

THE INCORPORATION OF WEAVERS OF STIRLING.

(By DAVID B. MORRIS.)

INTRODUCTORY.

Weaving is a primeval occupation, and the making of cloth by the interlacing of threads of yarn in a loom has come down to us from very early times. In the Bible we read of the weaver's shuttle and the weaver's beam. The principles of construction of the hand loom are simple, and must have remained practically unchanged throughout a prolonged period.

The weavers of Stirling, like their fellow-craftsmen elsewhere, used the simple hand loom down to the nineteenth century. The first important improvement in the construction of the loom was effected by John Kay of Bury in 1733. Then followed the loom invented by Jacquard of Lyons in 1801. About the same time Cartwright's power loom gave the opportunity for the application of water power, and afterwards of steam power, to the making of cloth, and so revolutionised the whole industry.

The nineteenth century saw the gradual elimination of the hand loom weaver in Britain and the concentration of the industry into huge mills in different parts of the country, where goods to supply a great part of the world were made. This caused not only an industrial revolution, but it effected a great social change. The weavers had been scattered over the whole land, living in the villages and rural communities as well as in the towns, and their disappearance caused a blank in the life of the country side and made a big difference in the smaller towns.

Stirling all along supported a fair quota of hand-loom weavers, and the Incorporation of Weavers was always reckoned one of the strongest and most important of the seven trades. The weavers were a notable set of men, great politicians every one of them, independent in character too, as each was generally his own master. When newspapers were introduced, the weavers subscribed to take in a paper amongst them, which was often read aloud to the assembled gathering. The phrase, "a weaver's

read," is still familiar when one takes up a paper and reads it from beginning to end. They had frequently a poetic turn of mind, or a bent for natural history. They were often of poor physique, the result of long hours at an indoor occupation. It was a Forfarshire farmer, alarmed lest his newly cut hay should be blown over the cliffs into the sea, who shouted to his foreman, "Rin and get men, and if ye canna get men, get weavers or onything." Still, the weavers could take their place in the military forces of the country, and in the early days of volunteering, at the time of the threatened Napoleonic invasion, the number of weavers who enlisted in the Stirling and district companies was in excess of their just proportion.

The Stirling weavers of the present day are engaged in the carpet making industry. Although the loom is still a loom, the conditions of work and life are greatly different from those of the early days of which we are now to speak.

EARLY HISTORY.

The earliest record of weavers in Stirling which we can trace is in the *Leges Quatuor Burgorum*, or Laws of the Four Burghs, which were codified in the reign of David I. (1124-1153). As Stirling was one of the four burghs in which these laws originated, their application to Stirling is beyond doubt. Law 20 is entitled, "Of makyn of clath and littyn of woll," and is in the following terms:—"Na man bot a burgess sall by woll to lytt na clathe mak na schere." We may translate it thus:—"Of making of cloth and dyeing of wool. No man but a burgess shall buy wool to dye, nor make nor cut cloth." The meaning is that no one should be a dyer, or a weaver, or a tailor (perhaps a draper), unless he were an entered burgess. This points to the weavers of Stirling possessing exclusive privileges even at that early date, although probably an organised Incorporation of Weavers, as established later, was not then in existence.

Weavers in Stirling are mentioned in the important Charter by Alexander II., dated at Kincardine on 18th August, 1226, by which the King granted to the burgh of Stirling a weekly market, a Merchant Guild, and other privileges. This is recognised as the great Charter of the Stirling Guildry. It provides that the waulkers (the men who shrunk or bleached the yarn) and

the weavers were excluded from the Merchant Guild. This was not an unusual provision, and its meaning was that the waulkers and weavers wrought with their hands, and were therefore not eligible to be received as merchants, although they bought the materials and sold the products of their crafts. This was one of the cardinal principles of early burghal administration, that the merchants must be buyers and sellers only. The Charter clearly shows that there were weavers in Stirling so long ago as 1226.

The exclusion of the weavers was confirmed in the Charters of King David II., dated at Scone, 26th and 27th October, 1360, and of Charles I., dated at Holyrood, 17th November, 1641.

In the reign of Robert I., who died in 1329, there was drawn up a list of points upon which the Chamberlain of the Kingdom was to make inquiry when he visited the burghs throughout the kingdom to ascertain whether local government was efficiently performed. All the different trades were included in this catechism, and the questions for the weavers or wobstaris were as follows:—

In the first,—That thai mak our lang thyrms in skaithing of the peple. (Do they make too long thrums (loose threads or fringes) to the prejudice of the people?)

Item,—Whair thai tak in with wechtis when thai gif jt out thai mak jt donke and wete with water, castand thingis therin to gar it wey and ther throw haidand out of it to thame self a grete quantite. (Where they take in (yarn) by weight, when they give it (the cloth) out, do they make it damp and wet with water, casting things therein to make it weigh (heavier), and therethrough holding out of it to themselves a great quantity?)

Item,—That thai tak a mannis yarn and puttis in ane utheris wob for haste. (Do they take one man's yarn and put it in another's web for haste?)

PRIVILEGES.

There is no trace of the original Seal of Cause incorporating the weavers, but it must have been granted by the Town Council at a date anterior to the Council minutes that now exist. On 19th March, 1547-8, we find the Provost and Bailies granting to the craftsmen of "wobstaris thair

ould privilege usit and wont." The reference to old privileges and their re-enactment by the Town Council shows that a Seal of Cause had been issued by the Council at a considerably earlier date.

In 1628 there was a litigation in the Court of Session between the Incorporation and the weavers in Castlehill, which was decided in favour of the Incorporation, the decree being dated 21st March, 1628.

On 17th January, 1648, the Town Council ordained that the Acts (the Council's resolutions) anent the "wobsteris and litsteris" (dyers) be set down in the Town Court Books.

In 1680 weavers in the Castlehill were again a source of trouble. Being outwith the royalty of the burgh, they were not liable for any of the public burdens, and were not burgesses or members of the Incorporation of Weavers, while it was not difficult for them to dispose of their wares within the burgh. On 20th January, 1680, the Town Council resolved to approach the Earl of Mar, on whose ground these weavers lived, and so the Provost, Convener, and Clerk proceeded to Alloa to interview his lordship. On 1st May it was reported that the Earl had referred the matter to Captain George Erskine and John Keirie of Gogar, the magistrates, dean of guild, and convener. The Town Council approved. The Decreet Arbitral was issued on 29th April, 1681, and recorded in the Town Court Books, 20th July, 1681. The decision was that the Castlehill weavers were permitted, upon fulfilling certain conditions, to bring into the burgh or take forth thereof, webs or yarn.

On 29th January, 1687, the Town Council granted an Act in favour of the weavers. On 7th September, 1703, the weavers complained of encroachments on their rights and of fraudulent practices in the sale of yarn. The Town Council confirmed the previous Act, and dealt with the new grievances. The Act was not entered in the Council Minute Book at the time, but seventy-three years afterwards, on 9th July, 1776, it was inserted in the record. As it constitutes a Supplementary Seal of Cause in favour of the Incorporation of Weavers, I give it in full:—

"Stirling, the seaven day of September, one thousand seaven hundred and three years. The magistrates and council of the said burgh being convened in their ordinary meeting place, there

was ane petition given in to them by John Finlayson, present deacon of the weavers within the samen burgh, for himself and in name and behalf of the whole remnant members of the said trade, mentioning that where, in anno j^m vj^e and eighty seven, the magistrates and council of the said burgh for the time did by there act strictly prohibite and discharge all unfree or country weavers whatsoever from buying of any wooline or linnine yairne, thereafter to be brought to this burgh for sale, except upon the publick mercate place and after elleaven o'clock each mercate day, under the pain of confiscation thereof and otherwayes punishing both buyers and seller as the saids magistrates should think fit; which act has not only contribute to the good and encouragment of the petitioners' trade, but also to the whole other burgesses and inhabitants of this burgh who are noways restricted thereby, and likewise has been the occasion of the increass and growth of soe considerable ane yarne mercate as is now weekly within this burgh: but in regard there is an cunning and frawdulent practice lately crept into the said mercate by some unconscionable people there exposing to sale therein certane quantitys of yarn not only short of the ordinary ell lenth, which as to wooline yairne conform to express act of parliament ought to be thirtie seavin inches, but also there is a new and deceitfull method contrived in making up the heasps of yarn double in one part and single in another (one of which hesps so made up the petitioner did produce to the said magistrates and council), and which fraud is hardly perceptible by the most cautious buyers; and farder, ane great part of the said yarne daylie brought to the said mercate comes short of the just tale thereof, wanting a great many threads of six score to the cutt, by which both the petitioners and the whole neighbourhood are cheated and abused; and therefor humbly creaving that the saids present magistrats and council would take the premisses to consideration, and by their act not only to ratify and approve of the former act of council, bot also to prohibite and discharge the bringing and exposing to sale in this mercate for the future all woolin or linnen yarn any way short of the true lenth it ought to be or wanting anything of the true tale of the cutt, and that under such ane penalty as the council shall

think fitt, and that besydes cutting of the yarne at the cross conform to the practice and custom of other burghs, as at more length is contained in the said petition. Which being considered by the saids magistrates and council, they unanimously not onlie ratifie and approve of the act of council above mentioned in the whole points thereof and appoint the same to, take effect and be put to all due executions in time comeing, bot also have prohibited and hereby stricltlie prohibite and discharge the bringing or exposing to sale in this mercate in any time to come all wooline or linnen yarn any way short of the true lenth it ought to be, or wanting anything of the true tale of the cutt, and that under the penalty of fyve pounds Scots money ilk person contraveining, toties quoties, besides confiscation of the yarn or cutting thereof at the cross; and any of the weavers or other neighbours who shall happen either to buy or see any of the said prohibited yarn are hereby discharged to compone or transact with the owner thereof any manner of way, or otherways conceal the said fraud, under the like penalty of five pounds Scots money ilk person, toties quoties, as said is; and ordain these presents to be published at the mercate cross that non may pretend ignorance."

The litigation between the Incorporation of Weavers and the Magistrates in 1711, and again in 1723, as to the stamping of serges, is narrated at some length hereinafter.

In 1714 the country weavers, feeling aggrieved that they were only allowed to buy yarn in the burgh market at certain restricted hours, presented a petition to the Justices of the Peace. This came before the Town Council on 13th March, 1714, when it was agreed to support the weavers in the defence of their privileges, and the magistrates, dean of guild, and convener were appointed to appear before the Justices, and to decline their jurisdiction, and to protest against their proceeding farther. This also went to the Court of Session, and the decree, dated 13th July, 1715, favoured the Incorporation. The reduction of this decree was the object of litigation in 1780, which went to the House of Lords.

A similar dispute about the purchase of yarn in the market by the Castlehill weavers was, in 1734, submitted to arbitration. The decision was

that the Castlehill weavers had no rights other than strangers or country weavers, and that they could only purchase yarn in the market after nine in the morning.

