

# Then and Now.

Dennyloanhead, Bonnybridge, Higgs,  
and the surrounding district—Past and  
Present.



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A LECTURE delivered at a Meeting of  
Dennyloanhead Church Guild, held in the  
Muirhead Memorial Hall, on the Evening of  
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BY

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# THEN AND NOW.

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AS an introduction to this lecture, permit me to read to you a few extracts from letters I have received from friends who have read in booklet form one or another, or both, of my previous lectures to the Guild on the subject of my reminiscences. A lady belonging to my native village writes regarding the lecture entitled "Retrospect," "I just sat down and read it to Old Nancy, and we both enjoyed it, I can assure you. It was most interesting to hear of all your experiences, both as a probationer, and as a minister, and it takes us away back to the old days. . . . I am sure you could write a most interesting book of all your many and varied experiences. Shall I tell you what you ought to do? When you retire, you and Mrs Keir should come back and settle down in Scone, and then you could write that book. What do you think of that idea?" Another lady friend writes, "J. wants me to tell you that he has greatly enjoyed your lecture on "Reminiscences," and that he considers it a real masterpiece of art, written so simply and so enthrallingly. D. and I have equally enjoyed it, and only wish we could have been present to hear you deliver it. If you give any others, please allow us to see them, for they are a perfect literary treat." From the Kingdom of Fife another friend writes, "The perusal of the booklet on 'Reminiscences' was a delight, as well as both helpful and inspiring. My wife and the boys, too, found it equally entertaining. I can recall many of the events and personages embodied in the lecture. I sent the book to our mutual friend, Mr A. S., Glasgow (late of Dennyloanhead), and he writes to say that it has been a rare pleasure to read it." A lady well-known to many of you, writing from South Africa, says, "I got that little book of yours, 'Retrospect,' and gave it to our minister to read, and he, like George and myself, enjoyed it very much and felt the better of it." A former conductor of our Church Choir, writing from New Zealand, says, "I also received, and read with much pleasure, your lecture, 'Retrospect,' delivered at a Guild meeting on November 16th, 1919." Many others have written to me expressing their interest in the booklets and the pleasure with which they perused the pages, and not a few in this district have done so verbally. In a report of a meeting held recently, at which a gentleman gave an address, it was stated that at the close of the address, there was loud applause in which the audience joined. In that case the speaker did not require to do all the applauding himself. The audience joined in it. That is how it was with me. My audience rewarded with applause my

efforts to entertain them. Now, while it is gratifying to me to receive these words of appreciation, I know quite well that my friends penned them, not because of any special merit in the lectures, but in large measure out of the goodness of their hearts. Perhaps there was also something attractive in the theme. The subject of reminiscences is one that appeals more particularly to those who can look back over the long stretch of years, but not to them alone. The most of people like to hear about old places and about men and women who lived in them, and events that happened in bygone years. And if the story is told by a speaker who knows something about the matter, they will give him a cordial hearing. Well, when one has lived so long in one place, as I have done in Dennyloanhead, he can hardly fail to know a good deal about the whole neighbourhood. And that is my chief qualification as a writer on this subject. Allow me to read to you one more of the extracts to which I have referred, and that mainly because of a suggestion it contains. One of my friends, who is himself an able and learned writer, says, "The Reminiscences are excellent, and I can well imagine the interest they were to the audience. Page 20 is a brilliant passage of eloquent and stately English, all the more so because of its simplicity . . . When you next indulge in Reminiscences, how would it do to deal with Then and Now—Dennyloanhead as it was when you went in 1879, with its houses, inhabitants, their occupations and industries, and the same now? It would be a valuable record in after years from your graphic pen. That is only an idea. Now, this idea is in the line of what I had intended to do, if spared to deliver another lecture to the Guild. And that is what I purpose doing this evening, although I shall take a wider survey, and a good deal of other matter may come in before the concluding paragraph is reached. It is not to be expected that the lecture will be of much interest to those who do not know the district. But I hope it will prove interesting to you and to others who belong to this village or its vicinity.

Dennyloanhead, as the name implies, means the head of the loan from Denny, and a finger-post erected there informs us that it is 294 miles from John o' Groats. In his childhood, a member of our family once asked his mother if London was as big as Dennyloanhead. Although it is somewhat bigger now than it was then, it is not yet a large village, and is not likely ever to grow much larger unless the proposed Mid-Scotland Ship Canal becomes an accomplished fact. In that event, this whole countryside would be completely altered, and it is not unlikely that Dennyloanhead would be linked up with Bonnybridge and perhaps also with Denny, and they would all become one. Although this village is not large, it has sometimes been a busy place. In former years, before the coming of

the railway, when much of the travelling was accomplished by means of coaches, Dennyloanhead was an important stage on the highway between the North and the South; and, doubtless, many a distinguished traveller has found temporary accommodation at the village hotel. It was probably in those days that this droll couplet was penned:—

“Them what is rich, them rides in chaises;  
Them what is poor, them walks like blazes.”

I cannot go so far back as the coaching days, but I can remember the time, when an extensive stabling business was carried on at the hotel. On many a Sunday I have seen, beside the stables, about a dozen vehicles, in which worshippers had been conveyed to our church from their homes some miles distant. And although stabling here is a thing of the past, yet since the advent of the motor car and the motor char-a-banc, which has been called the poor man's motor car, there are some days when the whirr of the motor is heard almost incessantly from early morning till late at night. And I venture to say that there are not many villages in the County of Stirling, or indeed in the whole of Scotland, where there is a larger traffic than that which passes through Dennyloanhead.

And now I invite you to accompany me on a ramble through our village and the adjacent villages and hamlets, while I do my best to tell you of changes that have taken place within my recollection in the appearance of the district and in the homes of the people. I shall also refer to some of the alterations that were carried out prior to my settlement. And in order to keep my lecture from becoming dull and tedious, I shall tell you some stories by the way, and relate to you some incidents that happened here in past years. Sir J. M. Barrie, in “Auld Licht Idylls,” says that when Sam'l Todd was married to Tibbie Allardice, the Rev. Mr Wishart, who had officiated at the marriage, occupied the place of honour, when the guests sat down to partake of tea, and that he tried to give an agreeable turn to the conversation by describing the extensions at the cemetery. I, too, should like to make our gathering this evening agreeable by speaking of extensions; not, however, at the sleeping-place of the dead, but in the habitations of the living.

