



William Skene.

EAST NEUK CHRONICLES.

BY

WILLIAM SKENE.



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Prefatory Note.

UNDER the title of "East Neuk Chronicles, by an East-
Ender," a series of papers dealing with life and character
in the East-End of Aberdeen between the years 1840
and 1860 appeared in the *Aberdeen Evening Express* during 1896.
They were so favourably received that the author was induced to
pen a second series of reminiscences, which were published in the
Saturday issue of the *Evening Express* during the year 1908. In
response to the request of many friends and other readers, a collec-
tion has now been made of the principal papers in the two series,
which it is hoped will prove interesting to the general public as
recording phases of life that have long since passed away, and
describing "characters" that have vanished from the scene and
left no successors.

The papers were originally written with no thought of eventual
républication, and with little regard to literary style or elegance,
to which, indeed, the author makes no pretensions. They were not
conceived on any definite plan, and anything like continuity or
sequence was not aimed at. An endeavour has been made in
this volume, however, to arrange the matter in chapters and
sections.

ABERDEEN, *March*, 1905.

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EAST NEUK CHRONICLES.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

In looking back upon the mighty changes that have taken place in Aberdeen during the last sixty or seventy years, I do not think there is any locality in the city where there has been a greater upturning than in the classic region where I first saw the light—the Justice Port. And it is not only physically that it has changed—in fact, it has been blotted out—but the moral aspect of the locality is as different from what it was at the period referred to as night is from day. The locality was also noted in the past for a great many worthies of different degrees, a number of whom did not a little in their day and generation for the good of “the braif toun” of Bon-Accord. The very mention of some of their names will recall pleasureable recollections to the minds of many of our older citizens, though they are quite unknown, unless by hearsay, to the younger members of the community.

THE QUEEN'S MARRIAGE BONFIRE.

About the earliest of my recollections of anything of importance in the locality is the bonfire that was lighted on the Castle-gate on the occasion of the Queen's marriage in 1840—sixty-five years ago. My recollection of it is, however, rather hazy; I only remember that it was a big blaze. I used to pay daily visits to our then new market in Wales Street; and I was present at the opening of the New Market in 1842, when the building was all decorated with banners and evergreens, and the proceedings were enlivened by the music of brass bands. About this time gas was just be-

ginning to be introduced into private houses, while railway communication with the city was not opened up for other seven years at least. The penny post had only come lately into being, thanks to Sir Rowland Hill, who, by those who can remember having paid from one or two shillings in postage for a single letter, must be considered a public benefactor. But we had to wait for other fifteen years ere the last fetters were knocked off, in the repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Act and the duty on paper.

THE WRECK OF THE “BRILLIANT.”

The most appalling sight I ever saw occurred about the time of the Queen's marriage, and as I was quite young at the time, it made a great impression upon me. I refer to the wreck and burning of the steamer “Brilliant” at the mouth of the harbour. As the story is almost forgotten by the older inhabitants, and has perhaps scarcely been heard of by the younger generation, I may briefly recapitulate it. The steamer was one of the regular traders between the port and Leith. She left Leith for Aberdeen one winter afternoon. All went well with her until about two o'clock next morning, when she was off Montrose. At this time the weather became very stormy. By great exertions she got to Aberdeen bay about 6.30 a.m. There was a tremendous sea running; and it was then about an hour after high water. Captain Wade, her commander, thought his best chance of safety lay in attempting an entrance, and as he put about to carry out

this intention, the vessel gave a heavy lurch, a big sea striking her, and the captain was washed overboard, and was never more seen. The mate, who now took the command, had no alternative but to proceed for the harbour. The vessel crossed the bar, but a heavy fresh coming down the river caught her, and drove her on the old South Pier. With a tremendous crash she heeled over to the inside, but all the passengers and crew managed to scramble ashore. In the hurry the firemen forgot to draw the fires from below the boilers, and the result was that the steamer took fire and burned down to the water's edge. Most of the cargo was recovered, although it was greatly damaged, together with part of the material of the vessel; and this was the last of the unfortunate "Brilliant."

SHIPPING FACILITIES AND LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS.

Sixty years ago a great number of important questions were agitating Aberdeen and the north of Scotland. The Chartists were in full swing, educating the people in regard to their rights; and another important movement was that for the abolition of the corn laws. The agents of the Anti-Corn Law League travelled over the length and breadth of the land, with what results we all know. The total abolition of the slave trade the world over was another subject that greatly exercised men's minds at that time and for long after; while another burning question for Aberdeen and the whole of Scotland was the celebrated Strathbogie case, which led up to the Disruption in 1843.

Besides these matters, which were more of a national character, local movements with a view to public improvements began to take shape. The city began to recover from the state of bankruptcy into which it had fallen about 1818 after Union Street was laid out, and the inhabitants became more fully alive to their own interests. Although, as has been already stated, the railway system had not reached the far north, mail coaches were running in all directions from the town; and considering

its then recent introduction, steam navigation had got a good start in Aberdeen, there being, as far back as 1838, a weekly steamer to and from Dundee, the fares being 7s 6d and 5s, and three sailings each week to and from Leith, the steerage fare being 5s. One of the Leith traders was the ill-fated "Brilliant," of which Lord Provost Mearns' father was at one time commander. There was also one weekly sailing to and from London, the cabin fare, including provisions, being £2 2s, and one weekly sailing to and from Hull, the steerage fare being 21s. At this time the "Great Western" was sailing to New York from Bristol in fifteen days, and the steerage passage was 35 guineas.

It may thus be gathered that at that early date things were beginning to improve in the city, and it will not be wondered at by those who are old enough to remember what like our harbour was before the docks were made, that harbour improvement came to be a very clamant cry. The harbour at that time was at low water only a gigantic cesspool, but although the Harbour Act for the docks was passed in 1843, it was 1846, if I remember rightly, before the docks were opened.

