

CHAPTER X.

SOWING THE HARVEST—INTERESTING ANECDOTES.

The return of peace was the return of prosperity, and the winter after Waterloo saw more activity at the bulwark and elsewhere on the shores of Fife than had been the case for thirty years before. New and larger boats floated in the harbour, fresh and more seaward fishing fields were explored, not everyday, it is true, with success, as when that trusty old plank, "the Father and Son," was running home from beyond the Bell Rock. "We'd been better at the Glack," said Geordie Anderson, with an eye at the scanty luck. "Haud yer tongue, man," retorted his skipper, Sandy Wood, "it was better times before you or the Glack was heard of;" the sea referred to being Dunse Law, bearing over the famous ravine at the "Pease Brig," some four leagues to the eastward of the May, which, within his own time, the skipper had regarded almost in the light of a foreign adventure. On the whole, however, hook and line met with fair returns—the harvest of the sea being in those years in happy contrast with the harvest of the land, which was more than once gathered in the East Neuk ankle deep in snow. The whale ship, it is true, yet divided the affections of the coast, so much so that when the first steamboat—the lumbering old tug—rounded the Carr, the people everywhere running out to see the ship on fire, over seventy of our whalers were on board, and these only the contingent from Aberdeen, who had made a bargain on that pier to be landed at Anstruther, which was accordingly done, to the intense delight of the old port. A good Greenland voyage, shall we whisper, was that day the joy of the

shore. "It just turned oor hand," said the honest goodwife, in all ages the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the fisher home, and many a time and oft it replenished the "ways and means" for the new fishing tackle, if not for the last year's rent. But we turn to another point. "We could catch fish, but we could not sell them," observes an old friend, referring to the market of his early days. But about this time the curious merchandise known as "couping," that is the system of selling or sending fish from boat to boat, was engaged in with considerable spirit and enterprise on the shores of the Forth. To some extent it was already a century old, for in the event of a good haul and a fair breeze, especially in the summer months, the Cellardyke boats, instead of steering home, would make their landfall at Fisherrow sands, where the North Sea fish, as the Buckhaven and other inshore fishers knew to their loss, as the old minister of Wemyss tells, had the mastery of the Edinburgh market, and not only so, but the celebrated Dr Carlyle of Inveresk is our authority that the Fisherrow boats would sail to the East of Fife, where it was more profitable to buy than to gather the spoils of the deep. The chance run, however, had been superseded by a regular weekly or bi-weekly service, while faithful old William Anderson, from the beach of Queensferry, opened the markets of Glasgow, for which he has had again and again as many as three cargoes afloat in the course of a week. The Dundee and St Andrews cadgers were also at the pier, but the "couper" was the great merchant of the coast, and that from year to year, till the memorable day that the thoughtful Anstruther grocer—Robert Taylor—introduced a new era into the sea industry of the East of Fife. It is a romantic story. Mr Taylor was a passenger in the Leith packet "Maggie Lauder," but Skipper Baynes, after the mooring ropes had been actually

cast loose, resolved, in the change of wind, not to sail till another day. In these circumstances, remembering an old Edinburgh friend, Mr Taylor walked from Leith pier to the High Street. He was standing at the friend's counter, when the guard of the Aberdeen mail coach entered with a parcel of "Finan haddies," which were evidently as welcome as the first choice fruits of the season, and the grocer as frankly yielded to an advance, because, as the guard said, "Haddies are dear now-a-days at Finan." "If haddock's are dear at Finan it is otherwise in Cellardyke," thought Mr Taylor, who was told by his friend that the guard bought the parcels from a fisher relative of his wife, and that the little speculation was to the profit of both. Then and there it flashed on Mr Taylor's mind, "Why not send smoked fish from Fife," and, full of the idea, he returned to Anstruther to try the experiment, first in hogsheads at his own back door, and then in the premises leased and specially erected at the Brae. It was a seedling wafted on the wind, but which in fifty years had so developed that in a single day—on the 9th of January 1869—the deep-sea going boats of Cellardyke, then forty-one in number, landed at Anstruther shore over fifty tons of "caller haddies"—the prime take being thirty-nine hundredweight, which sold at the ruling price of 10s a hundredweight, or £500 in all—the enormous catch, almost to a tail, passing into the hands of one or other of the local curers, in order to be consigned as "gmeekit haddies," the great change since Mr Taylor's day being that Glasgow had taken the place of Auld Reekie. Robert Taylor was associated in this enterprize with another who also claims a word of kindly remembrance. This is Captain Robertson, who, as an apprentice lad noted for his spirit and energy, had cast in his lot for life with a Norlan lass in Edinburgh, but an encounter one evening in