On 6th November, 1735, the Incorporation complained of defective yarn being received, particularly from the south country, and this led to another Supplementary Seal of Cause being granted by the Town Council on 11th July, 1741. It is as follows:—

"Anent the petition and representation this day given in by John Nicoll, present deacon of the incorporation of weavers in this burgh, for himself and in name of the remanent members of the said incorporation, shewing that the said incorporation have been immemorially in possession of searching the weekly mercats and fairs of the said burgh, by their deacon for the time being and the masters or others of the trade of the deacons appointing, for discovering of frauds or cheats in eln or tale of the worsted or linnen yairn that is brought there to be sold; and when any fraud or cheat has been found out in any of these kinds of yairn the constant practice has been that the samen has been apprehended and seized by the said deacon or those others of his appointment and carryed before one of the magistrats of the said burgh in order to condemnation; and after triall, and the baillie's finding the fraud or cheat either in the eln or tale, the yarn so apprehended and seized has been alwise confiscate and condemned to the apprehenders for behoof of the poor of the said Incorporation, and besides the offender or person guilty of the fraud or cheat has been punished by the baillie in a fine and unlaw of five pound Scots money applicable as he thinks proper; that as this has been the immemorial and constant practice of the burgh in the above particular, so the said incorporation apprehends that the samen has been introduced for the publick well and utility not only of this place but of the lidges in general, and that the incorporation have been warranted thereto by the magistrats and council their authority, and if the records of council were lookt into it is thought the same would be found to be so, but the particular act or grant with respect thereto the said incorporation are not at present masters of an extract thereof, the samen having fallen by them; and that as the particular represented

with respect to searching the mercates and fairs and seizing and condemning the yarn and punishing the offender in the manner above represented is a certain and indisputable fact known to the hail inhabitants, and that whether it shall be found to have been warranted by the council's authority or not, yet as it has so long obtained as to have become an immemorial custome or practice of publick well and utility, so it is necessary for the same reasons that the magistrats and council their approbation and confirmation of that custome and practice, and any former rules or acts there-
anent, and authority for continuing the same in time coming, be had and interposed by the said magistrats and council by way of grant in favours of the said incorporation, and therefore praying to the effect after mentioned. . . . The magistrats and council having considered the representation and petition, and it consisting with the knowledge of severals of them that the custome and practice represented is true in fact, they therefore ratifie, approve of, and confirm all acts and grants in favours of the said incorporation with respect to the particular before represented, [and authorised the former practise or searching, seizure, confiscation, and punishment, to be continued]."

The yarn market was situated on the north side of Broad Street, opposite the tron, but a custom had arisen of buying and selling yarn also in the Baxter's Wynd, Mary's Wynd, and elsewhere. The Town Council, on 5th February, 1743, of new ordained that no one trade in yarn except at the place appointed.

An important litigation, which went to the House of Lords, between the Incorporation of Weavers and unfree weavers residing outwith the burgh in 1780 and subsequent years, is dealt with more fully in a subsequent part of this paper.

The weavers took a keen interest in the discussions over the Reform Bill, which ultimately was passed into law in 1832, and anent the Burgh Trading Act of 1846. Although these Acts put an end to their ancient privileges, it is to the credit of the weavers and their fellow-craftsmen that they supported the measures of reform with great heartiness. The Reform Act put an end to the great power which the Incorporation possessed in the election of

a member of Parliament, and the Burgh Trading Act abolished the title of the members to the exclusive right to exercise their calling within the burgh. These rights were their patrimony, a possession for which their forefathers had shed their blood and spent their means in a grim fight that endured for centuries. They were the *sine qua non* of all that the Incorporation stood for. In byegone days these things meant freedom, and the fight for the burgesses' rights was a fight for liberty. But changed times brought changed conditions, and now, in the nineteenth century, the cause of freedom lay in opening the gates of the burgh and allowing all to trade at will. The weavers and their brethren of the guildry and the crafts, recognising this, took up an enlightened position and supported the cause of reform.

Amid the rejoicing over the passing of the Reform Act of 1832, the weavers regretted the establishment of a £10 franchise. Many of their number were thus totally disenfranchised, but they bore their disappointment sensibly.

The long fight for exclusive trading privilege which had filled volumes of the weavers' records, and had taken them repeatedly to the local courts, the Court of Session, and even the House of Lords, was brought to an end by a very simple minute in the following terms:—

"18th April, 1835.—A motion was then made by Convener John Stevenson, that from and after this date all young men commencing business for themselves in the weaving and manufacturing line, shall be at liberty to do so, without paying any remuneration to the Trade. —Which motion was unanimously agreed to by the Trade, and the following Committee was appointed to get the same inserted in the newspapers:—Convener John Stevenson, John Dick, Junr., John Douglas, Robert M'Gregor, and the present Convener."

In 1845 the Association of Non-Freemen of Edinburgh issued a schedule of queries to ascertain the attitude of the Incorporations throughout Scotland to the Burgh Trading Bill. On 24th September, 1845, it was agreed that the best answer would be a copy of the Minute of Trade of 18th April, 1835, and the Clerk was ordered to make an extract from the record of the Incorporation and forward the same, which

was done accordingly. The Bill passed into law, and this was "the end of an auld sang."

LITIGATION REGARDING THE MAKING OF SERGES.

About the beginning of the eighteenth century there was much ill-feeling, and also litigation, regarding the manufacture of serges in Stirling. The trouble arose out of several Acts passed by Parliament for the encouragement of foreign trade, at a time when a serious effort was being made to increase the export of Scottish goods, a movement which included the sending out of the ill-fated Darien Expedition, and was stimulated by the formation of the East India Company.

In 1661 an Act was passed in the Scots Parliament of Charles II. regulating the breadth of linen cloth. This was followed in 1681 by an Act for encouraging trade and manufactures, which included a considerable variety of legislation. It provided that pieces both of linen and woollen cloth were to be taken up in folds, and none of them rolled, so that the quality of the whole piece might be apparent, and that it would not be stretched by the rolling. The Town Council, on 26th April, 1711, took these Acts of Parliament into consideration along with a resolution of the Justices of the Peace, and appointed two Bailies to examine all serges made within the burgh and shire, and to stamp those if considered sufficient in quality, breadth, and length, enacting that no serges should be held to be sufficient "Stirling Serges" without the seal. The Incorporation of Weavers considered that their rights were being encroached upon, and raised an Action of Suspension in the Court of Session, in which they were successful, the resolutions of the Town Council and Justices being set aside. The question was renewed by the passing of an Act of the British Parliament in 1719, in which the sizes and qualities of serges, plaidens, and fingsams were regulated. On 19th March, 1723, the Magistrates of the Burgh and the Justices of Peace for the Shire made an Act which practically repeated the Act of Parliament, although it differed in certain important particulars. It provided that every piece of serge made within the burgh or shire should be a Scots ell in breadth and 63 ells in length, to be taken up in folds and not rolled or stretched by rolling, and that no white, broomed, or tarred wool be wrought or mixed

together, but each piece to be wrought of one kind, and to be of equal work and fineness from one end to the other. A room was provided in the burgh to which all serges were to be brought from the burgh or county to be stamped on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, between certain hours. One shilling Scots per piece was to be charged for sealing, and fines were prescribed for breach of the regulations.

The matter had been apparently under consideration for some time, as the Guildry had dealt with the question on 18th August, 1722. The Incorporation of Weavers were entirely dissatisfied, and again raised a Bill of Suspension in the Court of Session, dated 11th June, 1723, to have the resolutions of the Magistrates and Justices set aside. They founded upon the suspension by the Court of the previous resolutions, and the Magistrates replied, founding upon the new Act of Parliament. The weavers asserted that the resolution complained of was arbitrary, and an usurpation of the legislative power, and the Magistrates replied that they were carrying out the Act of Parliament. The weavers retorted that in prescribing a length of 63 ells the Magistrates had gone beyond what the Act contained, and in prescribing the breadth to be a Scots ell they were acting contrary to the Act, which prescribed a breadth of an ell and two inches. The weavers also pled that the sealing of cloth was intended by Parliament only for exported goods, and not for cloth for home consumption. The Magistrates replied that they founded on the Statute, which was not confined to exported goods. The weavers complained that it was impossible to comply with the regulation, because it affected a great number of poor people, who, they said, buy wool in small quantities, by pounds and quarters, spin it, and sell it again, and thus gain their bread. It is impossible for a maker of serges to get as much yarn, either of one wool or of the same fineness as will make half of a web, but he must pick it up by "spynels" from different spinners who spin different wool. Some part of the same wool will be finer than another part, and there will be different sorts in one fleece. The Magistrates replied that these statements were nothing else than a subterfuge and pretext to avoid obeying the law, that the weavers might go on in their frauds and abuses.

The weavers made a serious allegation in the following terms:—

"Of late, a particular Set of People in and about the Town of Stirling (of whom some in the Government of the Town are Part) having a Mind intirely to engross this Trade into their own Hands, and to enrich themselves with it in the easiest Way, did not take the fair and laudable Method of bringing the Trade to themselves, by outdoing the Poorer People in the Goodness and Sufficiency of their Webs, but entred into a Concert to defeat the poorer People in an easier Way, by putting the Trade under such Regulations, as it is impossible for the People of small Stocks to observe: And thus, under the Colour and Pretext of advancing and raising the Credit of that Manufactory, they shall destroy many of the poor Families that now live by it."

The parting shot of the Magistrates is also worth quoting:—

"Upon the whole, 'tis but too well known, how hard it is to drive some Tradsmen from the little Tricks and Frauds by which they reap but a pitiful Gain, but occasion immense Loss to the Nation, and when we feel Trade languishing and decaying, then we are ready to cry out against Magistrates and Justices of the Peace, that they do not imploy their Powers in restraining the Abuses that give Occasion for it: Wherefore, 'tis not doubted, but your Lordships will rather strengthen than weaken the Hands of the saids Magistrates and Justices of the Peace, and therefore will refuse the Bill, the passing whereof, would allow those weavers to go on to their own and the Nation's destruction in their Abuses and Frauds, which Law has endeavour'd to prevent; and no doubt, the supreme Judicature will Discourage."

Either the magistrates won their case or the matter was compromised, for we find the weavers, on 23rd December, 1727, recording in their minutes:—

"Taking to their consideration the great loss that they sustain through the insufficiency of the yairn being so spoiled, by mixing broomd and white wool, and good and bad wool together, and hard twined and soft twined together, that no tradesman can separate them, which is the cause that the sarge webs that comes to the seal office are so often found fault with, which no tradesman can help, except that the Magistrats with

the Justices of the Peace concurr, with their authority, that intimation may be made publickly at the Mercat Cross discharging such abuses, and likewise that they would ordain men that has skill to see the sufficiency of the yairn of each sort of wool that comes to be sold at the Mercat place, and ordains John Aikman to present this to the Magistrats and Justices of the Peace, that they would be pleased to interpone their authority for this effect."

LITIGATION WITH THE COUNTRY WEAVERS AS TO THE YARN MARKET.