By-and-bye an agitation got up for a new post office, the business having greatly extended after the introduction of the Penny Post. The Mechanics' Institution was requiring suitable quarters, and the Trades were requiring a new hall. We had a number of markets, but they were unsuitable. We required to have them all under one roof, if possible. Then we required a better approach from the quayside than Marischal Street; we required new banks, and, after the Disruption, required shoals of new churches. As to the last, we set to work, and, in the course of a few years, got them. The Market Company was formed, and Market Street was built; and our Chief Magistrates, Provosts Milne and Blaikie, together with the late Sir Alexander Anderson, and the firm with which he was connected, all acted their part in helping on the good work. From that time till now the city has grown with leaps and bounds, and long may its progress and prosperity continue!

THE OPENING OF THE NEW MARKET.

In connection with the New Market, after the laying of the foundation stone in 1840, the building went on apace, the directors of the Market Company being anxious to get it ready and opened as soon as possible, as a great number of people—*butchers, gardeners, etc.*—were anxious to secure shops in it, more especially those connected with the *Wales Street* and *Poultry Markets*. The principal contractors were *Messrs Macdonald and Lealie* for the mason work, and *Mr Alexander Rennie*, *Commerce Street*, for the carpenter work. Great interest was manifested by the citizens in the undertaking, both from the novelty of the building and also its great size. As there had been a demonstration at the laying of the foundation stone, it was thought it would only be in keeping to have another at the opening, and it was agreed to have an opening demonstration on the afternoon of *Friday, 29th April, 1842*, when a banquet was provided, admission being by payment. The market was all gaily decorated with ensigns and banners, a half-holiday was proclaimed, and from 2000 to 3000 attended. Five long tables ran along the hall with the good things provided, and two tiers of tables along the galleries. The company present first promenaded through the place for an hour, and there was vocal and musical talent galore, which entertained the guests at intervals. After doing justice to the good things provided, the ubiquitous *Sillerton boys*—who never missed any of the good things—commenced their part by singing a hymn and then a glee written by somebody or other for the occasion. The first and last verses were—

From the fair *Levinian shore*
 I your markets come to store;
 Muse not though so far I dwell,
 And come here my wares to sell,
 Such is the insatiable thirst for gold.
 Then come to my pack,
 While I cry, "What d'ye lack, what d'ye buy?"
 For here it is to be sold.

Gentles all, now fare you well,
 I must trudge my wares to sell;
 Lads so blythe and dames so young
 Drop a guerdon for my song.

Just let me have a touch of your gold.
 I'll come with my pack
 Again to cry, "What d'ye lack, what d'ye buy?"
 For here it is to be sold.

The whole affair was a great success. It may be mentioned that, after the opening of the market for business, the first article that was sold in it was a salmon 11 lbs. weight, bought by the *Lord Provost* of the day at *David Robb*, the fishmonger's stall or shop in the low market.

PROCESSION OF THE TRADES.

I remember the procession of the Trades at the laying of the foundation stones of the *Docks*, the *Trades Hall*, and the *Mechanics' Hall*, which all occurred on one day, I think, in 1846. I remember the Reform demonstration of 1884, but, big as it was, it was not within sight of that of which I am speaking. The amount of money spent in connection with the pageant must have been enormous. One worthy—there are few or none of this kind to be seen now—was "*Boxer Jock*," who walked at the head of the gardeners. He was eight feet high if he was an inch. *Jock* was sadly annoyed by the gamins in his latter years. Such as he are taken better care of nowadays. I do not believe that the present boys are better or worse than the boys of sixty or seventy years ago; and only give them the opportunity of "*bully-ragging*" some poor creature, and they are at it tooth and nail, just as in the past.

PREVALENCE OF VICE.

During recent years there has been a good deal of controversy in *Aberdeen* with regard to the efficiency of the enactment in reference to what is known as loitering, some maintaining that it has been the means of ridding us of the evil to a great extent, and others maintaining that the evil has only been driven below the surface. Be that as it may, in *Aberdeen*, as it was sixty or seventy years ago, and more especially in the east end of *Castle Street* and in *Justice Port* and that quarter, the scenes that were enacted, and the squalor, vice, and misery that were to be seen in broad daylight,

hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly, would scarcely be credited by the present generation, and would not and could not be tolerated long. Women and men of the lowest grade, hailing from all the lowest dens about Smith's Court, Peacock's Close, Pensioner's Court, and the adjacent lanes and wynds, were to be seen lounging about and sitting on the streets, and no one ever interfered with them or said, "What doest thou?" As for the conversation that went on continually, it was simply appalling. It was nothing uncommon on a fine summer afternoon to see twenty or thirty of them sitting or lying on the steps that led up to the old Record Office at the top of Cast'e Street, then used as a dispensary, afterwards as a temporary police office, and now demolished. The day patrol would, as he passed along, clear them off the footpath, but they would immediately go back once he had passed; and so the thing went on. Farther along, towards John Black's stair, they could be seen sitting in half dozens all the way to Albion Street, then called the "Bool Road." Where the church now stands, all the male and female black-guardism of the district could be found.

REV. DR J. H. WILSON.

The late Rev. Dr J. H. Wilson, editor of "The North of Scotland Gazette," when quite a young man, towards the end of the forties started a mission with a view to civilise the locality. He built a wooden edifice of a very primitive style, and called it the "Ragged Kirk." The wooden structure soon had to give way to a larger stone building, which in turn was found to be too small, and was superseded by the present church. Mr Wilson ultimately devoted himself to the ministry, and, owing to his success in reclaiming the district, he was called to London by the late Lord Shaftesbury to organise the same kind of work there. He periodically visited the scene of his former labours, and I consider that if ever a man had cause to be proud of the visible tokens of his work he was the man. Mr Wilson and the late Sheriff Watson are two of whom Aberdeen may justly be proud. Mr Wilson not only worked for the spiritual

good of the locality, but also carried on classes for the education of the people. For a number of years there was a night of the week devoted to lectures on all sorts of interesting subjects by well-known men, such as the late Professor Martin, Mr George Troup, and Mr George Easton. No charge was made. There was also a temperance society in connection with the mission; and a coffee-room was opened at the top of Commerce Street, under the charge of one of Dr Wilson's lieutenants, John Learmont, stonemason, a regular old terror, who used to keep us in order in rare style. A great friend of the mission was the late Captain Burnett of Monboddo, who used every year to invite the members of the temperance society to his seat, where he treated them handsomely. I believe that about the first pleasure trips ever organised were got up under Mr Wilson's auspices.