the High Street changed the current of his destiny. He awoke next morning with the badge of the East India Company on his bonnet, and within a week had embarked for Madras. Repentance came, as repentance often comes, when too late, and he gave himself up to sadness and despair. The ship was boarded and taken by the enemy, but he refused to stir a finger, and kept his berth. A little Frenchman dealt the broken spirited soldier a contemptuous blow on the head with a hatchet. It was his last blow, for, springing up like a roused lion, Captain Robertson killed him on the spot with his own hatchet, and, almost single handed, saved the ship. Promotion followed, and after a distinguished career in India he once more sailed for the old country. Poor Maggie Sutherland, at this time neither wife nor widow, had from first to last a weary life; but she had one happy day when, as the house drudge, she came to open the door for the gallant officer who called in the carriage—that officer being her own husband, and his errand to bring her home. He had retired from active service, but a curious chain of circumstances induced him to turn his thoughts to sea merchandise at Anstruther. “I like the place and I like the people,” and throwing his whole soul into the enterprise, he soon gave a new cast to the fortunes of the shore. He was the first to break the close league among the coupers, and nothing fired his indignation so much as an attempt to overreach the fishermen, when his ringing voice would give a new turn to the prices of the day. His stature was prodigious. “A bottle of brandy, Captain, that you outweigh the giant boy,” exclaimed his waggish friend, David Rodger, when the town’s folks had turned out to see and wonder at the public exhibition. The good humoured veteran submitted to the test in full sight of the crowd, when he was seen to have the advantage of three

stones, or thirty-three to thirty over the famous English giant. He had a heart, however, as soft and tender as a child, and none save the eye of heaven knew how truthfully he was one of the noble few that

“Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame;”

but, to the grief of all, he, one fatal morning in the Lammas of 1823, soon after the death of his friend Robert Taylor, leaped in delirium over the old pier at Anstruther, when his troubled spirit passed to the mercy seat of God.

It was an anecdote of the bookseller's shop at Anstruther shore that the “Finan haddie” was so highly esteemed by the reigning sovereign—George the Fourth—that the mail-coach as regularly as the letter-bag, carried a prime parcel from the little Banchory village for the royal breakfast. The waggish collector told a stupid joke that “Letter Maggie” had been seen freighted from the post-office with a mysterious packet, which was nothing less than a royal order to have the palace supplied from Anstruther; but although it had been really so, the Captain could never have been more enthusiastic about his fish-house and kiln, which is, after all, the secret of the early and exultant success of the Anstruther experiment.

Originally, however, Captain Robertson's eye, like that of the other merchants of the coast, had been all upon the cod fishery, which was so extensive that the prince of Scottish fishcurers, James Methuen, had christened Cellardyke “the cod emporium of Scotland.” That fishery had long been the backbone of the coast; but new energy had been infused into it by the establishment of the Fishery Board in 1808, or rather by the amendment of the Act in 1815, which struck off the iron shackles, so long and firmly rivetted by the old law, framed in the worst spirit of the times. As examples in point, it strictly prohibited the English rock

