the burgh, to be their commissioner or delegate “for them, and in their name, to meet and convene at the Burgh of Inverkeithing, being the presiding burgh of the district for the time, upon Monday, 20th June current,” and there and then to elect the Member of Parliament for the district.

Thus ended the first series of engagements in the local campaign of 1796. But the Shirra Muir was not yet finished. It is quite true and of verity that the Hon. Andrew Cochrane Johnstone was duly elected at Inverkeithing, and sent up to London. But Fordel and his henchmen were neither satisfied nor subdued. The baronet maintained, asserted, and asseverated that the election had been wrongly conducted, that its results were a travesty on the intents of the district, that certain electors had been constrained and compelled to vote in contravention of the statute, and that the whole affair was corrupt and illegal. Sir John presented a petition to the House, and prayed for an enquiry into the villainies of those who had dared to tamper with the freedom of an election, and specially this one at Inverkeithing. His petition came before the House in due course, and a committee was appointed on 17th March, 1797, to probe, prove, and penetrate all and sundry the circumstances contained in the asseverations of Sir John. That committee “sat” in due course, called witnesses, and

in the fulness of time reported to the House that the Hon. Andrew Cochrane Johnstone had been, was, and is, duly elected, and in accordance with the statutes, but that the petition of Sir John Henderson was not vexatious, without cause or unwarranted.

Among the witnesses called, was the redoubtable Luckie Skinner herself, and she was tackled by no less a person than the Hon. Charles J. Fox. Here are some of his questions, with answers, freely translated :—

“ You keep an inn at Kinghorn, I believe ? ”

“ Na, na, sir,” was the reply.

“ Oh ! A tavern then, or public-house ; a place of entertainment it must be ? ”

“ Na, na, nane o’ the twa, sir,” replied the dame smiling, and continued, “ for weel micht ye ken, in Scotland it’s the man, and no the woman, that keeps the house.”

Noticing how the lady’s humour went, Mr. Fox tried her on a new tack. He was anxious to learn the amount of these election bills. He began in a roundabout and gentle way.

“ Had Mr. Skinner sometimes particularly good dinners in his house ? ”

“ No *sometimes*, but *always*—to those that would pay for them,” Mrs. Skinner answered.

“ Had you a particularly good dinner for the Dunfermline party ? ” queried Mr. Fox.

“ Yes, sir, very good ; and they needed it too, for the gentlemen had come far, an’ were a’thegither oot o’ their usual way.”

“ What might the dinners cost for such a party at the inn conducted by Mr. Skinner ? ”

“ Whiles mair an’ whiles less—just accordin’ to circumstances—as they ate an’ drank,” answered the Luckie.

“ Well, well—but you can tell, no doubt, who ordered this dinner ? ” put in Mr. Fox.

“ It’s no easy doin’ that. You canna weel tell the leadin’ bark,

when a' the kennel's yowlin'; nae mair can ye mak' oot wha's orderin' dinners, when there's half-a-dozen speakin' at aince."

"You will know, at least, who paid the bill, Mrs. Skinner?"

"Na, na. That's e'en waur to answer. We tak' the siller when we get it, but it may be gathered in sma's by the company, or paid oot o' ae pouch. We neither ken nor care."

"Well, but can't you tell what the entertainment cost, on the particular occasion referred to?" continued Mr. Fox.

"Indeed, sir, it's no the custom for gentlemen in oor quarter to speir the price o' a dinner, unless they mean to pay for it."

"Come, now," coaxed Mr. Fox; "say what was the amount of the bill?"

"Indeed, sir," replied the Luckie, warmly, "I wonder to hear a gentleman o' your guid sense expectin' me to mak' or meddle wi' sic a piece o' my husband's business. It's no in my line o' duty, sir."

There was much more of the good lady's examination, but the finest manœuvring and cleverest touches of the examiners failed to elicit any material point as to the dinner or the donor of it; and at last Mr. Fox retired, smiling at his own discomfiture.

The reader will now, no doubt, conclude that the election episode of 1796 was now closed, and that no more would be heard about it. Well, it is hardly done yet. True, there were no law cases arose out of the embroglio; but at the very time the crafts and the council were settling down to the common affairs of life, and giving the go-by to further political excitement, they were startled out of their quietude by an entirely unexpected turn of events.

The Hon. Andrew Cochrane Johnston, M.P. for the Stirling District of Burghs, had hardly got the pleasant sound of Luckie Skinner's voice out of his ears, when he received the appointment of Governor of Dominica. He resigned his seat at once, and sailed away, incontinently, to the west. Mrs. Skinner was before the House in March, and Mr. William Tait, Esq., advocate, was before the constituency in April. On the 13th of that month (1797) this gentleman was presented with the freedom of the burgh; and the five

delegates of the five burghs presented him, on the 1st May following, with the honour of being their M.P. The struggles of the previous year, the battle of Kinghorn, the forced night marches, and other perils "i' the eminent deadly breach" had quite exhausted the anxious politicians.

The warlike Sir John of Fordel made no show in this, the second innings. He, too, was evidently tired of the spree, and was resting awhile, or otherwise, like Ulysses, was sulking in his tent. In the former election, he was delegate for Inverkeithing, and voted for himself, but on this occasion Inverkeithing made no choice; and, though it was the returning burgh, there was no Inverkeithing commissioner in its own Townhouse when James Moodie for Dunfermline, the Hon. John Cochrane for Culross, the delegate for Stirling, and William Tait, Esq., advocate, for South Queensferry, unanimously voted the said William Tait into the honourable position of being M.P. for the District. Four burghs only were concerned, and three votes formed the entire constituency—and they were unanimous!

Yes! the people were tired of strife, and had no longer any stomach for political bickerings. The war that was still raging abroad, eating up, as it was doing, the life and resources of the nation, and the famine that was around them, demanded all of energy, and hope, and wisdom, that counsel or sacrifice could ensure. Two years before, we found the weavers praying for peace. They appealed to the council to make a movement, and were repulsed. They made themselves heard in St. Stephens, only to find that the war feeling was still in the ascendant and that the angel of peace was still being sacrificed on the altar of policy and prestige.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Peace—Poverty—Pinching want—Sufferings in 1800—Another grand combine for meal—Meal Society—The Corn Laws—Dearth and famine again—Finances.

IN 1797, the craft of the weavers, the other incorporations, and the guildry unite in petitioning Parliament in favour of peace. They had done the same with no visible result only two years before. It is nearly always so. We enter with a light heart into the terrible arbitrament of war. As, a people, we dream always of an easy victory, of territorial conquests, and of military glory or naval triumphs; and we indulge our deluding dreams till the pinch of want, of sacrifice and suffering, tells us the truth, and exposes to our distracted view the ghastly results of battles and campaigns. When this great French war began in 1793, we hailed it as an opportunity of exhibiting our greatness, of punishing an exulting foe, and of feeding our lust of glory. Ere two years had passed, we were in the depths of repentance and social suffering. The trades' petition of 1797 had as poor fortune as that of two years before, and the community then learned, and learned with dismay, that the war must go on and the famine must continue. To embitter matters still farther, and to intensify the feeling of wilful injustice, the farmers of the country, the "protected" party, entered into a combination in 1798 to raise prices of grain and food stuffs, a movement which stirred the whole energies of the trades, from the conveners' court downwards, to defeat the attempt.

On 19th December, 1799, the craft take "into their serious consideration the present scarcity and dearth of meal and corns; and having heard read an extract of a minute of the magistrates and town

council of this date, relative to the above, hereby agree to contribute £10 10s. for behoof of the industrious poor ; and, also, to venture or run a risk of £200, in proportion to the loss thereon, by the town's £500, and warrants the deacon to subscribe accordingly for said sums."

A quotation like this brings us round with sharp and sudden force from the wretched fooleries of the local election to the real, the actual life of penury then endured by our industrial population. The weavers no longer appear as loud-voiced, lean-thoughted screamers in a political farce, but as men capable of making sacrifices, as heroes in the strife against poverty and want. They subscribe at once for the pressing cases of destitution, and they join with their industrial brethren, the guildry and the council, in a scheme that will meet for months the want of the town.

It was well they did so. It was well they provided for the future, for that future was laden with sorrows and sufferings greater than any they have yet had to bear. In the winter that succeeded the date of the weavers' minute, the dearth continued to deepen in severity and to widen its bounds. In January of 1800 the council—with help of the guildry and the crafts—were compelled to set up a soup-kitchen in the Flesh Market Close, and to feed the starving crowds as each day returned. All classes willingly subscribed or assisted, from Admiral Mitchell of the Hill, who gave £10 to the general fund and £10 to the kitchen. Over three hundred families were supplied daily with a meal of bread and soup, carried from the kitchen by boys and girls, by old men and patient women, many of them shoeless and poorly clad, pale and shivering in the cold. The efforts of the trades were also bearing fruit. The united offerings of the incorporations had procured meal, if not in abundance at least in supply of pressing needs. The price in Dunfermline at this time and as charged by the committee of the subscribers, was two and ninepence per peck, and was sold to the people from the east room of the Townhouse, from the window looking up the High Street. Sixteen hundred families in Dunfermline had been within three months served with the subscribed-for meal. It was indeed a terrible time for the poor, yet all classes

were nobly fighting the gaunt and ghastly enemy of want, and beating back the wolf of penury from the doors of the hungry.

All through the hot summer of 1800, the dearth had continued. Prices rose to a level never dreamed of in these later favoured times. On 3rd September, the deacon reported to the preliminary Michaelmas meeting of the craft, that the conveners' court had recently held a meeting, and had discussed the social and domestic condition of the people. Here it had been proposed and agreed to, "That the different incorporations and societies of the town should join together in raising a fund for keeping a permanent supply of grain for the use of the inhabitants and others; and it was also resolved that the deacons of the several incorporations should meet their members and take their minds on the subject; and in obedience to the first resolution he had called this meeting."

"The incorporation of weavers, after reasoning on the subject, unanimously are of opinion that such a measure would, under proper management, be productive of great utility; and that this incorporation would, in case of the proposal of the conveners' court being carried out, subscribe a sum not less than £200; and they appoint a committee to meet with the committees of the other incorporations and societies, for the purpose of digesting a proper plan of operations." Deacon and boxmaster were appointed to the committee, along with William M'Arthur, deacon John Reid, deacon William Stewart, and deacon John Ferguson. (These last are merely courtesy deacons on the principle "aince a deacon aye a deacon.")

In continuing the business of the meeting, the clerk, Mr. James Alexander, reported that he had "corresponded with a house in England, relative to the price of grain, and had received a letter quoting prices in a general cargo of wheat and oats, for the brewers and bakers and others; and that there remained only about one hundred bolls of the oats undisposed of, and which he offered to the societies at prime cost and charges—they paying him two and a half per cent. commission, and allowing the other incorporations to have

the meal at the same price as their own members." This offer was accepted by the meeting with the terms and conditions attached.

On the following day (September 4th), the deacon laid before another meeting of the weavers, a scroll set of regulations, agreed to by the convener's court, for consideration and possible acceptance by the different societies, regarding the purchase and importing of grains and meal. These were read, and at once agreed to, the treasurer being taken bound to keep a regular cash book, etc., and to balance accounts weekly, at sight of the sub-committee appointed.

It would appear from the transactions, that the weaving craft at this time, and with all their generosity, had not the ready cash to meet their assumed liabilities. The bank, on being applied to, could only advance the money on the production of sufficient securities or cautioners. These, however, were soon found, and Messrs. Sutherland, Blackwood, and Wilson, were willingly accepted by the Bank of Scotland [the only one then in the town]. The joint enterprise was then fairly started, and though the craft minutes are silent as to the details, it may be concluded that some ship, homeward bound from a Dutch port, would be chartered, the grain brought, most likely, to Limekilns or Brucehaven, sent to mills in the vicinity to be ground, and then sold, as above, to all in need of the general bounty.

It may not be without interest to the reader of to-day to recall, for a moment, the fiscal condition of the country when the nineteenth century began. Bread riots and hunger plunderings were reported from nearly all our manufacturing centres—the distress continuing unabated all through 1801. "Yet Pitt, in his last financial statement made just before his resignation, proposed a variety of new taxes. Ten per cent. was to be the increase of the duty on tea, above 2s. 6d. per pound; the paper duty was doubled; the calico duty was raised from 2½d. to 3½d. per yard; the tax on timber was increased one-third; a tax of 6d. per pound was to be levied on all exports; and a duty of 3d. in the pound on all articles consumed at home. The sugar duty was fixed at 1s. 8d. per cwt. A duty was levied on raisins. On every agricultural horse a duty of 4s. was levied, with

10s. on every pleasure horse where only one was kept, and 20s. where more than one was kept. Fresh taxes were put on marine insurance policies and deeds of conveyance. The charges for postage were raised—in some cases doubled. The sale of fine wheaten bread was prohibited, and brown bread of the vilest concoction became the appointed food of the people. The quartern loaf cost 1s. 9½d. at the beginning, and 1s. at the end of the year." Such were the tremendous prices—indicating incalculable suffering—we were paying for our unwarranted war with France. It had yet a long course to run, and human endurance was to be stretched to the last thread ere the end came. And all for what? For political myths, for dynastic dreams, and the ghastly pageantry of glory.

It has been said by those who were intimate with Mr. Pitt, the Prime Minister of those days, that, individually, he was in favour of free trade, but the terrible difficulties into which himself and the ministers had plunged the country, left him no alternative but to plant taxes on every article of human food or use—the last year of his long reign, 1800, being distinguished by the passage of the notorious and wasteful "Brown Bread Act," a piece of silly back-kitchen legislation, repealed in 1801.

A year passes away, and then we learn that the auditors of the Meal Society (for it would seem that for purposes of careful accounting, the committee of sale and distribution had been formed into a little separate and corporate body, with books and accounts entirely free of the different trades' accounts) reported on 31st October, 1801, to a meeting of the weavers, that there had been a heavy loss on the meal transactions, and that the incorporation would be chargeable with £157 6s. 11d. as its proportion of the total amount. The meeting, remembering, no doubt, that the craft was prepared for this, and had provided for it, made no complaint as to the amount, but for the sake of justice to all, the clerk was instructed to use every possible and legal means to recover outstanding accounts, and to insist on a final settlement with the Edinburgh societies, and to report.

The Edinburgh societies here referred to, were combinations engaged in the same enterprise as this in Dunfermline, and which, for economies in freights and other charges, had associated with the Dunfermline, and with other committees, in commissioning and shipping grain from abroad.

On 26th January, 1802—for the terrible dearth still continues—the craft are informed that a quantity of rice is still on hand, from the grain speculation, and the meeting at once instruct the committee to sell off the same at reduced prices, and to get an exact statement of accounts from the Edinburgh societies, so as to enable the entire sum of the loss to be made up. The Bank of Scotland here lent its assistance in the matter, called up its various items of account connected with the enterprise, and on 29th January presented these to the craft. The weavers, nowise daunted by their losses (£157 odds), passed a resolution, which was carried by forty-five votes to twenty-nine, to carry on the importing of meal and grain, even in the face of the heavy loss shown. The deacon and boxmaster were authorised to borrow the amount required and to grant a bill for the same.

The spring and summer came and went, with no abatement of the dearth; and the weaving craft, on 18th August, 1802, by the boxmaster, is found paying a bill for £50 formerly granted to meet the meal accounts. Farther accounts from “Thomas Bonnar and Charles Kirk,” amounting in all to £35, are presented against an empty exchequer. But the weavers have good credit. They borrow £95 from the bank, and that helpful institution is easily persuaded to accept a bill for same. The annual Michaelmas meeting on 28th September is devoted to adjusting the roll of, and payments to, their regular and trade claimants, in charities and aliments; and on 17th November of this same year, “Lieutenant Alexander Keiller of the Royal Navy” is reported as willing to lend the craft such a sum of money as will enable its members to pay the bank bill. The weavers accept a loan of £80 on bill as before.

This Alexander Keiller has left a kindly memory behind him, and the weavers of his day seem to have esteemed him beyond most men,

for on 9th May, 1803, they admit him for his good deeds an honorary member of their incorporation. He died on the 31st August, 1831, at his house in Chalmers Street. He had reached the age of seventy-two years.

On 3rd September, 1804, the weavers agree on joint action once more. They desire by resolution to join with the other incorporations in Dunfermline, to urge the Town Council to petition Parliament in favour of the repeal of the "late Corn Bill," i.e. the last addition made to the duties on corn; and they resolved also that if the council refused to act, the different corporations should do so by themselves. The appeal to the council proved a failure, and the weaving craft then appointed Henry Meldrum, James Ker, Andrew Houston, David Paton, William Addison, John Barnet, William Stevenson and Adam Miller, along with the deacon and boxmaster, to frame the petition and have it sent to the district M.P. As might have been expected, this, and hundreds of other petitions bearing the same burden of complaint and appeal, were received, passed aside, and ignored by the House. The maw of the remorseless war-hound must be fed; and money, already being spent by the hundred million, must be obtained in hundreds of millions more.

The resolutions of the weavers were advertised in the Edinburgh newspapers, and their committee were constantly at work. On 9th November, the weavers were again met in the Townhouse listening to an address drawn up by "The People's Committee in Glasgow," for a repeal of the Corn Laws. At the end of the address we find the deacon is empowered forthwith to move in the council with, if possible, the whole influence of the conveners' court to back it up, a resolution for repeal of these statutes.

In 1814, the corn duties were again proposed to be increased; and the weavers, on 23rd March, convene a full meeting of the trade. They draw up a series of seven resolutions, and they combine these in a petition to the House of Commons, signed by their deacon, Henry Meldrum, and have it sent up to St. Stephens. The seven resolutions were advertised in the *Edinburgh Star*, the *Advertiser*, and *Caledonian*

Mercury. These resolutions traverse the entire field of argument against these atrocious enactments. They "view with alarm the exertions being made by the landlords and farmers to increase the duties," and they conclude that the first are moving thus so as to increase their rents, and the latter to augment their profits. The weavers think the landlords might be content with the "revisions" of 1791 and 1804. They insist that any further increase of duty will still further increase the general distress, and that the suffering induced will fall most heavily on the poorest of the poor, and they finally point out that any increase of the corn duty is uncalled-for, iniquitous, and unjust.