The railway bridge over the Glasgow Road in front of the Railway Inn will form a convenient starting point. There was no bridge there when I came; for there was no railway along this valley until nearly ten years later. At this part the public road was diverted a little to the South, where the Kilsyth and Bonnybridge Railway was made. Before then it was somewhat nearer the inn, and did not take the bend it now takes.

at the head of the present Seamores Loan. The inn was then a house of one-storey. To the west of it was the cottage that still stands there, near to the Colliery Office. On the east, the only building between the inn and Dennyloanhead farmhouse, which was then owned and occupied by Mrs Wm. Laing, was a double cottage belonging to Mr Thomas Anderson, joiner, who lived in a portion of it. His workshop, which was next door, was transformed into two dwelling-houses some years later, when he removed to the corner house at the junction of the road from Denny with that from Bonnybridge. At this corner, in addition to a dwelling-house, there was a building which had been used for some years as a smithy by Mr Thomas Rankine, and which is said to have been stables in the coaching days in connection with the hotel. This building is still occupied as a joiner's workshop by Mr John Anderson, who continues in the business so long carried on by his father. On the south side of the Glasgow Road, opposite Mr Anderson's former workshop, there was a field sloping down towards the Bog. When the railway, which intersects that field, was constructed, the ground for it had to be made up, and a corner was left, part of which was cultivated for some years as a garden by Mr Andrew Angus, who was at that time proprietor of the Railway Inn. In 1906 Denny School Board acquired this corner for school building purposes, and a corrugated iron school was erected at the east end of it for the accommodation of children belonging to this district, who before then had been attending the Board Schools either at Bonnybridge or Longcroft. But some years later it was found to be inadequate for the educational needs of the district, and a larger stone building was erected a few hundred yards to the west. To the east of it is Holmbank, where there is little alteration in the appearance of the houses, although in the majority of them the tenants have been changed over and over again. Until a few years ago, the road to Seamores and the canal ran down past the east end of Holmbank. But, owing to the insecure condition of the railway bridge over Seamores Loan, the uppermost part of the road was closed, the loan was diverted, and the head of it is now a few yards to the west of the bridge at the Railway Inn.

Leaving that part of the village, let us come up past the hotel to Crown Place. For nearly 20 years after I came here, the eastmost part of it was used as a stable, with a loft above it. I remember of a concert being held in the loft, when the music was provided by the Denny Parish Church Choir, under the leadership of Mr John Shirra, and when I had the honour of presiding. That was the day of small things in the matter of hall accommodation in the village. There was no other building in which public meetings or concerts could be held, and the inhabitants had to be content

with such things as they could get. That concert was promoted to procure funds for some public object. The programme was an excellent one. But the surroundings were dismal and the staircase was rickety, and it was a great relief to me as chairman, when the concert came to an end, and I saw the audience safely outside the door. The loft was also used as a dancing hall, and some nights the young folks danced so vigorously and shouted so loudly that some of us in the manse, which is only about a dozen yards distant from it, were kept awake till nearly midnight; and we were not sorry when the stables and loft were converted into dwelling-houses and the dancing nights were done. At that time Belmont House, in which there are now seven or eight tenants, was the summer residence of Mr James Marshall, a Glasgow gentleman whose name is well-known as the maker of Semolina and similar food specialities. The cottage adjoining it was occupied by Miss Stark, a daughter of Dr James Stark, who was the minister of Dennyloanhead Church from 1797 to 1850. The Garden Cottage behind Belmont House was then a stable and coach-house belonging to Mr Marshall. Several years after my settlement this property was acquired by the directors of a Medical Mission connected with the Wynd Free Church, Glasgow, that it might be used as a home, where people belonging to the Mission could spend a fortnight in the country. Belmont Home, as it came to be called, was under the management of a matron. But Mrs Still, a widow lady, who had supplied the money, with which the house was bought, spent much of her time at the Home, and gave it liberal financial support as long as she lived. Shortly after her death, the directors of the Wynd Mission converted the Home into dwelling-houses, and devoted the revenue to some other purpose for the benefit of the mission people. The property has recently changed hands and now belongs to two local gentlemen—Mr James Anderson and Mr Duncan Stewart. Glenbo, a house standing on a height to the north-east of Belmont, was built by Mr John Hay a few years prior to my coming. After his death it was purchased by Miss Thom, Wyndford, who, however, was not spared to enter into the possession of it. Her brother, Mr George Thom, who inherited the house, lived there until his death some years later, and it is now the property of his daughter, Miss Agnes Thom, Glenrig, Bonnybridge. The houses at Church Place are amongst the oldest in the village. In the small house, which has a mutual gable with the vestry of our church, there lived about thirty years ago, an old woman known as Granny Gillespie, who delivered the letters daily in the houses along the roadside. The Muirhead Memorial Hall, in which we are now met, was built in 1893 on a piece of ground purchased by Mrs Air, Dundee, and Miss Bain, Stirling, nieces of the late Mr John Muirhead, Burnhouse, Dunipace, who was for fifty-four

years an elder of our church, and who passed away on 24th October, 1891. This hall, which has been of great service to the congregation, was gifted by these ladies to mark the connection of the Muirhead family with Dennyloanhead Church, extending from 1765 to 1892, during which period men belonging to three generations in succession had served in the office of the eldership. Beside the hall, and built a few years before it, is Gow-anbank, a double cottage, and behind it is an old row of houses overlooking the Glasgow Road. Forty years ago the three houses of this row were occupied respectively by Mr John Russell, Mr James Duguid, who was our church officer, and Mrs Adams and her grown-up family of three sons—Baldy, Jimmy, and Will—and two daughters—Nannie and Jenny. At that time they were rather old-fashioned abodes. But when these tenants passed away, the houses were repaired, and now they look almost as good as their neighbours, and they have the distinction of being the only buildings in the village with thatched roofs. Among the new tenants who entered into them after they were renovated was a man who was an enthusiastic piper, Mr Archibald Murdoch. Archie and I were good friends, although for a reason different from that given by a caddie who claimed acquaintanceship with Mr Arthur J. Balfour, the distinguished statesman. This caddie, on being asked by a golfer what he meant by being acquainted with Mr Balfour, replied, "Just this; I'm wearing a pair of Mr Balfour's troosers." While Archie and I were acquaintances and friends, our bonds of friendship were not formed in any way such as that; for he could not wear either my hat, or coat, or "troosers," and I could not wear his kilt. A good many years ago he removed with his wife and family to Glasgow. Archie was a rhymster as well as a piper, and some time after his removal to the city, I received from him a picture postcard, with the following verses beautifully written and embellished with hand-painted representations of the shamrock:—