salt, so indispensable to-day ; it left the fishcurer no choice but to use "the fushionless saut wi' nae deed," as the old coopers would say, manufactured at Pittenweem, or the other salt pans of the coast, and at the same time it burthened the trade with a tax on the first and last necessity of the cure. Under the new system, however, thousands of barrels with the cod in pickle were freighted every Lent to London, the Fife cure being noted far and near for its sweetness and perfection. These were, in truth, rising days for the coast, as the Lammas drave also began to revive about this time. Wick was still the favourite rendezvous ; but a little squadron fished the returning shoals from Cellardyke with encouraging luck, while under the new Fishery Act the merchant had as many, nay more, encouragements to speculate than he had in the cod and ling fishery, the salt tax, in particular, being before so oppressive that it actually took a shilling out of the blistered hand of the poor cottar every time his "gudewife" filled the herring barrel. Herrings were freely cured for the brand, and smoking houses also began to be erected on the coast. Inspector Loch in 1778, as we saw, talks of such a purpose ; but it was full twenty years later till the first kiln was erected in the rear of the old custom-house on Anstruther shore. It was built for the "John aboon the braes," in the curious old rhyme concerning the Robertsons of Anstruther :—

"Here's Paul John, and Pamf John, and John aboon the braes,
And John Robertson, the dyaster, that dyes thread to sew our claes."

The artisan was a Dunbar sailor, named James Swanson, who, while sitting during an after hour on the "Skipper's Rest" at the old gable, was fond of telling the curious story, according to which the merchants of Yarmouth, in the days of King Charles, had sent to Dunbar for tutors in the art of making bloaters ; but the shoals deserted the coast season after season,

till the work and the workers were forgotten, so much so that when the herrings came again to the Forth, Dunbar had actually to send to Yarmouth to borrow back the secret from the descendants of her own children, who in the interval had made Yarmouth bloaters famous the wide world over. The fishery and the kiln failed together, but within the next twenty years Mr Robertson's son-in-law, Bailie John Darsie, resumed the speculation in the old man's garden, which in this particular may be regarded as the nest of the fishcuring enterprise of our day. As usual the return of the herring was the return of life and energy to the shore. The successful drave of 1816 inspired the laurel crown in the celebrated Musiemantik Society of Anstruther. The poet sings—

“ What time the Fifean plains, with plenty crowned,
 Change their green aspect for a yellower hue,
 The hardy weather-beaten fisherman,
 Tired of the haddock and the petley tribe,
 And red-ware codling from the town of Crail,
 Or rocky Cellardyke, walks anxious forth,
 And from the windmill or the castle yard
 Peers o'er the ocean, hopeful to espy
 Some well-known symptom of the herring race ;
 Nor looks he long in vain ; the enormous whale
 Spouts briny fountains from his nostril wide ;
 Wheel-like the awkward porpoise by the shoal
 Of countless millions rolls ; the cunning seal
 Follows the multitude : the yellow solan,
 Stooping full frequent from his path aloft
 On his defenceless prey, give passage sure
 Of the long-wished-for, happy herring drave.”

So overwhelming was the spoil from the Auld Haikes, that, according to him—

“ Auld wives' tub or maister can was crammed,
 Till Darsie swore, by George, he'd cure no more,
 And Roger sickened at the smell of herrings.”

And not only so, but the very cats were satiated, for

“Even Anst’er tabbies, that were wont to felch
Herring or haddock rizzering on wall,
Would at the frying-pan mew, and puff, and spit ;
Would arch their backs, and grin with desp’rate teeth,
And eke with tail enlarged, like brush of fox,
Scud to the house-top, where enraged they’d sit
Till breakfast or till dinner hour was past,
And smell of herrings vexed the house no more.”

As before the drave became the El Dorado by sea and shore, the tradesman left his bench or his stool to share the midnight toil and the midnight prize of the hardy fishers on the deep ; and the merchant also left counter or desk to invest his capital and credit in the great silver mine. Season after season saw it prosper, till 1822, when the following anecdote will give a suggestive insight into the men and manners of the day :—Amongst the herring curers that Lammas on Anstruther shore were the town-clerk, the inn-keeper, and the young draper, just from Leven. Each had his little magazine of salt and barrels with a cooper, and the preparations were not in vain. The harvest came, and as the most advised market the three friends united with Mr George Forbes, originally from Elie, but now a leading fish merchant in Anstruther, to send a cargo to Dublin. Mr Forbes acted as supercargo, and on his return the joint-stock concern, so to speak, met in the parlour of Mr Laing’s inn to discuss the balance sheet. The returns just saved a loss. The town-clerk suggested, and the inn-keeper agreed with him, that there might be better luck next year ; but the young draper, Mr Murray, was decided. “No, no,” said he, “if herrings at four shillings or five shillings a cran will not pay, I at least have done with the trade now and for ever.” Next year the shoals again disappeared from the Forth. “It’s the steam-boats ;