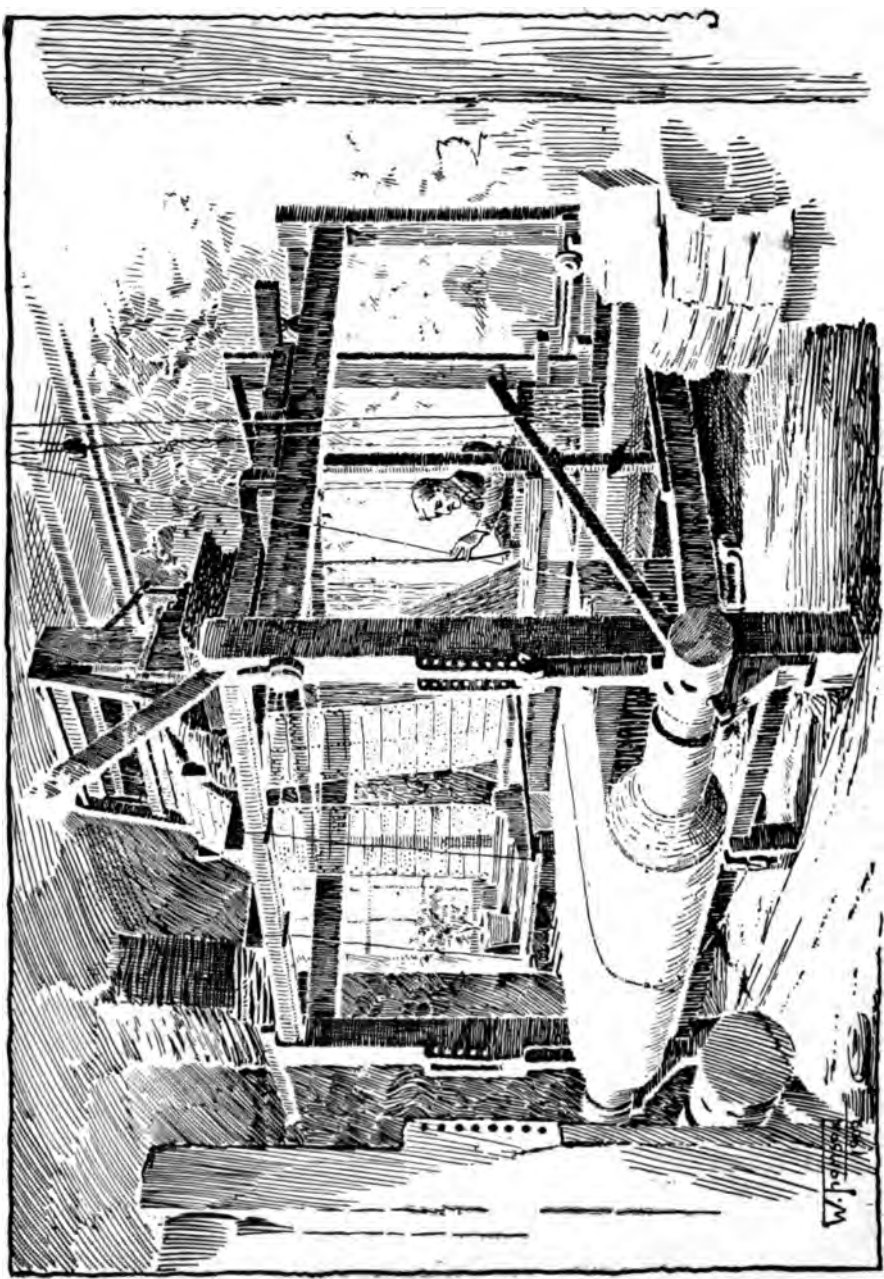
On 2nd April, 1815, another meeting is held, and another protest and petition prepared by Robert Hutton, writer, against any increase of the corn duties is adopted. Copies of these were presented in the House of Lords by Lord Grenville, and in the Commons by Mr. George Rose. The petitions were again unheeded, and new and heavier duties imposed, but no sooner did the Government proposals become law, than the weavers petitioned for their immediate repeal. They went further. The continued disregard of their petitions roused a natural spirit of resentment, and on 19th December, 1820, the little community agreed to, and prepared a petition to the King, asking him to at once dismiss his "present ministry," and to substitute one that would act more in accordance with the mind of the people. In 1826, they thank the legislature for a modicum of Corn Law relief, and the subject disappears from the minutes of the weaving craft, till 27th January, 1827, when the craft petitions strongly for total abolition. Thus the subject finally disappears.

The effects of these mistaken enactments, however, could not so easily disappear. The "dry year," the long burning summer and autumn of 1826, produced again the inevitable result of a food famine among the common people. Four days after the above vote of thanks, the craft members are found discussing and adjusting their charity and alimient rolls (3rd October, 1826), and on 13th October, 1826, they receive a letter which had been sent by a Mr. Stevenson of

Leith, to Mr. Finlayson, of the Messrs. Rutherford, ~~Dunfermline~~, who had evidently been writing as to the destitute condition of the working classes, and enquiring as to the possibility of shipping grain and meal from foreign ports. The letter pointed out how the different incorporations could join their funds, or obtain loans ~~from the banks,~~ ~~to enable them to make a~~ purchase large enough to ensure the best terms. With this letter was an enclosure from a Thomas Ogilvey of Montrose, indicating that the trades in Brechin had instructed a cargo of fifteen hundred quarters of oats from Messrs. Deuchar & Stevenson of Rotterdam, and giving the necessary quotations.

The calculations are interesting. The meeting propose to take the best quality at 27s. per quarter; freight, 3s.; insurance, 9d.; Government duty, 2s.—in all, £1 12s. 9d. per quarter net. In this way, the cost per boll laid down in this country would be 24s. 6d. A boll of Friesland oats would give 16½ to 17 pecks of meal. If the oats were allowed to lie at the mills till 4th November, the duty would then be (by some recent legislation) reduced to 4d. per quarter, and if Government would forego the claim of duty otherwise, the price per boll would be 23s. 3d.; so that 16 pecks at 1s. 5d. per peck would meet the initial outlays. A double object was arrived at here: to cheapen present supplies, and to lay in a stock against the higher prices expected. The meeting ordered 500 quarters, and the *Cherub* was chartered from Rotterdam. Leave was granted by Government Commissioners at Bo'ness to land the grain at Brucehaven. When the cargo came to land, 713 quarters were found on board. They were all taken, and all was sold at Limekilns—the committee visiting regularly and overseeing the whole transaction. A Mr. Rattray was salesman (under caution of £100). By the end of October, the entire cargo was disposed of, with a loss to the weavers of £198 1s. 3d. There is not a single word of complaint in the minutes. They were pleased evidently at having acted nobly, and the happy reflection was their reward.

The income of the weavers' craft was derived from the members' entries and fees, from house rents, and from interest on loaned sums.



Jacquard Damask Handloom.

The total membership would run up to many hundreds, but forty to fifty seems to have been the average attendance at the meetings. About one hundred and fifty were made freemen of the craft from 1800 to 1863. The income during the same period, taken from the boxmaster's accounts, averages about £140, and the expenditure to a few pounds less. In 1836 the income from the sale of the properties mounts up to £736; and the expenditure, from mutual division of the funds, to nearly the same sum—a balance of only £7 13s. 8d. being left—to cover the expense of a decent funeral, and the dairgie of the ancient incorporation. The debit balance of the craft, on account of the losses incurred in the oatmeal ventures of 1827-9, runs to between £350 and £390, till the property sales of 1836 provide the means of clearing scores. There was a regular roll—paid monthly—of the craft poor, besides casuals. These were made the recipients of doles that appear to us moderns as insignificantly small. The accounts during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were kept in “Scots money,” and are set down so irregularly that little can be made out of them.

Touching the financial condition of the craft. In September, 1806, the boxmaster shows a credit balance of £49 14s. 2d. In 1807, of £52 17s. 8d., and they lent Charles Kirk £20 to help him with some of his “mechanic schemes” In 1809, the balance falls to £33 15s. 8d. In 1816, the funds are down to zero nearly—only £1 6s. 7d. in the box. By 1820, the credit balance stands at £31 7s. 4d. In 1824, it is reported that the boxmaster, Thomas Hoggan, had run off with all the craft funds, to the value evidently of one hundred pounds. Just after learning their loss of about £200 in the meal and grain enterprise, they give £10 additional to their own poor; but when William Campbell seeks a loan of £10 to help him to buy a reed-making machine, they cannot give the money. Their funds, however, take a sudden rise in 1827, when they show a credit balance of £163 10s. 5d. They spend £35 to procure a hot press for the finishing of woollen goods at their calender; and the last glimpse we get of the weaving crafts’ “bawbees,” is when, in March, 1831, they

subscribe £2 2s. to get a gold chain for the provost of the burgh—the provost then being George Meldrum, baker, Maygate.

In the last fully recorded meeting of the craft, though not the last in its history, held on 20th August, 1858, in the warehouse of Andrew Boag, manufacturer, at seven o'clock in the evening, there being present the deacon, boxmaster, and two key keepers and others, the deacon stated that the meeting had been called by special requisition to consider the propriety of exposing the reed-making machine, gifted by the Board of Trustees in 1819, for sale. The meeting agreed that the said machine should be sold for what it would bring, and it was ultimately bought by Mr. Andrew Robertson, reedmaker, for £1 sterling. They also sold—the last memento of all their history and their greatness—their bell, to John Scotland for eightpence.

Legislation and the administration of iniquitous laws were the chief producers of the sufferings of the people. The experiences and hardships of the community during the ten years preceding the settlement of their famine accounts, had convinced every one of the gross injustice of the fiscal policy maintained by the governing classes, and especially by the landlords of our country. The policy of protection—the resort of all nations in the childhood of their political wisdom—was now seen to be but another name for monopoly. That monopoly was given to the agricultural interest, and that resolved itself at once into the drawers of agricultural rents—the lords of the land. These exercised their power—in these old days of unmixed class rule—with a callousness and disregard of the true interests of the people that may have been paralleled, but has never been surpassed. Lord Stanley, the “Rupert” of debate, in one of his speeches said that the principle of landlord protection had existed in England for eight hundred years. He may have been a century or two wrong, but in essence he was near the truth. The Corn Laws formed the grand instrument of tyranny in the beginning of the nineteenth century, an instrument which, in its varying modifications, proved but the lengthen-

ing of the thong and sharpening the whip of social and financial infliction.

In 1774, the Corn Laws received the impress they retained till repealed in 1846. Changes—"revisions"—were made in 1791, 1804, 1815, 1826, and 1828, and at each change the duties imposed on the importation of food stuffs were, with one exception, made more and more severe. The shipping of wheat from abroad was practically forbidden, unless the price of the home-grown article was—in 1774, at 48s. per quarter; in 1791, at 54s.; in 1804, at 66s.; and, in 1815, at 80s. per quarter of 8 bushels. The liberal policy of Mr. Huskisson succeeded in 1828 in reducing this maximum to 73s. per quarter. The system was a compromise between a pandering protection on the one hand and starvation on the other; and the famine eras we had passed through in Dunfermline formed a stern and enduring commentary on their blasting and ruinous results.

The preceding quotations from the minutes of the weavers' craft show not only a strong spirit of association, but a generosity and readiness to help that gives beauty and harmony to the associative idea. The generosity of the weavers in the latest visitation of the dearth was worthy of all the greater praise, that the funds of the society were then in so attenuated a form that the liabilities they voluntarily incurred had to be met by loans granted on the property of the association. When the century was closing—i.e., at the September meeting of 1799—the boxmaster (Mr. John Ker) showed a credit balance of £38; while £100 had already been banked for behoof of the incorporation by John Wilson, one of the craft councillors and a bailie of the burgh.

So flush were the weavers of cash at this time that they determined to have their coat-of-arms graven or carved on the front of their loft in the kirk, "if it can be done at a moderate cost." In 1800 they lend John Reid £30 "at 5 per cent. till wanted by the trade," though the claims of the dearth had reduced their credit balance to £3 17s. 11d. The effects of their liberality is seen at the September meeting of 1803, when they accepted a loan from James Knox of £40

at 5 per cent. In April, 1805, when the Town Council is in treaty for a fire engine, the weaving craft can give no more than £5 5s. to help this good intent—nor would they subscribe any more to this “fire or water engine.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Union—Effect on linen trade—Stamp Acts—Trades' Library—Bounty system—Board of Manufactures—Prizes—Commercial Academy—Burgh reform—Council abstracts—Corruption.

WE have already spoken of the revival noticeable in the Scottish linen trade, after the Union with England in 1707. The removal of inter-kingdom restrictions, the wider market, the more peaceful condition of society, and the greater skill, both of weavers and manufacturers, were all causes leading up to the happy result of improved goods and improved trade. The Imperial Government, aware of the somewhat turbulent, hardy, and independent character of the Scottish people, were anxious to create a spirit of content with the new order of things. For that purpose, and with the design of increasing, at the same time, the trade and commerce of the nation, they devised a system of bounties calculated, by giving rewards for improvements in methods, and excellence in the produced article, to stimulate and advance the linen trade in a way it had never known before.

The first of these linen laws, sometimes called the “Stamp Act,” was passed in 1727. It ordained that no linen cloth could be sold or exposed for sale, until it had been inspected and stamped by the duly appointed public official. The machinery of this Act was applicable—so far as stamping was concerned—only to linens intended

for sale or export, that made for domestic use was not touched by the Act. Its provisions contained too much of detail, though its purpose generally was to prevent frauds, and to raise the character of the trade. The kinds of linen subject to the provisions of the Act were:—White linen, brown linen, diapre and damask, striped and checked linens and Bengals—all of which appear to have been woven in Dunfermline in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, and consequently the "Stamp Act" was well known in our town.

This Act, though a useful one, was found on trial not to meet the purpose intended. It was accordingly amended in 1742 by another Act, which offered a reward, in the way of bounty, on all linen stamped for exportation.

The promoters of the bounty system, and those who took advantage of it, did not seriously consider whether it was just in principle or otherwise. A good deal could be said in favour of the new Act, when looked at in the light of results, while it was open to decided objection in the face of abstract political justice. It was evidently wrong to apply tax monies, drawn from the whole nation, to the benefit of a class or section, and to supply a foreign market. In short, the system was liable to all the objections urged against other forms of privilege and monopoly. It was urged in reply that the bounties were paid out of monies received in payment of duties on foreign-made textiles, but even in this modified form, the argument and system are intrinsically bad.

Another Act was passed in 1745, to prevent the fraudulent application of the stamp to other than British or Irish-made linens; and in the same year, another measure was given to the linen trade, increasing the bounties on exported linens. Doubts as to the equity of these enactments seem to have been entertained by our legislators at this time, but the evident benefits they were conferring tempted the administration of 1749 to pass an Act continuing the bounties for three years longer. Quoting from Mr. Warden (*History of Linen Trade*, p. 665), the bounties were withdrawn by an Act of Parliament passed in 1754. These bounties were, however, renewed in 1756, and

further regulated in 1770. In 1778, the bounty period came to an end, but was again renewed and continued. The bounties continued to be paid up till 1820, in which year there were a great many petitions from the linen weaving districts in favour of continuing the grants. It was evident that the system was now being looked on as a constant and permanent "quantity." Government evidently saw at once the danger and the difficulty of fresh legislation. A series of gradual reductions were made, beginning in 1818, and coming to an end in Scotland in 1832, thus making the abolition of bounties co-incident with the year of reform.

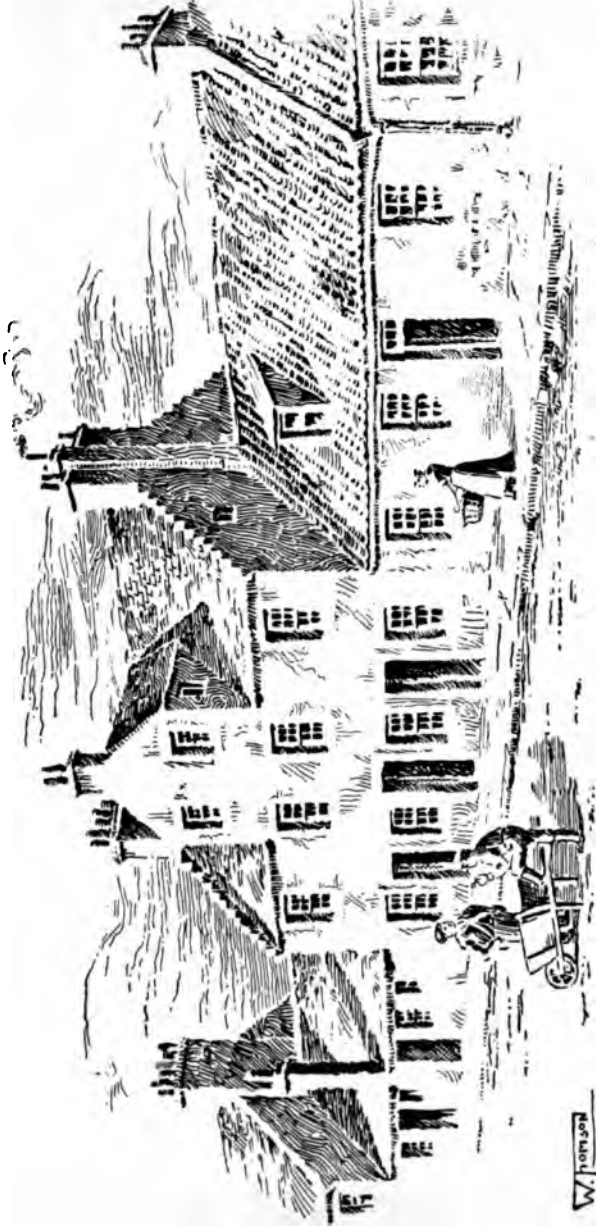
It was under the auspices of the Board of Manufacture and of the bounty system that a new diapre loom was fitted up in Dunfermline in 1731. The old loom required the attendance of a "drawboy;" the new loom dispensed with his services. It was under this system, as we have seen, that a sum of money was given to assist in fitting up and preparing a bleachfield at Dunfermline. The warping mill and reed bank, one of the Dutch inventions, was also introduced by the Board of Trustees, and which soon became familiar to the weavers of the auld gray town. The patent for the spinning of flax, obtained by John Kendrew & Co. of Darlington in 1787, was, by the assistance of the Board of Trustees, introduced into Scotland—the first mill being set up at Innerbervie in Kincardineshire, the second at Brucefield, Dunfermline, in 1792. In 1797, Henry Meldrum of Dunfermline obtained a prize of £10 10s. for his invention of an improved method of working marsielles quilts, and David Bonnar, Dunfermline, is recorded as selling in 1806 to the weavers' incorporation of our town, his improvements on the damask loom, obtaining in payment the sum of £350, the improvement consisting in a method of producing coloured sprigs; while in 1819 the aforesaid Henry Meldrum and Robert M'Gregor are jointly awarded £30 for improvements in the weaving of diapers. Nor must we omit that when Mr. Huskisson, in pursuance of a liberal and enlightened policy, proposed in 1825 to abolish the duties imposed on the importation of foreign linens, the Dunfermline weavers petitioned the Board of Trustees to intervene,

when a promise was given that the Board would use its influence to get these duties taken off, not all at once, but gradually.