From 1771 until 1780 the Incorporation of Weavers carried on a litigation with the country weavers residing in Bannockburn and elsewhere. The pursuers were John Paterson, Jun., weaver in Bannockburn; James Kidston, weaver in Cambusbarron; Alexander Fergusson, weaver in Alloa; Walter Meiklejohn, weaver in Dunblane; James Monteith, weaver in Mintrie, and Robert Morris, weaver in Alloa, for themselves and the other weavers in the neighbourhood of the town of Stirling. The defenders were John Paterson, Preses of the Incorporation of Weavers in Stirling; Alexander Rattray, late Deacon of the said Incorporation; William Gilfillan, weaver in Stirling, Boxmaster of said Incorporation; John Paton and George M'Arthur, weavers in Stirling, Collectors for the said Incorporation. In addition, there were called to defend the action David Gourlay and others, managers of the Burgh of Stirling. At that time Stirling had no magistrates or Town Council, the election made at Michaelmas, 1773, having, on 8th November, 1775, been declared void by the Court of Session.

The cause of dispute concerned the yarn market. In the litigation of 1715 the Court of Session had fixed the hour of opening of the yarn market to be nine in the morning each public market day, summer and winter, but that the freemen of the town might buy yarn at any time. This regulation was strictly adhered to, but the country weavers considered it a great hardship. It was stated in the proceedings that the town of Stirling was the seat of one of the most considerable manufactures in Scotland of shallons, tartans, serges, camblets, and other worsted stuffs, that in the town of Stirling and in the country for six miles round it, there were no less

than 1100 looms employed, of which about 160, including 16 or 17 carpet looms, were employed in the town, and all the rest belonged to the country weavers. The conclusions of the action were as follows :—

1st—That the Custom of beginning the Yarn Market at Nine in the morning be utterly abolished.

2dly—That all Persons whomsoever should have Liberty of buying Yarn at all Hours of the Day each Market-day.

3dly—And that the Weavers, Freemen, and other Inhabitants ought to be discharged from buying, and all other Persons whomsoever, whether of the Town or Country, from selling of Yarn, except in open Market.

The case came on to be heard before Lord Montboddo, the Lord Ordinary, who, after hearing parties, decided in favour of the Incorporation on 1st January, 1771. The pursuers gave in representations against this Interlocutor, in consequence of which Lord Montboddo took the cause to report, and, after certain proceedings, pronounced the following interlocutor, dated 19th November, 1777 :—

“Find, that the public Yarn Market of the Borough of Stirling shall, from the 15th day of April to the 15th Day of August, yearly, begin and open at the Hour of Six in the Morning, and from the 15th Day of August to the 15th Day of April, yearly, at the Hour of Eight in the Morning; and in Time coming, prohibit and discharge all the Lieges, Freemen as well as others, from purchasing Yarn, on Market Days, at any Place but upon the Public Market Place, after the Market is begun and opened as aforesaid, and not before; and decern and declare accordingly.”

The Incorporation presented a Reclaiming Petition against the above interlocutor; whereby they prayed the Court to acquit them from the Action, or to allow a Proof of the Expediency of the Alteration; desired at least to vary the Hour in Summer only, and that from Nine to Eight o'clock; and at all events to find, that the Petitioners (Appellants) may lawfully buy Yarn from Unfreemen at any Time, as well upon Market Days as others, at any Place, before or after opening the Market.

When this Petition came under the consideration of the Court, the Counsel for the country

weavers consented to alter the Interlocutor reclaimed against, in so far as it fixed the Time of the Day for opening the Public Yarn Market of the Borough of Stirling at Six in the Morning, from the 15th Day of April to the 15th Day of August, and Eight in the Morning from the 15th Day of August to the 15th Day of April yearly; and to order that the said Yarn Market should, from the 15th Day of April to the 15th Day of August, yearly, begin and open at the Hour of Seven in the Morning, and from the 15th Day of August to the 15th Day of April, yearly, at the Hour of Nine in the Morning.

Whereupon the Court, by their Interlocutor dated 4th December, 1777, “found, That the Public Yarn Market of the Borough of Stirling shall, from the 15th Day of April to the 15th Day of August yearly, begin and open at the Hour of Seven in the Morning, and from the 15th Day of August to the 15th Day of April yearly, at the Hour of Nine in the Morning; and with that Variation they adhere to their former Interlocutor, and refuse the desire of the Petition.”

Against this decision the Incorporation of Weavers appealed to the House of Lords. In support of their case, they founded upon the following rights :—

1. The Charter of King David.
2. The decision of the Court of Session in 1628.
3. The Charter of King Charles in 1641.
4. The Decreet Arbitral against the Castlehill weavers of 29th April, 1681.
5. Minute of the Town Council in 1687.
6. Minute of the Town Council in 1703.
7. Decree of the Court of Session of 13th July, 1715.
8. Decreet Arbitral against the Castlehill weavers in 1734.

The country weavers founded upon the following :—

1. Leges Quatuor Burgorum, Cap. 79.
2. Act James V. 7 Parl. 98.
3. Statutes of the Guild, Cap. 29.
4. Act James IV. 4 Parl. 21.
5. Act James VI. 12 Parl. 148.

After the case was heard in the House of Lords, the cause was, on 28th February, 1780, remitted back to the Court of Session in Scotland, without prejudice to the parties amending their

process by adding new parties as they should be advised.

Negotiations followed for an amicable settlement. The country weavers appointed William Wilson and John Paterson, weavers in Bannockburn, and James Kidston, William Jaffrey, and John Watson, weavers in Cambusbarron, a committee, with full powers, and the Incorporation similarly appointed six of their number. An agreement was effected which was embodied in a formal document, signed by the eleven contracting parties, binding their constituents, dated the 18th and recorded in the Town Court Books of Stirling the 21st April, 1783. The Town Council met on 13th May, 1783, and interposed their authority for making the agreement effectual.

The terms of settlement were as follows :—

The town weavers shall keep proper regulations in the market by four men elling and tolling the yarn during the whole time of the market.

The country weavers shall pay yearly to the town weavers £2 12s sterling.

The country weavers are to have equal liberty with freemen to buy yarn in the market.

Each Martinmas the country weavers are to give in a list of such of their number as are deficient in advancing their proportion of said sum, and the town weavers are to take particular care that such persons shall not be allowed to purchase yarn in the market before the hour of nine in the morning.

Both parties pass from the process and appeal, and declare the same void and null.

THE FLEMINGS.

A circumstance of much interest in the history of weaving in Scotland was the introduction of Flemish weavers, a policy deliberately undertaken by the Government for the improvement of the manufacture of cloth goods. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, the economic position of Scotland was very bad, the result of the prolonged wars with England. The country was in a state of great destitution, the currency was terribly reduced, food was scarce and dear, and beggars abounded. All the finer cloths were imported from France and England, and the Scottish weavers were content to produce the primitive goods that their fore-

fathers had woven from time immemorial. A serious effort was made to make the country self-supporting. English tanners were introduced to improve the process of leather making. Although fishing was one of the most remunerative industries of Scotland, Scottish salt was so bad in quality that salt for preserving the fish was imported from Spain and Brittany, incredible as it may seem. Lady Balfour of Burleigh erected pans at Pittenweem, at considerable expense, to produce salt by an improved process, and Parliament in 1587, granted her a patent for the exclusive manufacture of what was called "great salt" for seven years (Acts of Scots Parliament III., p. 494).

In 1581 Robert Dickson obtained a patent for the manufacture of silk. He offered to bring into Scotland the art of making silk that should be as good as that made in France and Flanders, and cheaper, and promised to spend great sums by which many people would be sustained. He was granted the exclusive privilege of manufacturing silk in Scotland for thirty years, he was to import the raw material duty free, he was to be made a burgess of Perth or wherever he chose to settle free of the usual dues, on condition that he commenced by a certain date with a hundred workmen, and continued to prosecute the trade (Acts of Scots Parliament III., p. 240).

The Scottish weavers' looms and methods were so defective that their coarse produce was fit only for the dress of the lower orders. There was plenty of raw material, but skill was lacking. To remedy this three Flemish weavers, named Johne Gardin, Philp Fermant, and Johne Banks, were, in 1587, brought to Scotland, and they undertook to teach the art of making serges, programs, fustians, bombazines, and cloth for bed covers and other such uses. An agreement with them was entered into by Parliament (Acts of Scots Parliament III., pp. 507-509). They were to remain at least five years, and to bring to Scotland other thirty weavers and waulkers, and one or more lister or dyer. The work produced was to be of the same kind and quality as that of the looms of Flanders, Holland, and England. They were to engage no apprentices except Scottish boys and girls, preference being given to Edinburgh children. They were to get a fee of forty pounds Scots for each boy and twenty pounds Scots for each girl, in

consideration of which they were to maintain the apprentices and teach them the craft.

By these means a new impulse was imparted to the industrial spirit of the people. Under the training of these foreigners a generation of skilful workmen grew up, and the success of the adventure tempted the fresh immigration of teachers. There followed numerous prohibitions of the export of Scottish wool. On the renewal of these, in 1597, it was added that foreign craftsmen would be brought into Scotland for working up all the wool produced in the country (Acts of Scots Parliament IV., p. 119). The importation of English cloth was also prohibited, but as both the prohibited exports and imports appeared to go on in spite of the parliamentary enactment, a duty was placed upon all such articles sent out of or brought into the country (Acts of Scots Parliament IV. p. 137).

In this movement the Convention of Royal Burghs took an active part. On 19th June, 1600, at a meeting at which Walter Cowane, John Cowane's uncle, was present for the burgh of Stirling, it was agreed to represent to Parliament anent the formation of a society for making cloth. On 14th February, 1601, they agreed to give twelve hundred marks towards the expenses of "hamebringing of strangeris, craftsmen, makeris of claith, and lauboureris of woll, to the number of twenty persons." On 30th June, 1601, it was reported that Alexander Hunter of Edinburgh had gone to Norwich, and that Gabriel Byschop of Norwich had come to Scotland to obtain particulars, also that Thomas Fisher of Edinburgh had travelled in France "for hamebringing of strangeris and could get none." The matter being recognised as "wechtie," and requiring grave deliberation, it was remitted to a Committee, of whom Archibald Alexander, the Stirling representative, was one.

On 10th July, 1601, the agreement made with Byschop was reported. He and his partners were to come to Edinburgh to instruct the people and exercise their craft of making broad cloth, and the other burghs were to send their craftsmen to Edinburgh to be instructed for one month each in turn, in the order in which the burghs stood in the stent roll. Byschop, who was described as a Fleming, although resident in Norwich, was to be paid three thousand one hundred pounds for his expenses. It was farther-

reported that Alexander Hunter had brought home twelve Flemings from Leyden, but one of them, Iurean Nickerin, would "nocht remane," so he was sent home, and the remaining eleven were distributed among certain of the burghs. It may be of interest to give their names and designations:—

Edinburgh—John Sturman, camber; Christian de Peill, wewar.

Perth—Jaques de la Rudge, camber and spyner; Jacob Petirsoun, scherar; Abigail Vanhort, spyner woman.

Dundee—Claus Losseir, sherer; Cornelius Dermis, weaver; Henre de Turk, spyner and wewar.