there's nae doubt about it," cried the wise, as they pointed to the clumsy paddle steamers running between Newhaven and the Tay or the Dee. "Na, na," quoth others, "it was the ringing o' Kingsbarns bell. Wha ever heard o' herrin' in the Auld Haikes after a Sabbath day?" "People only see the surface, let us tell them," said one oracle, with a look of mingled contempt and pity; "we told what would happen the first day the herrings were driven to the fields." According to such seers, it was a direct judgment from heaven—more herrings being caught in September of 1822 than could be cured or consumed; but thus early there were those who held the sea-exhausted theory, of which so much has since been heard from the parlour or the garret in recent years.



CHAPTER XI.

THE MARTYRS TO DUTY, AND THE LOSSES OF FIFTY YEARS AGO.

In the meantime, however, a touching calamity had befallen the homes of Cellardyke. It was on a sunny afternoon in the year 1819. The farmer and his children turned from the green fields to the green sea to watch the boats dancing so gaily on the homeward tack. Two boats in particular are coursing like things of life on the beautiful waters, when one, like a strong foot caught in the race, is borne down by the treacherous white squall. "God help that poor crew," cried the spectators; but within the very brink of destruction the boat righted and is safe. Not so her companion. It is the "Flora," with Alexander Parker as skipper, and, being to leeward, her crew so far had been warned. The sheets are loose, but the hurricane has claimed its victim, and the men have only time—some to cut away a bladder and others to seize, perhaps, a kit, and thus to leap from the gunwale when the wreck, with a long lurch, sinks like a stone to the bottom. The windward boat is flying to the rescue, but seven instead of eight brave men are breasting towards her. One by one they are taken on board; but what of the missing one. It is Alexander Watson, one of the best beloved youths of Cellardyke, last seen as if asleep in the afterhold, which has now become his coffin and his grave. The rescue boat, with the melancholy tale, is steered for Anstruther pier; but sad tidings travel swiftly, and hurried whispers are on every threshold. "Wha is't; wha's droon'd," asks the unfortunate mother, seeing the dejection and sorrow in every face; but

brave men, whose eye never quailed in the battle and the storm, now steal past bent and broken, till a landsman rudely unclasps all mystery. "Gang awa hame, woman; it's yer ain son!" The disaster occurred on Monday, and on the previous Sabbath Alexander Watson seemed to lead the young enquirers who, after earnest study and prayer, were to sit down at the communion table at its first dispensation by the popular minister, James Brown, who never forgot the interest and devotion of one thus early gathered in the harvest of God. Our narrative of bereavement and sorrow has its next scene not on the green shores of Fife, but on the stormy coast of Buchan. The incident at the time thrilled the heart of the nation; but the story is best told in the interesting letter which an eye-witness sent to the venerable father of the hero who gave his life with such willing sacrifice to the cause of humanity:—

FRASERBURGH, 29th January 1822.

DEAR SIR,—With extreme sorrow I write you these lines to inform you of the death of your son John, which happened on the 25th day of the month, about four o'clock in the afternoon. The circumstances attending his death have been truly melancholy for many individuals of this and other places, and has involved families in the most agonising thoughts and reflections. The sloop "Mary," of Gardenstown, came in sight of this place between two and three o'clock of the afternoon of that much-to-be-lamented day, and soon after made for the harbour, and a boat in which were six people. Pilots belonging to this place went out of the harbour to give what assistance they could. Two other boats soon followed to act as occasion might require. The ship came towards the harbour without any apparent danger, but before the anchor could be let go to bring the vessel up, she drove, and after it was gone she still drove until she came stern upon a rock called Baich Head, to the southward of the harbour,