Elsewhere we have shown that when John Kay of Bury, in Lancashire, invented the picking-stick in 1733, he really began that long series of improvements in machine methods of weaving which ultimately brought the power-loom into existence; and when Kay the younger invented the drop-box lay, the leading features of the power-loom as it now exists were made parts of the hand-loom, and furnished suggestions for many other improvements.

Similarly with our Dunfermline trade. When John Wilson in 1778 produced his invention of the fly-shuttle, he introduced what may be called a new era in the art of weaving. The picking-stick was a vast improvement on the old hand-shuttle methods, and for some classes of goods the picking-stick, with its secondary form of the "pull down" could not be bettered; but for fine, white, delicate goods the fly-shuttle was much the superior form. At this time there were only about twenty damask looms in the town, and of these Mr. Mark Stark had fitted up three in the dated (1666) house at Hospital Hill (now removed), where the new shuttle driver would be carefully tried. Along with Mr. Wilson in the above invention should be bracketed the name of John Gilmour of Brucefield village, who aided in its completion. Neither should we pass unnoticed the name of John Hatton, whose improved method of working sheeting obtained a premium, and was highly approved in 1799.

The regularity and evenness of the cloth greatly depends on the uniform spacing of the weaving reeds. The ancient system of making these by hand produced such irregularities as caused continual complaints from purchasers of the cloth. Aware of the importance of the reed, the weavers here had always shown a desire to secure the best articles made. In 1743 Charles Roy, reed-maker, came to the town, and was at once patronised by the craft, who gave him all the honour they had to dispose of—they made him a freeman of their trade society. They bestowed the same dignity on Colin Croll in 1765; Alexander Macintosh, when he set up in Dunfermline in 1792; and



Hotany House, Nethertown.

Henry Meldrum's House, Nethertown.

also on William Chalmers, who succeeded in 1812, and who introduced an improved machine for the essential purposes of his trade. The same honour was extended to every reed-maker as he came to the town or set up in the business of reed-maker to the weavers. In the smaller matters of improving the form of the shuttle or of the various levers used on a damask loom, and even in matters of preparing the warp yarns, the weavers as a craft were always alive to the interests of their trade, and to the excellence of their productions.

Nor were they indifferent to municipal affairs and to the welfare of the general community. We have seen already how generously they gave, and how bravely and wisely they fought through the famine periods of 1782, 1795, 1800, and 1827. These efforts proved the depth and sincerity of their generosity. Their general intelligence was no less proved by a remarkable and spontaneous movement made at this time to meet the mind wants of the community.

The history of the Tradesman's Library of 1808 has been, and often, told already. It has no place in the minutes of the weaving craft; but as weavers were its sponsors at birth, and were its mainstay in all its succeeding years, it may not be out of place to recall the circumstances of its origin. This can best be done in the words of William Meldrum, one of its earliest members. "It had its origin," says Mr. Meldrum, "in James Kirkland's loom shop, in Moodie Street, in the year 1808. Richard Gosman, William Carnegie, and Charles Anderson, journeymen weavers there, and William Anderson, Nether-town, agreed to make common stock of the books which each of them possessed, and also to consult each other before making any farther additions. But before they had gone any length, they found the stock too small for the demand, and agreed to ask some of their acquaintances to join them, when a library was proposed; and about the same time the following persons formed themselves into a body for that purpose, viz.:—Ralph Walker, Richard Gosman, William Carnegie, Charles Anderson, William Anderson, David Letham, Thomas Main, John Syme, Andrew Aitken, and William Meldrum.

“The entry-money and quarterly payments were the same as now [1854], and as books were then more than double their present price, we had to exercise a good deal of patience; but a number of the members gave in such books as they could spare from their own stock—to be paid for by the library when times were better.”

Such were the beginnings of an institution—now grown to the dimensions of the Carnegie Free Library—an institution at once of the greatest benefit and credit to the community.

William Anderson was its first preses, and when, in after years, he removed to Leith, he continued to be warmly attached to the “Tradesman’s,” and spent many an hour at the bookstalls in Edinburgh, selecting books for his friends in Dunfermline. Ralph Walker, father of the late Bailie Thomas Walker, was treasurer for the first decade, and Charles Anderson was the first librarian. The books were kept in his mother’s house, and the surplus volumes were ranged with pride on the limited space of the drawers’-head. His mother got tired, by and by, of the debates, bickerings, and late hours of the readers, and the books were then carefully carried to an upper room, occupied by an old man, in one of the curious old houses on the north side of Nethertown, removed from the site now (1902) occupied by the Cottage Hospital.

In 1831, the “Tradesman’s” was united with the “Mechanics’” Library, and the first preses (elected 1829) of the enlarged institution was the once well-known Robert Flockhart. Following him were James Elder (1831), Robert Wardlaw (1843), David Hood (1846), W. G. Robertson (1875), James Philp (1876), and so on, till this effort of a few associative spirits in 1808 blossomed out, in 1881, into the splendid Carnegie Free Library, now housed in the finely-appointed building adorning the site of the old Inland Revenue office, in St. Margaret and Abbot Streets.

Other and reigning difficulties prevented the adoption of many a noble resolve, and frustrated the accomplishment of many excellent designs; though the spirit of advance was never wholly dead. It had long been felt that while the cause of education had been kept alive,

and served fairly well, in its more antique forms, by the Grammar School of the burgh, yet was there something wanted for growing modern needs—for the equipment of a sound commercial training. It is to this feeling we owe the existence of the Commercial Academy in Viewfield Place, and which served its proper purpose excellently and well, from its opening, in 1816, to its close, on the advent of the present national system of Board Schools, when buildings and ground were handed over free to the Burgh School Board by the guild brethren.

The need for a Commercial Academy was first mooted at a meeting of influential gentlemen held in the Townhouse on the 15th December, 1813, when Mr. Hunt of Pittencrieff was called to the chair. They fully discussed the subject, and finally adopted memorials to the Town Council, the guildry, and the kirk session of the parish. These memorials set forth the objects aimed at by the subscribers, viz. :— That the Grammar School should continue to be maintained on its present footing, and that the projected new school should be designed for the teaching of English, reading, grammar, arithmetic, and mathematics. These objects were set forth in motions by Mr. Hunt, chairman of the meeting, and by Mr. Black, town clerk ; with the addition that when the subscribed fund for the new school reached the sum of £800, the building should be begun and the teachers selected.

Dr. Henderson, in noticing the school in his *Annals*, says bluntly, that it was built by the guildry. The above statements would go to show that the leading public bodies of the town had been asked to subscribe towards the fund necessary for the erection of the schools ; though it is clear that ultimately the buildings and grounds were vested in the guildry. The memorial, and copies of the motions made by Messrs. Hunt and Black, came before the weavers at a meeting of the craft held in the Townhouse on 4th January, 1814. Here, again, the whole matter was gone over and elaborated to the content of the weavers present, who finished by following the example of the council, deferring any farther consideration to another meeting. That

meeting, if we are to judge by the minutes, never came round. The engulfing importance of the Corn Laws, and the consuming desire for their repeal, served for a time to shut out all other questions of discussion. It was not, however, through any lack of interest in, or discernment of the importance of, education, that caused the "Commercial" to disappear from the minutes, for we know from the general newspaper records of the time, and from local registers, that the handloom weavers had not only a high opinion of the value of education, but were willing at all times to take their full share in advancing its forms and improving its equipment. The Commercial Academy was founded in 1816, and its first engaged teacher was Mr. John Johnston, afterwards well known in Inverness and Edinburgh as a man of refined literary taste, and who, with his wife, the authoress of *The Saxon and the Gael*, and many other works, was long known in the literary circles of the capital. He died in Edinburgh in 1857.

There existed also among the weavers some spirit of wide and liberal interpretation of what was due between man and man, and between the members of the different associations into which the town was divided. In these modern days, when Limited Liability Companies are on every hand endeavouring to convince the world that man in his united capacity has neither heart nor affection—in such times and with such surroundings, we can hardly realise the noble and elevated sentiments on which the weavers took their stand, and from which they worked. Their actions take us back to the beginnings of our civilisation, and to the infancy of our ancient Scotch burghs, when every resident was compelled by the exigences of his life, to look upon himself as one of a mutually dependent, mutually sustaining society, which the records named a burgh. It is said of the modern "Limited" Company that it can never be seen, that it can never be approached, made to feel or express itself in the language of humanity. These things could never be said of the old weavers' craft. It may be true that the modern "Company" has neither "a body to kick nor a soul to save"; but the craft, whose history we

have been following, rejoiced in its corporate evidence, and made clear to every one that its affections were not dead, that its heart *did* beat to the woes, and to the joys also, of our common humanity—even the evolving aspirations of the community were constant on the business cards of the weavers.

When, in 1808, the Town Council were cogitating the details of a measure to be obtained from Parliament “for extending the royalty, regulating the police, and for lighting and cleaning, and keeping the streets in repair,” the weavers cordially concur with the object, but point out “that the late greatly augmented revenues of the town is, or should be, highly adequate to meet these purposes, and, therefore, disapprove of any application to Parliament which might occasion additional burdens to be laid upon the inhabitants.” It must be kept in mind that inhabitants were, at this time, still struggling with the difficulties of the recent dearths and with the hardships which a languid trade and poor remuneration always bring. The “greatly augmented revenues” of the town referred to above, must have come from the coalfields of the burgh.

In their resolution, the weavers make no mention of the town's debt, the condition of which ought to have caused the magistrates and council to reconsider their entire position, and to have paused ere they added any fresh responsibilities to the heavy burden they had then to bear. The debt of the burgh at this time (1808) was £10,450 sterling. In 1788, the debt was only £3000; in 1798, it had increased to £5000; but in 1808, this last sum was more than doubled. The causes of this abnormal increase were not only suspicious, but were easily traceable to the corrupt administration of the town's affairs. This was made clearly manifest in the Parliamentary enquiry of 1819, when the debt stood at £20,400, exclusive of a claim by Mr. Hutton's trustees of £2000 against the town; by the bankruptcy of the burgh in 1828, and by the revelations of the Royal Commissioners in 1835, when the very persons and methods by which the town had been plundered for the previous forty years were named and described.

The movement for the reform of our burgh "sett" was begun by the guildry. In October of 1816, a motion was put before the annual meeting of the guild brethern, and carried by a large majority, the object of which was to obtain for themselves the right to elect their own dean and merchant councillors, whom, though they were nominally their representatives, they had no independent power to elect. In this year (the subject being discussed all over the country), Lord Archibald Hamilton moved in the Commons, and obtained the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry into the financial condition and administration of the royal burghs of Scotland, and four burghs were selected for that ordeal, viz.—Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, and Dunfermline. This becoming known, the entire body of incorporations in each of the towns were roused to action—the councils by fear of the consequences, and the other bodies by expectation of incriminating disclosures.

It is difficult, in the absence of local and contemporary evidence, to find the reasons for including Dunfermline in the list of burghs whose debts, accounts, and government, were to be overhauled by Government Commissioners in 1819. The other three burghs chosen for enquiry were doubtless awarded that distinction because of their size and importance. But Dunfermline was in no worse plight than many other burghs of similar size in Scotland, so that there must have been, in our recent history, some attracting cause for the determination of the Commissioners. That cause, in the general belief, was found in the long-pending lawsuit between the Town Clerk of the burgh and the M.P. for the Stirling District. That quarrel arose out of the Parliamentary election of 1812.

David Black, writer, Dunfermline, was then Town Clerk of Inverkeithing (since 1796), as well as Town Clerk of Dunfermline (since 1806). In his capacity of law adviser to the coast Town Council, and when the time of the election was near at hand, he, on 15th October, allowed a power to vote—in the election of the burgh delegate—to three gentlemen whose right, because of residence, was somewhat doubtful. This allowance was satisfactory to General Campbell, one

of the three candidates (the other two being General Maitland, and Henry, afterwards Lord Brongham), since it would have given him a majority, and secure the seat. But Clerk Black, acting on the advice of Chief Commissioner Adams, afterwards (on 30th October) disallowed these same three votes. On this, General Campbell raised an action in the Court of Session for malversation of office, and for damages against Black. The case came on in the Outer House on 22nd May, 1813, and Black was found guilty, fined in £500, and adjudged to six months' imprisonment. He appealed to the Second Division, where the case was again reviewed, and Black again adjudged to meet the full penalties. Nothing daunted, he appealed to the House of Lords, where, on 19th May, 1817, both the Scotch decisions were overthrown, and David Black declared an honest man, and correct interpreter of the law.

There were, in consequence, immense rejoicings in the burghs. All the trade "colours" were hoisted—all the music available was put in requisition. And there was fervid speech-making and toast-drinking galore. General Campbell—who, strange enough, had been allowed to retain his seat till his quarrel with Clerk Black was settled by the law lords—was now unseated, and Francis W. Primrose of Bixley Hall was elected to the honour. Black himself seems to have regarded his victory as a kind of local and municipal triumph. He erected a memorial tower on the top of his house in High Street, Dunfermline, where it still stands, to attest the greatness of the five years' fight, and the victory gained. It was this election, and the excitement in connection with it, that led, as was generally believed, to Dunfermline being put in the hands of the investigating Commissioners of 1819.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Conveners' Court—Burgh Reform—Obstruction—Corruption in the Commons, and among the Weavers—Beef and Greens—Mr. Downie and Election of 1830.

At this time the industrial affairs of the town were regulated in a way we have no conception of now. Each trade was, of course, subject in the first place to its own laws, and to the decisions of its own committees and annual meetings; but the trades, as a whole, were also subject to the decisions and arrangements of what was called the Conveners' Court. This court, composed as it was of the deacons of the various trades, took supervision of questions that were supposed to affect the interests of all—such, for example, as the frequently occurring disputes between the guildry and the crafts, and also when these different bodies agreed upon any general line of action. This court comes before us, though not for the first time, in the weavers' minutes in the year 1809.

On the 5th December of that year, the convener had called a meeting of his court to consider, and if thought right, to recommend an alteration in the rates, fees, etc., charged upon each member of any particular craft on his being enrolled a freeman of that craft. The object was to enable the crafts to accumulate a larger fund for charity purposes generally, and to pay larger aliments to their aged and sick members. The minute of the Conveners' Court, which was held "within the house of John M'Pherson" on the above date, is preserved among those of the weavers' craft—the convener being David Wishart, and the various deacons were George Robertson, William Strachan, James Thomson, Michael Hunter, James Murrie, John Philp, John Henderson, William Hoggan, David Couper, and Thomas Bonnar.

The question of burgh reform was one eminently fitted for consideration by the deacon-members of the Conveners' Court; and the next time the subject comes before us, in a minute of the weaver craft dated 21st November, 1817, we learn that the Conveners' Court had requested each of the trades to "consider the propriety of petitioning the council and other constituted bodies for an alteration in the present sett of the burgh." The deacon also gave in a minute of the guildry committee meeting, the heading of which ran as follows:—"Meeting of committee of guildry, appointed by last annual meeting, for procuring a reform in the present sett of the burgh. The meeting being held in the Townhouse, there were present—Messrs. James Inglis, Robert Lawrie, Alexander Robertson, Robert Hutton, James M'Bean, and Finlay Malcolm."

The meeting (of the weavers) are of opinion "that a copy of the resolution entered into by the guildry at the before-mentioned meeting should be given to John Henderson, deacon-convener of the trades, requesting him to call a meeting of the Conveners' Court in order to submit the same to their consideration; and, if the proposed measure should meet with the approbation of the court, the deacons of the trades should be enjoined to call a meeting of their respective incorporations to consider the resolution and, if accepted, to appoint a committee of their number to act with the committee of the guildry" to carry out details.