Ayr—George Baert, plotter and camber; Jaques Claers, weaver; Arane Jansoun, sherer.

Ayr was to lend Jansoun to Edinburgh for six months, and Dundee was to lend Henre de Turk to Edinburgh until the work was settled. It was reported that Gellis Pakket "come nocht heir."

On 24th July, 1601, King James addressed a letter to the burghs of Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth, Linlithgow, Stirling, Ayr, and Glasgow, complaining of delay in setting the Flemings to work. The representatives of these burghs met on 10th August, Walter Cowane being present from Stirling, and agreed that the strangers be put to work in Edinburgh.

On 13th January, 1602, the Town Council of Stirling agreed to raise fifty pounds ten shillings from the inhabitants anent the matter of the "claith making," and on 10th May Walter Cowane was sent to Edinburgh to make arrangements. By July the Flemings had arrived in Stirling, and the Town Council, on the 9th of that month, agreed to give them twenty-four marks to buy them two stones of wool. It is a pity we do not know how many they were, or their names. The arrangements for housing the strangers are set forth in the following minute of 9th July 1602:—

"Ordinis the thesaurare to be catione for the Flemyngis hous maillis fra Witsonday last bipast to Witsunday nixtocum, and the toun sall releve the thesaurare of the said cautionerie. Ordinis the thesaurer to pay fourtie schillingis to James Castellawes wyff for the len of ane hous to the gude wyff of Pannellis bairnes for the ease of the Flemyngis."

The next phase of the question was a project to institute the making of cloth upon a national basis, and in 1605 Parliament asked the Convention of Burghs to undertake the enterprise. On 2nd July, 1605, the Convention decided that it was not the business of the burghs any more than the other estates of the realm to do so, as there were more cloth makers resident to landward than in the free burghs, that the burghs had undertaken the work before and "throw their awin inhabillitte and inquitte of straingeris sustentt grit los thairby," but that they would take their share with others. On 5th July, 1616, the Convention appointed a Committee, which included the Stirling representative, to inquire into the export of wool and the manufacture of broad cloth, and on 3rd July, 1623, it was reported that the King recommended the formation of a joint stock company for the manufacture of cloth. Remit was made to a Committee to consider the matter, which thereafter disappears from the records.

THE WEAVERS AND THE CHURCH.

The patron saint of the weavers was Saint Severine or Severinus. He was an educated Roman of high rank who lived in the middle of the fifth century. The conquering Germans and Huns were then invading Rome, and the Roman colonists along the Danube were in a hapless plight. Taking up his residence in Vienna, Severinus did great service to the harassed and starving people, getting on friendly terms with the barbarian kings (Baring Gould's "Lives of the Saints"; Kingsley's "The Hermits"). Severinus is a patron saint (although not sole patron) of Austria, Vienna, and Bavaria. Why he was chosen as the patron of the Scottish weavers I cannot tell.

We have definite information as to the weavers undertaking an obligation that mass should be said twice a week in the Parish Church of Stirling. The entry in the Town Council minutes is as follows, being dated 17th June, 1522:—

"In presens of the provest and balyeis, Allexander Benne, dekin of the wobstaris, and hus haill craft, with consent and assent of all the dekinis and craftsmen of the said burgh, the quhilk nyemis of the saidis dekinis folowis: in the first, Patric Lausoun, Thom Smyth, Johen

Allexander, Johen Allan, Thom Mitschal, Andro Lokart, and Allexander Robisoun, hais conduisit and feit Sir Robart Broun, chaplan, curat for the tyme, for dyvin service to be doune at the altar of Sanc Luck, situat within the parocht kirk of the said burgh, that is to say the said Sir Robart sall, God willin, say twa messis in the wouke at the altar befor Sanc Severine, patrone to the saidis craftsmen of wobstaris, for the quhilkis the saidis dekin and craftsmen of wobstaris that happynis to be for the tyme sall thankfully content and paye to the said Sir Robart xxvj s. viij d. in the yeir, be evinly porcionis at twa usit termis Witsounday and Mertimes in wynter."

The meaning of the record is not quite clear. Probably Sir Robert Brown was chaplain at the altar of Saint Luke, and he was to officiate for the weavers at the altar of Saint Severine. It may, however, be that there was no separate altar of Saint Severine, and that an image of Saint Severine was provided at the altar of Saint Luke when the masses for the weavers were being said.

On 5th July, 1549, the weavers were ordained to pay their weekly pennies for the maintenance of the church services. The entry is as follows:—

"The provest and baillies ordanis all wobisteris that wirkis the townis werk, quhair evir thay duell, to pany ane olkis penny to the dekin of the wobisteris, and the nychtbouris that puttis furth thair wobbis to werk to ansuer tharfor of the payment of the saidis wobbis."

It was the duty of the deacon to see that the craftsmen provided wax candles for use at the altar. The following record of 29th January, 1556, has reference to the celebration of Christmas:—

"Anent the pound of walx persewit be the dekin of the wobstaris aganis Johne Wobstair, comperit the said Johne and grant the said act, with this conditioun, that he hes bene in use to mak his awin torche and byrn the samyn in the kyrk in the jukscheing in Ywle and thairefter to tak the samyn with him to his awin hous at his plesour quhen it misterit, and offeris him to preif the samyn, and the jugsis assignis thairto the fyft day of Februar."

The Incorporation of Weavers in Edinburgh supported the altar of St. Soverane in St. Giles' Cathedral, and the weavers of Dundee maintained the altar of St. Severyne in the Parish

Kirk there. The weavers of Lincoln were constituted in name of the Holy Cross.

After the Reformation, the practice of erecting lofts in the Parish Church came in. There was a loft for the Seven Incorporated Trades, as well as galleries for the Guildry, the Maltmen, and Omnigatherum in the East Church. The Weavers had no separate loft in the East Church, as they would have their share in the Trades loft. There are entries in the Weavers' minutes as to the occupancy, and, in later years, as to the letting of the seats in the Trades loft.

When the East Church was altered in 1800, the Seven Trades gave up their loft, or perhaps part of it, in order that the pulpit might be placed in front. In exchange, they accepted the front seat of the old Magistrates' loft, and the seat at the back of it.

In 1731 the Weavers proposed that the other six trades, or some of them, might join with the Weavers to purchase a loft in the West Church, "for hearing of the word of God," but the other trades did not incline to join "such a numerous Incorporation." The Weavers therefore themselves purchased "the westmost winged loft to front both ways," at the price of thirteen pounds sterling, and employed workmen "for building of said loft." The old plan of the West Church in the Town Clerk's Office shows the Weavers' loft to be situated between the westmost and second westmost pillars on the south side of the church, with one frontage northwards across the body of the church, and another eastwards along the south aisle. The pulpit at that time was placed against the third pillar, counting from the west, on the south side, and the session house occupied the space between the westmost pillar and the gable of the church.

The Tailors had their own loft in the West Church, and there were separate lofts also for the Magistrates, the Guildry, and the Maltmen.

The Weavers occupied their pews in the West Church, but they appear to have accommodated the deacons of the other trades when they desired to worship in the West Church. The arrangement in 1799 is set forth in a minute of 17th May of that year. The front seat on the east was reserved for the seven deacons. The front seat on the north was for members of the trade. The second seats on both sides were for the families. The remaining four seats faced

eastwards and were to be let. The weavers were a numerous class, but these eight pews would accommodate a considerable body of worshippers, and there were several weavers among the individual owners of seats in the church. We are not, therefore, to conclude that the weavers were not a church-going set of people.

The letting of the pews and the lifting of the seat rents occupied much of the time of the Incorporation throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The national troubles in connection with the Church are reflected in the Weavers' records, which show that throughout the years the tradesmen took an eager interest in these controversies. The Incorporations claimed and exercised the right to be consulted in the call of any minister for the Parish Church. The Guildry and the other trades had the same right, and questions of procedure caused disputes. At times every individual member claimed a vote, and thus the vote given for the weavers represented the opinion of the whole Incorporation or a majority. The Town Council and Kirk Session, however, decided that each body should send a delegate, and that the delegate should vote on their behalf. This created a storm of protest in 1740, but gradually the weavers fell in with the plan proposed. At times they instructed their delegate how he was to vote, but latterly we find the appointment of the delegate to be the only official act of the Incorporation in the process of filling the vacancies that were constantly occurring in the incumbencies of the First, Second, and Third Ministers of the burgh.

THE WEAVERS' HOUSE IN BAKER STREET AND YARD IN SPITAL STREET.

The Incorporation of Weavers owned a house on the south side of Baker Street. On 6th December, 1718, the Town Council allowed the Incorporation sixty pounds Scots for the better enabling them to make sash windows in their new fore tenement on the south side of the Baxters Wynd, near the foot thereof, lately rebuilt by the said trade in a spacious manner, for the greater decorament of the said public street. The property is now numbered 27 and 29 Baker Street, and is occupied by the Caledonian Vaults. Immediately to the east there used to stand three houses, all of the same

construction and attached, with their crow-stepped gables fronting the street. They were taken down in 1901, when the present structure was erected by Messrs Lawsons Limited. One of them bore the following quaint inscription:—

16—

Heir I forbear
My name or armes
To fix, least I or myne
Should sell those
Stones and sticks.

The inscription was believed to contain an allusion to the owner of its westerly neighbour, who, after its erection, had conspicuously affixed his arms, and afterwards, through impecuniosity, had to sell the building. This was the Weavers' Lodging. The Incorporation bought it from the Craigengelt family, and the gibe may have been intended for one of the Craigengelts, whose arms may have been replaced by those of the Weavers. The stone bearing the inscription is now preserved in the Smith Institute.

The Weavers' property is described in the titles as "that great lodging or tenement, high and laigh, back and fore, with the thatched back houses and close adjoining thereto, being the subjects purchased by Nicol Bryce, merchant in Stirling, and Duncan Campbell, mason, there, from the Incorporation of Weavers in Stirling" (Register of Sasines, vol. 58, p. 167). On the front of the building is a well-carved and somewhat florid coat of arms, bearing the motto, "Concordia." What it represents is not easy to make out, but the fact that one of the supporters holds in his hand a weaver's shuttle indicates that the arms are meant to be those of the Incorporation of Weavers. I suggest that the arms may be those of the Craigengelts, altered so as to represent the Weavers. The property was sold to Bryce and Campbell in 1765.

The Incorporation of Weavers also owned a yard and orchard in Spittal Street, opposite to the back of their Baker Street property. These were described as their "yard and orchard with the dovecot and back gate on the town wall belonging thereto." The dovecot still stands, and the entrance through the town wall, now built up, can still be seen. The property now belongs partly to the Stirlingshire Education

Authority, being the site of Allan's School, and partly to the Town Council, being the property recently purchased from Mrs Sangster lying between Allan's School and the Municipal Buildings. It was acquired by the Incorporation of Weavers in 1718 from Charles Craigengelt at the same time as the property in Baxters Wynd, and was sold, along with that property, in 1765, to Nicol Bryce and Duncan Campbell. They sold it to James Adam, merchant, who, in 1797, sold the western portion to the Patrons of Allan's Mortification for the purpose of erecting a school and hospital, where Allan's boys were educated and housed after they removed from the former hospital on the south side of Broad Street. In 1797 the ground appears to have been almost entirely occupied as a large garden or orchard.