which rock is about 240 yards distant from the harbour. In a few minutes after the vessel struck, one of the boats was upset in the act of attempting to get a line from the vessel to the pier, when five men were immediately engulfed in the merciless waves. The other two boats, after making several dangerous although unsuccessful attempts to obtain possession of the line, were obliged to desist and return to the harbour. On the first boat being upset, the Life-boat was immediately launched into the water, in order to preserve some of the men who were then floating ; but owing to the irresistible fury of the wind and waves, which were still increasing, they were drove ashore on the sands a considerable way from the place where they went out, without being able to give the least assistance. At this melancholy crisis Lieut. Crocker, commanding the boat employed on the Preventive Service here, proposed to attempt to rescue the crew, and one of the pilots was on board the vessel, which had by this time nearly become a perfect wreck, if his crew would assist him in the humane attempt. Accordingly, one of the Preventive boats was launched, in which were Mr Crocker, your son, and two more of the Preventive crew, and a seaman belonging to this place, who proceeded to and reached the wreck in safety ; and the crew of the vessel and pilot were taken from the wreck into the boat, and were in the act of proceeding to the shore when a tremendous sea broke over the vessel and filled the boat—which immediately rendered all human efforts unavailing—and in a few minutes the whole of the unfortunate people were left to the mercy of the waves, and out of the ship's company, boat's crew, and pilot who was on board at the time, none have been spared to relate the melancholy tale but Lieut. Henry Crocker, who, being a good swimmer and being lightly dressed, and having had presence of mind to divest himself of the coat he had on at the time, his hat, and neckcloth, was a great means in the hand of Providence in saving him. This is the most accurate and true account I can give you of the sad catastrophe that has happened, which will be long remembered and severely

felt in this place. My brother-in-law, whom you knew, was the unfortunate pilot who suffered along with your son ; and had it not been that I was taken up so much in soothing the mind of his unfortunate widow, I would have wrote you sooner. Your son's corpse came on shore yesterday morning, and is to be interred in this church-yard this day at three o'clock afternoon. I need not give you any directions about how you shall inform your son's widow of her loss. May God enable you to put up with what I have related to you, and to communicate to her in a suitable manner the melancholy news. You may acquaint my friend, David Watson, and friends what I have said, and may God enable you and your connections to bow with Christian fortitude and resignation to the Divine Will ; and may He be pleased to direct and protect each of us in our several occupations through life, is the wish of your afflicted but sincere friend,

ALEXANDER NOBLE JOSEPH.

This martyr to duty is commemorated in a fine obelisk in Kilrenny Churchyard, placed over the grave of his widow, Margaret Lothian, who survived till the 25th of December 1859, by their only child, John Martin, Esq. of St Ayles' Crescent—the thrice elected Provost of the burgh—and whose name has also been for years as familiar as a household word in connection with the oil-cloth manufacture of Cellardyke.

Time rolls on, and the cry—the piercing cry of the widow and the orphan—is again heard on the shores. It is a bleak day in the spring of 1826, when, let us observe, the deep sea going boats of Cellardyke have far outgrown its little harbour. The moorings are in three tiers, by as many stout chains, which have replaced the thigh-thick cables of an earlier day. The enterprise of the coast, however, is not arrested by such an obstacle, and the dashing new boat which has engrossed so much attention as she rose plank and plank