Meantime the weavers resolve:—(1) "That the constitution of the royal burgh of Dunfermline is highly pernicious and unjust, and that it is most desirable that a sett affording a more equal, free, and extended representation to the guildry and trades should be obtained. (2) That this incorporation is deeply impressed with the necessity of giving attention to that part of the sett which prescribes the mode of electing the trades' deacons, and is most anxious to be relieved of that most humiliating thralldom by which the choice of a deacon is circumscribed and frustrated by the Town Council. (3) That the alarming financial difficulties of the burgh, occasioned, as has been candidly confessed, by that close and exclusive system of muni-



"Leisure Moments"—Hand-loom Weavers, Dunfermline.

cipal government which admits of no control and refuses all responsibility, renders necessary a constitution, founded on a fair representation of the guildry and the trades, one which would restore confidence to the burgesses and prevent these evils—the more especially when the already burdensome and still increasing amount of the town's debt and its scanty income is considered." (4) "That this incorporation join with the guildry and the other trades to procure the concurrence of the magistrates and council to petition the Convention of Royal Burghs " to grant the amendments sought. (5) "That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Right Hon. the Lord Advocate, for the liberality and patriotism which he displayed in recommending to the Prince Regent and His Royal Highness' Council the new constitution of the burgh of Montrose. (6) 'That the deacon and boxmaster and Adam Stewart be a committee to carry the same into effect."

The meeting here referred to as the last annual meeting of the guildry was held in the Townhouse on 17th March, 1817, and it may be interesting to subjoin the names of those present thereat:—

James Inglis, Alexander Robertson, Robert Lawrie, and James M'Bean represented the guildry.

John Henderson was convener of the trades.

Thomas Thomson and David Masterton represented the smiths.

Deacon John Ferguson and David Allester represented the weavers.

James Hutton represented the wrights.

Deacon David Stenhouse and William Dewar represented the tailors.

Deacon Andrew Anderson, David Wardlaw, and Thomas Morrison represented the shoemakers.

Deacon John Gall, Alexander Morton, and James Walls represented the masons.

Robert Auld and George Beveridge represented the fleshers.

Note.—The bakers are not represented ; they preferred the old ways.

At this meeting an excerpt of the minute of the Town Council meeting of 20th December, 1816, was read, in which the Provost moved and Dean of Guild seconded, "That the changes sought by the guildry and trades are not called for, and would lead to endless contention." This was carried by fifteen votes to five. The guild brethren and the trades were not, however, to be baulked by the refusal of the council to join hands with them. The excerpt minute and motion of the Town Council were no sooner read than the meeting unanimously resolved that a "Petition or Memorial be made out and presented to the ensuing Convention of Royal Burghs, praying for an alteration in the present set of the burgh."

This burning question of burgh reform, now hasting to its solution, still further engaged the attention of the combined incorporations, and produced a set of resolutions in May, 1819. These resolutions, we are informed, were destroyed by "a mistake of the clerk," and we are left to guess their fitness and purport. But the weavers met in the Townhouse on the 2nd June, and, having the combined resolutions before them, they agree and resolve:—

(1) "That it is highly proper that the incorporation should inform the Parliamentary Committee that they are ready to prove the allegations [of corrupt and oppressive government, as practised in the burgh] contained in the petition, both by written evidence and by witnesses; (2) That the sett of the burgh will prove that the incorporations must submit leets to the council, who have also the election of the trades' councillors; (3) That proper persons would be nominated . . . to prove the allegations contained in the petition; and (4) That in case the trades resolve to send witnesses, a sum should be voted to defray the expense of sending such persons to London."

The meeting also expressed their best thanks to Lord Archibald Hamilton "for his unwearied exertions in the general cause of reform, and to General Sir Ronald Crawford-Ferguson of Raith, M.P., and the Hon. Francis Ward Primrose, member for this District of Burghs, for their constant adherence to the interests of the general

cause, and to this burgh in particular." Thus, in these years, did the weavers of Dunfermline prove their title to being earnest and radical reformers, as they proved themselves to be in many a contest of wits and principles in after years.

The obstructive policy of the council did not quite shelve the question. The weavers petitioned the Convention themselves, but met with no favour. Up to the summer of 1819, the matter is still being discussed by the weavers; the whole subject is also being canvassed in the newspapers and in every industrial community in Scotland. In 1820, the House of Commons make some show of interest in the agitation, by calling for a statement of the "setts," or constitutions, of the different trade organisations—a demand with which our weavers at once complied. Long before this, however, the Government had determined to quash the agitation. This attitude was known, and its drift and purpose understood, and local authorities would not lend themselves to the move. The affairs of the four burghs already named were thoroughly investigated, and found to be appallingly corrupt; but the spirit of obstruction was too strong for the reforming impulse, and the subject, for the time, gradually died out of the public mind.

Here is the formation of the Dunfermline Council in 1817—a curious formation it now seems to be:—Provost, Major David Wilson; Bailies, Capt. John Wardlaw, and George Meldrum, baker; Dean of Guild, John Scotland, East Luscar; Old Provost, David Beveridge, baker; Old Bailies, John Greig and Alexander Bogie; Old Treasurer, James Beveridge, senior; Old Dean of Guild, William Anderson, merchant; Councillors, James Ferney and James Finlayson; with eleven Councillors from the different trades.

At this time the House of Commons was quite as corrupt as any of our local councils, and was filled in by methods as indefensible as any against which the trades of Dunfermline and guildry, or the investigating committee, pronounced their condemnation. The virtue of our weavers, even, reformers though they were, was not proof against the corrupting influences and temptations to which they were

subjected. Moralists are never tired of informing us that as institutions grow old, they lose the high-toned virtue and vigour of their youth, and become the easy and willing prey of degrading suggestions and corrupting powers.

It was even so with our weavers—those valiant antagonists of corruption in the council now became aiders and abettors in the prevailing methods of corrupting the House of Commons. They do not put on the full change of raiment all at once, but show by undeniable signs that they are on the down grade. Thus, at the Michaelmas meeting of 1824, “the meeting agrees to spend £1 1s. on beef and greens to-morrow evening at six o’clock, within the [public] house of George Beveridge, or the Townhouse; and appoint the deacon, box-master, and John Scotland, to take off the meat, and recommend to such as are to attend to lodge their names with the deacon or box-master by eleven o’clock to-morrow forenoon.” There is no record extant of this “beef and greens” meeting, but one can imagine the uproarious fun, the hazy songs, the wonderful stories sung, told, and listened to, as the gathering hours flew past. The twenty-one shillings being “melted,” each one would supplement, and as no Forbes Mackenzie existed then, the jolly company would swagger hilariously on into the small hours of the morning.

There is also a slight indication of their growing weakness at the meeting of June 20th, 1825, when Mr. Downie, M.P. for the District, is in the town, and when the weavers determine to make him an honorary member; and appoint a committee of the deacon and box-master to wait on him at his inn, to present him with their badge of honour, and explain that the same had been granted to him for presenting the weavers’ petition “not to allow any lowering of the duty on foreign linen goods.” “Brethren,” said the deacon waxing eloquent, “it is to this honourable gentleman you owe your present condition of comfort.” The “beef and greens” dinner comes off again in September, 1825, in the same house of George Beveridge, and again we have an opportunity for warm imagining. The virtue of abstinence, however, triumphs in the “dry year,” 1826, when the

meeting unanimously agree *not* to spend the guinea "usually allowed at this time."

"With evil never tamper, lest resolutions scamper," says some cacographical poet, taking his own way of impressing the moral concealed under the aphorism about playing with edged tools. There was a fall at last; not on the part of a mere committee, but in the case of our entire craft. An election (1830)—a contested one—is about to be worked out, and its crooked methods are already being planned. It is July 20th, and the weavers, expectant, are met. James Johnston of Straton, one of the two candidates, wishing to feel that the weavers are happy, sends them £20 *as a grant* to the craft, and the craft return exuberant and luxuriant thanks.

It never rains but it pours, and good fortune comes in similar fashion. On the evening of the above refulgent day the agent of the other candidate, the sitting member, Mr. R. Downie, instructs the convener of the trades that his client had intended to give each incorporation a sum of money with which to enjoy themselves, but, by some mistake, the instruction had miscarried. The agent was sorry that the amount of Mr. Downie's bequest had not been announced simultaneously with that of Mr. Johnston, but begged now to intimate that £25 would be handed over to each of the crafts.

Alas! alas! it came too late
To stay the voting steeds of fate.

The weavers made the agent an honorary member of the craft, gave thanks for the gift, and made up their minds to waken the echoes for one night more o'er beef and greens.

Mr. Hunt of Pittencrieff, as a friend of Mr. Downie, sent the craft a strong letter in that gentleman's favour. The latter is dated from Pittencrieff House on 22nd July, 1830, a period when Mr. Hunt had already been a good many years president of the manufacturers' association in the town. In his letter he reminds the websters that when, "in 1825, Mr. Huskisson brought forward his measures to reduce the protection duty on German damask, Mr. Downie was

applied to, who immediately recommended that the petitions from the manufacturers, operatives, and Town Council [against the Bill] should be sent to Parliament, and the petitions were accordingly forwarded to Mr. Downie—that from the operatives being signed by nearly the whole of their number.” Mr. Hunt then goes on to say, “how much Mr. Downie had done for the reduction of duty on the goods made in the town,” and speaks of “the surprise of the manufacturers in finding that the German goods were to be admitted on easier terms, and the damage this did to the trade of the town.” He then reminds the weavers “that over one hundred of the manufacturers and principal inhabitants gave a banquet to Mr. Downie, when he (Mr. Hunt) had the honour to preside.” He concludes by stating, “that in June, 1826, Mr. Downie effected the repeal of this obnoxious and ruinous (German) clause in the Act. For this, Mr. Downie was presented with a set of the finest damask cloths the manufacturers could produce.” He had stated before that he would not take part in burgh politics, but this was a special case, etc.

On the day this letter was written, the weavers created Mr. David Birrel and John M'Donald, writers in the town and agents for Mr. Johnston, honorary members of their craft. The die was cast, and Mr. Downie must go; and why?

On Christmas Day of the previous year, two eminent local gentlemen, by mere accident, of course, were dining with Mr. Johnston of Straiton at the house of Champfleurie in Linlithgowshire. Politics were discussed over the wine and walnuts, and Dunfermline local affairs particularly. The council was purely Tory, and must be got rid of. The members had been too long in office, and must now give place to Liberals. Just before this—a few days—Provost Blackwood had died, and a successor must be found for the office. There was likely to be a fight for the honour. George Meldrum, baker, and John Kerr, yarn-boiler, of Bothwellhaugh, were the two likely men—the first as a member of the black horse party, the other of the Liberals. All this was discussed and arrangements made for eventualities at the Champfleurie symposium.

On May, 1830, Mr. Meldrum was chosen interim provost, but the Tory party saw that there was danger of Mr. Meldrum being thrown out at the Michaelmas election of the council. To obviate this and to save the party interests in the burgh, Mr. Meldrum declared that if he was elected burgh commissioner (to choose the M.P. with the other four burgh commissioners), he would be ready, if necessary, to forego his political leanings and vote for the Liberal candidate. Everybody knew that Mr. Meldrum was an honest man, and that he would keep his promise. The choice of the commissioner or delegate fell to the Liberal side, and Mr. Meldrum was appointed. South Queensferry was the returning burgh on this occasion, and a splendid spread when the occasion came round was laid out in the Hawes Inn. The preliminaries over, the delegates pronounced the choice made by their respective burghs, and Mr. Johnston was returned.

The inhabitants, and specially the weavers, could not forget the alienation of the burgh lands in the previous year; and though the chief offenders in that shameful business were to be found in the council, they could not acquit Mr. Downie, who had acquired the lands, of complicity in the transactions. They seemed to think, at least, that such a vital matter should not have been concluded between Mr. Downie and the council without much greater publicity than it did attain. He was accordingly, after ten years' experience, turned out of the burgh representation.

If the weavers had any compunctious visitings as to the way they had assisted in dismissing Mr. Downie, they show no signs of the feeling in their minutes, unless we ascribe the decision of the next Michaelmas meeting as showing up in that direction. That resolution was one to "abolish the practice of the members visiting the deacon's house and obtaining a refreshment after the election"—in lieu thereof, the deacon to expend one guinea to entertain the members, he choosing the house of entertainment.

This practice has not before been referred to. It was much like the practice of the Birley ("Burgh Law") men, in which case the members visited the house of their new chancellor on the evening after

the election, had a dram, and then adjourned to the house of the old chancellor and had another dram, then to each of their own houses, and so on, till member after member became *hors de combat*, or, as it was called, "mortal," and the watchmen carried home the "remanent brethren."

CHAPTER XXX.

*The Incorporation breaking up—The proposals—Dependent members—
Letters from weavers—The last meeting—The farewell.*

BUT now the incorporation is approaching dissolution—it may almost be said the death rattle has already been heard. A special requisition has been framed by William Stewart, David Peacock, John Rennie, James Chalmers, Laurence Miller, Thomas Bisset, John Drysdale, John Ferguson, William Allester, and John Donaldson, and presented to the deacon of the craft, asking him to call a special meeting of the members to consider the propositions to be submitted by the above gentlemen.

A meeting was duly called by deacon John Scotland, and held within his own house, East Port, on 15th July, 1836. Being duly constituted, the chair taken, and minutes read, the clerk read over the propositions of the ten requisitionists. These were generally—we repeat them here for the sake of continuity—“(1) To dissolve the association, or to take means to carry out its purpose. (2) As there is a Bill pending before Parliament to break up all corporate bodies in Scotland, we think it more prudent to dissolve of our own free will. (3) As there are a great number of old men belonging to the incorporation, and no provision made for old age, we think it most proper that whatever share should belong to them, they are justly entitled to

it for present support. (4) Owing to the present flourishing state of our trade in Dunfermline, we look forward to our getting a better price for our properties than we could realise at a future period."



Old House, Newrow, belonging to the Weavers' Craft.

These proposals were moved by Thomas Bisset, who also moved—
(1) "That the heritable property belonging to the incorporation be immediately disposed of." (2) That the just and lawful debts due by the incorporation be paid; and (3) "That the balance, after payment

of these debts, be divided equally among the members alive at the date of division." These motions were seconded by William Stewart, and when put to the meeting, the first and second were carried with only one dissentient. On the third being submitted, Adam Stewart moved "That the widows of members alive at the date of division receive such sum, along with the members, as may be agreed on." This was seconded by Andrew Philp. The motion in its original form was carried by forty-seven to eleven votes, when John Morris moved, seconded by John Allester, that the properties be exposed by public roup within one month from this date. This last was carried unanimously—James Morris protesting against the proceedings. James Inglis, George Birrell, Thomas Bisset, and Adam Stewart were appointed to carry out the decisions of the meeting. Efforts were made at a subsequent meeting, held on 23rd September, to postpone, for six months, the sale of the property; but it was again decided by a majority to adhere to the former agreement. Several other attempts were made by requisition and otherwise to stave off the evil day, but in the end all failed to break the first resolution. The property sale was advertised in the newspapers and by handbills. The first upset price is set down in the minutes as £500. This was modified to £450, and again to £400; but the records give no information as to the purchaser or the amount realised by the sale; neither have we any minuted information as to the ultimate division of the funds, about which the various motions for sale raged and wrangled—though £2 10s. is set down on a dateless page as given to each of one hundred and fifty members.

That a considerable number of the members were, at this time, dependent upon charity and claiming aliment from the incorporation, may be judged of by the number of members in the association, and by the obligations which the craft admit, as constant liabilities in their monthly accounts, to assist, if not to maintain, their decayed freemen. One letter now before me, dated from Edinburgh, 11th May, 1827, pleads piteously with the boxmaster for some assistance. "It is great needcessity," the writer says, "that causes me to mak this

application, as I am quite worn out with auld edge and frailty. So I hope, sir, you will be so good as send an anser to this with what you can spare. Send it with Andrew Cranston, the carrier, on Thusday, and in so doing you will, dear sir, oblige your humble servant, Matthew Neilson, Forrester's Wynd."

The other is from Bellshill, near Glasgow, and is long and diffuse. The date is 21st November, 1827, and is sent at this time so as to suit the annual election and annual division of the surplus funds. The writer desires the deacon to inform him what the "old and new quorum" had decided to give him, and insists upon having his "six months' aliment" sent on to him at Bellshill. In conclusion, he says:—"Now, deacon, this is the seventh time I have sent from Bellshill to Glasgow for ane answer from you, and as yet have got none. Now, the distance from Bellshill to Glasgow, taken seven times back and fore, is ane hunder and twenty-six miles; and had it not been dire needcessity, I would not have put you to so much trouble, and myself to so much expense. So your answer will much oblige, yours truly, David Stewart."

Such appeals as these, we have no doubt, would be made for years after the sale of the property, and until all hope of further help had vanished. But the weaving craft as an association had now "gone out of business," and whatever the weavers may have done, or how they comported themselves, is without record for the next fifteen years, and we have no further notes in weavers' black and white till the year of grace, 1851.

It is much to be regretted that the minutes of the weaving craft were not maintained after 1836, nor during the fifteen years that succeeded. This is all the more to be deplored because these years were perhaps the most momentous, in changes and issues, known in the history of the Dunfermline weaving trade. As we have already seen by the terms of the motions made at the annual meeting of the craft in 1836, the trade of weaving and its collateral industries were then in a most healthy and prosperous condition.

In that year we had no less than eight spinning mills at full work

in the town and district. It may be worth while giving the names :— Meldrums Mill, on Balmule estate ; Pitliver Mill, on Pitliver estate ; Mid Mill, near Charlestown ; Milton Green, at West Nethertown Street ; Harrie Brae, in Mill Street ; Millport, in Collier Row ; Golf-drum and Knabbie Row Mills in their respective streets. “Owing to the flourishing state of our trade just now, we ought to sell our property and so realise the best price for it,” said the requisitionists in 1836—evidently with a premonition that a disastrous change was about to take place. And it came !

But ere it came the members of the craft had been busy digging their own economical graves. The lively business of 1836 had turned their heads. The entire trade members, discontented with the wages earned and the rates paid (weavers, 10s. to 12s. ; winders of pirns, 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. a-week), demanded an increase of the weaving rates. This the manufacturers refused, and the weavers entered into an engagement—unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians—to beam no more webs till their demands were conceded.