THE SAND CADGERS.

Where Albion Street Church now stands was the rendezvous in those days of a race of character now almost as extinct as the dodo—namely, the sand cadgers. Although we have sorry sights sometimes yet in the shape of horseflesh, I think the S.P.C.A. would soon have cleared out the apologies for horses that the sand cadgers possessed. It was lamentable to see the animals dragging their loads up Park Street, the drivers begging every passer-by to lend a hand in shoving the carts along. On Sundays, horses and masters spent the day on the Old Town Links. Sometimes one does see a cartload of sand still, but the use of it for floors has fairly gone out of fashion.

THE MILKMAIDS—"BUTTERMILK JOHNNIE."

Then there were the milkmaids, who used to stand at the corner of Justice Street and Castle Street twice daily, morning and afternoon. The supply of milk was fully equal to the demand, and it was a sight to see the milkmaids racing when a likely customer appeared. I feel bound to state that they were badly treated by us urchins, for whenever they ran away we went to their pails and drank their milk, little caring what the consequences might be to

the poor girls. I can remember it was a very demoralising job for the girls to be standing for hours daily in such a locality, and never six months passed but some of them went astray.

There was also a man who, for a great many years, came to Castle Street early in the morning twice a week to sell butter and buttermilk. He went by the name of "Buttermilk Johnnie," and I never knew anybody that could tell what his right name was. He used to be literally besieged by customers whenever he appeared in the street.

THE CASTLEGATE.

At the time with which I am dealing the people in the Green had not taken away our well with the "mannie" on the top of it. It stood close to the pavement at the end of the Record Office, and near the premises occupied by Mr James Gordon, afterwards of the Aberdeen Mourning Establishment, who carried on about the largest, and certainly the best-known, drapery business in the city. Mr Gordon did not spare his gas, and when his shop was lighted up in the evening the whole of that end of the Castlegate was brightly illuminated. The consequence was that the front of his establishment was the happy hunting-ground for fun and frolic of all the gamins in the neighbourhood. The police in those days did not trouble us much. They were few in number, with proportionately big beats, and unless we were at something extra bad we were allowed full scope to play our games. In fact, instead of being hunted by the police, we used to hunt them. There used to be a man on the beat whom we did not like. We gave him the name of "Parrot-beak" from his look, and we used to hoot him and cry names at him. He would start after us, but we would rush round by the barracks or down the Hangman's Brae, and he never put himself much about in running far after us. If boys were to try that game now they would be surrounded and caught in a few minutes.

THE POLICE FORCE.

At that time, and until not so many years ago, there were two ruling bodies in Aber-

deen—namely, the Town Council and the Police Commission. We had also two distinct bodies of police, the day patrol and the night watchmen. The day men were never on duty during the night, nor were the night men ever on duty during the daytime. The dress of the patrol bore a faint resemblance to the present police uniform, with glazed "cheese-cutters" instead of helmets. The whole strength of the day force in the early fifties was some seven men, with a superintendent, Mr Alexander, who was every now and again getting himself court-martialed by the Commissioners for dereliction of duty, such as receiving charges while lying on a sofa in the police office, etc.! The opinion was publicly expressed that the town's officers were the only men fit to apprehend prisoners, and that the police force was quite worthless for the discharge of its proper duties, and should consequently be disbanded. The majority of the night men were rather old men. Their pay ran to something like 11s per week, with uniform thrown in. This uniform consisted of a topcoat, with cape, and a blue "Tam o' Shanter" bonnet. There was uniformity in nothing about them except their dress, for a young man 6ft. 5in. in height might be seen marching alongside an old man of 5ft. 6in. A godly number of our later effective police force commenced their career among the "Charlies," notably the late Lieutenant James Milne, who was for some considerable time on the Justice Street beat, and could tell of some queer episodes in that locality. I, who, as a punishment to wean me of my theatre-going propensities, was occasionally locked out for an hour or two at night, used to march round his beat with him, and got much good advice from him. The Commissioners recommended on one occasion that the night watchmen should be drilled like the military, but the force declined to agree to it without being paid extra for it, and the proposal came to nothing.

DISORDERLY WOMEN, BEGGARS, ETC.

As an instance of what the east end of Aberdeen was like then, I may mention that a memorial was sent to the magistrates by the late Baillie Bothwell, who lived and

carried on his business in the locality, complaining of the number of profligate and dissolute females that congregated in Park Street, Justice Port, and the north end of Castle Street. To such an extent had this nuisance increased, the memorial pointed out, that, even in the daytime, families could not send out servants without their being insulted and having their ears assailed by the most indecent and blasphemous language. Mason's Court was entirely occupied by prostitutes, and on complaint being made to the proprietrix of the property there, she said the prostitutes had literally taken possession of the premises, and would pay no rent. The Provost, in answer, threw the blame for the matter on the Police Commissioners, and said that, if they were as particular in looking after this sort of work as they were in looking after a poor man with a bundle on his back, or a baker with his basket on the pavement at five in the morning, they would be better occupying their time. The Provost added that if he had his old friends, Charlie Clapperton and Simon Grant, with half a dozen more as good men, he would soon put such nuisances down. A Councillor then mentioned that a great many beggars, with sore arms and legs, who were to be seen lying about on the streets, formed a disgusting sight. The outcome of the matter was that, as the Police Commissioners' men could not abate the evil, the Council's men, the town's officers, were told to look after it. So much for dual control. Things went on for long in the same fashion before a remedy was found by the late Mr Geo. Stirling, grocer, a well-known east-ender, and for many years a Police Commissioner. Having bought some property in Nailer's Court, directly opposite the back barrack gate, on going to take possession he found that the tenantry would not budge. He first attempted to get the furniture, such as it was, put into the street, but no sooner was one lot cleared out than the tenants started to put it back. He then took out the windows and took off the doors, but it was of no use. At length a happy thought struck him. He sent for the water hose, and, amid the shouts and yells of all the gamins in the district, the poor wretches

of tenants fled from the premises like a lot of half-drowned rats. The entrances were then all barricaded up until such time as the buildings were pulled down and new premises erected.