"Dear, reverend Sir, a thoosan' thanks  
 For your very welcome letter;  
 An' ilka time I ease my shanks  
 I never read a better.  
 An', if health permits, 'tween this an' May.  
 An' Glesca fouk keep reachin',  
 I'm comin' oot some Sabbath day  
 Tae sit an' hear ye preachin'.  
 But for me tae clamp, clamp thro' the manse  
 I doot I wid feel awkward;  
 Tho' I've been tel't here mair than wance  
 A piper's no-wey backward.  
 But up I'll gang, although I drap,  
 Whaur my shanks will be trimley;  
 For I maun ca' on you, auld chap,  
 An' speir for Maggie Lumley.

Piper A. M. Murdoch."



I hope that the Glesca' fouk will keep reachin' their coppers and silver into Archie's pockets in return for his stirring music.

The Churchyard is next. Although there have been no interments in it for a number of years, a good many of the inhabitants of this district have there been laid to rest. But

" Mourn not for them, their grief is o'er,  
Weep not for them, they weep no more ;  
For deep is their sleep, tho' cold and hard  
Their pillow may be in the auld kirkyard."

The Old School, so long occupied by Mr Thomas Stark, which stands immediately to the east of the Churchyard, and the house next door, in which Mr and Mrs Robert Lane lived for many years, have likewise undergone alterations, and the school is now used as the village hall. Forty years ago there were no cottages, except Fernlea, between these houses and Dick's Burn, but only a field, and in the year 1884 I was the tenant of it. In our early married life Mrs Keir and I kept a cow that we might have a plentiful supply of milk for our children, and one of the fields that we rented for a season was this one, belonging to Mr James Davie, who then lived at Fernlea Cottage. Some years later this field was purchased by Mr James Anderson, a gentleman who has done much for this village and for Bonnybridge, and, indeed, for the whole surrounding district. Myrtle Cottage, Mr Anderson's present residence, was the first cottage built in this field, and now there are a dozen cottages facing the road to Bonnybridge or that to Denny. On the south side of the Bonnybridge Road, opposite Myrtle Cottage, is a coal pit belonging to the Banknock Coal Company, Limited, which was sunk about thirty years ago and was worked for some time. But no coal is taken out of it at present. That small stream called Dick's Burn is regarded as the eastern boundary of Dennyloanhead. Originally its name was the Crumbling Burn. But at Chapel Haugh, past which it runs, there was once a croft belonging to a family named Dick; and it was during their occupancy of the croft that the burn got its present name. Between Dennyloanhead and Bonnybridge there are on the north side of the road Hillend cottar houses, and on the south side Bonnyfield farmhouse and steading (formerly called Catscleugh), and Bonnyfield House further east on the same side. These present pretty much the same appearance as they did forty years ago, except that some old trees at Hillend and Bonnyfield that were landmarks have recently been cut down.

The changes that have taken place in Bonnybridge and the surrounding district within my recollection have been on a larger scale than at Dennyloanhead. There I have seen the steady growth of an industrial community. The meaning of the name Bonnybridge is obvious. The village takes its name from the Bonny, on whose banks it is situated. This stream rises at Kelvinhead, about four miles to the west, near to where the Kelvin also takes its rise, and flows in the opposite direction, westwards to Glasgow. It used to be reckoned a fine fishing stream, but local anglers say that not many good trout are to be got there now. And though they have a decided grievance, they are unable to get it remedied. The name Bonny occurs frequently in the locality — Bonnyfield, Bonnybank, Bonnyvale, Bonnyside, Bonnymuir, Bonnywater, Bonnyview, Bonnyplace, Bonnywood, Mount Bonny, and Glen Bonny, being the names of houses and places in and around the village. By the courtesy of Mr Christopher Little, I have had the privilege of perusing an interesting paper he delivered to the members of the Bonnybridge Rambling Club in the summer of 1918, entitled, "In and around Bonnybridge; from the early 'fifties." In his paper, Mr Little describes this whole district, as it was in his boyhood, seventy years ago—nearly 30 years before I first saw it. And in the interval many changes had taken place.

Ure-Allan Park, Wheatlands, and Hopepark, on the north side of the Larbert Road, were all built in the early 'Seventies. On the edge of this road, a little further east, there stood when I came here, a cottage called Peathill Cottage, that was taken down a number of years ago. The only other buildings on that side of the road were Highland Dykes farm house and steading, which, some years later, were converted into dwelling-houses. All the other cottages and villas facing the south, and also Norwood and Bonnywood farmhouse and steading, on the south side of the Larbert Road, and some of the cottages and villas opposite the grounds of Hopepark and Wheatlands have been built within my recollection, and a new public road has been made on the east of Peathill farmhouse leading down to Wellpark Terrace, Unitas Terrace, and the Ford.