Then commenced a long struggle with the manufacturers. Of these there were over fifty in business—some of them very small, no doubt, but all equally affected by the drastic resolution of the weavers. Some poor, hard-up wretches among the weavers attempted to evade, and others to defy, the agreement, and beamed their webs in secret. These were soon found out, their shops visited, the webs torn from the looms, their windows smashed, and their houses wrecked. The police of the burgh consisted then of the jailor—who acted also as an officer—two assistants, and the drummer. These were wholly unable to preserve the peace and protect life and property. A party of dragoons was accordingly imported from Jock's Lodge, and afterwards a company of foot soldiers from Edinburgh. These precautions were deemed necessary, since the colliers of Halbeath and farther east were also on strike, and reported to be drilling nightly, with the view of joining the Chartists and overturning the Government !

All this was bad enough, but worse was to follow. The weavers had been falling idle as their webs came out—they refused to take or

beam the new ones. Trade orders in consequence fell rapidly away, the resolution of the weavers became absolutely useless, and hundreds would soon gladly have taken webs on any conditions, but these were not now to be had. The defiant weavers became despondent instead, and the direst possible distress set in (1837) among the community.



The Lancastrian School, Rolland Street.

Subscriptions were raised on all hands, soup kitchens opened, and street improvements started—to feed and employ the starving, idle men.

It was then that the “hirst” in North Chapel Street was levelled down, and North Inglis Street levelled up; the ascent at Shadows Wynd moderated by the cutting at the top of South Inglis Street; Abbey Park Place was levelled and metalled; Moodie Street and Gibb Street were similarly treated; Reid Street was opened into Nether-

town and the Nethertown "hirsels" cut down on the north side, from Reid Street eastward, and Rolland Street carried into Reid Street. These relief works cost between £500 and £600 besides numerous private sums paid for special bits of cutting or levelling work. These works were managed by the magistrates and a committee of the manufacturers and others. George Birrel was provost, James Morris, bailie, and John Ker, James Bryce, John Fergusson, Robert Somerville, Ralph Walker, were assistants and advisers in the work of providing employment and distributing food.

The Strike Committee—who by and by forgot the strike in the face of a worse calamity—who worked with the magistrates and others, deserve to have their names preserved for the work they achieved and for the splendid spirit they showed. Here they are :—

ALEXANDER HARLEY, Woodhead Street.
 ALEXANDER STENHOUSE, Woodhead Street.
 GEORGE HARLEY, Golfdrun Street.
 WILLIAM CARNEGIE, Nethertown Street.
 ROBERT SYME, Priory Lane.
 ROBERT BEVERIDGE, Moodie Street.
 RICHARD HENDERSON, Reid Street.
 ROBERT CARMICHAEL, James Street.
 JOHN MEIKLEJOHN, Martyrs' Place.
 RICHARD MELDRUM, Bothwell Street.
 DAVID DURIE, Baldridgeburn Street.
 JOHN ANDERSON, Beveridgewell Street.
 PETER SMART, Newrow Street.
 GARDINER CAMPBELL, Knabbie Street.
 ROBERT LIVINGSTON, Damside Street.
 WILLIAM MELDRUM, Nethertown.

To increase the distress and to agonise the situation, diseases in the form of influenza, typhus fever and measles now set in, and swept away scores of victims. During this year of 1837, 493 interments took place in the churchyard, being 182 over those of 1836. It was

indeed a direful year in Dunfermline. Many a tale could be told of the sufferings endured, of the generosity displayed, of kindness, wisdom and love, as well as of erring and of short-sighted obstinacy, in the year 1837.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Queen's Proclamation—Public dinings—The Charter—The universal strike—Torryburn—John Collins—Riots of 1844—The Exhibition of 1851—Decline and fall.

THIS year of 1837 was also the year of Queen Victoria's proclamation. That proclamation was read aloud at the Townhouse, thundered out at the Cross, and made known at the East Port. Provost Birrel was the central figure, and he was accompanied by the Town Council, Police Commissioners, Sheriff Colville, Mr. Hunt of Pittencrieff, a *posse* of J.P.'s, and a long procession of influentials. What a crowd was there! How the streets were crammed! How the people shouted and hurrahed! At the cake and wine banquet, speeches were made, toasts were drunk, and many a gallant sentiment uttered. The three long tables in the Townhouse were crowded by the "respectable inhabitants." All the medical and legal professions were present, and all the clergy, except Mr. Law of St. Margaret's U.P., who would not come because the wrong man was to say grace, a reason which also kept away Bailie James Morris.

Were the weavers represented here? And if so, how did they appear? What did they say; and how did they respond to the dulcet invitation of the chairman to the banquet in the Townhouse? We know not. A compound cause of suffering was then bearing down upon the members of the craft. They had, with mistaken foresight,

initiated a strike, and now the trade was falling off. They were suffering from want, and disease was carrying off their little ones. They had sold their properties, divided the proceeds, and were "freemen" in a sense never meant in the ancient formulas of the craft. They were sorely tried; they were utterly wretched. They ceased in this year to record their proceedings, and they tell us nothing of the great Queen's coronation.

But the Charter was now in demand, and the Chartists were on every platform and at every street corner. The "five points" were grown familiar to every child, and were fought over in every school ground, as well as in every workshop in the kingdom. The bad harvests of 1837 and 1838, with the influence of the Corn Laws to help, had again raised the prices of food stuffs to famine rates. The political agencies, operating in conjunction with failing trade, low wages, disease, and soup kitchens, had roused the people to a frenzy of discontent and opposition to the Government. Lovett, Collins, Vincent, O'Brien, Cooper, and others, leaders in the widespread agitation, were thrown into prison, immured in filthy dungeons, fined, and treated as felons, because they taught the people to be "discontented" with a Government that first denied them any voice in its administration and then taxed them down to starvation point.

Fergus O'Connor's land scheme, its universal discussion and wide acceptance, distracted the calmer Chartists, and mixed a discordant issue in the general political acclaim. Meetings were being held in Rankine's hall, in the mason lodges, and in the open air at the Pends and Milton Green, to discuss and "resolve" on the new scheme. Fergus himself came here, and at the last-mentioned place, in 1841, enforced the consistency of his scheme, against the quiet, yet cogent, arguments of Dr. Brewster of Paisley.

John Collins of Birmingham was here in 1838, gathered the weavers under the shadow of the monastery wall, and expounded with burning eloquence the principles and features of "The People's Charter." Thomas Morrison, one of our best known local lights and leaders, came arm in arm with Adam Stewart—one of three brothers,

all alike, men of eminent abilities and sterling character. Stewart presided, and, in a few sensible remarks, introduced the celebrated expounder of the Charter. Mr. Collins spoke for nearly an hour, with a clear, ringing voice, and in rich, racy, choicest English. The audience were greatly excited during the delivery of the speech, and at the close broke out into long-continued applause. It says much for the moderation and caution of our local leaders that, as soon as Collins sat down, the chairman arose, commented on the splendid address to which they had listened, and then drew attention to the position of those who advocated the Charter, asked them to think over what they had heard, to retire quietly from the meeting, and to keep the peace. Mr. Morrison followed in the same strain, expressing at the same time a firm belief that the fiscal burdens by which they were then oppressed, and the political injustice by which they were daily visited, would early come to an end, and a brighter day, a more beneficent era, dawn upon the working-classes.

Then came the momentous year of the universal strike, when, in the autumn of 1842, colliers, cobblers, masons, weavers, joiners, tailors, and all others of the working-classes, determined to paralyse the Government of the day, come out on strike, and bring (or try to bring) the world of industry to a deadlock. In Dunfermline, the most valiant leader in that crusade against privilege and political iniquity was Thomas Morrison, afterwards bailie and treasurer of the burgh. His speeches at the shore, Kirkcaldy, and at Dunfermline and Torryburn, were at once wise, daring, and defiant, and yet strictly within the law.

Before the march on Torryburn, however, as great distress existed from want of work, wages, and food, as at any time in the town's history. Public meetings had been frequently held during the summer, to devise means of employing the idle, and of feeding the destitute. In June, over £500 had been expended in relieving the wants of the starving poor. In July, things were no better. Trade seemed to have completely collapsed, and the outlook was gloomy in the extreme. In August, rioting broke out (on the 9th), and life

and property were again in danger. Again we had an invasion of Jock's Lodge dragoons, with a company of foot. On the 10th, the High Street was choked with the crowds. The sheriff and the provost, and Mr. Morrison too, addressed the swaying multitudes, and advised them to disperse; but as no advice in peaceful form could be taken, the dragoons and constables enforced the law by driving the rioters from the thoroughfares.

The miners to the west and east were now "out," and crowded meetings had been held at Carnock. A mass meeting was advertised for Dunfermline, but the restraining influence of the military held the Chartists at bay. The meeting at Torryburn was held on 27th August. It was broken up by the military, accompanied by the authorities; but, on the advice of Mr. Morrison, the meeting crossed the stream of Torry, and finding themselves then in Perthshire, they made their speeches, passed their resolutions, and adjourned proceedings. "Keep within the limits of the law," said Mr. Morrison, "and you will always be able to find a bridge by which to reach your purpose."

Morrison and Henderson (president of the workmen's association) were apprehended, but soon after liberated, and the strike crisis blew over. But the distress did not cease. On 3rd November, a census of the destitute was taken, when it was found that six hundred and ninety-six individuals, having eight hundred and eighty-four dependents, were without means of support. Street improvements were again engaged in. Trenching the wilderness at Townhill, breaking stones by the wayside at Broomhead, and other spade and shovel work, furnished employment and starvation wages to the shivering, half-fed, poorly-clad, ill-provided weavers.

Trade improved in 1843, but became bad as ever in 1845. The experiences of 1842 were repeated. The famine period was on us once more, and the wretched weavers and their children were again being fed from the steamy purleus of the soup kitchen. Oh! my readers! if you have ever known the horror of being obliged to haunt the doors, and wait in the atmosphere and surroundings of a charity

kitchen, you can never after banish its image from your minds. It is a cloud on the soul while life endures.

We cannot detail the shame and disasters of this year. The riots of August, the plundering of shops, the wrecking of warehouses and factories, the assault on Provost Ronaldson, the visitation of the dragoons, the march on Balmule, the lawless proceedings there, the trial of the three victims in November at the High Court of Justiciary, their sentences of transportation and imprisonment—all come back to our mind as a hideous nightmare.

But now comes the benign year of 1846, when the long, lingering curse of the Corn Laws was removed. I see the triumphal arches, I hear the music of the bands as they play through the wet and soaked streets, and all sounds and signs are of joy that this curse of monopoly is no more. The rain floods that came upon us the night before and on the memorable day itself, could not damp the ardour of the processionists nor dull the universal joy.

But other sights and scenes crowd the mind. The factory system develops upon and supersedes the healthier but less convenient, and now non-economical, scatter of weaving shops. In very ancient times, when "art and industry set light and song on every Grecian farm," the weaver was found in every mansion, on every holding. The same fashion seems to have prevailed in Scotland, and up to the nineteenth century hundreds of farms in the north and the midlands could boast their sheet- and towel-weaving loom. This system, if system it could be called, was gradually found to fall out with the needs of the time. Fatefully and steadily, the weavers and looms were aggregated in villages and towns, and the farm-weaver died out. In similar fashion, and in obedience to similar laws, the disconnected weaving-shops—by which the work of one manufacturer might be found scattered over miles of space—were in time found but ill-adapted to the needs and methods of the big business manufactures. To earn the full advantage, to reach the highest form of control and the nicest execution of orders, the manufacturer must have his workmen and work-looms within immediate reach. Hence arose the factory system,

which, whatever its drawbacks may be—and they are neither few nor unimportant—had become a necessity of the changed condition of things.

When the Messrs. Dewar erected in Woodhead Street their comparatively small weaving factory in 1834, the weavers thought that a kindly Providence might send a wind strong enough to swing it over



House where Web-beaming Machine was first started, 1840 :
also birthplace of Dr. A. Carnegie, Moodie Street.

into the back burn. The same strong wishes were breathed when the Baldrige Works were being built in 1839, and when Mr. Darling's Glen Factory was built in 1840. Similar thinkings, however, came down to dry, unimpassioned discussion, as the weavers came more and more to see the necessity, in the demands of modern trade, for something more regular and more reliable than a community of weavers on the free-and-easy system of working when they chose and leaving off

when they wanted. They might sigh for the loss of independence and freedom, but they came to see that if orders were to come to the town they must, in the growing exactions of trade, be executed with attention to detail and to time.

For like reasons, the power-loom succeeded the hand-loom, and female labour largely took the part of the craftsmen of old. And now the hand-loom, alike in shops and factories, is a thing of the past, and the "remanent brethren" of the weavers' once proud incorporation are now only occasionally to be met with—pale, weary of eye, and worn, "hingin' twafauld o'er a rung."

Radical and restless the weavers have always been; and even in their years of decay, they eagerly listened to news of political or dynastic changes. Thus, when the year of revolutions (1848) came round—when it was impossible for each man to provide himself with a newspaper—they crowded the old Relief Church to hear the *Scotsman* and other papers read nightly by Thomas Morrison and Andrew Fleming. The writer hereof can still recall the strident and somewhat raucous tones of Mr. Fleming, and the softer yet seemingly ill-to-manage voice of Mr. Morrison. The prominent features, and cold, pale aspect of the one, formed a striking contrast to the glowing cheeks, scintillating eyes, and enthusiastic manner of the other.

As the revolutionary era calmed down, the industrial arose, and with its wondrous world-show in Hyde Park, London, in 1851, bade welcome to a halcyon time of peace. Dunfermline made a brave figure there: and the ancient weavers' craft, ashamed of their morbid condition, drew together again, and, after fifteen years' silence, appoint their penman, and resumed the writing of their records. The revival, however, came too late—the craft was out of date. It lingered on for a few years more, then sank for ever out of sight.

The meetings during the fifties were held in the house of James Bruce, Guildhall Street, during which time the late Mr. Andrew Boag, manufacturer, was their constant deacon. In 1862, the penultimate meeting of the craft was held in the house of Alexander Turnbull, Douglas Street, when the once well-known John

Muckersey, was appointed boxmaster. He was, however, first made a freeman of the craft, with all the honours ; and the deacon announced to the new comer that he was entitled to "all the rights, liberties, privileges and immunities pertaining to the members from of old, to exhibit, claim, and use as freely as any other member ever did, or could use, said privileges and rights." To this the indomitable Muckersey made a magnificent and magniloquent reply.

The final meeting—a mere ghost of former gatherings—was held in the house of Mr. Turnbull, when the new boxmaster acted as host, hailed the members, paid their "caus," and pronounced the following words from Byron's "Giaur":—

"He who hath bent him o'er the dead,
Ere the first day of death is fled,
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress,
Before decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers.
He feels such anguish, dread, and pain,
His heart can never know again ;
To him, the sudden, rending grief,
Bursts o'er the soul ——"

He got no further.

The company applauded the boxmaster's impromptu, and waited for more. The repertoire of Shakespearean extracts, and of song, story, and blank verse speech, which John Muckersey had always in fresh and suiting order, was drawn on to the full. Others told tales of ancient days and bygone times, as when, in 1822, the trade turned out to walk in procession in the funeral cortege of Provost David Wilson ; and how each of them had assisted that warlike provost's ardent wishes by ringing the bells on each recurring victory over the French. How, when the Townhouse, in September, 1831, was about to be lighted with gas, the craft subscribed a guinea of the plumber's charges, and turned out in mass to see the wonderful new light. William Templeman was then deacon of the weavers. He could not

contain himself on the occasion, but broke away into a speech which rippled out so fast, and in so dishevelled a style, that half of it was not understood, and the other half so common place and humorous, that everybody was pleased, and cheered the kind-hearted deacon.

The subject of Parliamentary reform was turned on, and nearly all got their spoons in, as Muckersey phrased it. The fierce agitation of the time, the almost nightly meetings of the inhabitants, the apathetic bearing of the council, and the influences they played off against the reformers. Some of the speakers could remember that, both in 1830 and 1831, the craft had pressed the subject, and petitioned Parliament in favour of clamant changes.

The technical merits of full harness weaving, as opposed to the common, or back harness style, was roughly and familiarly handled. Its introduction in 1836 was made in the face of strong opposition, for though the weavers were alive to its merits, as well as its defects, they were like most other human beings, instinctively opposed to anything new. The "double jig" and the "shifting box" were no less dissected—the boxmaster enlivening every remark with sceptical enquiry, illuminating quotation, or fitting innuendo.

The company were not hurried, either from inclination or by the landlord; so they sat on, the very picture of the forlorn hope of some once great and gallant corps. This thought seemed to impress and to oppress every one present. The seriousness, if not the gloom of sadness, settled down on the "little when" as the hours sped on—the heaviest reflection being that all of the past they could recall in memory could never again be realised in actual life. The hand-loom was but a shadowy memory of bygone times. The giant power-loom, ingenious, capable, intricate, and wonderful, could do all the hand-loom weaver ever could accomplish, so far as delicacy and finish was concerned, and a hundred times more in the turn out of quantity.

"The bygone experiences of the hand-loom weaver," said the deacon, "have no hope of a resurrection. I thought so this morning as I stood in Willie Wanless's loom-shop. The four looms, once so active, were moveless and silent. The tillie pin lay rusting on the

sole, the cloth beam was empty, the breast beam was bare. The thrum hung loose between the reed and the harness, while the heddles were dishevelled and broken. Up above the bearers, the cards and the machine were festooned with spider webs, and the space below and inside the yarn beam was filled in with the twister's chair, and the odds and ends of the kitchen. I turned away and locked the door—and I felt as I did so, that I was shutting out of my heart and memory a pleasant and joyous, if sometimes a suffering and a trying past."

"Give us a song, Muckersey," said John Allester, the key keeper, "and let us go. We can do naething here—the game's up."