The earlier history of the ground is interesting. Part of it belonged to the altar of St. Andrew in the Parish Church of Stirling, of which Sir Alexander Craig was chaplain when the property was acquired by the Craigengelt family, the remainder belonging to Dame Helen Murray, Lady Polmaise, and to John Clounie.

There is no record of either the large tenement in Baxters Wynd, with its back houses or the extensive garden in Spittal Street, being used by the weavers in any way in connection with their trade or for meetings. The acquisition of the property appears to have been simply an investment of their funds.

THE STIRLING CARPET WEAVERS' BROTHERLY SOCIETY.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the carpet weaving industry was firmly established in Stirling, employing a considerable number of men. These belonged to the Incorporation of Weavers, but were entered as journeymen, not as full members. As their rights were thus limited, a number of them took steps to form themselves into a Friendly Society, so as to make some provision for sickness and paying funeral expenses. On 10th May, 1805, the society was instituted under the title of the Stirling Carpet Weavers' Brotherly Society. The entry money was 2s 6d, and the periodical payments 6d every six weeks. The rate of aliment allowed was 1s per day, or 7s per week. No aliment was paid until 1807-8, when a sum of £1 11s appears in the accounts. In 1822-23

the aliment paid had risen to £28 15s, showing that the carpet weavers were a numerous body at that time.

In 1817 steps were taken to have the constitution of the Friendly Society put upon a legal footing. Articles were drawn up, and then submitted to a special meeting of the Incorporation of Weavers on 10th May. The Articles were approved of except one. A second meeting was held on 17th June, at which the Articles were submitted, and again approved of, with a little alteration. Another meeting took place on 5th July, at which the Incorporation finally approved of the Articles, and authorised them to be laid before the Justices of the Peace for confirmation. This decision was only come to after a keen discussion, and, by a majority of three, the votes being marked on paper. Alexander Gilfillan protested that no vote should take place.

There was a proposal that a sum of £36 should be taken from the funds of the Incorporation, upon which Robert Downie protested against the giving of any sum of money, and took instruments in the hands of the Clerk. Four members concurred in the protest. There is no farther record in the Incorporation's minute books, and probably the £36 was not paid.

I have been unable to trace the subsequent history of the Brotherly Society, except the following minute of the Society, dated March, 1824, which I think worth quoting:—

"At a meeting of the Stirling Carpet Weavers' Brotherly Society, held in the Trades Hall, on the 18th instant, Bailie Jaffray having previously seen the Society's Regulations, and having highly approved of the same, attended the above Meeting, and addressed the members to the following purpose:—He remarked that Stirling, in which our lot is cast, is on an elevated spot of ground, so as to be seen at a distance—it is more, it is built upon a rock; it is also blessed with faithful gospel ministers; its inhabitants are greatly increased; its merchants numerous; its manufacturers respectable; its manufactories increased and improving, among which, her carpet manufactories are none of the least, having of late years been greatly extended both at home and abroad. He then expressed his high approbation of the Society which the journey-men Carpet Weavers had so successfully instituted, and remarked that the stock of the

Society now amounted to upwards of £200, by which means the wants of their sick are amply provided for, they receiving 7s per week, which keeps them from becoming a burden on the public, and their families from penury and want, and all this is effected by a small item from the working members. The whole, he said, did great honour to the Society, and added, that he wished other towns and villages would adopt the same plan, and follow the manly example of the Stirling Journeymen Carpet Weavers, who had reared so creditable an institution. He then highly approved of the manner in which the Society was conducted, and wished that the principles on which it is founded were more generally known, as they could not fail to prove an inducement to others to enter into similar associations. After which, the presses rose, and in name of the Society, thanked Bailie Jaffray for his kindness in paying the Society a visit, and stated that if magistrates, ministers, and others in the higher ranks of life, would give their countenance to similar meetings, he thought such attention could not fail to benefit not only this, but all friendly institutions of the like nature."

What I take to be an echo of the Brotherly Society appears in the minute of 13th March, 1830, when it was proposed that the whole Incorporation should form themselves into a Society. The four Masters and Key Keepers were ordered to meet with the Deacon, and search the box for the Articles formerly made. On 19th July, 1830, it is recorded that the Committee searched the box for the old Articles of the then proposed Incorporation of Weavers' Society, but could find none deposited there. It was agreed to make farther inquiry, but the matter does not appear to have been farther gone into.

ADMINISTRATION.

The system of administration of the Incorporation was very complete.

The head of the body was the Deacon, chosen annually at the end of September, at a special meeting of the whole members. He, and his predecessor in office, known as the Old Deacon, were ex-officio members of the Convener Court of the Seven Incorporated Trades, which thus consisted of fourteen of the most experienced and respected members of the crafts. The fourteen

elected their preses, known as the Convener, who as head of the craftsmen class was a very important man in the community. The Deacon of the Weavers might be, and frequently was, a member of the Town Council, under the old Setts of the Burgh, which regulated the election of Town Councillors up to the passing of the Reform Act of 1832. The seven individual trades paid certain dues to the Convener Court upon the entry of new members. The Convener Court had its own officials, and acted as an independent body, although in all important matters the seven individual trades were consulted.

At a meeting held yearly in September, about a fortnight prior to the election of the Deacon, the Weavers elected their other office-bearers.

These included the Masters, four in number, constituting the Master Court. This was the executive committee of the Incorporation, which dealt more or less with all its affairs, their decisions in matters of consequence being subject to review by the whole membership. They took charge of the supervision of the yarn market, the Masters being on constant duty while the market was being held. They also visited the shops of members to detect and deal with infringements of the rules of the craft, frequently seizing cloth or yarn when they considered that course to be justified. They also took care of the admission of new members, although the actual resolution of entry was passed by the whole trade. They appointed the Sey Masters, generally from their own number, whose duty it was to set a specified task to an applicant for admission, to watch him actually perform the work, and to report to the trade their opinion as to its sufficiency. Generally their opinion was accepted before admission, or rejection was decided upon, although sometimes there was difference of opinion and re-examination.

Two Key Keepers were appointed, whose duty presumably was to keep the keys of the box in which the documents and the cash of the trade were kept. The term Boxmaster was used at an earlier date, when only one was appointed.

There were two Collectors, who were different men from the Key Keepers. They were really joint treasurers. They rendered half-yearly accounts, which were gone over by the trade in March and September. Occasionally two

Auditors were appointed to specially examine the accounts and to report.

The Clerk, Standard Bearer, and Officer performed the duties which their offices implied.

There was a Reed Keeper, whose business it was to take charge of the reeds which belonged to the Incorporation, and which were hired out to the members for a small charge. The reed was an appliance for separating the threads of the warp, and for beating the weft up to the web. These were in a considerable variety of sizes, and probably it was beyond the means of many of the poorer weavers to keep all the kinds that were required. The Incorporation owned a large number of reeds, and the hiring of the reeds went on until 1846, when the stock then in hand, numbering 311, was sold off. Their use had been diminishing for a considerable time. The Reed Keeper accounted to the Collectors half yearly for his drawings, and his accounts were regularly submitted to the trade. To assist the Reed Keeper in the performance of his duties, there was a Reed Committee of four.

For many years there was also a Seat-Letting Committee, which dealt with the letting of the seats in the Parish Church, and which also accounted to the trade for its doings.

The principles of admission to the Weavers were similar to those of other Incorporations in Stirling and elsewhere. The names of apprentices were booked, that is entered in a book specially kept for the purpose. The usual period of indenture was five years, but sometimes it was six years, and occasionally six years and one year thereafter for meat and fall (fee). On completion of the period of apprenticeship, the indenture was discharged, and there are many records of members being dealt with for discharging an apprentice before the full period had been served. The young man, now become a journeyman, was duly booked as such, as were also young men from other towns who came to Stirling to work. Fees for the booking of both apprentices and journeymen were duly exacted.

When he wished to set up in business for himself, the craftsman had first to satisfy the sey masters of his efficiency by a practical test, and then to enter with the trade and pay the dues. The amounts of these dues were the subject of frequent discussion, and they were so often changed that it would be tedious to record

them. The principles, however, remained unchanged, namely, that sons and sons-in-law of members, who were said to join at the short hand, paid the smallest sums. Others joined at the long hand, but townsmen were admitted at smaller rates than strangers, or neutrals as they were called. Country weavers, or town weavers who were non-members, and in some cases women weavers, were admitted to certain of the privileges of the trade for an annual payment or a life composition, the amounts of which were constantly changed. There was no special name for these, they being simply designated unfreemen or country weavers. In Dumfries the class referred to were known as Stallagers. During the period for which the records exist, the fully entered weaver was necessarily a freeman, that is to say he was obliged to enter as a Burgess with the Town Council, and to take the Burgess oath.

Among the possessions of the Incorporation of Weavers may be mentioned the Box for containing the belongings of the trade, the flag or standard renewed from time to time, and the mortcloths, of which there was always a selection varying in size and magnificence, which were given out for use at the funerals of members and their families. Sometimes the mortcloths were given free, and at other times a small charge was made. From time to time new mortcloths were procured, and the nature of the materials and workmanship and the price were always matters of anxious concern, recorded at length in the minutes. In the Smith Institute are preserved one of these mortcloths, and also a flag made of tartan 9 feet long by 4 feet 2 inches broad, probably the standard procured in 1824 for the celebration of the centenary of Allan's Mortification, stated to be of King George IV. tartan. There are also in the Institute an ell and a chain measure, a toddy ladle, sugar tongs and a number of spoons and forks belonging to the Weavers.

Much of the time of the Incorporation and its office-bearers was taken up with the distribution of charity to widows and old members. Of these formal lists were kept, which were amended from time to time, and the amount to be given, and sometimes the purchase of furniture, such as a bed, or food, were the subject of assiduous consideration.

CONCLUSION.

The story of the Incorporation of Weavers may be divided into three portions.

During the earliest period the members were working handloom weavers, the weaving room being part of the house, or in a shed attached thereto. The more prosperous employed one or more journeymen and several apprentices. The chief concern of the Incorporation was to prevent weavers from outside the burgh selling their cloth in the town. This was rendered especially difficult from the fact that the Castlehill, where a number of weavers always lived, was situated outside the boundary of the burgh, being part of the Constabulary of the Castle, belonging to the Crown. The proximity of Bannockburn, Cambusbarron, Torbrex, and other weaving villages was also a constant source of trouble for the same reason. Another concern of the trade was to have a monopoly or a preponderating interest in the yarn market, which was held within the burgh, so that the members might have an advantage in procuring the raw material of their craft. Prescribed hours were so fixed that the best of the goods should be available for the town weavers, while the country weavers were to get only what was left. The records of the Incorporation are full of the efforts which were made to accomplish these objects, and to punish offenders.