One disturbing element among many others in those days was the great influx of navvies employed in the formation of the railways from the south and to the north. Upon the pay Saturday—once a month—the scenes in the vicinity of Justice Port were simply appalling. For one thing, there were no closing regulations for public-houses. The Forbes M'Kenzie Act had not come into existence, and, in fact, many public-houses were never shut.

THE MILITARY.

Then we had the military. In those days Aberdeen was a regimental headquarters, with its 500 or 600 troops—not a depot, as it now is. For a great many years the regiments were either English or Irish—namely, the 34th, the 60th Rifles, the 69th, the 88th Connaught Rangers, and the 87th, the last-named with its brass band, which was reckoned the finest in the service, and which was under Mons. Jullien's great cornet player, Herr Koenig. The band, I can remember, were the most supercilious, conceited lot of soldiers I ever remember having seen. They never left the barracks except in full dress, and, instead of a white ball in their shakoes, such as the regiment wore, they had a bunch of red horse hair hanging over their faces. I can remember the swallow-tailed coats and the white jean trousers that the line regiments wore in those days. Although the fact that such a number of men in a place meant the spending of a good deal of money, their presence was also the cause of a great deal of vice and immorality.

RACES AND SPORTSMEN.

The officers at the barracks, along with a number of gentlemen connected with the district, went in largely for sporting, in the shape of horse racing on the flat and steeple-chasing. One name in particular was more on people's lips, young and old, fifty to sixty

years ago, than those of any other fifty men, and that was the name of Robertson of Foveran, the mention of which will bring back to those of an older generation recollections of the days of their youth. Another familiar name in the same connection was that of Count Leslie. The boys used to think there never were two such heroes as these two, nor such races anywhere as the Aberdeen races of that epoch—races which are now only a memory. After the races the boys of east Aberdeen invariably used to go racing mad for a month or two, and the amount of penny-worths of green, red, and yellow cotton for racing jackets and caps that was bought in Gordon's shop was something alarming; and the quantity of energy expended in running from Barrack Hill to Commerce Street, Canal Bridge, and the Bannermill, and back, was not exceeded in running for the Derby at Epsom.

Speaking of steeplechases, I once saw one somewhere out about Denmore. I could not now identify the place, but I remember some of the jumps were alarming; Foveran, with his celebrated grey mare Tinderbox, was the very man for anything of a break-neck order. The sporting gentlemen of those days went in for a number of freaks that we do not see or hear much of now—freaks such as were associated with the name of a former Marquis of Waterford. One in particular I remember, as I was one of the victims of the practical joke. A number of officers and other gentlemen were in a front room in the Royal Hotel one day about the time when the schools were coming out. They commenced throwing halfpence out of the window, for which we scrambled. By and by the shower stopped, but as the gentlemen still remained at the window we remained on the street, picking up an odd copper that might be cast down. By this time there was a fairly large crowd of us. We expected more halfpence, and we were right in our expectation. At last a perfect shower, in fact a whole shovelful, descended, but—O, horror!—when we attempted to lift them, we let them drop with a howl of pain, for the swells had made them red-hot. How the jokers laughed at our discomfiture!

SOLDIERING.

The young officers in those days were a bright lot in many ways; but I suppose in this twentieth century such pranks as those in which they indulged would not be tolerated in the British army. I remember the arrival of the 92nd Highlanders in Aberdeen about sixty years ago. They came direct from Barbadoes, where they had been for a good number of years, and every man, woman, and child of them was as dark as a mulatto. I also remember the arrival of the 42nd over fifty years ago. They came direct from Bermuda, but not having been so long abroad as the 92nd, they were not so tawny. They remained at home till they were sent to the Crimea, two years after, whence the greater part of them never returned. Soldiering for a good number of years prior to the time referred to had been somewhat uneventful to the most of our regiments, although we had a little war on now and again, such as the China War about 1842, and the Sikh War in 1846; but it was only a regiment here and there that took part in these wars, a great number of the native Indian troops having the lion's share of the fighting. At this time there was still a great number of our old Peninsular veterans to the fore. They used to fight their battles over again every day on the Barrack Hill, and used to make us youngsters thrill again with their narratives. The outbreak of the war with Russia in the spring of 1864, in which there was the likelihood that the whole of our troops would be engaged, sent a feeling through the country that it would be impossible to describe; everybody, with the exception of John Bright and one or two others of his way of thinking, went war mad. During that summer there were groups of men who used nightly to sit at the Barrack Hill from about seven o'clock in the evening to one or two o'clock next morning, eager to discuss information. In fact, the war was the sole topic of interest to the people.

MINIO FIGHTING.