Let us come back to the west end of the village, and go along the Falkirk Road. A notice board here put up informs us that Bonnybridge is  $405\frac{3}{4}$  miles from London. On the north side of the road, between Bowling Green Place and Dunure Street, forty years ago there were only a few small houses, one of them at Loanfoot and two or three a little further east. The Parish Church was erected in 1877, and between it and the Royal Hotel, which was then a much small-

er building than it now is, there was a house occupied by Mr Robert Thomson, a carting contractor. This house, called Windyblaw, still stands in a remodelled condition on a little mound between Torrance Place and Cornhill Place. With the exception of the shop and house at Glenbonny occupied by Mr John M'Culloch, provision merchant, a small house adjoining—formerly used as a bake-house—Mount Bartholomew, Mount Bonny Cottage, two or three houses near the Ford and the Mill at the Bonny, all the other buildings in that part of the village have been erected since I came to Dennyloanhead. The bridge over the Kilsyth and Bonnybridge Railway was built in 1888, and the central station was opened for traffic in the same year. Mr Little tells of an old man called Sandy Grindlay, who, in the 'fifties, occupied a house near the Ford, and sometimes wheeled coals in a barrow from the colliery at Dennyloanhead for any of his neighbours who wanted them. In summer his custom was to walk about bare-footed. But when he got an order for a barrowful of coal, he put on his tile hat, and then, tile-hatted and bare-footed, he went off to the pit-head with his barrow, and charged threepence for wheeling a barrowful along. If Sandy were alive now, and were seen in this fantastic fashion, he would have a lively time of it in Bonnybridge. At the head of the Ford brae in a little wooden building, there lived about the same time a Crimean veteran named Malcolm M'Farlane, a well-known character, who hawked commodities of various kinds in the village. Bonnybridge Brass Band was then reckoned one of the best in Scotland, and frequently gained prizes at contests. Wherever the Band went, Malcolm accompanied it, marching in front, dressed up for the occasion, with his military medals on his breast, and bearing aloft a flag. The house in which he lived was built for him by the bandsmen and other villagers, who in various ways showed him much kindness.

And now, will you accompany me once more to the west end of the village? Forty years ago there were no cottages on the Bonnyfield estate, on the south side of the Falkirk Road, to the west of Auchenlone and Gowanbrae. Now there are half-a-dozen double cottages. Between Gowanbrae, which stands opposite the Parish Church, and the bridge over the Bonny, several houses have been built and also that row at the side of the railway, which is part of Albert Place. At one time the small house opposite Cornhill Place, was the Post Office, and was under the charge of two sisters—the Misses Gray. For many years the mails for Bonnybridge and district came by Denny, and there was a post-man named Robert Kerr, who daily in the forenoon walked from Denny round by Dennyloanhead to the sub-office there, and then on to Bonnybridge.

and he delivered the letters on the south side of the canal as far as to Castlecary. Further along the Main Street are the Royal Hotel stables, where a motor and carriage hirer's business is now carried on by Mr Thomas Cowie. Long before the advent of motor cars and before Mr Cowie's time, I was conveyed to the stable yard one winter's evening, instead of to a cottage in Bonnybridge, where I was expected to officiate at a marriage. Both the horse and the coachman thought they had done quite enough for the day. The coachman's wife was of the same opinion. I agreed with them, and, leaving the coach, hastened to the cottage, where the marriage party were anxiously awaiting my arrival. Two or three dozen yards to the east of the stables is Stirling's Land, one of the oldest houses in the village. Crossing by the bridge from the north to the south side of the stream, we enter another part where great alterations have taken place. Forty years ago the only buildings between the Bonny and the Falkirk Road were the Public School, which then consisted of one storey, the school-house, a few old cottages to the east of it, and a shoemaker's shop and dwelling-house on the west. All the others, as far as to Thornton, including the Public Hall and the Clifford Home, have been erected since then. Beside the Post Office Buildings there has recently been tastefully laid out a piece of ground, where formerly there was an unsightly coup for refuse, and on it there is a chaste memorial in the form of a grey granite obelisk on a square base, having four panels, on which are engraved the names of 187 men, who laid down their lives in the Great War.

At the extreme east end of the village, on the south side of the Falkirk Road, is a public park gifted in 1920 by Mr James Anderson to the Parish Councils of Falkirk and Denny for the use of the inhabitants of these parishes. Glenruane, formerly called Sawmill House, Barleyhill, Barleyhill Square, (which had at one time been a farm steading), Bonnyplace, and Cowden Place all belong to an earlier date. And so did a sawmill, the property of Messrs A. & G. Paterson, which has recently been demolished after having been worked for 50 years. Nearly all the other cottages to the east of Bonnyplace, where two or three of the oldest houses stand, and also Forth Place, beside the canal, have been built since I came. At the west end of Cowden Place is the old parochial school and the teacher's house—now altered and occupied as dwelling-houses. I have been told that sixty years ago the teacher's salary was £4 per annum, and that about 60 scholars were in attendance, who each paid a fee of from 2d to 3½d per week. To the west of the old school there are two or three of the original houses, that take us back in thought to the olden days, when many families had to be content with a butt and ben. Great

changes have taken place at that part of the street, where the premises of the central branch of the Bonnybridge Co-operative Society now stand. Within my recollection there were two or three old houses there on a higher level than the Falkirk Road, with a few steps leading up to them. And I used to visit an aged member of our congregation named Miss Alison Grindley, who lived in one of them. A little distance to the west is Hislop's Land. Turning over some old letters recently I came across the following one which recalls an incident that happened there more than thirty years ago. I withhold the name of the place from which the letter was sent, and also the surname of the writer :—

“20th May, 1888.

Rev. Sir,

I am sorry that I have not written to tell you that I have passed my school examination, and that I am now in the Courier Printing Office as a clerk. I have a good walk of three miles every morning, but I like it very well. I hope you got home all right after your visit here, and that you are all well.

Never forgetting your very great kindness,

Yours respectfully,

JAMES —”

“Thereby hangs a tale.” One evening I came upon a group of young people at Hislop's Land standing around a lad apparently about 12 years of age, whom I had not seen before. I asked him where he had come from, and what he was doing there. Bit by bit he told me his story. When he was at school that forenoon the teacher called him a booby. He was highly offended, and he resolved in a fit of anger to run away from school. So he gathered up his books, and, at the first interval, hastened to a wood not far off, and there hid them. His intention was to make his way to Glasgow, and then go off to sea. After walking two or three miles, he reached the Union Canal. He kept the track road at the side of it, until he came to Falkirk. Then he got down to the Forth & Clyde Canal, and walked westwards to Bonnybridge. And there he was, as I found him at Hislop's Land, at the dusk of that evening, tired and hungry, and at least a dozen miles from his home. By that time the heat of his anger had cooled, and he readily took the advice I gave him. He came with me to Dennyloanhead, and remained there over the night. Next morning he and I joined the train at the station at High Bonnybridge going eastwards. About an hour and a half later he reached his home, to the great joy of his parents. The letter given above is one that I received from him some time later.