The second period was during the latter half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. Following upon the union with England, the wealth and population of Scotland had been slowly growing, and there was more enlightenment among the people. The invention of weaving machinery was changing the practice of the craft, although the old hand looms still lingered in considerable numbers. It became usual for one man to own a number of weaving shops, even those containing hand looms, and to pay the men a stated wage or by piece work for their industry. These employers called themselves manufacturers. It was they who introduced machinery, as they possessed the capital to do so, and then the individual manufacturer began to give place to a partnership, and in time to larger company concerns. The Incorporation at first fought these firms, but gradually they admitted the partners as members,

and raised the entrance fees. The result was that the Incorporation prospered, partly from the influx of money to their funds and partly because they got experienced business men to take an interest in their affairs. The outlook of the Incorporation, as reflected in their minutes, became broader, and they began to take a less parochial view of public questions. They became keener and more competent critics of the Town Council in the management of the affairs of Spittal's and Allan's Hospitals, in which the Seven Incorporated Trades had a patrimonial interest, and in national affairs they could and did express a reasoned view, which was not without considerable effect. It was this influence which caused the Incorporation to admit to full membership weavers resident in Bannockburn and elsewhere outside the burgh, thus strengthening their body by the wealth and added power which were secured. It was this influence also which enabled the Incorporation to see that the true interests of their class were to be served by those measures of national and municipal reform which they supported, and which their predecessors would have opposed to the bitter end.

The third period dates from the passing of the Burgh Trading Act in 1846. From that date to the present time the minutes of the Incorporation take on a strikingly changed appearance. Gone are the anxious consultations about exclusive privileges, the regulation of the yarn market, the jealousy of the Merchant Guild, the meticulous recording of journeymen and apprentices, the inquiries as to whether craftsmen were "packing and peeling" with unfreemen, the frequent fining of offenders both within and without the membership. The minutes are now merely a record of convivial and ceremonial gatherings, the keeping up of the appearance of a living corporate organisation from which the soul has departed. There is no discredit in these doings, and the record of the Incorporation of Weavers during the past eighty years is an honourable one. Perhaps its best features are the care which was shown for the welfare of the poorer members and their widows and children, and the decided stand made to secure the benefits of the endowments of Stirling's generous donors for the class for which they were originally intended.

At the present day the Incorporation of Weavers, like the Guildry and most of the other Seven Incorporated Trades, exists as a useful social and philanthropic entity in the community, and for maintaining, in a spirit of praiseworthy local patriotism, the historical prestige which membership of such an ancient and honourable body confers.

EXTRACTS FROM THE RECORDS OF THE WEAVERS' INCORPORATION OF STIRLING.

Note.—The volumes of Records of the Incorporation which are preserved are as follows:

- (1) Minute Book, 1703-1822.
- (2) Minute Book, 1822-1902.
- (3) Minute Book, 1902-
- (4) Small Minute Book, containing entries concurrent with (1), 1700-1792.
- (5) Account Book, 1769-1790.
- (6) Account Book, 1791-1831.
- (7) Account Book, 1831-
- (8) Book for entering Apprentices and Journey-men, 1806-1701.
- (9) Book for entering Apprentices and Journey-men, 1708-1806.
- (10) Register of entries to the Trade, 1826-1805.

At Sterling the Yoir off God 1567, the heill bretherine brethering of the craft beand convenitt Alexr. Bennie beand Deacone David Wrycht, Johne Lowsonne and William Robesoune, Archibald Bennie, Walter Blakburne, Johne Bennie, William Philpott (?) is appointitt and sett doune that thair sall not ane pronteco be tane without the Deacone be present att making of thair indentur to heir yair promis maid undir the paine (?)

MOREIS COWING.

[The foregoing is written near the beginning of the Apprentices' Book, which contains a continuous record dating from 1806. It is apparently a copy from an earlier Minute Book now amissing.]

19 June 1675.

Any servant that flits from master to master yearly shall pay ane mark as oft as they change yr master, free men's bairns as well as unfreemen.

1st November 1686.

Considering the great loss that our trad sustanes by trusteing of prentises and servants buckeing [booking] money, statuts and ordaines that no buckeing money shall be trusted.

1 February 1701.

Members discharged to maintain apprentices of all bulements nessessar, only bed and burd the time of their prentishipe.

2 August 1701.

Act that all ancient Acts shall be revised.

[This record is in the small Minute Book. There follow transcripts of ten Acts of earlier date with reference to entry money, apprentices, buying and selling of goods, etc. These are undated except two, dated 1687 and 1689.]

4th February 1702.

Discharged all freemen's sones thats come to age or aney journeymen servants to keip aney kynd of deaconrie or courts as they did too maney tymes.

8 March 1702.

Considering the great disturbance that is in our court when we meitt ordanes ane Act to be reveised that if aney man of our trade take speitch upon hand without libertey granted to him be deacon and trad and lykwayes if aney man ryse out of his seat when he is seat to troubell the dicen when hie is goeing throug with ane voat bot every meamber to speik is frie judgment of the matter. To be fined 6/8.

26 April 1703.

Approve of the Toun Council's call to Mr. James Birsbane to fill the vacancy of Mr. John florestor, late Minister.

19 June 1703.

Members not to discharge apprentices before the Indenture be expired.

6 November 1703.

None of the brethren to absent himself from the Court. Fine half a merk.

6 May 1704.

In staid of the former chain for measuring of the staikes, a new on to be made, consisting of four links and two rings, and that it must be one of the rings of the old chain shorter than the old chain was.

3 August 1706.

Considering the great loss that several of the members sustains by customers going from one tradesman to another with their work without paying the former tradesman for his work, ordain the Deacon so send the Trades Officer and arrest the sd. work in whose hands it can be found ay and while the former tradesman be satisfied for his work.

3 August 1706.

No member to discharge apprentices privately until the indentures be expired.

7 October 1706.

John Aitken found guilty of giving a discharge to his apprentice two years before the expiring of his Indenture, and of giving a back bond or ticket to his oyr apprentice, for furnishing of cloaths to his body.

4 December 1707.

Apprentices and servants forbidden to fee with unfreemen.

6 November 1708.

Application to be made to the Magistrates that those of our Brethren that lives in the town and goes to the country to dwell should be charged to come in and dwell in the town to bear burden with the rest of their neighbours.

7 February 1713.

Complaint that several of the Brethren gives work to unfreemen contrary to their burgar oath, ordained that freemen be preferred to any other, either in the Castlehill or in any other place whatsoever.

6 February 1714.

Complaint that members bargain with Chapmen to go through the countrie to buy up yairn.

4 May 1717.

Complaint that the yairn on the Mercat is greatly abused, and yr be many covetous people who make it their business to stand in a hedge upon the strand purposlie to inhans the Mercat to themselves, and many of them waggis the people within the strand, and some grips the yairn over the strand, and brings it within and others buys it over the strand, some in the Mary Wynd, and in Baxter's Wynd, and others stands in the merchants' shops to catch the yairn as it comes by, ordained that whosoever stand in a hedge upon the score, to wagg or grip the yairn to bring it over or buy it over the scores till nine a clock in the morning strick shall pay a half merk.

A charge of horning to be given to those in the Castlehill that refuses to pay the money of their looms.

10 August 1717.

Considered the money that was ordered to be spent when any man is entered among us that it breeds great disturbance amongst us in the spending of it, and likewise the Trade is greatly in debt, ordained that none of the dues be spent except twenty Shilling Scotts with the present Deacon and Master Court till the Weavers be free of their debt.

7 February 1719.

The Collectors that has been collecting the babies [hawbees, halfpence] weekly since November last from the several districts laid £24 16s 6d Scots upon the Court table.

2 May 1719.

The babies collected since 7th February amounts to £23 2s 0d Scots.

1 August 1719.

Severals yt is obliged to pay the babies and wilfully refuses, their houses to be poided.

7 September 1719.

Those that shoot the doves belonging to our dowcat to be punished that they may be a terror to others to do the like in all time coming.

30 April 1720.

No Deacon to have any quarterly allowance.

20 July 1724.

No persons to be entered in this and the other six Incorporate Trades in this Burgh who were never educate in the knowledge of the particular Trade by whom they were sought to be admitted.

23 November 1725.

Consent to the call of the Rev. Mr. Alexander Hamilton, Minr. at Airth, to supply the vacancie of the deceast Mr. Birsbain, first Minr. of this Burgh.

23 December 1727.

Agreed to ask the Magistrates and Justices to give intimation against the mixing of broom'd and white wool and good and bad wool together.

28 June 1731.

Agreed to purchase the westmost winged loft in the West Church to front both wayes for £13 Sterling.

4 November 1735.

Considered a complaint against the south country yairn and agreed to meet with a Committee of the Merchants to draw up a Petition to be laid before the Trustees for regulating the south country yairn.

6 March 1736.

No Brother to go to the Convener Court with any complaint untill he appeal to the Master Court.

15 January 1737.

Agreed to defend an action in the Sheriff Court by James Sharp, Weaver in the Castlehill, against

some of our number for seasing yairn from him conform to our rights and priviledges.

Att the Hills of Stirling the
15 day of January 1737.

Considered a Petition from the Weavers in the Castlehill that they were willing, in order to prevent any law plea or expences thereanent, to mean themselves to the said Incorporation for the liberty and privilege of buying yairn equally with the Freeman Weavers of the Burgh, granted the desire of the Petition upon payment of Twenty shillings Scots money for each weaving standing loom in ilk one of their possessions.

(Signed by 21 names probably at
different dates.)

30 August 1737.

Complaint against Alexander Harloy ane unfreeman for importing work that was wrought by him, they confiscate the web, but agreed to give up the web upon his paying £2 12s 0d Scots.

30 August 1737.

Ano complaint being given in by John Nicoll aganst Robert Gilleriont for giviong work to unfreemen contrear to accotts of tread and the tread having heaird boath parties thoiron they feinds heim and oathors gultty by yr. own confession. Therfor the tread oardains them to be rebuckt for their fault and promis never to be gulty of the like in all time cumming, they being cald to the barr and publickly rebuckt by the Deacon in name of the tread and gave yr. hand and promise never to be gulty in all times comming. Therfor we discharge aney freeman in all times comming to give aney worke to unfreemen till once they agwant the present Deacon that he may cause his officer go through and make ofer to the freemen of the tread under the pennelty of fourty shilling Scots as often as they shall transgress.

12 November 1737.

Archibald Buchanan, Weaver at Torbreack, fined £3 Scots for carrying webs to a house in the town, and the web which had been seized restored to him.

1 November 1737.

To prevent mismanagement, confusion and needless spending of money, only four members with the Deacon and officer to follow the Masters of the yarn market.

9 November 1737.

A lesser mortcloth to be bought when the babies sall amount to as much.

3 December 1737.

Complaint by James M'Alaster that the Master Court took upon them the trade's authority in judging some webs of serge taken from Alexander Buchanan, younger, weaver in Torbrex, the weavers ordered the Master Court to remove till the trade considered upon the fault, and the whole Master Court being called, ordered William Oliphant, late Deacon, in name of the trade publicly to rebuke the Master Court for their fault, and this public rebuke being given assolies them.