I have referred to the Jingoism that was so rampant at this time. It was

not confined to the adult portion of the inhabitants; the juveniles in different parts of the east end organised themselves into bands, and engaged in stone fights on the Links. These mimic battles came to be so hotly contested that there was danger to life and limb in going near the Links at certain times; and they ultimately reached such a pitch that a body of police had to be sent for to separate the combatants. The police managed to do what the Russians failed to do—namely, capture Lord Raglan and his staff! Along with many others, his "lordship" was brought before the bailies, and mulcted, if I recollect aright, in the sum of half-a-crown, with a caution that if he came back his punishment would be more serious, as the matter was getting past a joke. I think the others were whipped, and the presiding bailie was ever after known as "Skelpie L—e." However, it turned out not to be a bad job for his "lordship" after all. He was just about leaving his situation as a grocer's shop boy at Waterloo Quay to learn ship carpentering, and some gentlemen, to show how they appreciated his patriotism, presented him with a chest of carpenter's tools. The poor fellow died about twenty years ago.

CRICKET—OTHER GAMES.

About fifty years ago Aberdeen could boast of two crack cricket clubs, which played the game much nearer to perfection than any of our crack clubs now do—I refer to the St Nicholas club (afterwards merged in the Aberdeenshire) and the Union club. No little excitement was caused among the juveniles when a match between the two came off, as one generally did every other week during the cricket season. As the members of the first-named club consisted principally of business men, bankers, etc., while the members of the other were mainly tradesmen, our sympathies generally went with the latter; and young Aberdeen at that time was as much bound up in the results as the players themselves. Among the players of the St Nicholas were Mr Nisbet, soap boiler, who had a peculiar style of bowling, which went under the name of "Nisbet's twisters"; Mr Watt, banker;

and Mr Manson, banker; while among the Union players, very few of whom remain alive, were the late David Duguid, fishing tackle maker, who was a good bowler; Alfred Normable, currier; Forbes, blacksmith; Cay, an old soldier, and the best wicketkeeper I ever saw; the late George M'Kay, of the "Star and Garter"; Harry Tawse and his brother; and Bob Millar, lithographer, the most cautious cricketer I ever saw play, he generally being first in and last out. I believe Mr William Carnie was also a member of the club. When the Union were victorious our joy was unbounded. I witnessed Mr Cay do an exceedingly smart thing on one occasion—namely, jump across the canal lock at Constitution Street Bridge. The lock, I suppose, was not less than 12 or 13 feet broad, and there was no room for a running jump. None of Mr Cay's brother cricketers attempted to follow his example.

Referring to the games and pastimes in Aberdeen in those days, although we had not that abomination called football, which has about crazed the rising generation, it seems to me that we indulged with more zest than is now done in "smuggle the gig," "kee-how," "hi-spy," "huntie, unity, stalgie," the "boole," the buttons, and, what the present generation know nothing about, "bonnetie kick." I sometimes see boys now engaged at some game with bone buttons, but they know nothing about "figs," "chancers," and "bossies." We used to have frequent fights over the determining of the value of our possessions in that line. During the winter months the Barrack Hill used to be so crowded with players at the "boole"—sailors and boys—that numbers had to shift elsewhere. This was quite a harvest time in the shape of coppers for us boys. Great numbers of our Baltic and American traders were generally laid up, and, there being no Naval Reserve to occupy the young sailors' time, they had no other resource but to frequent the Barrack Hill and join in playing at the "boole." We used to sell them marbles, win them back from them—very often by cheating—and re-sell them again and again; but they never complained.

GALA DAYS—THE "TIMMER MARKET."

A yearly red-letter day in the east end used to be the Queen's Birthday. Among the young people, the cry of "A boat! a boat!" was raised, and away they would rush towards the harbour with the object of getting a boat to burn. Their designs were generally frustrated, however. When they had crossed to the other side of the harbour, the bridges at the foot of Marischal Street and at the dock gates would be thrown open, and by the time the boys retraced their steps by the head of the harbour their ardour was considerably cooled down. A few of the "boys in blue" were generally present, and they, in conjunction with the boatowners, were able to beat us back. I often wonder that some of us did not get our small modicum of brains blown out, for, although we were unable to get hold of any fire-arms in the shape of guns or pistols, we used to obtain Johnnie Mennie's toy cannon, or, failing that, old keys improvised as tiny pieces of ordnance, and, charging them with powder, fired them. That none of them ever burst was a wonder, for we used to load them to the muzzle.

Another high carnival was the "Timmer Market." But then it was the "Timmer Market"—not a general fair as it is now. A few days before it, cartloads of gooseberries and pears made their appearance in Castle Street. The berries were sold by the peck, and the other fruit by weight. We used to be on the watch about dinner-time on the Tuesday, when the first of the cartloads of "timmer" used to put in an appearance, in the shape of ladders, washing tubs, wands for creels, etc., etc., not forgetting dozens of loads of cracking-dry fir roots. Before sundown the whole of the upper part of Castle Street was covered with material for next day's market, and if we did not enjoy ourselves it was not our blame. The sports on the Tuesday night often wound up by the fruit-sellers running races for money, with their empty wheelbarrows, from the Duke of Gordon's statue down to the North Church and back. Wednesday morning opened with the music of tin horns and other unearthly sounds. The market went on merrily, and some-

times, long before night, numbers of the stallholders were sold out. Some of them, however, who did not get clear that day, reappeared on the scene on Thursday. It was an established custom for the Castle-gate boys to have a bonfire of their own on this particular day. We set to work to pilfer as much fir as would make one, and this was very easily accomplished. A crowd used to stand round the piles of wood; we used to get in behind the crowd, and bend down and "slouch" out a piece and walk off with it. There were few police, and we did not seem to have any fear of the police there were. Moreover, we thought we had a prescriptive right to have a bonfire on that occasion, as much as Johnny Milne, the hangman, had to have a fish out of a fishwife's creel.

LOCAL SHIPPING.