A little to the west of Hislop's Land there was once a smithy, and not many yards distant from it, a joiner's workshop. The smithy was removed at a late date to a site opposite Shillinghill, but the joiner's workshop, altered and enlarged, still remains, and there Mr James Menzies carries on the business established many years ago by his father. Craignure, his residence, is one of the cottages built in recent years. On the other hand, the houses at Bonnywater Place, sometimes called The Bench, are among the oldest dwellings in the village. Lilybank is next. When I commenced my ministry, and for a good many years after that, Mr George Turnbull, who had been a master builder, and who owned Bonnyside Brick Work, lived there with his sister, Miss Turnbull. Their two nieces—the Misses Margaret and Janet Dougall—also had their home with them, and carried on a business as general merchants in a shop on the ground floor. In recent years an addition was made at the west end of Lilybank, part of which is now occupied as a branch of the Commercial Bank of Scotland. The grain mill and the miller's house, at the entrance to the Pend, which were then occupied by Mr Peter Grant, and in which there have been several tenants in succession, the Hallhouse that stands on the west side of the entrance to the Pend, and Bonnybank House, and the sawmills still further west, where Messrs James Wilson & Sons have so long carried on a business as sawmillers, are the only buildings that were in that part of Bonnybridge forty years ago. The small burial ground there, called the Chapelyard, must have been used for interments for fully two hundred years, as one of the tombstones bears the date of 1717. I am inclined to think that the congregation of Dennyloanhead had a temporary meeting-place somewhere near this spot, as old papers show that, before the members built the Church at Dennyloanhead, they met at the Bridge-end of Bonny. Shillinghill, the Police Station, the Territorial Hall, the old Temperance Hall (now converted into dwelling-houses), the workshop of Mr Jas. Gray, joiner, Chapel Buildings, and the Faith Mission Hall have all been built within my time. On the site where the Police Station now stands, there was a smithy when I came that had been removed from the Main Street, and the dwelling-house of the black-smith—Mr David Gillies—adjoining it. At the corner opposite Lilybank there was a small shop, in what had been the toll-house in the days of toll-bars. It is a good many years since these old houses and the smithy were taken down, and now not a vestige of them remains. The black-smith's business, however, is still carried on near the bridge over the Bonny by the Gillies Engineering Company, with Mr William Gillies, a son of the late Mr David Gillies, as manager. The Picture Palace, which stands close by, is, of course, one of the recent additions. The road to the canal was made

in 1900, when the Pend became unsuitable for the largely increased traffic. And it was mainly through the efforts of Mr George Ure, Wheatlands, who was then the chairman of the Eastern District of the County Council of Stirling, that this undertaking was carried through and the canal bridge built. Before we pass by this bridge from the north to the south side of the canal, let us stop and take a view of the village from the canal bank. Although we cannot see it all, we can see a considerable portion of it, and it has quite a nice appearance. Perhaps it cannot be claimed for it that it is "beautiful for situation." There are, no doubt, many bonnier villages in Scotland; but there are also some not nearly so bonnie. An article appeared in a local newspaper a number of years ago recommending Bonnybridge as a health resort. It is not likely ever to become popular in that respect. Nevertheless, it is quite a pleasant spot to live in, and there are many excellent people in it. With humble apologies to the shades of Burns, one may say that it is a place,

"Which not auld Ayr itself surpasses,  
For honest men and bonnie lasses."

And what a lively lot the boys and girls are! What a joyful noise they can make at the door of a house where a marriage party is met. Barrie says that in Thrums, the usual cry on such a happy occasion was "Toss, toss!" The youngsters in Bonnybridge and in this district have a different greeting for the guests at a wedding. Their welcome is "Bowl money! Hard up!" And how stridently they can shout! And when the best man bowls the coppers to take away the reproach of being hard up, what a scramble there is, with some of the mothers looking on to see that their bairns get fair play, and perhaps joining in the scramble if an extra liberal supply of coppers has been scattered! Then Jess says to Jenny, "I've got tuppence; what have you got?" "I've gotten a skinned finger." And so the fun goes on. Then another shout is raised, "Here's a caur comin'. I wonder wha it will be this time." The young folks rub their hands and prepare for another scramble. The car stops. The groomsmen steps out, and instead of helping out a young lady, he is followed by the minister. The disappointment is keen, and is tersely expressed, "Hard up! Hard up!!" The minister must smile, and take what is going. I once heard of a young married woman in this district, whose husband, while under the influence of drink, had given her some rough usage. She went and complained to her mother-in-law. The old woman, who had oftener than once had a similar experience, listened to her story, and then gave this sage advice, "Gae awa' hame, an' content yersel'. Ye'll just hae tae tak' yer licks like ither fouk." And so, when the minister is reminded that he is hard up, he must take it like other folk, and content himself. One of

my Bonnybridge friends said to me a short time ago that he did not think there is so much fun at weddings now as there used to be when he was a boy. That may be the case. But the boys and girls in this district manage to extract a good deal of fun out of them even yet, and they sometimes get a good many coppers also.

And now, as we turn our faces from the residential to what is more particularly the industrial part of Bonnybridge, it may be as well to recall that the modern village owes its rise in large measure to the enterprise of two or three gentlemen, who, some sixty years ago commenced an iron foundry on the south bank of the canal in a building that had previously been used, first as a chemical work, and then as a laundry. Attracted perhaps by the proximity of this building to the canal, Messrs James Smith and Stephen Welstood, in 1860 started a foundry there for the manufacture of American stoves and other similar castings. In the prosecution of their business, they were ably assisted by their managers and workmen, and their trade grew rapidly. About 20 years later, when I first saw these works, they had grown to considerable dimensions. There were then two separate foundries—that of Messrs Smith & Welstood (the Columbian Stove Work) and that of Messrs George Ure & Company. Mr Ure, who had been associated with Messrs Smith & Welstood almost from the start, commenced a foundry at what is called the new side in 1871. And when I came, the firm of which he was head was doing a large business. These two firms remained separate until 1890, when an amalgamation took place, and the combined business is now carried on with much energy and success under the original name of Messrs Smith & Welstood, Limited. Forty years ago there was a department of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, adjoining the new foundry, for which Messrs George Ure & Company made the castings. But in 1884, it was transferred to Kilbowie, where a large work has been erected, at which the Singer Company made their own castings. At that time the only other public works on the south side of the canal were Bonnyside Brickwork, belonging to Mr George Turnbull; a paper mill at Broomhill, owned by Messrs Oswald & Hall; a small iron foundry on the west side of the road to the N.B. Railway Station, carried on by Mr Campbell Ferguson; and, at High Bonnybridge, the work of the Bonnybridge Silica & Fireclay Company, which had been begun a short time previously by Messrs White & Griffiths. Now there are other three foundries and other three brickworks, and a railway station at the canal bank, for the branch line from Greenhill to the village. Ingleside, Greenbank, and the houses at Gardea Row, Bonnymuir Place, Wortland Square, and Bonnyside Brickwork, were erected at an earlier