The boxmaster rose to his feet more serious than was his wont, and humming the air, "Good nicht and joy be wi' ye a'," he sung out in strong baritone strains—

"Adieu ! a heart warm, fond adieu !
 Dear brothers of the mystic tie !
 Ye favour'd, ye enlighten'd few,
 Companions of my social joy.
 Though I to foreign lands must hie,
 Pursuing fortune's sliddery ba',
 Wi' melting heart and brimful eye,
 I'll mind you still, though far awa'."

One stanza more he sang, hush'd his voice, and moved from the little festive board. The rest of the company followed his example. The landlord closed the door behind his guests, and these for a moment, standing in the moonlight, turned, shook hands, and parted—never to meet again.

"Out of ye olde fields, as men saith,
 Cometh the new corne from year to year ;
 And out of olde books in goodly faith,
 Cometh the new sciences that men do lere.

"When time, who steals your years away,
 Has stolen your pleasures too,
 The records of the past will stay,
 And half your joys renew."

LIST OF MANUFACTURERS, 1820-21.

JAMES ALEXANDER, Canmore Street.
ROBT. BALFOUR, Woodhead Street.
BEVERIDGE & BOGIE, St. Margaret Street.
J. & A. BENGIO, High Street.
R. & G. BIRRELL, St. Margaret Street.
BISSET & MORRIS, Abbey Street.
JAMES BLACKWOOD, East Port Street.
W. & A. BOWIE, Moodie Street.
GEORGE BURT & SONS, Back o' the Dam.
AND. LINDSAY & CO., Pittencrieff Street.
D. DEWAR & CO., James Street.
JOHN SWAN, Pittencrieff Street.
DAVID GARDINER, „
JOSEPH GOWANS, Moodie Street.
ALEXR. HARLEY, Woodhead Street.
D. & W. HENDERSON, Back o' the Dam.
JOHN HORN, High Street.
W. HUNT & SONS, High Street.
GEORGE INGLIS & SON, Newrow.
JAMES INGLIS, James Street.
R. & J. KERR, Collier Row.
WILLIAM KINNIS, Canmore Street.
JAMES KIRKLAND, Senr., Newrow.
JAMES KIRKLAND, Junr., Moodie Street.
JAMES MILLER, Bridge Street.
AND. PEEBLES, Guildhall Street.
WM. PEEBLES, High Street.
JAS. PHILP, Woodhead Street.
PHILP & SON, Woodhead Street.
JOHN REID, Knabbie Row.
ALEXR. ROBERTSON, Bridge Street.
J. & T. RUSSEL, High Street.
JS. SOMERVILLE, Woodhead Street.
JN. SUTHERLAND, „

W. & J. SWAN, Queen Ann Street.
JOHN WARDLAW, Nethertown.
WM. WILKIE, Gibb Street.
J. WILSON & SON, Newrow.
S. WILSON, Senr., Bridge Street.
S. WILSON, Junr., „

—Pigot's *Directory for Scotland*, 1820-21.

Thus we find, in 1820, there were forty-nine manufacturers in the town. Now (1902), with a turn-out at least one hundred times more goods, we have only something like ten firms. It is true that many of those named in 1820 were in a very small way, but even allowing for that, the tendency to concentration is very marked.

MANUFACTURERS IN DUNFERMLINE, 1825-26.

J. & T. ALEXANDER, Canmore Street.
ROBT. BALFOUR, Woodhead Street.
DD. BEVERIDGE, Guildhall Street.
JS. BLACKWOOD, East Port Street.
A. & W. BOWIE, Moodie Street.
G. BURT & SONS, Back o' the Dam.
DD. DEWAR, James Street.
JOSEPH GOWANS, Moodie Street.
ALEXR HARLEY, Woodhead Street.
DD. HENDERSON, Back o' the Dam.
JOHN HORN, Guildhall Street.
R. & J. KERR, Collier Row.
WM. KINNES, Canmore Street.
JN. KIRKLAND, Moodie Street.
JAS. MILLER, Bridge Street.
R. MORRIS, Gardner's Land.
PHILP & SON, Woodhead Street.
A. ROBERTSON, St. Margaret Street.
J. & G. SPENCE, St. Catherine's Wynd.

JN. WARDLAW, Senr., Newrow.
 JN. WARDLAW, Junr., Nethertown.
 WM. WALKER.
 JAS. WILSON & SON, Newrow.
 J. & A. BENGIO, High Street.
 R. & G. BIRREL, St. Margaret Street.
 ALEXR. BOGIE.
 DD. BRODIE, Priory Lane.
 JN. COUPER, Pittencrieff Street.
 DD. GARDINER, ,,
 JAS. HALL & COY., Moodie Street.
 HAY & COY., Pittencrieff Street.
 DD. HOGG, Newrow.
 JOHN KERR, Bothwell Street.
 JOHN KINNELL, Coal Road.
 JAS. KIRKLAND, Knabbie Street.
 COLIN LENNOX, Pittencrieff Street.
 LAWRENCE MORGAN, ,,
 AND. PEEBLES, Guildhall Street.
 JAS. PHILP, Woodhead Street.
 JN. & JAS. RUSSEL, Maygate.
 T. & J. SPENCK, St. Catherine's Wynd.
 W. & J. SWAN, Queen Ann Street.
 DD. WILLIAMSON, Newrow.

—Pigot's *Directory for Scotland*, 1825-26.

Thus, in 1825-26, we find there are forty-three manufacturers in Dunfermline—being six less than in 1820-21.

MANUFACTURERS IN DUNFERMLINE, 1835-36.

J. & T. ALEXANDER, Canmore Street.
 ROBT. BALFOUR, Woodhead Street.
 GEO. BURT & SONS, Back o' the Dam.
 DD. DEWAR, James Street.

ALEXR. HARLEY, Woodhead Street.
DD. HENDERSON, Guildhall Street.
JN. HORN, "
R. & J. KERR, Collier Row.
WM. KINNES.
JAS. MILLER, Bridge Street.
ROBT. MORRIS, Gardner's Land.
PHILP & SON, "
ALEXR. ROBERTSON, St. Margaret Street.
J. & G. SPENCE, St. Catherine's Wynd.
JOHN WARDLAW, Newrow.
WM. WALKER.
J. & A. BENGIO, High Street.
R. & G. BIRREL, St. Margaret Street.
ALEXR. BOGIE.
JOHN COUPER, Pittencrieff Street.
DD. GARDINER, "
JAS. HALL & COY., Moodie Street.
HAY & COY., Pittencrieff Street.
DD. HOGG, Newrow.
JOHN KERR, Bothwell Street.
JOHN KINNEL, Coal Road.
JAMES KIRKLAND, Knabbie Street.
COLIN LENNOX, Pittencrieff Street.
LAWRENCE MORGAN, "
AND. PEEBLES, Guildhall Street.
JAS. PHILP, Woodhead Street.
JN. & JAS. RUSSEL, Maygate.
T. & J. SPENCE, St. Catherine's Wynd.
W. & JN. SWAN.
DD. WILLIAMSON.
JS. WILSON & SON, Newrow.
EBEN. GRAHAM, Woodhead Street.
Mrs. J. HALL, Moodie Street.
THOS. LAW, Knabbie Street.
JN. MORRIS, Canmore Street.

ALEXR. ROY, James Street.
 WALKER & BRUCE, Reid Street.
 T. WILSON & SON, Newrow.
 THOS. AITKEN, James Street.
 DD. ANDERSON, High Street.
 THOS. BENNET, Junr., St. Margaret Street.
 E. & R. BEVERIDGE, Priory Lane.
 GEO. BURT & SONS, Cousin's Lane.
 GEO. ELDER, Newrow.
 HUGH ELDER, Inglis Street.
 DAVID KESSON, Newrow.
 DAVID ANDERSON, Newrow.

—Pigot's *Directory for Scotland*, 1835-36.

In this list are fifty-two manufacturers. Trade at this time being exceptionally good.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Half-Gangs—Thrums.

HALF-GANGS.

CASTIN' OOT.—At the meeting of the weavers in the Auld Kirk session-house on 5th of February, 1734, the "incorporation, being greatly troubled by apprentices and their masters disagreeing," they statute and ordain that, in all time coming, no complaint of this kind shall be received without the complainer paying down £1 10s. Scots money, "to be disposed of by the deacon and the quorum called upon to judge the affair." If the apprentice break his indenture and leave the trade, "he must give security by bond that he shall not work at

the trade, neither as master nor as servant, under penalty of [blank], of whilk half shall go to the craft and half to his foresaid master—unless he come again to his former master and serve anew as an apprentice.”

WEAVERS' PATRON SAINT.—In James Ronald's *Landmarks of Old Stirling*, we find :—“The weavers do not seem to have been able to maintain an altar, but they had their patron saint, ‘Sanct Severine’—as on 17th June, 1522, ‘Alexander Bennie, dekyn of the wobsters, and his hail craft agreed to pay Sir [clerical title] Robert Brown, chaplain, to say twa messes in the weik at the altar of Sanct Luck, before Sanct Severine, their patron Saint, for xxvi s. viij d. in the yeir.’ Of Saint Severine we know next to nothing. He is set down as being Archbishop of Cologne in A.D. 400.”

HE LODGED A MARK !—It seems to have been the custom with our weavers of the old time, as it is with our Presbyteries of modern days, to table their money when requesting a special meeting, or protesting and taking instruments. On 3rd November, 1814, William Campbell insists upon a special meeting of the websters, and enforces his claim by tabling a mark—as earnest of his good intentions.

THE ESSAY OR 'SAY.—The essay, assay, or 'say, was, as the name imparts, a trial piece of work executed by the hands of the applicant for admission as freeman of any of the crafts. In the case of the weavers' craft, the essay does not appear to have been required till the year 1736, as no notice of it appears in the minutes till then. David M'Raich and John Thomson were the first essayists. They were admitted on 30th September—“The which day David M'Raich and John Thomson were admitted free with the incorporation of weavers in Dunfermline, and gave in a sufficient essay, and also gave their oath of fidelity as use and custom is.”

These trial samples of work form a feature in the admission to the “freedom,” of all entrants from very early times. Thus, among the hammermen a coppersmith is assigned “ane brass tea-kettle” or “ane broth-pot tinned,” a watchmaker “ane eight-day clock made and

perfected by himself," an armourer "furbishing ane flabill for a broadsword," a goldsmith was asked to produce "ane teapot with stand ring worked with his ain hand," a wright had to produce a little chair or common chair, a cooper had to turn out a well-made stoup or tub, while a shoemaker had to show a good pair of shoes—all taken as proofs of the workman's efficiency in his chosen craft.

PLACES OF MEETING.—The first place of meeting, as we have pointed out, was the Abbey Church, or its session-house in the south-west tower. The September meeting of 1755 was held in "John Harley's at the East Port"—the church now being shut against the craftsmen. In 1756, the "Tolbooth" was secured for meetings of the craft, though the name "Townhouse" is adopted in 1762, and it continued to shelter the weavers till 1768, when the old Townhouse was being removed. The house of "John Anderson, brewer here," is named as the place of meeting on 20th October, 1769. The meetings thereafter wander about from place to place till the new Townhouse is built and ready in 1772. The craft meetings continue to be held here till the "dividend year" of 1836; then in the house of John Scotland, at the East Port, till 1855. The penultimate house of meeting is that of James Bruce in Guildhall Street; and, finally, in that of Alexander Turnbull's in Douglas Street, where the attenuated craft occasionally meet till the close of their craft life is reached in 1863.

The following list of boxmasters or treasurers for the weavers, and during the present century, may be of interest to not a few of our citizens :—

HENRY MELDRUM,	...	...	1800-1.
ADAM MILLER,	...	...	1802.
ANDREW DRYSDALE,	...	...	1803-4-5.
WILLIAM STEWART,	...	...	1806-7.
DAVID BONNAR,	...	...	1808-9.
LAURENCE FORD,	...	...	1812.
DAVID ALLESTER,	...	...	1814-'17-'18-'19-'20.

JOHN ANDERSON,	...	...	1815-16.
THOS. BISSET,	...	...	1821.
WILLIAM BONNAR,	...	...	1822 to 1825.
GEORGE COUPER,	...	...	1826 to 1830.
JAMES CHALMERS,	...	...	1831.
ROBERT ANDERSON,	...	...	1832-4.
DAVID KESSON,	...	...	1835.
PETER CAMERON,	...	...	1851-2.
DAVID MORRIS,	...	...	1853-5.
STENHOUSE BOAG,	...	...	1856-63.

When the dynasty closes, and the books, accounts, and relative vouchers are vided, if not verified, by the auditors.

NOTABLE FREEMEN OF THE CRAFT.

Dates of Entry.

15th September,	1791—	MARTIN MELDRUM, of Nethertown Races fame.
20th „	1793—	JOHN COUPER, eldest son to George Couper.
1st „	1796—	ALEXANDER STIRLING, son to Alex. Stirling.
1st „	1796—	JAMES and ROBERT KER, sons to John Ker.
4th July,	1797—	JAMES STIRLING, son to Alexander Stirling.
4th „	1797—	JOHN and JAMES LETHAM, father and son.
4th „	1797—	ANDREW STEEDMAN, son to Robert Steedman.
1st August,	1800—	DAVID HATTON, well known as “Flutorum.”
24th September,	1800—	ROBERT HATTON, entered as freeman and clerk.
20th „	1802—	ANDREW REID, son of John Reid.
16th „	1803—	JAMES KINNEL, a once well-known manufacturer.
23rd „	1806—	JAMES and JOHN STEEDMAN, sons to William Steedman.
26th „	1810—	GEORGE COUPER, son of Charles Couper.
10th March,	1820—	Hon. FRANCIS WARD PRIME, late M.P. for the District.

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- 30th September, 1820—STENHOUS BOAG (who became the last deacon of the craft).
- 30th „ 1820—JOHN DICKSON, long known for his style of speech.
- 28th February, 1828—ANDREW MONTEATH, long known as bell-ringer.
- 23rd September, 1830—JOHN COUPER and JOHN RUSSEL, manufacturers, Pittencrieff Street.
- 23rd „ 1830—GEORGE BIRREL, manufacturer and provost.
- 23rd „ 1830—WILLIAM TEMPLEMAN, known as “ the deacon ” *par excellence*.
- 23rd „ 1830—THOMAS STEVENSON, solicitor, elected also as craft clerk.

A MAN OF NO CONSCIENCE.—On 23rd September, 1814, William Campbell “ objected and protested against Laurence Ford being elected deacon, for the reason that he does not think him a man of conscience, and that he has been informed that his oath cannot be taken in any civil cause in a court of justice.” Campbell was replied to by Thomas Bisset, who averred that “ Laurence Ford is a man of unimpeachable character,” and demanded proof of Campbell’s assertions. These proofs could not be given, and on 3rd November William Campbell expressed his willingness to signify his regret for the expressions he had used, since these were made from false information. Laurence Ford is chosen deacon, and reigns for two years.

The choosing of the deacon was on several occasions the cause of strife among the weavers, as on 25th September, 1800, when John Fergus “ behaved repeatedly in an improper manner to the deacon.” For this fault, Fergus was “ put off the trade.” Against this judgment of the deacon, Fergus appealed to the Town Council, “ took instruments, and craved extracts ;” but the council was evidently unwilling to meddle in the quarrel, and finally Fergus withdrew his appeal and made peace with the craft. The minute of this affair is signed by sixteen freemen and nine “ visitors.”

IMPROVEMENTS IN WEAVING.—On 3rd February, 1803, we find the following petition :—"Unto the Deacon, and the other members of the Incorporation of Weavers of Dunfermline, The Petition of John Philp Humbly Sheweth :

"That, having invented a new method of Erecting and Drawing harness, and Damask Patterns of all kinds, the same being put up at a small expense, and likewise very quick and easy in its Operation, he humbly conceives that it will be of great use and advantage to the Business. Therefore, begs you would appoint a Committee of your members to inspect and Examine it, and your Petitioner shall ever pray."

A committee of the weavers was appointed to examine the "new improvement." This committee reported favourably, and recommended the invention, whatever it was, to the Board of Trustees. Another committee examined and recommended a weaving improvement, which John Cook brought out in the same year—in reward of which the craft admitted Cook's two sons to the "freedom" of the trade "gratis."

James Blake wove a wonderful napkin in 1719, and the same highly skilled weaver wove the weavers' flags in 1734. David Mackie had several damask looms going in 1736. In 1749, when there were four hundred looms in the town, the British Linen Company appointed an agent to get as many looms as possible to weave linen. At this time, it was customary for the weavers to have their looms going on ticks and checks during the winter months, and table linen during the summer.

The manufacturers of Dunfermline gradually lost their exclusive fondness for local markets, and began to reach out to distant places. In 1760, they managed to make an appearance in London, and soon had a fair trade with the Metropolis. New and superior patterns were introduced, chiefly from designs by John Thomson of Drumsheuch, near Edinburgh; and a superior bleach and finish was got by sending the products of the looms to Luncarty in Perthshire. The looms still (1768-72) numbered about four hundred and twenty, and a

weaver's wages were taken at £30 per annum. By 1788, according to Fernie, the looms had increased to nine hundred, and more intricate and pleasing patterns were introduced. In 1792, the number of looms is set down at twelve hundred. In 1803, Mr. Bonnar brings out his comb-drawn loom which, after a number of petty lawsuits, was bought by the town for £600. In 1808 and 1813, Henry Meldrum produced his wonderfully clever seamless shirts—still preserved in our local museum. Henry was elected freeman gratis, and sent as weavers' representative to the council. William Anderson repeating this feat in 1821, gets a prize of £10, and selling it to George IV., gets other £50 for his skill. There are at this time about eighteen hundred looms in the town and vicinity, and the weavers get up their once familiar and futile "Table of Prices."