Speaking of sailors, no greater change has come over any department of trade and commerce in Aberdeen than that of shipping. Whereas, at the time with which I am dealing, wooden sailing ships were the rule and steamers the exception, it is now the different way about, and I suppose the day is not far distant when the sailing coaster will become extinct. All our coal at that time was carried in these wooden sailing vessels, of which Aberdeen owned a few hundreds of one kind or another. A great many of them were employed in spring and summer in the Baltic and American trade; and there were some five or six whalers that used to lie up in the winter at the Poyner Nook, close beside where the railway station now stands. It was sometimes a sight to see the bay after the fleet had been detained on the homeward passage by contrary winds. Whenever the wind shifted, as many as 50 or 60 ships would arrive off the port, and enter at one tide, with the result that they would be lying six tier deep all up and down the harbour. A great many of these old ships—or coffins, as they were called—were kept running between Aberdeen and Shields until generally, as was predicted of them, they went to the bottom with all hands. No winter ever passed without generally half

a dozen of them meeting that fate; although the sailors dreaded them, they went to sea in them nevertheless.

WRECKS.

Although I have witnessed a considerable number of wrecks upon Aberdeen beach, I think the most painful scene I ever looked upon was the wreck of the two brigs, the "Armistead" and the "Venus," one forenoon in broad daylight (27th November, 1852), in the presence of thousands of the inhabitants. We saw the crew of each of the vessels swept away, man after man, until, with one exception, all were drowned. The tragic scene occurred comparatively near the shore, but not the slightest assistance could be rendered, there being a tremendous sea on, and the lifeboat being powerless to get alongside.

One incident that happened in connection with these wrecks created a very painful feeling in the town for a long time. As just mentioned, the whole of the crews of both ships were drowned, the only exception being a man belonging to Peterhead, a passenger in one of them—in fact, the only passenger—who managed to jump into the lifeboat as she tried to get alongside the wreck. The incident I refer to was that, with the exception of the coxswain of the lifeboat—Robert Hunter, a pilot—for some reason or other none of the crew of fishermen and pilots would go in her; and the Messrs Hall, Duthie, and other gentlemen who were on the spot got a volunteer crew of ship carpenters to man her, and they did their best to save the crews, but, owing to the heavy surf, they could never get alongside. It is perhaps probable that the crews could not have been saved under any circumstances in such a storm.

Although I was not present at the wreck of the "Duke of Sutherland" (1st April, 1853), when her captain and some others were drowned, I was on the scene within two hours after. By that time her cargo was beginning to come ashore; and numbers of people, in spite of the watch that was kept on the beach, got away with great hauls of goods in the shape of drapery

of all kinds. Lots of parasols that had been hidden in the sand bents were not rediscovered until ten years after!

One wreck in those days at the back of the North Pier pleased the boys very much—there were no lives lost. Following what I suppose is a legend about the folks of Footdee—that in their prayers one petition was, "Guid, sen' a coal shippie ashore"—we also used to pray for another "shippie," but ours was not a "coal," but an "apple" shippie. The wreck to which I refer was that of a Jersey apple smaak; but another one never came that I am aware of—"the prayer of the wroked availeth little!" We dug up the apples at the beach for a whole month, and although they had a strong taste of the briny ocean, that did not give us much concern. I remember that one day I was digging away, and that as fast as I found an apple I put it in my outside jacket pocket. When I thought I had got about enough, and put my hand in my pocket to see, to my astonishment I found there was nothing there but a big hole. In the excitement of digging, I had failed to observe it, but as fast as I placed the apples in the pocket, a bigger fellow behind me picked them up as they dropped through the hole to the ground. I took precious good care that he did not get the benefit of my digging any longer that day. Salted apples had no worse a taste, I suppose, than those we used to fish out of the docks with a "dabber," which consisted of a rusty nail or an old heckle tooth fastened on a block of wood, and a long string; I suppose salt water was as wholesome as sewage!

At the time I refer to, before the dock was finished, they used to take out the dredgings and place them down on the Inches, and advertise good manure for sale. The smell now is occasionally not the purest Eau de Cologne, but I remember yet, for as long ago as it is, that the smell used to be horrible. It was a case, in the event of anyone falling into the harbour, if not of drowning, at least of poisoning! I sometimes wonder if they have stopped growing apples in Jersey now, or if they have only stopped bringing them to Aberdeen in order to prevent the boys catching cholera!

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD THEATRE.

THEATRICALS.

In regard to theatricals and public amusements, I would like to see the Aberdonian who lived sixty years ago, and who was, like myself, a theatre-goer in his young days, who would not prefer the little house in Marischal Street to the present provision for the entertainment of the populace. On a Saturday night there would have been three Scotch pieces enacted, with a song and a dance thrown in; and the performance lasted from seven o'clock, when the curtain rose, till five minutes to twelve. The theatrical season lasted for seven or eight months, and the boys knew familiarly all the actors who formed the stock company. In the old days, there was always something fresh and spontaneous occurring to raise a laugh. Woe betide the actor who was not letter-perfect in his part; he was not long in being told about it.

Mr and Mrs Corbet Ryder and family were as well known in their day as the town clock, as also were Mrs Ryder's second husband, Mr Pollock, and her two sons-in-law, Mr M'Lean and Mr Price. Nowadays, theatre-goers sit mute waiting the raising of the curtain, and go home quickly at ten o'clock when the performance is over. Catch Pollock sending a lot of us boys home at that time! I believe it would have been better for us; but he would have heard about it. In fact we would not have gone; one in the morning was the closing hour sometimes, and we would have sworn we were being cheated, and would have demanded our money back had we been dismissed earlier. We would have had to be ejected by the policeman, or rather the man with the policeman's coat on, and then there would have been war, as we did not give much heed to the officer. He was

employed principally for the purpose of stopping smoking, but the boys used to light their pipes, and when he stood at the side of the house, and blustered and cried out—"Put out those pipes!" and made his arms swing about like the sails of a windmill, the smokers only laughed at him. He was frightened to come down to the front, as he would have been "launched" as sure as a gun; he would make as if he were going for Mr Pollock, but he knew better, and came back when the smoking was over.

It just took eightpence on Saturday nights in those days to send us up to Mahomet's seventh heaven or Elysium—sixpence for admission to the gallery to witness the performances of three dramas; a penny for apples, bought before going in; and a penny for one of Baker Stephen's monster penny tarts (he used to supply the theatre)—the whole forming ambrosia fit for the gods.