date. But all the others at Bonnyside Road, Caledonia Terrace, Wordie's Buildings, Milnquarter House, and the dwelling houses near the Canal Bank Station have been built in more recent years. At Broomhill, most of the buildings at the former paper mill have been converted into dwelling houses, some new houses have been erected, and there also there is a Roman Catholic Church. High Bonnybridge has grown from being a place with a few houses, into a fair-sized village, with a preaching station in connection with the United Free Church, a public school, and a large number of dwelling-houses. Pursuing our journey from High Bonnybridge westwards by the footpath along the side of the N.B. Railway, we soon enter Greenhill district. Forty years ago there were only a few houses there; now there is a considerable population, and a public school and school-house. Still further along are the brickwork belonging to the Greenhill Fireclay Company, and Glenyards Cottages, standing on rising ground a little distance to the south. These cottages were begun in the 'fifties for the use of workmen intended to be employed at a coach building establishment that Mr Wallace, a coach builder in Stirling, meant to carry on near Greenhill junction. He died, however, before the houses were completed. After some delay they were purchased and finished by Mr Muller, and are still in the possession of his representatives. Above Glenyards there are some heights from which a splendid view may be obtained to the east, the west, and the north. I once remarked to a worthy elder of this congregation, who was the tenant of the farm up in these regions, that he had a fine view from a point not far from the door of his house. "Yes," he replied, "It is very fine, but one cannot live on a view." It was his lot to live in the lean years for farmers. For some time the price of farm produce has been better than it used to be, although now, as "Punch" says,

"The gilt is off the gingerbread,  
The bloom is off the rye."

Or, in the homely phrase of one of my farmer friends in this district, "The bottom is out of the barrow now."

Let us now go down past Greenhill to the canal bank. At the foot of the road is Seabegs farmhouse and steading. From sixty to seventy years ago, the farm belonged to a man who appears to have been notorious in his day—Dr Charles Grindlay. He was the son of a Mr Grindlay, who had been a farmer and grain merchant at Barleyhill, Bonnybridge. It is from Dr Grindlay that the wood at Seabegs, and the pend underneath the canal there get the name of Doctor's Wood and Doctor's Pend respectively. Charles attended the medical classes at the Glasgow University with the view of becoming a doctor. But his medical course was brought to an abrupt termina-

tion by an incident that is reminiscent of the story of Burke and Hare, the resurrectionists. On the death of his father, the doctor, as he was then called, entered into possession of Seabegs, and farmed it for a number of years, though with indifferent success. At a later date he removed to a farm in the Denny Greens district, where he is said to have lived a solitary life and to have come to a sad end.

Leaving Seabegs and going westwards along the canal bank, we pass Dalnair and Skipperton farms on the south, and some cottages, and ere long we reach Underwood Lock. On the north side of the canal there used to be a chemical work, owned by Mr Robert Bennie, who lived in Underwood House, a little distance to the west. Some time before I came, the manufacture of chemicals had there been discontinued, and the buildings were falling into ruins. Now hardly a vestige of them remains; and some other old houses that had been used as stables and store-houses in connection with the traffic on the canal, have been swept away. Further west is Woodend district, where, within the past dozen years, a hamlet of a considerable size has sprung up. Here Messrs John G. Stein & Co., Limited, have erected a very extensive fire-clay and brick work, where several hundred workers are employed. The firm has also provided a large number of nice-looking cottages for the employees. The aspect of this whole district has been entirely altered, and now there is a busy hive of industry, where formerly there were fields and a wood and a few scattered houses. We must now hurry on past the Castlecary Public School, erected a few years ago, and past the site of an old Roman fort dear to archaeologists not far from the Castlecary viaduct. At the bridge over the canal at Castlecary a huge oil tank was built a few years ago for the storage of oil for the fleet at Rosyth. A pipe line brings the oil from Old Kilpatrick to this tank, and from it the oil is conveyed in pipes laid along the canal to Grangemouth, and is shipped from there to Rosyth.

We shall now turn our faces homeward and go past Castlecary Mill and the Old Toll up the Coal Road to Haggs. To the west of Haggs are Hollandbush, Bankier, and Banknock, and at each of these places there have been many changes, and the population has now largely increased. Shortly after I came here I had the privilege of meeting at Banknock House, Dr Robert Moffat, the distinguished missionary, who had laboured so long in South Africa. In his old age Dr Moffat returned to this country, and at the time when I met him, he was the guest of Mr William Wilson, who was then the proprietor of Banknock House. And I can still recall the form and features of the veteran missionary, who had such a splendid record of service.