23 January 1738.

The Deacon having refused to fine absent members George Buchan protested.

25 May 1738.

Complaint that the late taxman refused to deliver the twinning mill in a good and sufficient condition when he removed.

8 July 1738.

The twining mill put up to public roup and fell in James Davie's hand. He offered £4 16s 0d Scots each year for the space of ten years, and he took the mill in the same condition she was in, and he was to furnish a house for her, to uphold and maintain her the whole space foresaid, without any kind of thirell, and a written tack was to follow thereupon for the more security of both parties.

8 July 1738.

Dispute as to whether the whole trade should be thirled to the twining mill. Alleged that this was formerly a great burden to several members, losing their dyeing and casting them idle, and so stopping the manufacture of plaids.

31 August 1738.

All qualified members to be free to vote for the leets except those that has not paid up their hapenies that they rest [owe] for the mortcloth.

11 November 1738.

Anent the settlement of one of the vacancies of this congregation, disapprove of a leet contained in the Town Council's Act, as the Town Council's Committee has never met with our worthy, lawfully called minister and Kirk Session, as has been the laudable practice of this Burgh since the Reformation, but instead of that they brought in the five intruded elders to consult with them

and allowing them to sit there as the Kirk Session which was not only contrary to the mind of some of the members of the Committee but also contrary to the minds of the generality of the burghers and inhabitants of this place, being inconsistent with our Christian liberty and contrary to the word of God and the constitution of the Church of Scotland in her purist times.

9 August 1739.

The yard and house belonging to the Incorporation lot for nineteen years at a yearly rent of £5 10s 0d Sterling.

3 November 1739.

Complaint as to the bad payment of several of our tenants.

28 November 1739.

Absent members fined.

2 August 1740.

Grant a nine years tack of the first and second stoves of our fore land with the two back stables to William Thomson, Maltman, with liberty to put up a sufficient vent in one of the foresaid stables so as he may have access to distill spirits for his own use.

16 August 1740.

Asked by the Town Council to give their opinion whether the Weavers shall vote by a representative or each member of the Incorporation shall have a vote of the Second and Third Minister calls, declared unanimously that each man in the trade shall have a vote.

12 October 1740.

Approve that the Convener Court should buy a quantity of oat meal for the use of the seven trades.

1 November 1740.

Rescind an old act that no freeman can take apprentice till he be three years entered unless he pay £10 13s 4d Scots, or have three apprentices at one time unless he pay £12.

8 November 1740.

Considering the needsecity of the poor of the trade, agree to buy one thousand bolls of good sufficient oat meal.

22 November 1740.

The Deacon informed the trade that there was a great needsecity for paying up the weekly babies, the trades tennants made so bad payment and the income being so small that the collectors could not get money to pay the annual rents, agreed by a majority to carry on the babies for one year, whereupon a member protested that he would pay

no babies nor adhear to no shush Act nor would pay none as loang as he lived.

17 December 1740.

Considering the needsecity of the trade in this streating time, agreed to buy three hundred bolls of oats and two hundred bolls of beans.

27 December 1740.

Protest that each weaver was not allowed a vote for the two ministers, Mr. Tournier and Mr. M'Queen settled in this place on Wednesday, out of the leet of four chosen by the Town Council, Mr. Turner, Mr. Shearrer, Mr. M'Queen, and Mr. Bean.

19 January 1741.

Agreed to buy five hundred bolls of oat meal.

3 February 1741.

Bought a parcel of beans for the weavers' use.

12 July 1742.

The principal of the New Charter to be laid up in the box and not to be taken out of the box because the former rights being fallen by or lost.

22 May 1742.

Elizabeth Dods to be dealt with for setting up a standing weaving loom.

7 August 1742.

The yearly rent of the Castlehill looms let by public roup to John Buchan for £14 Scots.

20 August 1743.

Thomas Gilfillan Weaver in the Castlehill, eldest son to the deceased Alexander Gilfillan, Weaver, Burgess, petitioned that as he is in providence married to a merchant's daughter and so is deprived of his privileges as a freeman, he offered to pay for his privilege during his lifetime. Agreed that he pay £30 Scots, and not set up more than four looms.

24 September 1744.

William Edie agreed to pay the full sum that any utlands man has paid these several years bygone, but in case he was married to a freeman's daughter betwixt and Martinmas 1745, he is to be allowed the privilege of a freeman's son in law. Our Deacon immedately with with six or seven went off without given a reason for so doing, the Trade proceed and made choice of John Nicoll to be yr. pressess, and the voat being steated, Accept of the above William Edie on the above termes or not, it cearrer by twenty eight of majorety accept.

23 February 1745.

The unfreemen weavers in the Castlehill will not pay up the money of yr. looms, the Deacon and old Deacon to go to the officers of the Castle and inform them, that payment may be made.

27 April 1745.

Several of our brethren that has not gone the yearly marches neither did ride to meet the lords ordained so pay forty shillings Scots each man.

30 September 1749.

William Edie informed the trade that he had married a freeman's daughter, agreed to quit him of four merks.

10 August 1751.

Complaint of a window struck out of the gavel of Adam Liddle's house opposite to the weavers' yard, agreed to build a dyke before all the windows that faces the weavers' yard.

28 May 1752.

The Weavers met in the Trades Hall.

10 April 1755.

Two of our members being laid up in prison by a Magistrates order upon the footing of the Convener Court ordering four of our members to meet the Lords of Sirquite [Circuit] upon which two of the four was put to prison. The trade agreed to take advice and to pursue as far as law will.

28 August 1755.

The trade is to pay no more money for horses to the Deacon or his young man for miten of the Lords.

28 August 1755.

Our right of the yearn market not to be set to any unfreeman.

18 December 1756.

John Sheree proceeded against for having a web not sufficient by having thredos out of it.

7 October 1758.

Declined to appoint a delegate to choose a Second Minister.

22 December 1759.

By sixteen votes against six agreed to support Mr. Donald Plenderleith, Minister of the Gospel mr. Dalkeith for supplying the present charge. Made choice of Alexander Pollock, Weaver in Craigs as delegate.

29 December 1759.

Several members complained of Ebenezer Brown, weaver, his having at the last Presbytery of

Stirling, when a call was moderated for a Second Minister of this burgh, asserted some falsehoods concerning the commissioner from the weavers at said moderation, vizt., expressing, that the Weaver Trade had either choosed no Commissioner at all, or if they did, it was in a tavern over a bottle.

Another complaint was given in against the said Ebenezer Brown for his disrespectful behaviour to the Deacon in the hearing of a good many members present. When the said Ebenezer asserted that a boy to whom he then pointed would have acted as good, or a better part than our Deacon did in signing the commission given to the Presbytery, agreed by a great majority to fine the said Ebenezer Brown in forty shillings Scots.

7 June 1760.

James Dason, infirm in his right arm entered gratis.

6 December 1760.

Henry Grahame allowed to work as a weaver although he enter as a merchant.

20 August 1761.

Agreed to advertise the fore house for sale.

4 February 1764.

John M'Lay, maintained by the industry of his wife as a weaver and by bogging himself, allowed two looms during their lifetime on paying £2 Sterling.

3 March 1764.

Every outlandman to pay one shilling Sterling and every freeman's son sixpence on their entry to the Mortcloth fund.

5 October 1765.

Agreed to sell the whole tenement of houses and garden to Nicol Bryce and Duncan Campbell for £228 15s 0d Sterling.

26 October 1765.

Sale of property in the Baxters Wynd and the yard and orchard with dovecot and back gate on the Town wall, completed.

15 July 1769.

John Black, Weaver, allowed to enter merchant, on paying £3 Sterling to the weavers.

30 November 1771.

The second long mortcloth to be lent out to any person that needs it on paying one shilling and sixpence.

18 January 1772.

Object to the Patrons of Allans Mortification purchasing the lands of the deceased Bailie Alexander Bryce in Cornton.

26 February 1774.

No member to have the reids for less than a penny a week whether coarse or fine.

3 November 1774.

Considered a scheme by the Town Council and Kirk Session for preventing begging in the town. Agreed to prevent all that belongs to the weavers from begging on condition that the rest of the communities do so also, and the town for the beggars that belong to no community.

15 February 1775.

A barnos [bairns'] mortcloth procured. The account is as follows:—

4 yards fine rich velvet at 25/-	...	£5	0	0
7 yards rich fringes at 3/-	...	1	1	0
2½ yards Glasged linen at 16d.	...	0	3	4
3½ yards fine shalloon at 16d.	...	0	4	8
3½ dropes silk 7-2 threed 1d	...	0	0	8
Making thereof	...	0	4	6

£6 14 2

5 September 1775.

Protest that the weavers do not acknowledge the present Council as legal for having any constitutional existence.

[Signed by Fifteen Names.]

18 November 1775.

Agreed that a new chist be made to hold the mortcloths.

6 July 1776.

Agreed to defend the two Masters of the yarn market and the trade's officer lybelled by the Fiscal before the Sheriff for maintaining the trades privileges against two women who bought yarn before nine o'clock in the morning.

16 November 1776.

Intimation received of an action raised against the Weavers by John Paterson Junior, Weaver in Bannockburn and others, weavers in the neighbourhood of Stirling.

4 January 1777.

Agreed to oppose a Bill for altering the laws for mending high roads and bridges, whereby a tax is proposed to be laid on the possessors of houses in the town.

4 November 1777.

Agreed to join the Guildry and other trades in making application for a restoration of the burgh.

19 December 1778.

Agreed to write to all the different royal burghs and communities in Scotland so as they might fall upon ways and means to put a stop to a bill in parliament for a repeal of the penal laws against popery.

13 February 1779.

Object to the entry of James Fener who had married a freeman's daughter, but was not a weaver to his trade.

18 March 1779.

James Fener admitted on a report by the say masters that they seid [saw] James Fener weave a piece of a linen web, which they were satisfied with.

9 April 1779.

The weavers' appeal to the House of Lords considered.

12 June 1779.

Subscribed a guinea to assist the defence of James Cooper and others in Montrose from being unlawfully pressed as soldiers.

21 August 1779.

A List of the Weavers Reids given in to the Trad by John Finleson, present reid liper,

[List follows.]

12 August 1780.

Agree that Rev. John Muschet succeed the deceased Rev. Mr. Randall as first minister, and that Rev. Mr. Buchanan succeed Mr. Muschet as second minister.

1 February 1782.

Agreed to meet a committee of the county weavers in order if possible to compromise the differences that is betwixt them.

10 July 1782.

Resolve that the election of ministers in the church should be by the majority of heads of families in every parish, residing heritors and elders included, and that any other mode of election short of the above will not prevent secession and separation from the church.

1 March 1783.

The case in the Court of Session being decided in favour of the country weavers, agreed to take an appeal before the British Parliament.

1 March 1783.

Agree to a representation along with the Guildry for a more equal representation of the Burghs in Parliament.

29 March 1783.

A committee appointed to meet with the country weavers for an amicable settlement.

2 April 1783.

Four members to attend the yarn market every Friday morning.