An incident in my own experience in connection with the old theatre had a strange effect on me for many years after it happened, and the recollection of it is yet very gruesome. One night I was present at a performance, and it was midnight, as usual, when we came out. Elliott, the low comedian, had been in great form that night, and the fun had been fast and furious. When we reached the street, the night being very quiet, we heard the noise of a mighty "thudding" and hammering proceeding from the direction of the Castle-gate. It suddenly occurred to every one of us what was happening. It was the erection of the scaffold on which to hang the criminal Burnett at eight o'clock in the morning for poisoning his wife. I would have given all I possessed not to have heard it. I slunk away home as fast as I could, and I heard them "thudding" away for

hours while I lay sleepless in my bed. It was the most dismal piece of work I ever witnessed. I fancy the workmen did not relish their job that night. And what must have been the feelings of the poor culprit? They must have been awful; and I did feel for him, as he must have heard every stroke of the hammers during that long and dreary night.

With regard to Mr Corbet Ryder, Mrs Pollock's first husband, although I used to hear a good deal about him in my young days, I was quite young at his death, and have no personal recollections of him. But I can perfectly remember his whole family or rather families (Mrs Pollock being his second wife), including the inimitable "Tommy," his brother Roderick, and his half-sisters, Jessie and Emma.

Mr Ryder at the time of his death in 1839 had been lessee of the Aberdeen Theatre for twenty-three years. He was supposed to be the best "Roy Roy" of his day, and was so highly respected by the profession that he was able to bring every prominent actor of the day to the city at one time or another, including Macready, Sheridan Knowles, Edmund Kean and Charles Kean, T. P. Cooke, Vanderhoff, Miss O'Neal, and Miss Foote. By a coincidence, the "Aberdeen Herald" that records his death contains close beside the intimation an account of the marriage of the late Mr Gladstone. Mr Ryder was a native of Wales, hailing not far from Hawarden Castle. Tom Ryder, on his father's death, managed the theatre for some time in conjunction with his step-mother, but the management subsequently fell into his stepmother's hands entirely.

THE MARISCHAL STREET HOUSE.

It was not until Mrs Ryder got married again, so far as I can remember, that I paid my first visit to the theatre. I had often been previously to penny theatres, "Scottie's Show," and "Giles's Penny Rattler," as also to a threepenny theatre that used to be in the "Boal Road," but the New Year's night I made my first entry into the Marischal Street house is as vivid in my

recollection as if it were only a year ago. The play was "Bluebeard," with the old melodrama of "Raymond and Agnes; or, the Bleeding Nun" for an afterpiece. Charles Hale was the low comedian of those days. The Bluebeard business I thought grand, but when it came to the afterpiece, in which there were a few murders, it began to get rather realistic for me, and I began to feel rather nervous at it. I began to think it was all in earnest, and yet I could not think that people would sit still, and look on upon their fellow-creatures getting "polished off" in that manner. I was not sorry, however, when the curtain fell that night.

Twelve months passed before I revisited the theatre. They had got up a pantomime—the first, I believe, for many years—entitled "Old King Cole," with "Tammy Fraser" as clown. What Aberdonian that is 60 years old does not remember Tammy—the most versatile professional of his day? He was an actor ("The Dumb Man of Manchester" was his masterpiece), conjurer, comic singer, marionette manipulator, scene painter, &c., &c., and there was scarcely a boy in Aberdeen that did not know him and his shows, of one kind or other. He was a brother of Mrs Pollock—her maiden name was Jessie Fraser; and he used to get an engagement now and again at the Theatre, when he had nothing else of his own on the carpet. He was a very popular man, indeed.

HUMOROUS INCIDENTS.

For many years after, I was a regular theatregoer. About that time, I first saw Mr Paumier, who excelled in Franco-English pieces; Alfred Rayner, a leading man for a number of seasons, who afterwards took up a good position on the London stage; Barry Sullivan; G. V. Brooke, the hero of the ill-fated steamship "London"; Charles Dillon, with his "Belphegor"; Ira Aldridge, the "African Roscius"; "Old Crone," one of the best old men on the stage of his day; Clara Leslie, Julia Harcourt, "Old Clifford," Elliott, T. Watson, and a host of others; and, in later years, I