The name of Haggs suggests the nature of this district in former times. Hag means a pit in mossy ground. When I think of the people of Haggs I like to associate them with the men and women of whom Mr S. R. Crockett writes, who in covenanting times played so heroic a part in the moors and moss-hags of Scotland. Within my time a number of God-fearing people have lived there. And some of them were very quick at seeing the humorous side of things. Here is a story that comes from that quarter, which shows that quite unintentionally a funny remark may be made in connection with such a solemn thing as a funeral. A death had occurred at a place some distance from Haggs. A young woman, a relative of the deceased, on receiving intimation of the death, went with the letter to the house of another relative. There was a footnote stating where and when the interment would take place. But this young woman was not sure about either the pronunciation or the meaning of the word "interment," and after some hesitation she said, "I see it tells where the 'entertainment' will take place." It was rather an odd thing to say about a burial. But a young friend of mine, who lives in Haggs, once made a remark to his mother, which shows that the children do occasionally get some entertainment even out of a funeral. One day after a funeral cortege had passed along the road, he went into his home somewhat crestfallen and said "Ma, that wasna a nice funeral." The explanation of his remark was that some time previously there had been a funeral of a Free Mason, at which the local brass band had been present, as well as a number of Masons with their regalias. The youngsters enjoyed the music, and were pleased with all they saw and heard that day. And when some time later they learned that there was to be another funeral, they expected to hear the band again, and to see the Masons in their full dress. But at the second funeral there was nothing of this sort, and they thought they had been cheated out of a pleasant entertainment. Hence the remark of this little lad, "Ma, that wasna a nice funeral." Another friend, who can see the humorous side of things, tells a story of two neighbours who foregathered on the day that the body of a certain worthy who belonged to Bonny-bridge, was to be buried. Rain was falling heavily at the time, and one of the two remarked to the other, "This is Rab's funeral day." and then added, as if the deceased had been about to set out on a pleasure trip, "Puir man! he's no gettin' a verra guid day for his funeral."

Let me tell you another story which has a pathetic side. In one house that we passed in the course of our ramble, I received, many years ago, a request which was a singular one. An old maiden lady, who was a member of our congregation,

was drawing near the end of her pilgrimage. From time to time I called to visit her. One day, before I went into the room where she lay, a relative of hers informed me that she had made a request, which, he hoped, I would grant. I replied that, if it was in my power, I would do so. "What was it?" I asked. He said that she had expressed a desire that I would give her a kiss before she passed away. She may have been thinking of Paul's words, "Salute one another with a holy kiss." Perhaps it was a comfort to her to get her wish gratified. And someone has said, "What else is left to us who are getting old, except to help lame folk nearer to the Little Gate?" But we must all endeavour to help lame folk on with their pilgrimage to the Little Gate, and we can all do something. For the sake of variety, will you allow me to express this thought in a few rhyming verses?

This world is fu' o' dool an' care,  
 An' hearts are sometimes sad;  
 An' God has gi'en tae us the power  
 Tae mak' oor neibours glad.  
 Sae speak ye aye a kindly word  
 Or sing a cheery sang,  
 Tae help wayfarers on the road,  
 Wha find it rough an' lang.  
 Hoo mony a sair an' troubl'd heart,  
 Wi' sorrow almost broken,  
 Has got new strength, an' joy, an' hope  
 Frae kind words fitly spok'n.  
 Sae speak ye aye a kindly word,  
 Or sing a cheery sang,  
 Tae help wayfarers on the road,  
 Wha find it rough an' lang.  
 Kind words are aften guid as gowd,  
 An' drive fouk's care awa'  
 An' gi'e them courage for the fecht  
 That 'waits them ilka day.  
 Sae speak ye aye a kindly word,  
 Or sing a cheery sang,  
 Tae help wayfarers on the road,  
 Wha find it rough an' lang.

Let us now go eastwards as quickly as we can. All the terraces and many of the cottages on both sides of the road have been erected within the past forty years. When first I saw this district, there was a long straggling row of one-storied houses, with intervals, between from Dennyloanhead westwards to Hags. Some of the old cottages have been repaired and enlarged, a few of them have fallen into ruins, and several of them have been taken down and new ones have been built on their site.

Longcroft Public School has received additions two or three times, and a new school for the infant department has been built on a site a little distance to the west of it. The Russell

Memorial Public Hall, opposite the School, was erected in 1893 by the inhabitants of this district as a memorial to Mr James Russell, of Longcroft, for many services he had rendered to the community both in a public and private capacity. Coming eastwards past Anderson Terrace we reach that point called The Sheddings. What is now the Police Station used to be the village school, before the days of Board Schools. The last teacher was Miss Connell, Skipperton, and before her was a male teacher, known locally as Dr Chalmers. Exactly at The Sheddings there stands the memorial erected by the inhabitants in memory of the men belonging to Dennyloanhead, Haggs parish, Banknock, and Allandale, who fell in the Great War. This fine memorial, which takes the form of a grey granite obelisk on a square base, has the names of seventy eight men engraven on the four sides.

At the foot of the Station Road there was once an old thatch-roofed house. That was taken down when the front Banknock Terrace was erected. At Dennyloanhead Station is the Knowehead Mine, now a landmark in the district. When I look upon the enormous bings at the mine and at the coal pits in this district belonging to the Banknock Coal Company, and think also of the tens of thousands of tons of coal that have been taken out of the bowels of the earth, I marvel that she does not open her mouth and swallow us all up as she did in the days of Moses, when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and all that appertained unto them went down alive into the pit and the earth closed upon them. But those who know more about the matter than I do, assure me that there is no need to be afraid. In the hollow to the north-east of Knowehead farmhouse and steading, near to Knowehead Bowling Green, there used to be a forge, locally called the Spade Mill; where Mr John Robertson carried on for many years a business which had been established by his father, Mr Robert Robertson. Some time ago this building was demolished, and nothing is now visible there, except the site on which it stood. At the head of the road leading to the Bowling Green there was a coal pit called "The Garibaldi." For a short time after I came it was worked in a small way. But it has been closed for many a year, and now grass grows over the pit-head. We are now within sight of the point from whence we set out. A few hundred steps will take us past Broomridge Terrace, Edgar Villa (where there was once a little row of thatched houses), Broomridge farmhouse and steading, Dennyloanhead Public School, and the branch of Bonnybridge Co-operative Society, to Leicester Terrace, near the head of Seamores Loan. I once met with an unexpected rebuff at a house in this terrace. One day I said to one of the tenants, whom I met on the road, that I would pay him a visit soon. He said he would be glad to

see me. So one evening I knocked at the door. My friend opened it, and at once unceremoniously shut it again, without saying a word. I thought his conduct strange, and turned away from the door wondering what was the matter with him. Meeting him a few days later, I asked him why he shut the door in my face, after telling me that he would be pleased to see me. "Oh, was it you?" he said, "It was dark in the passage, and I thought it was a tramp." It was not very flattering to me to be mistaken for a tramp, but even a worse thing might have befallen me, for I might actually have been a tramp.