18 April 1783.

Agreement with country weavers signed. [Minute Book, page 174.]

5 September 1784.

The reed keeper reported the bad condition of the reeds.

22 March 1788.

Walter Smith found guilty of packing and peeling with an unfreeman.

28 November 1789.

John Wandes challenged Thomas Chalmers with a gross lie, and he was fined by the Tread.

19 February 1791.

John Robesone in the Chastlhele [Castlehill] Junry [Journeyman] abusing a number of the members with thriving words, saying he would knock their souls out, at said time produced a large dog either mastiff or bull dog, upon which thriving the members was in terror of their lives. Fined ten shillings.

29 March 1791.

A new mortcloth procured and rules for its use resolved upon.

16 July 1791.

Complaint of encroachment on privileges by those in the muslin line.

23 February 1792.

A widows' fund established and rules adopted.

25 August 1792.

Three firms of Glasgow merchants allowed on payment to carry on the manufacture of muslin in the town.

10 December 1792.

A resolution of confidence in the government passed, and abhorrence of seditious and illegal associations.

29 August 1795.

Agreed to give Five guineas to the Magistrates fund for reducing the high price of oatmeal from fifteen pence halfpenny to thirteen pence per peck.

31 August 1795.

A resolution of thanks passed to the Lord Provost and Magistrates for their zeal when dearth seemed to be fast approaching.

10 October 1795.

Agreed to purchase oatmeal for the trade.

25 March 1797.

Approved the Regulations made by the reed committee that none of the reeds shall be hired to go farther than Causewayhead, Bridge of Allan, Drip Bridge, Cambusbarron, St. Ninians, and Carsemill.

27 January 1798.

Object to the Town Council's plan for four men to watch the town in the night time, and the tread thinks that the town was never better watched than when every individual mounted as we are all sworn to. No tax can be imposed on us.

23 February 1799.

Approve of the alterations of the East Church.

23 February 1799.

Object to doctors, lawyers, gaugers and private gentlemen who pretend to be living on their money being exempt from the quartering of soldiers.

11 May 1799.

Thank the Royal Stirling Volunteers for quelling a mob on third May.

17 May 1799.

Agree to give the front seat on the east side of their loft to the Seven Deacons, the other front seat to the members of the trade, two seats to the families, and from the third seat and backwards to be set [let].

19 October 1799.

Delegate appointed respecting the supplying the Second Charge of this Parish vacant by the abdication and subsequent deposition of the Rev. Mr. William Innes, Recommend the Rev. Mr. John Russell, Minister of the Gospel at Kilmarnock.

2 October 1800.

Proposed to send to America for Indian corn or to the Baltic for grain.

11 December 1800.

Agree that the Seven Trades grant liberty to put the pulpit on their property in the front of their loft in the East Church, and accept the front seat of the old Magistrates' loft and the seat at the back of it.

14 June 1801.

Reported that the India corn come to Greenock.

22 July 1801.

The price of Indian corn meal fixed at sixteen pence to themselves, and seventeen pence hapnie.

23 September 1803.

Rules for letting the seats in the East Church belonging to the Seven Trades.

1 March 1806

Being dissatisfied with Mr. M'Dougall, agreed to support another school master to teach writing and arithmetic.

7 March 1807.

NOTICE.

In taking the Oath, written on the other side, it may be necessary to explain it to young men, that they may obtain a clear view of the words before they swear, as the antiquity of some of the words makes an explanation absolutely necessary.

There is another thing which ought strictly to be attended too, and it is this, that it be administered with much solemnity, an Oath being an act of Religious Worship and a solemn appeal to the Searcher of Hearts.

ROBT. SMITH, Clk.

THE OATH OF THE WEAVERS OF

STIRLING.

I swear to be a true and faithful member to the Incorporation of Weavers; that I shall neither pack nor peal with unfreemen; and bear Scot and Lot with my bretheren, as I shall answer.

16 April 1807.

Agreed to present an address to His Majesty for his spirited conduct in interponing his authority with respect to the Irish Catholic Emancipation Bill.

15 March 1814.

A resolution passed objecting to an alteration of the Corn Law, and resolved that the resolution be

published in the Edinburgh Courant and Caledonian Mercury.

Approve of Mr. Baird's Report of the projected canal from Edinburgh to Falkirk.

30 September 1815.

307 reeds in stock, and 51 out upon hire.

10 May 1817.

Having heard the articles of a friendly society read, the whole of the members present agreed to, only article tenth they object and a new article to be in its place.

5 July 1817.

Approve of the articles of a friendly society being laid before the Justices of the Peace for confirmation. Robert Downie protested against the Society taking from the Incorporation £36 or any part of money.

7 March 1818.

Agreed to take legal steps to secure the Weavers loft in connection with the repairing of the West Church.

13 June 1818.

The Deacon stated that a Mr Campbell of Blair and the Honble. Mr. Primrose of Roseberry had made their appearance as delegates for member of Parliament. The trade then put it to a vote, and there were four for delay, and twenty five voted that the Deacon shall vote for the interest of the Honble. Mr. Primrose, and only two voted for Mr. Campbell of Blair.

29 August 1818.

Agreed to sett their property in the West Church and that the town crier proclaim the same.

10 April 1819.

Protest against the Town Council erecting warm baths at St. Ninians well from the funds of Spittal's Hospital.

11 September 1819.

Office bearers appointed.

Collectors, two.
Masters, four.
Key keeper.
Read keeper.
Read Committee, four
Clerk.
Officer.

15 February 1820.

Terms of Report to Select Committee of the House of Commons agreed upon. The number of members stated to be 131.

3 July 1821.

Agreed to give two guineas to Allan Comb, Deacon of the Smiths in Couper of Fife to support them in a law suit with the Guildry there.

4 October 1822.

Agreed to oppose the building of a new bridge over the River Forth for the present.

6 January 1823.

Considered a plan for watching the church yaird.

6 September 1823.

Reported that the Weavers' Charter is found in the Registor Office, Edinburgh.

3 December 1823.

The Weavers' papers procured from Edinburgh as follows:—

1. Copy Charter King David to his bruggesses of Stirling of the market day.
2. Attested copy of grant by Queen Mary in favour of the crafts, 16th April 1566, with a translation thereof in English.
3. Extract Submission between the weavers of the town of Stirling and the weavers in Castlehill, 24 September 1680, and Decreet Arbitral thereon, dated 29th April 1680, recorded in the Town Court Books of Stirling 20 July 1681.
4. Extract Act of Town Council 29 January 1687.
5. Extract Decreet of the Court of Session the weavers of Stirling against the weavers in Castlehill, 21st March, 1623.
6. Extract Act of Town Council, 7th September 1703.
7. Memorial for the Magistrates and Incorporation of Weavers 1714.
8. Notarial Copy of Decreet of Court of Session 13 July 1715.
9. Decreet of the Provost of Stirling and Bailie Constable of the Castle in favour of the Weavers of Stirling 1 April 1735.
10. Copy Act of the Town Council of Edinburgh in favour of the Weavers of that Burgh 27 November 1684.

The Trade agree that the sum of £2 2s shall be taken from the Trades funds, to regale the Trade on account of the recovery of their Charter.

31 May 1824.

Agreed to join in the procession on Saturday 5th June 1824 being the centenary of Mr. John Allan's Mortification, and that Five guineas be taken from the funds to regale the trade. The

dinner to be in the Trades Hall at 3 o'clock, on Saturday afternoon, the procession to go from the Trades Hall at 10 o'clock forenoon, and the four Masters are ordered to have the Trades Halberts there by that hour. Order that six yards of tartan be purchased, of the King George the 4th pattern, and cut through the middle, and served together, making a square of two breadths and three yards long, for their Banner upon this occasion.

26 July 1825.

The new plate ordered by the Trade for their box produced and the execution of it approved.

21 July 1827.

Object to school teachers' salaries being paid out of Spittal's and Allan's Hospital funds.

9 April 1829.

Proceedings with reference to the feuars in Port Street from Allan's Hospital encroaching on the privileges of the Seven Incorporated Trades.

11 August 1830.

Procession in commemoration of the 300th Anniversary of Robert Spittal's Donation for decayed Tradesmen.

3 April 1831.

Address to the King and Petition to the House of Commons in favour of the Reform Bill.

19 May 1831.

Agreed to have a public procession in honour of Mr. Johnston being elected Member of Parliament for the Stirling district of Boroughs, he being favourable to reform.

26 September 1832.

The Incorporation met in the Flesh Market, on account of the Trades Hall being occupied as a Convalescent Hospital for cholera patients.

18 April 1835.

Unanimously agreed that all young men commencing business for themselves in the weaving or manufacturing line shall be at liberty to do so, without paying any remuneration to the Trade.

25 November 1837.

Agreed that a pair of silver spectacles be complimented to John Stevenson for his gratuitous service as clerk.

30 August 1842.

Agreed, in their procession to meet Her Majesty to appear in black cloaths and black stocks or neckerchiefs with a white rose on the left breast

of white silk ribbon, with a white rod in hand, four foot and a half long, to be purchased from the private funds of the Trades.

13 September 1842.

An account of Queen Victoria's visit to Stirling, concluding.—The Weavers then retired to the Trades Hall, where their own treat was prepared for them, and again drank the Queen's health in good Mountain Dew (Alias) Highland Whisky.

24 September 1845.

Received a letter from the Association of Non-Freemen of Edinburgh asking the Incorporation's opinion of the Bill to abolish the exclusive privileges of Incorporations in Scottish Burghs. Agreed that the best answer would be a copy of the Minute of Trade of 18th April 1835, and the Clerk was ordered to make an Extract and forward the same.

7 November 1845.

New mortcloth purchased, costing £8 3s 4d.

14 July 1846.

Agreed to take part in the procession at laying the foundation stone of the Scottish Central Railway Bridge across the Forth on Thursday, 16th.

12 September 1846.

As the reeds have not drawn as much for the last twelve months as pay the salary of the Keeper, the election of a reed Keeper considered unnecessary, and a committee appointed to devise some means for their sale or otherwise.

14 November 1846.

The reeds, 311 in number, sold for £2 5s 0d.

14 August 1849.

The Weavers took part in a procession to the Railway Station to greet the arrival of Her Majesty on her journey to Balmoral, afterwards drinking Her Majesty's health in the Crown Inn.

3 August 1854.

The weavers took part in the procession at the laying of the foundation stone of the High School.

24 June 1856.

Joined the procession of the great National Wallace Meeting in the King's Park and subscribed Three guineas towards the erection of a monument to Scotland's greatest hero, Sir William Wallace, upon the Abbey Craig.

24 June 1861.

Took part in the proceedings at laying the foundation stone of the Wallace Monument.

10 March 1863.

The Trade took part in the proceedings to celebrate the marriage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to Alexandra Princess of Denmark.

20 November 1877.

Agreed to join the procession on 24th November on the occasion of unveiling the statue to the memory of King Robert the Bruce.

2 September 1884.

Agreed to join the procession on 20th September in aid of passing the Franchise Bill.