under the hands of the old wright, James Henderson, at Anstruther Brae, now counts the four-and-twentieth of the fleet. She is named the "Victory," and is owned in shares, which is still the rule on the coast, and, being her maiden voyage, no little interest is of course felt to know how she will work at sea. Perhaps she is a little crank under the mainsail, but still the crew are proud of their gallant boat, and all goes well till, on the voyage home, they encounter the dreadful storm which swept over the coast on Thursday, the 6th of April. A brave hand was at the helm; but the black squall laughs at all precautions, and, reeling like a stricken bird on the pathway of destruction, the ill-fated boat is next instant engulfed in the angry waves. Once a wild cry rises through the crash of the tempest; but never again so swiftly did seven gallant mariners sink into a watery grave. One, however, is left to battle with the storm, all alone—no friendly eye, no friendly ear to catch, perchance, the death cry. Oh! the suspense, the agony of such a situation—every wave rushing on with the menace or the message of death; but the arm of heaven is around him, till, at the end of more than an hour, he is seen and rescued by his neighbours in the boat "Johns," of Cellardyke. The disaster occurred in the afternoon, about four miles to the eastward of the Island of May, and the sufferers are as follows:—David Taylor, sen.; David Taylor, jun.; William Taylor, Robert Pratt, William Peattie, Andrew Heugh, Robert Corstorphine. The survivor is William Pratt, a son of old Alexander, the daring sailor of the war. An Edinburgh newspaper of the day says:—"By this calamitous event, four poor widows and a number of helpless children totally unprovided for, are left to bewail the loss of their husbands and fathers. Two of the persons who have suffered were lately married, and their

widows are pregnant. Such as were unmarried were the support of aged parents, or of younger brothers and sisters. In short, each of these poor mourning families have a claim on the sympathy of the humane; but upon one family the stroke has fallen with peculiar severity: a father and his two sons are among the deceased. The 'Victory' was thirty-four feet long, but in her day she was regarded as a floating leviathan, and the flush of pride was on many faces when she first kissed the brine. One of these, and also one of her owners, was Andrew Heugh, a brother of Captain Walter Heugh, so widely known in reference to the Wallaroo copper mines. The family was originally from Pittenweem, but the 'Preventive man' duties of the father had brought them to Cellardyke, where Andrew married and settled as a fisherman, while Captain Hughes began in 1818 his apprenticeship in Mr Sharp's curing yard as a cooper, which he quitted after a rather unlucky venture on his own account at Crail, to begin that romantic career first as a sailor, then as a sheep farmer, and next, by a happy chance, the master of an Australian copper field, which has placed him amongst the most successful men of his time." Ten months had not elapsed when "There is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet," was again the mournful text of an East of Fife pulpit. It referred to Saturday, the 11th of February 1828. The mourners were assembling. Here the old elder, pale and withered like the last sheaf in autumn; there the young student, full of the hopes and aspirations which his bright eye cannot conceal; this the owner of broad lands and that the toiler with the one thread-bare coat—all side by side to bear the remains of the sainted mother of Thomas Chalmers to the grave. It is a memorable day in Anstruther, and none the less so for the fearful blast of wind and snow and hail, which at the moment the bearers

stoop to lift their solemn burthen sends the stoutest reeling to the wall. It roars like thunder over the house tops, and the bewildered wife, turning to the dark sea, beaten like chaff by the wing of the tempest, prays in her agony—"God in His mercy help them on the water in an hour like this." Such was the conflict in which a little sail was seen to engage in Largo Bay; but it was short and decisive. That boat was never seen more. The sequel is soon told. It was the stout little drave boat returning down the Forth with staves to Anstruther, when there and then all on board met a watery grave—these being Andrew Crawford, the skipper; James Budge, of the little drug shop on the shore; Peter Watson, weaver; and John Philp, wheelwright. The skipper was a native of Cellardyke, but, like his three companions, he had his home at this time in Anstruther, where they left widows, and in nearly every case children likewise more or less unable, as the phrase went, "to fend for themselves." These were, in truth, evil days for the Fife coast, for only next year the streets of Cellardyke were once more saddened by wives and children weeping for their beloved, never, never to return again. It happened on the 24th of September 1828, when the white fishing fleet, as before the loss of the "Victory," was reckoned at twenty-four boats. The crews were also still in the custom of concluding the drave, or rather of proceeding the lines by a trip to the mussel beds of the Eden in order to lay up a bait provision for the winter, and this day several coast boats were lying deeply laden in the river, where the rule of the old tacksman, Arthur Berrie, was "Fill your bait, men; but tak' little or tak' muckle, you've fifteen pound to gi'e me." The tide was on the bar, but the heavens were dark with the west wind, and the old fishers advised, though the young men grumbled, to