In the course of our ramble to-night, we have passed various places of interest about which I have said nothing. By the canal bridge we crossed the Forth and Clyde Canal, the making of which was begun in 1768 and completed in 1790, and on whose waters for many a year "the swifts" sailed during the day conveying passengers, and "the hoolets" by night carrying goods. We were not far from Cowden Hill, which, I have been told, was once covered with trees, but on whose summit there is now only one tree left—a time shattered survivor—that has withstood the force of many a gale. Further south we passed over the Roman wall, built by the Roman soldiers nearly two thousand years ago, and we trod upon the ground where the rude, but brave Caledonians, "the people of the woods," stood up to the soldiers of the vast and powerful Roman Empire, in defence of their native country, and sometimes met them in a deadly conflict. Near Bonnyside we also saw the Elf Hill, which was covered not so long ago with trees, but which, since the war, is stript and bare. The very name calls up a vision of elves and fairies and other airy spirits dancing in the moonlight, and making the greenwood on the little hill merry with their revels. Beyond the Elf Hill is Bonnymuir, the scene of the Radical Rising in 1820, which ended disastrously for the Chartists, and resulted in the execution of Baird and Hardie, and in the banishment of others of their comrades, whose only crime was that as politicians they were in advance of the age in which they lived. Then near to the Castlecary viaduct, we passed the Roman fort where relics and remains of the Roman occupation may still be seen. And we were not far from Castlecary Castle, said to be the oldest inhabited Castle in Scotland.

In closing, permit me to say that to me it has been interesting to call to remembrance the former days, and to contrast them with the times in which we live. During these past years there has been progress in many directions. For example, the dwelling-houses of the working-people are better than they were forty years ago, although even yet there is room

for improvement in some cases, the working day is shorter, the conditions are more favourable, there is more time for recreation, wages are higher, and working-people get a larger share of what are called "good things of life." Old miners have told me that they began to work when they were nine or ten years of age, and that then the working-day was so long that for many weeks in winter they never saw daylight, except on a Saturday afternoon or a Sunday. There was a time, and that not so very long ago, when the "four eights" were regarded as the working-man's ideal of felicity:—

"Eight hours to work, eight hours to play,  
Eight hours to sleep, and eight shillings a day."

This ideal has, in the case of many, been exceeded, and the circumstances of working-men now compare not unfavourably with those of many professional men. And in other directions there have been progress and improvements during these years. There is now a good supply of gravitation water in the district and a drainage system. Gas has likewise been introduced into most of the houses, and some of them have been fitted up with electric light. Motor coaches, for the convenience of travellers, pass our doors almost every hour of the day, and the public are served in ways that were undreamt of in former years. These are local developments. Looking further afield, what marvellous inventions there have been during these years! The telephone, wireless telegraphy, the gramophone, the motor car, and the aeroplane are only a few of the most familiar of them.

I have been speaking about the past. Sometimes when I have talked with the aged about the olden times I have seen in their eyes the light of other days when

"The sun shone brighter far  
Than ever it's dune sin syne."

You and I, my aged friends, have had our day. Let us make the most and the best of the time that God gives to us on this side of the Little Gate. While we call to remembrance the former days, we do not live in them alone. We rejoice in hope of a good time coming.

"Grow old along with me,  
The best is yet to be."

And what shall I say of the future? It needs no prophet to tell that great changes will yet take place. During the past two or three years there has been a mighty upheaval, as a result of the Great War. At the present time the world seems

like a ship tossed to and fro upon the angry waters in danger of being engulfed. But our Father is at the helm.

“God’s in His heaven—  
All’s right with the world.”

The storm will pass. A brighter day will dawn. Those who live in the coming years will see greater things than these. The human race, under the guidance of Him who is wise in counsel and mighty in strength, will advance towards that

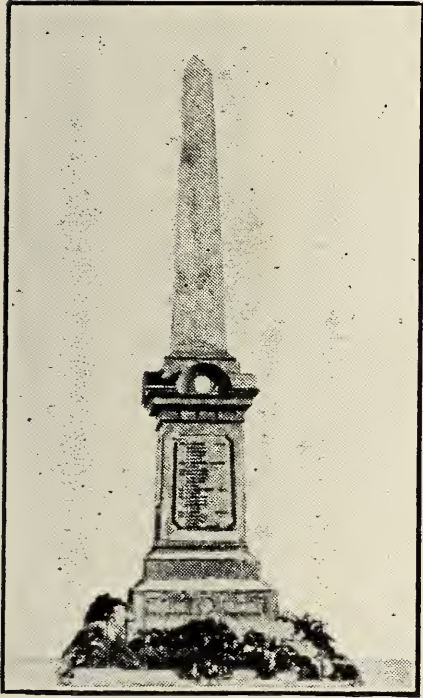
“One far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.”

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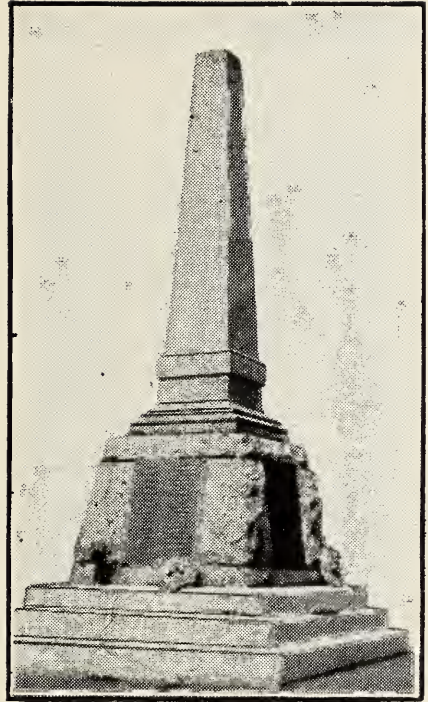
“All is of God that is, and is, to be,  
And God is good. Let this suffice us still,  
Resting in child-like trust upon His will,  
Who moves to His great ends, unthwarted by the ill.”







LONGCROFT & DISTRICT  
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BONNYBRIDGE  
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