THE JACQUARD MACHINE.—Alexander Robertson—who died in 1837—was, in his day, one of the most public-spirited, as well as far-seeing, men of his time. His place of business was, for many years, at the junction of Canmore Street with St. Margaret Street—where now the St. Margaret's Hotel is housed. His ceaseless, helping efforts in 1835, when the Royal Commission was trying to unravel our municipal affairs, and find the depth of our indebtedness, are well known to readers of our local history. In his capacity as a manufacturer, he had become profoundly dissatisfied with the narrow limits of the "drawboy" style of weaving damask, and was the first to introduce the invention of Joseph Jacquard. This machine effected, on its introduction, a complete revolution in the damask manufacture, and made it possible for the weaver to produce the most complicated, rich, and beautiful patterns. The machine itself was as nearly perfect as any machine can be, when it left the inventor's hands. It has, since then, been altered in detail, and made to suit an endless variety of work, but the first-conceived principle—touching only the power of a spring with concomitant details—has never been improved on.

DEATH OF PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.—On 17th November, 1817, several of the weavers “presented a petition to the kirk session requesting that their seats [in the kirk] may be put in mourning in consequence of the death of Princess Charlotte; which petition being read, a motion was made by the deacon (John Ferguson) and agreed to, to the effect that they do not incur the expense, but in lieu of which they give their poor a month’s extra allowance.”

Note.—This Princess Charlotte (born 7th January, 1796) was the daughter of George IV. and Caroline of Brunswick. In consequence of the separation of her father and mother, she was committed to the care of the dowager Duchess of Leeds, Lady Clifford, and the Bishop of Exeter. She gave early promise of excellence of character and abilities. She had fixed her affections on Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, but her fastidious father had betrothed her to William, Prince of Orange. The Princess at first agreed to the arrangement, but afterwards broke off the match, took to bed, and died on 6th November, 1816. Some local rhymster, noting the above vote of the weavers, wrote :—

“ Should now the weavers, in their mourning madness,
 Bid the dull fir-boards express their sadness,
 Or wake dull eyes
 With glad surprise,
 And make sad hearts o’erflow with gladness ? ”

A POLL ELECTION, MONTROSE.—The reference in Chapter XXIX. to the Lord Advocate of the time, and to the Prince Regent, for recommending and granting a “ new constitution to the burgh of Montrose,” is to the poll election which took place there in the year 1816, and which is fully described in Lord Cockburn’s *Memoirs*. The council of this northern burgh had long been entirely composed of Tories; and the whole burghal system was of the too common close and corrupt constitution. A mistake, however, was made in the above year, and the town was left without a council. The inhabitants then petitioned the Lord Advocate to allow the re-construction of the council by a popular poll election. The request was granted, and the old govern-

ing parties were chagrined to find that the election resulted in a complete change of politics in the council—it was now made up almost entirely of Whigs. This was the “new constitution” referred to in the text.

Similar, or nearly similar, elections took place in Jedburgh in 1774, and in Dundee in 1831. Our local Radicals looked upon the then recent upturn in Montrose as being a victory in the same direction as that in which they were then moving, and so put on triumphal airs and returned thanks to the Lord Advocate.

THE COTTON TRADE—10th February, 1821.—At the meeting held on this date, Hector Sutherland, “Preses of the Operative Weavers of Dunfermline,” presented, through the deacon, a requisition as follows :—“As the present depressed state of the Table Linen Trade calls upon every person concerned to make every exertion to introduce and establish the Cotton Trade in this place. they (Weavers’ Committee) beg to request the Corporate body to give every assistance in its power in furthering the same.” The word of explanation given is, “That David Short at Golfdrum, was a person in whom the manufacturers might have implicit confidence in regard to his integrity and professional abilities.” The deacon was warranted to write Messrs. Bartholomew & Company, Glasgow, or any other firm as to David Short’s character. This well-meant attempt came to nothing—linen continued our only product.

JAMES INGLIS’ GOOD DEED—23rd February, 1820.—James Aitken is described as tacksman of the calender house and cylinder from “Whitsunday last.” He had taken a lease of the same at a public roup, at the annual rent of £98. He now complains that his rent is much too high, in consequence of “the last tenant having unexpectedly erected a cylinder and lapphouse, and carried off a great part of the business,” etc. There is great demur, on the part of the weavers, in settling with James, but eventually James Inglis persuades the craft to accept £115 10s. in satisfaction of all claims. James Aitken was at this time in very poor health. Bailie James Inglis

was known for a generation as one of the wittiest and most congenial of men.

THE KIRK SEATS.—On 2nd August, 1821, the weaving craft “appoint the deacon and boxmaster, with David Wishart and William Campbell, to act with the other crafts to ascertain their rights in regard to their seats [formerly occupied] in the Old Abbey Church.” The new Abbey was now built, with pews for everybody; the bughted seats and the “laigh and high lafts” were no longer required, and so the crafts were anxious to secure the auld sticks. We hear no more of the matter, but doubtless the session would be able to arrange.

DEATH AND BURIAL OF PROVOST WILSON—18th March, 1822.—At a meeting on this date, the craft agree to walk in procession, “along with the other incorporations, to the late Provost Wilson’s funeral, on Wednesday first, the 20th inst., at twelve o’clock—as a tribute of the respect they entertain for the memory of the Deceased as an individual;” and “for the honest, faithful, and indefatigable zeal displayed by him in his official capacity as Chief Magistrate of the Burgh, during the long period of fourteen years.”

On 20th June, 1825, the craft agree to enroll the burgh’s M.P., Robert Downie, Esq., an honorary member of the incorporation, for his successful efforts in the House of Commons to obtain “a continuation of the protecting duties on the importation of foreign damasklinens.” Such were the notions of international commerce then entertained.

On 15th May, 1826, the craft appointed Thomas Stevenson, writer, to be their clerk, in room of Robert Hutton, deceased. Hutton succeeded James Alexander—all three were men trained to the legal profession.

MESSRS. J. & W. MORRIS.—On 31st May, 1827, The Messrs. J. & W. Morris obtain, on appeal, a reduction of their rent for the lapp-house and calender, of £20. They plead that the trade has been, and is then, in a very depressed condition. On 9th June, the

Morris is again apply for a reduction of rent, and a committee is appointed to confer, when the lessees offer to pay £35 for the past and three succeeding years. The original agreement ran from Whitsunday, 1826, for five years, with a break at three years—they took advantage of the break, and the weavers had to admit the validity of the claim, and grant the reduction.

A DIVIDEND OF £2 10s.—By September, 1836, some one hundred and fifty members obtain a dividend of £2 10s. each. The name of each is given. (See list of names at page 369.)

THE BEAMING MACHINE.—In 1840, the weaving craft offered a prize of £10 for the best form of a machine for beaming, and the designs of Robert Lawson and James Robertson were so nearly equal in fitness and so much esteemed that the prize of £10 was divided between the two. Neither of these two designs were ever adopted—that of William Cant was recognised as not only the best suited to the purpose, but the simplest and most easily managed. A description of this machine is given elsewhere. The invention was fitted up at first in a weaving-shop at top of Moodie Street, east side (in the ground floor of the house where Dr. Andrew Carnegie was born five years before). Here the weavers continued for years to bring their beams and to assist in having their webs rolled on. In 1845, “Deacon” William Templeman became possessor of the machine, and advertised on 7th January—“That, having taken the premises, together with the beaming machine, formerly belonging to Mr. William Kent (note the spelling !), at the head of Moodie Street, west end of Priory Lane, and having engaged experienced, steady men, to carry on the business, weavers may depend on obtaining satisfactorily beamed webs. He also keeps a man, pony, and cart to carry home the webs.” There were at this time about three thousand looms in the town and suburbs, with about as many weavers employed. The deacon died in 1858.

WILLIAM CANT.—This highly original mechanical genius was no less a genial and humorous man, an excellent story-teller, and an

eccentric of a very lovable kind. His machine for walking on the water—with which he, in 1822, launched off from Leith Pier to meet George IV. when about to land there—was his best-known invention. He drew great crowds to Limekilns Village, in 1821, to witness his first attempts at water-walking. Janet Reid, the Carnock poetess, celebrated this exhibition in her well-known lines—

“ Here’s oor frien’ Will Cant,
He’s juist a second Peter,
He can walk upon the water,
Paidlin’ wi’ his feeter.”

Cant, when working as a blacksmith in one of the Heuch Mill shops, connected his forehammer with a water-wheel, and

“ With a touch of his foot,
E’en the point of his toes,
Could bring on when he liked,
A doon rush of blows.”

When he shifted to Hospital Hill, he hoisted a windmill on the top of the workshop, and made use of it in his operations below.

He was clever, original, and entertaining. In story-telling he had no equal, for, when the facts were dry, he could illustrate and improve these in a marvellous manner. He had a fancy for what he called “ the halls of the great,” and delighted to meet at times a posse of his companions and friends in the “ sandy room ” of Rosyth Castle. Here he would regale the company in the usual liquidacious form, kindle a fire, and, as they sat round, would listen with rapt attention to his magniloquent tales of bygone chivalry, and of the Stewarts who ruled aforetime in Rosyth.

THE DYNASTY OF DEACONS, 1724-1863.

James Wilson, - - -	1724	David Beveridge, - - -	1728
Andrew Robertson, - -	1725	David Belfrage, - - -	1729
” ” - -	1726	Thomas Cousin, - - -	1730
” ” - -	1727	David Morris, - - -	1731

David Morris, - - -	1732	David Fergus, - - -	1765
„ „ - - -	1733	Thomas Wilson, - - -	1766
„ „ - - -	1734	„ „ - - -	1767
Andrew Stevenson, - -	1735	Andrew Chalmers, - -	1768
David Wilson, - - -	1736	Andrew Stevenson, - -	1769
John Wilson, - - -	1737	Andrew Bowie, - - -	1770
James Young, - - -	1738	„ „ - - -	1771
„ „ - - -	1739	John Fergus, - - -	1772
Alexander Wilson, - -	1740	John Ferguson, - - -	1773
Robert Morrison, - - -	1741	William Adamson, - -	1774
„ „ - - -	1742	William Meldrum, - -	1775
Andrew Robertson, - -	1743	D. Anderson, - - -	1776
„ „ - - -	1744	„ „ - - -	1777
John Ker, - - -	1745	G. Shorthouse, - - -	1778
Archibald Harley, - -	1746	John Williamson, - - -	1779
„ „ - - -	1747	„ „ - - -	1780
John Ker, - - -	1748	„ „ - - -	1781
„ „ - - -	1749	John Reid, - - -	1782
John Wilson, - - -	1750	„ „ - - -	1783
„ „ - - -	1751	William Meldrum, - -	1784
John Mackie, - - -	1752	David Tod, - - -	1785
„ „ - - -	1753	David Black, - - -	1786
James Philip, - - -	1754	„ „ - - -	1787
„ „ - - -	1755	David Alester, - - -	1788
James Aleson, - - -	1756	„ „ - - -	1789
„ „ - - -	1757	William Ferguson, - -	1790
Peter Robertson, - - -	1758	„ „ - - -	1791
„ „ - - -	1759	Ralph Miller, - - -	1792
James French, - - -	1760	„ „ - - -	1793
Adam French, - - -	1761	James Lawson, - - -	1794
Adam Law, - - -	1762	„ „ - - -	1795
James Alexander, - - -	1763	Adam Stewart, - - -	1796
David Mackie, - - -	1764	„ „ - - -	1797
James Pearson, - - -	1764	William Lethem, - - -	1798

William Lethem, - - -	1799	John Anderson, - - -	1824
Thomas Hoggan, - - -	1800	„ „ - - -	1825
„ „ - - -	1801	James Allester, - - -	1826
Thomas Morris, - - -	1802	„ „ - - -	1827
„ „ - - -	1803	John Scotland, - - -	1828
William Stewart, - - -	1804	„ „ - - -	1829
„ „ - - -	1805	William Templeman, - -	1830
James Ferguson, - - -	1806	„ „ - - -	1831
„ „ - - -	1807	John Dickson, - - -	1832
George Robertson, - -	1808	„ „ - - -	1833
„ „ - - -	1809	John Scotland, - - -	1834
William Stewart, - - -	1810	„ „ - - -	1835
„ „ - - -	1811	„ „ - - -	1836
Henry Meldrum, - - -	1812	15 years are here unrecorded.	
„ „ - - -	1813	Thomas Hoggan, - - -	1851
Laurence Ford, - - -	1814	„ „ - - -	1852
„ „ - - -	1815	James Stedman, - - -	1853
John Ferguson, - - -	1816	„ „ - - -	1854
„ „ - - -	1817	„ „ - - -	1855
David Wishart, - - -	1818	Henry Meldrum, - - -	1856
„ „ - - -	1819	„ „ - - -	1857
Robert M'Gregor, - - -	1820	Andrew Boag, - - -	1858
„ „ - - -	1821	continues till 1863, when	
Thomas Bisset, - - -	1822	the craft shut down.	
„ „ - - -	1823		

AMUSEMENTS OF THE WEAVERS—TRIPP.—Of outdoor games, “tripp” was the most popular for many years. It was a mixture of cricket, base-ball, and rounders. The apparatus consisted of a “cart” or box frame in which the ball was placed. This cart had inside a spoon-like lever, strongly made and poised nearly in the middle. Sides were chosen of six or eight men each, and the field (of pasture or stubble, hired for the play) cleared. Each man of one side was furnished with a bat or trip while at the “cart” or “in,” while the

other side were "out" or fielding. The man at the "cart" struck the frame referred to, causing the ball to bound into the air; and as it came down he struck it with his trip, and with all his force sending it far across the field. Those on the "out" side did their best to catch the ball; and if any one did so, the player at the "cart" was "out." If the ball was not caught before it reached the ground, it was lifted by one of the "out" party, who threw it high in the air and in such way as to cause it to come down near the active player. As the ball descended the player struck it again with all possible force, sending it once more out into the field. If it was not caught while flying, the player had the right to call out a number—understood as lengths of his trip—which, if allowed by the "outs," was counted to the credit of the "ins." When all the "ins" were played out, the sides of course changed places, and the game went on till time was called or the number run up.

Shinty was also sometimes played on hard commons or the macadamised roads. Putting the stone and tossing the caber were also practised, and there was a flat piece of ground by the Lyne burn-side, in front of Drymill hamlet, where the strong and athletic gathered in the long summer evenings to try their powers at these games.

Cards were the dominant attraction inside and during the winter nights, when the weavers had "lowsed" for the day and were at peace with all the world—but the man or men opposite. With the paste-board slips may be ranked as an indoor favourite the game of draughts, named by the weavers the "dambrod"—from the German "damm," to obstruct. Dominoes and the "Tods and Lambs" board were for boys and for family diversion. In early times reading and catechising in a slipshod fashion, or the singing of imitation psalms, filled up the evenings and passed away the slow-going hours.

THE CORN LAW PETITION OF 1815.—This petition of the Dunfermline weavers, against any increase of the corn duty, is entitled "The humble Petition of the Incorporation of Weavers of the Burgh of

Dunfermline," and is dated 3rd March, 1815. It proceeds thus :—
 "Sheweth that your Petitioners feel deeply interested in the question now under consideration of Parliament regarding the price at which the different kinds of foreign grain are allowed to be imported, free of duty : That the severe pressure arising from the state of the times which your Petitioners have patiently borne for these many years, and the effects of which they still continue to feel, makes them dread the consequences of a measure which they humbly apprehend is calculated to increase their hardships. From a sense of their own necessities, they willingly sympathise with the difficulties the Farmer has to contend with at present, but they cannot extend this feeling to the Landlord, whose exorbitant rise of rent has proved injurious to the Tenant and oppressive to the Community. That the expiration of the Property Tax will soon afford considerable relief both to Landlord and Tenant ; and if this be followed by a reduction of the rent of Land, an effectual remedy would be granted to the farmer against the evils of which he now complains. For your Petitioners are afraid that if the price at which importations is to commence be fixed at so high a rate as 80s. for the quarter of wheat, the Farmer will obtain his remedy, not from those who in fairness ought to afford it to him, but out of the pockets of the People at large. Your Petitioners therefore humbly hope that whatsoever alterations are introduced into the Corn Laws at present, they may be only of a temporary nature," etc.

THRUMS.

WARPING.—The hand-loom weaver's first assistant was the warper. In old times the warping was done by taking a proportion of the threads of the intended web, to fix these to a projecting wall peg, and to pass to another similar peg at five ells distance, twist the threads round it, and to repeat this lapping and plaiting process till the web was finished. The number of threads used were drawn from bobbins placed in a framework, in which they turned easily. The passage to and fro between the pegs—the warper walking or "ganging"—gave

the name "gang" to the mass of threads used, and any smaller quantity wanted to finish the web was called a "half-gang."

The introduction of the Dutch warping "mill" (1743) changed all this. Here again the bobbins were placed in a convenient framework or "bank," the threads drawn forward from each, and passed through a series of eyelets and between upright dividing thorles—both of which were fixed to a horizontal bar hung to an upright post, and passing freely up or down, obedient to the revolutions of the "mill" itself.

The mill was an upright cylinder made of light spar woodwork, revolving on pivots—top and bottom—in the centre. On the side of the mill (which was about six feet high) were fixed pins corresponding to the old-fashioned pegs. To these, at top or bottom, the necessary number of threads were fixed. The mill was operated by a handle fixed crankwise on the top of a spindle, which at bottom carried a horizontal disk having a grooved edge; an endless cord was passed round this disk and crosswise round the circumference of the mill (five ells of forty-five inches each). By this means the mill was turned round, the threads drawn from the bobbins and wound round the mill. Each round was five ells, and this repeated till the whole length was gained, the bar and eyelets on the post moving slowly up or down, as the process proceeded. The web was thus "laid on" in a series of flat spirals round the mill. When finished, the web was run off and linked up into what was called "a chain," several of these sometimes being required to form a web.