come to anchor for the night. A Cellardyke boat, however, is pushed into the stream. "There's David Roger, if it's weather for him it's weather for us," cried the skipper's son of the "Olive." John Davidson shakes his head, but youth is resolute and strong, and another boat is soon breasting to sea. With the cliffs of St Andrews to windward all is perhaps well but rounding the Carr and full in the Forth, and so at the mercy of the tempest. "Can they escape?" The windward boat anticipates the danger. "Let's into Fifeness and lighten her," said the skipper, and the order once executed she is bounding on her stormy way, like one relieved of a deadly burthen. The expedient, however, is all unobserved and unheeded by the "Olive," which again, as if by a fatal temptation, follows in the race. And gallantly she does so—tack for tack—till not three furlongs from Crail harbour she staggers headlong, like a wrestler in the fight, and so it is now with death and despair, for within the breath she is over-mastered and sinking in the breakers. Seven brave men are seen on the gunwale, but with six the glass is run. Amongst these is the skipper and his son. "James," said the veteran in the tenderness of the last farewell. "Father," answers the young man with the same look of melting love and confidence, and then clasped to each other's bosom they sink without a struggle into the raging flood. And thus all alone the oldest and most enfeebled man in the boat sees the last agony of his own two sons, his brother and that brother's son who are amongst the six that perish; but he holds on, and on to his frail stay, a drifting kit, till at last, just as his grasp is loosening in the dreadful conflict, he is caught by a friendly hand, and is saved in one of the boats that observed the tragedy. The survivor is William Davidson—the sufferers being the skipper, John Davidson, who left a wife and daughter; and his son

James, who had been but a short time married; William's two sons: William and Andrew, unmarried. The bodies of the skipper and his son, who perished in each other's arms, were cast up by the sea at Arbroath three weeks after the catastrophe. They would appear to have been locked in that last loving embrace almost to the hour they were found, as a rock only lay between parent and child, who rest in one grave under the shadows of the grand old sanctuary of St Vigeans. Young William Davidson's body was found floating at sea, and so landed by one of the Cellardyke boats. We extract the following reference to the calamity from a Fife paper of the day:—"A society was established in Anstruther about two years and a-half ago, called the Caledonian Gardener Society. Upon the death of any of its members the Society pays the widow or nearest relative of the deceased £5 as funeral money, besides other provisions. In the Cellardyke boat that was lost last week not less than four of its members perished, and a day or two before an account has arrived of the death of one of its members in the East Indies, a most promising young man, a captain of a vessel, who has left a widow and three children to lament his loss, being in all five members in one week. It was truly gratifying, at a meeting of the Society on Monday night, to see the spirit of philanthropy displayed by every member vieing with each other who should first pay their quota of said funeral money. This Society has really done much good in its way, and ought to be encouraged, particularly by seafaring people, as it has paid not less than 11 to 12 funerals, amounting to about £55 or £60, since its establishment, all of which have been (with one exception) premature deaths. In the last Cellardyke boat that was lost previous to this three members were drowned, and in the one

belonging to this place, lost last year in Largo Bay, one member was drowned."

The following year has also a place in the melancholy register of loss at sea. The Anstruther sailors and tradesmen had, in the spirit of their forefathers, fitted out three drave boats, long famous as the red, the white, and the black tankards. The last of these, the "Magdalene," was fishing that Lammas at Fraserburgh, with honest old David Grubb as the skipper, when one dark night, as she was swinging at the drift, her bows were crushed in by a north country boat, which completed the cruel outrage by stealing away and leaving the Anstruther crew without one word of pity to their fate. The skipper had scarcely time to warn his companions to seize the first float or spar which came to their hand, when the old tankard gave a long lurch and sank under their feet. They all rose to the surface, however, except a hapless young man, married but a few months before, belonging to St Andrews, who perished with the boat. The sea was crowded with fishing craft; but, unseen and unheard in the darkness, the poor castaways had to buffet for an hour or more with the waves before relief came. The exhaustion and anxiety of that night, however, were too much for the veteran skipper, who sank into a premature grave.