BEAMING.—The "chains" for a web, when received by the weaver, were found to be made up of "pins" or portions of a few threads each, carefully divided, or "leased" from each other. These "pins" were produced by the "thorles" of the warping mill already mentioned. If the web required—as was usually the case—several chains, the weaver counted the entire number of pins, and this decided for him the "evener" or "niffler" required to spread the web evenly, and to the proper width. These nifflers were simply rough, wood-pin reeds, through which the "pins" were passed. The

"niffers" were counted by "scores"—so many "scores" of pins to each Scotch ell of thirty-seven inches. The web "chains" being placed in "pins" in the "niffler," and the loom and yarn beam being ready (for the beaming, up till about 1840, was done in the loom), persons were set to hold the passing-in "chains," while three or four others turned the yarn beam, and two held opposite ends of the niffler, and formed the "head" or piling up of the web at the edge. The rolling on was then commenced, and continued to the end.

This somewhat primitive style was continued till about 1840, when Cant's machine came into use. This machine required a room (an old loom-shop in fine) to hold it. It consisted of a framework, very much like that of a turning lathe, with pulleyed receptacles at each end to receive the "heads" of the weaver's beam (from two to five yards in length). Motion was got by an arrangement somewhat resembling the "chuck" of the lathe, this "chuck" being operated by a double crank shaft. Connecting rods passed from the cranks downwards to two immensely long "treadles," or levers. These were pressed by the feet in alternative up and down motion, and so gave movement to the beam, and the web was rolled on—the holding being done by an ingenious contrivance of levered pulleys at the back. The "niffler" was held as in the old system. These beaming machines were set up in different parts of the town—the first being started by Cant himself in the house, top of Moodie Street, and the last was seen in the house, Newrow, corner of Park Avenue.

THE "NIFFLER" SOCIETIES.—The "nifflers" referred to in the previous paragraphs were of various widths and of all degrees of fineness. They had to be made with mathematical exactness, and were somewhat costly. It is clear that each weaver, or weaving-shop, could not possess the necessary stock to do all the different varieties of beaming. It became necessary, therefore, to combine, and to purchase such quantities as would serve the weaving community. When these "niffler" societies were formed in Dunfermline, we have no means of learning, but for many generations prior to 1860 (when hand-loom

were rapidly disappearing), they were a feature in the staple industry of the town. One was located (held its stock) in Woodhead Street, another in Queen Anne Street, and one in the Nethertown Broad Street.

This last one was kept during the thirties, forties, and fifties by Campbell Erskine and, after him, his widow, Rachel Erskine, or, as she was known by her maiden name, Rachel Preston. The house and stock-room were nearly opposite the foot of Reid Street, and was the "howff" of all the enquiring and talking weavers and gossips of the quarter. In the ceiling was fixed a large, hanging framework, with recesses in which to stow the "niffers." A weaver member of the niffer society obtained the loan of his necessary tool free of charge. If he was not a member, he was charged for the loan—though all had to contribute a penny, at each borrowing, for the trouble taken by the keeper, and to meet, by fee, the keeper's wages. The great framework in the ceiling darkened all the room, and visitors sat round in the dull, oft smoke-begrimmed atmosphere of the dwelling, discussing with Campbell, and afterwards with his widow Rachel, the state of the trade, the question of reform, or of free trade, the charter, the wars abroad and nearer home, the conduct of the magistrates, the abilities of the ministers and doctors, the merits of the last public concert given by Rankine or Shields, and so on, down to the capabilities of the new bellman, or the old drummer.

THE BEAMING QUARTER.—The beaming of the webs in old times, requiring, as we have seen, a number of from six to eight or ten helpers to accomplish the job, necessitated an arrangement by which the weavers within a given district, or part of a street often, were obliged to turn out and into the shop where the beaming was to be done, and lend a hand "to the doin o't." When these gatherings took place, there was usually a half-hour, before operations began, given to the gossip of the neighbourhood. The weaving community always numbered a proportion of the fair sex, and these too, nothing loth, came out to the beamings. Then came discoveries as to sweet-

hearting, and each sweetheart's prospects and qualities. If the parties chafed and teased in this subject happened to be present, the fun—though shorter—was much more intense, and the jokes were made to go home in a way we can hardly imagine in these more finical times, when the language has been refined out of all directness and force. If the discussed parties were absent, the remarks took a wider range, comparisons of the most extraordinary kind were made, while prophetic utterances consigned the parties to domestic bliss, a connubial heaven, or to a yoke of bondage.

Then, as in the niffler precincts, the discussion would range over wider fields. The last Chartist speaker would be compared to Lovett, Collins, or Vincent. The land scheme of the burly, loud-voiced Irishman, Fergus O'Connor, would be taken from the hands of Dr. Brewster, and re-threshed till the straw had not a seedlet left. Perhaps the neighbouring lairds, their conduct, the price of their feus, and sharpness of their bargains, would engage attention. From the Queen and her Ministers, the descent was sometimes as deep as it was rapid, and Will Cant and his water-walking machine, his water-reel, his windmill, and his pult hammer, would succeed a description of the Royal visit in 1822 or in 1842, and George IV. and Victoria I. would get mixed up in a most unheard of fashion.

TWISTING AND THE TWISTER.—When webs were narrow and the fabric coarse, each web was “drawn”—*i.e.*, thread by thread it was passed through the working gear, the heddles and reed. When this was found inconvenient the new web was, thread by thread, tied to the old or finished one, and pulled in mass through the working apparatus. When the weaving of damask was introduced—even in its early, draw-boy stage—both the “drawing” and “tieing” methods of connecting the old web with the new were found to be unsuitable to the new conditions. When heddles and reed only were used in working, when the fabrics were neither fine nor wide, drawing or tieing were either of them quite acceptable to the weaver.

When, however, the “forecamb and harness” came as a complica-

tion and necessity in the weaving of damask, the old methods of connecting the two webs had to be laid aside as wasting too much time, or straining the somewhat delicate working gear. The method of "twisting" the one web to the other was therefore adopted. "Twisting" was accomplished by taking one thread of the new web with its corresponding thread in the old, bringing the two ends together, twisting them into one, and folding back the twist on to the thread in the new web, and so on thread by thread till all were united, when the web was pulled through harness, heddles, or forecamb, and reed, and so was ready for a new start.

The quick manipulation and deft management of the threads and fingers in this operation only came by use and practice; and so the business of twisting came to be specialised, and in the palmy days of the hand-loom trade, the twister was recognised as a necessary concomitant of the weaving community. In Dunfermline, the twister was no less necessary as a worker than useful as a vendor of all the gossip, rumour, and social history of the town or district orbit in which he moved.

He was usually "a lamiter"—one who by reason of physical infirmity, malformation, or "the testament of bleeding war" in lost or useless limbs, was unable to bestride the loom or pace the treadles. Sometimes one could follow the twister as, wheeled in a hand-carriage, he sought the shop where next his services were needed. Often he might be seen with crutch, stilt, or stick, helping himself along. Once lifted inside the loom, with the two webs to right and left of him, he would, at every pause in the noise of the looms, open his gossip wallet and retail the latest news of the district—its loves and scandals, or its sorrows and misfortunes. Sometimes, as we have often heard with fervent listening ear, the old soldier would fall on tales of flood and field, recite the story of Cabul, the relief of Jellalabad; or, nearer home, he would recall, with rapid and fiery eloquence, the heady fight at Quatre Bras or the awful slaughter at Waterloo. The "old man eloquent"—roughly, inelegantly, sometimes coarsely, eloquent—would then, by the force of passion and sympathy, stop all

the looms in the shop ; and even the stripling in the corner, who has just been humming the ballad of " Moll Flanders," stopped with the others and got swallowed up in the narrative told by the veteran of a hundred fights. Sometimes he was a singer of songs himself, and would charm the shop into listening attitude as he warbled with thin, yet sweet and plaintive tones, " A wee bird cam' tae oor ha' door."

"THE WEAVER'S SATURDAY," a Poem (slightly altered). By A WITNESS.

(Published in Glasgow in 1838.)

" The sun was peepin' o'er Saint Margaret's fane,
 And stern necessity, from scanty sleep,
 Bids Robin Tamson ope his weary een,
 Else want and wae may gar his family weep.
 Four helpless bairns his labour must sustain ;
 Wee Tam, the infant, sucks his mother's breast :
 Blythe Kate, the eldest, grown a sonsie queen,
 Can wind a pirn and lull the bairns to rest,
 Though skelpin' doon the loan does often please her best.

" To the loom-shop he wends his peaceful way,
 The rusty lock's withdrawn with little din,
 His thrifty wife, with e'enin's glimmerin' ray
 Had wound the pirns to weave the dressin' in ;
 But mony a pirn he'll need, she kens fu' weel,
 Before he reach the ware-room door at noon,
 Bids Katy hush wee Tam, and at her wheel
 She cowers, and winds the pirns wi' eerie croon,
 For mornin' flees awa', and muckle maun be dune.

" The humble breakfast must be first prepared—
 Hung o'er the fire, the pat begins to boil,
 And guid auld meal, in niefu's quickly stirred,
 Mak's healthy paritch to sustain their toil.
 Kate lifts the poker from the ingle nook,
 And dirls it gently on the auld deal floor,
 Up Robin comes, and weary, worn doth look
 Full solemn at the grace o'er Scotland's fare,
 And wife and bairns beside him sit and tak' their share.

“ Hard is your fortune, nurslings of the loom,
Cradled in sorrow, reared in joyless toil,
Stumbling and lost in dull, commercial gloom,
Endured in hope, your anguish to beguile ;
Weary and sad, your life so mean and vile.
No sun illumines the cloud that thickens round,
Still blacker as you penetrate the gloom,
No guiding ray or brightening light is found,
While chained as galley slaves, you labour to your doom.”

WEAVERS' WAGES IN 1827.—In the year 1827, a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to enquire as to the possibility of relieving the distress of the time by emigration of the labourers. Witnesses as to the wages actually earned at home by various classes of workers, were examined. Among the first of these was Joseph Foster, a working weaver of Glasgow. He told the Committee that his class of workmen were in great distress, that they worked from eighteen to nineteen hours a day for a wage of seven shillings a week—sometimes as low as four shillings a week. He said that twenty years before they could earn twenty shillings a week, but the power-loom was taking the work from the weavers, and their distress was constantly increasing. This statement may be taken as fairly representing the condition of the Dunfermline weavers when trade was depressed. In 1836, as shewn in the Joseph Hume tables, Dunfermline weavers were earning an average of eighteen shillings per week. This, however, was during a time of very lively trade. In 1842, at the time of the great strike, the average weekly earnings were not over ten to twelve shillings a week, with full work. About ten years after this, a calculation was made to find the earnings of weavers in the best conditions, *i.e.*, in a hand-loom factory where the manufacturer kept the weavers in constant work, and nine to ten shillings a week were found to be the average earnings.

When the Incorporation of the Weavers came to a sudden stop in 1837—when the property was sold and the spoil divided in sums of money to each of the “remanent members”—there were then on the

books, and in the full enjoyment of "all the privileges, rights, immunities, freedoms, graiths, abulziements," etc., the number of one hundred and fifty-three members. These, in the division of the sums realised from the sales of the craft property, obtained two pounds ten shillings each, with an after-division of one shilling and sixpence—making the total divide to be two pounds eleven shillings and sixpence. The following are the names of the weaver craftsmen in connection with the incorporation, as at 16th March, 1837, to wit :—

Aitken, Thomas, Nethertown.
 Anderson, Robert, Nethertown.
 Allester, William, Edinburgh.
 Anderson, David, Glasgow.
 Anderson, George, England.
 Allester, David, East Port.
 Aitken, James, Nethertown.
 Allester, William, Golfdrun.
 Allan, John, Dundee.
 Allester, David, Manufacturer.
 Allester, William, Writer, Edinburgh.
 Aitken, Andrew, Nethertown.
 Aitken, David, Bothwellhaugh.
 Anderson, David, Lapper.
 Anderson, Robert, Liverpool.
 Allester, John, Newrow.
 Allester, Robert, Inglis Street.
 Anderson, William, High Street.

Beanie, Andrew, Nethertown.
 Bennet, Thomas, Rolland Street.
 Beveridge, James, Newrow.
 Balneaves, Robert, Paisley.
 Bald, William, Nethertown.
 Beveridge, James, a Bailie in Burntisland.

Beveridge, James, Guildhall Street.
Bonnar, David, "Isla."
Brownlie, James, Queen Ann Street.
Beveridge, Andrew, Reform Street.
Boag, Stenhouse, Inglis Street.
Blaik, James, Woodhead Street.
Beveridge, William, Pittencrieff Street.
Birrell, George, Provost, St. Catherine's Wynd.
Bisset, Thomas, Pilmuir Street.

Campbell, William, East Port.
Campbell, John, East Port.
Cooper, John, Reid's Park.
Clark, Thomas, Moodie's Street.
Coventry, Robert, Red Row.
Cooper, George, Back o' the Dam.
Cameron, Peter, Newrow.
Chalmers, William, High Street.
Chalmers, David, Reid's Park.
Chalmers, James, Bruce Street.

Duncan, John, Glasgow.
Drysdale, Robert, Pilmuir Street.
Donaldson, James, Woodmill Street.
Drummond, Robert, Bothwellhaugh.
Douglas, David, Bridge Street.
Donald, John, Crossford.
Donald, Andrew, Golfdrun.
Donaldson, John, Knabbie Street.
Douglas, William, James Place.
Drysdale, George, Pittencrieff.
Douglas, John, Golfdrun.
Dickson, John, Inglis Street.

Erskine, Campbell (Keeper of the Niffles), Nethertown.

Ferguson, John, N. Chapel Street.

Ferguson, James, Bothwellhaugh.

Ford, Laurence, America.

Ferguson, John, Reid's Park.

Ford, James, America.

Ford, Robert, America.

Ford, David, Newrow.

Fisher, John, Glasgow.

Fotheringham, John, Town Green.

Graham, William, Moodie's Street.

Gardiner, David, Pittencrieff.

Graham, John, England.

Gibson, James, Newrow.

Gardner, Alexander, James Place.

Hutton, David, Nethertown.

Houston, Andrew, High Street.

Henderson, Andrew, Moodie's Street.

Hunter, George, Burntisland.

Hatton, David, Orr Bridge.

Hoggan, Thomas, Reid's Park.

Hoggan, William, Woodmill Street.

Hodge, Robert, Glasgow.

Hoggan, James, Gardener's Land.

Hoggan, Thomas, Newrow.

Hoey, James, Nethertown.

Inglis, George, Newrow.

Inches, James, Gardener's Land.

Inglis, John, Nethertown.

Inglis, James, Manufacturer.

Inglis, Thomas, Yarn-Boiler.

Kerr, Robert, Manufacturer, Bruce Street.
Kerr, James, Manufacturer, Bruce Street.
Kerr, John (Provost 1831), Bothwellhaugh.
Kelty, John, Bothwellhaugh.
Kirk, Charles, James Street.
Kesson, David, Nethertown (afterwards foot of Newrow).

Lethem, William (Red-Cap Deacon), Bothwellhaugh.
Lethem, James, Moodie's Street.
Lumsden, John, James Place.
Laurie, David, Woodmill Street.
Laurie, David, St. Margaret Street.
Law, James, Newrow.
Laing, Alexander, Gardener's Land.
Lethem, James, Leith.

Miller, Adam, Damside.
M'Gregor, David, Bouffie's Brae.
Moyes, George, Paisley.
M'Kinley, John, Gardener's Land.
Mackie, David, Hopeton.
Miller, Laurence, Bruce Street.
Moir, John, Newrow.
Morris, David, East Port Street.
Mowbray, David, Rumbling Well.
Morris, Adam, Newrow.
Meldrum, William, Nethertown.
Main, John, Nethertown.
M'Kindley, John, East Port Street.
M'Gregor, Robert (Designer and Inventor), Nethertown.
Morris, James, Gardener's Land.
Meldrum, James, Senior, Nethertown.
M'Gregor, William, Newrow.
Morris, John, James Street.

Morris, John, High Street.
Meldrum, Andrew, Nethertown.

Penny, John, Golfdrun.
Peacock, David, Nethertown.
Philp, Andrew, Back Row.
Peacock, David, Beveredge Well.

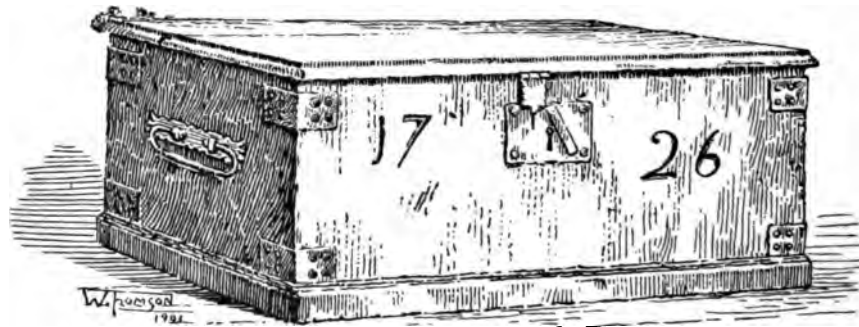
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Roxburgh, John, Paisley.
Renny, William, Reform Street.
Renny, Andrew, Pilmuir.
Renny, David, Reform Street.

Syme, William Gibbs Street.
Stewart, Adam, Pittencrieff.
Stewart, William, Woodmill Street.
Stewart, John, Masterton.
Strahan, David, Woodhead Street.
Sinclair, James, Town Green.
Smeaton, James, Newrow.
Stirling, James, Rhodes.
Steedman, Andrew, Priory Lane.
Stewart, William, Nethertown.
Sinclair, Robert, Brucefield (feuar there).
Steedman, John, Knabbie Street.
Scotland, John, East Port.
Stevenson, Hugh, Nethertown.
Steedman, James, Reid's Park.

Turnbull, John, Brucefield.
Templeman, William, Newrow.

Wishart, David, Moodie Street.
Wilson, Adam, Newrow.
Wilson, John, Bridge Street.
Wilson, John, Baldringburn.
Wishart, James, Newrow.

Young, John, Nethertown.



Muniment Chest of the Weavers' Incorporation.

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