Blin' Jamie



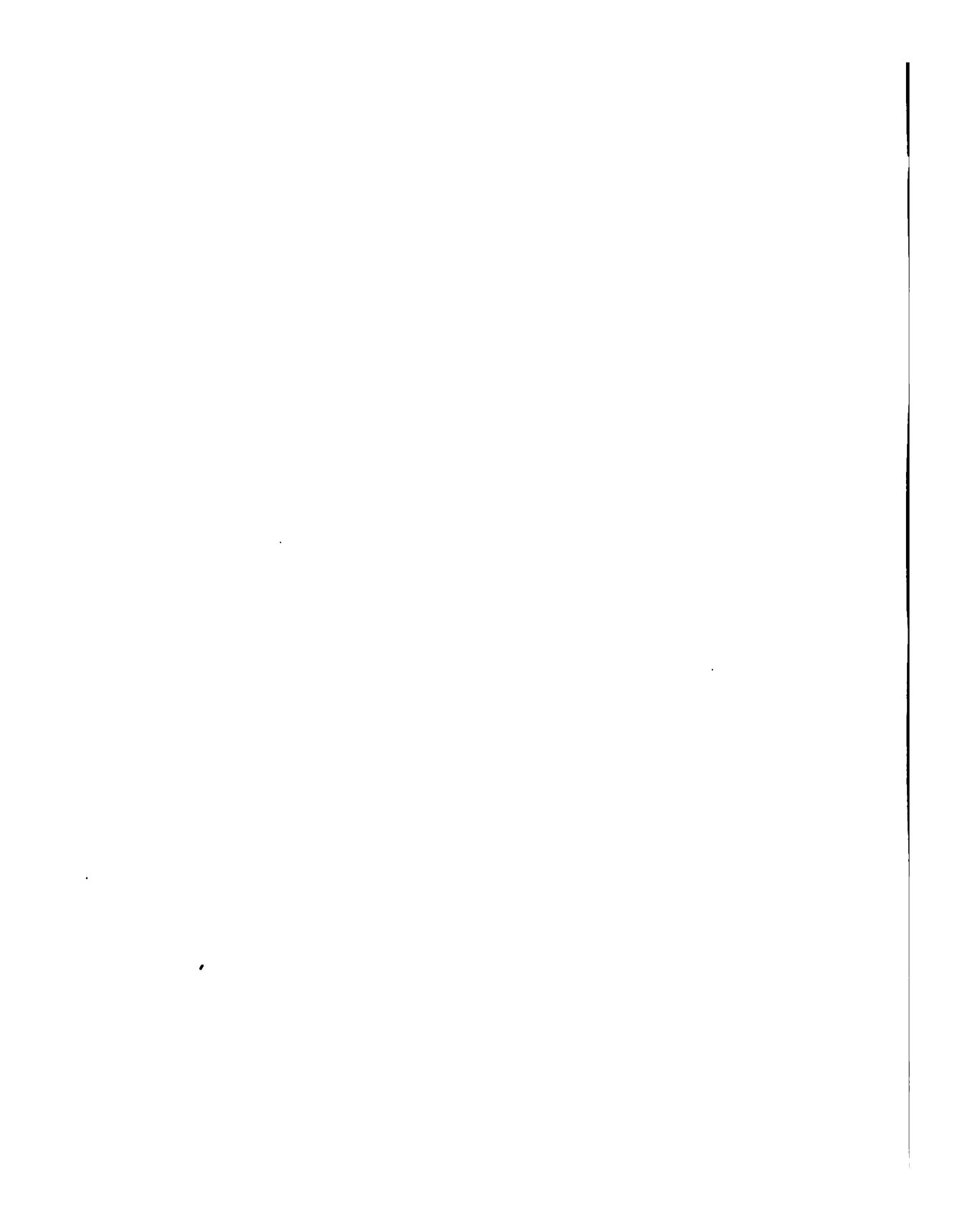
Feel Roddle.



John Fiddler.



Tom Ryder.



saw Messrs M'Lean, Price, Tom Glenny, Hodnett, Wilson Barrett, &c., &c. There was a number of amateurs about Aberdeen who used to cut a creditable show on the boards now and again. There was, for instance, "Bob Strath," whose masterpiece was *Wandering Steenie*, in the "*Rose of Ettrick Vale*"; John Milne, the mason, who could play Roy Roy and other characters very creditably; and John M'Lean, better known as "Candy John," who used to keep the refreshment room in the pit, and also a candy stall in New Market, and who got a benefit occasionally. He played fairly well Jaffier, in "*Venice Preserved*," but was dreadfully quizzed by the boys when he made his appearance on the stage. On one occasion John had to say in some piece—"Where shall I hide him?" and an robin convulsed the house by singing out, "Put him under the candy stall, John!" At another time he exclaimed, "Give me a dagger!" when he was met with, "Give him a stalk of candy!" But to those who knew the old house such interpolations were of every-night occurrence, and the Combwork boys used to get a good deal of the blame, rightly or wrongly. Walter Shelley, the "American tragedian," was playing "*Macbeth*" one night. There was a very poor house, I remember—in the gallery, at any rate. Shelley had been imbibing pretty freely before commencing, and in one scene, as he staggered across the stage, a voice in the gallery bawled out, "Shelley, you're drunk!" The actor stood stock still, and looked up towards his tormentor as if he would answer him. It seemed as if he did not know what to say. He stood about a minute, and then went through his part as steady as a rock, the rebuke having acted on him like a restorative.

REMINISCENCES OF ACTORS.

Emma Ryder (the late Mrs Price), when I remember her, used to come on in small parts. She was a very modest, bashful girl, indeed. It was said she did not like the stage, and that her mother thought she would never make an actress. But by-and-bye the two Misses Balcarras appeared (the

elder one was latterly Mrs Elliot). The sisters used to dance jigs and flings between the pieces, one as a male and the other as a female; and they were not long before they had Emma dancing along with them. From that time the girl gradually went ahead. Jessie, the elder sister, was about as winning an actress, in the singing chambermaid line, as I ever remember, and her singing of "Cam' ye by Athol?" will not be forgotten by old Aberdonians.

Who that ever saw Mrs Pollock as Helen Macgregor, *Lady Macbeth*, *Meg Merrilees*, or *Desdemona* could ever forget her? She was the most commanding actress I ever saw, and had she taken to the London boards, she would not have had many equals. She was equally at home in comedy as in tragedy, and to see her in her favourite benefit character of Mrs Fitzsmyth in the "Ladies' Club," with friend Elliot as Captain Fitzsmyth, was something to remember.

Mr Pollock himself (otherwise Peacock) was a native of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He came to Aberdeen Theatre a young man, and remained in the city until his death. He was a good, all-round actor—in fact, could play almost any character—but he excelled in Scotch representations, such as *Baillie Nicol Jarvie*, *Jock Muir*, *Jock Howieson*, &c. He was fairly well liked upon the whole. Mr and Mrs Pollock had two little boys; one of them was accidentally poisoned by eating some noxious plant at Seaview Gardens, where North Constitution Street now stands—a place got up by Mr Pollock for entertainments during the summer months, but which did not take, and was soon given up.

It need to be a great game with the east-end boys, when admission to the theatre could not be otherwise obtained, to beg or buy pass-out checks. The checker at the gallery, an old tailor named Donald Fleming, who used sometimes to play the *Dugald Cratur* in "*Rob Roy*," never objected to admit the bearer of a transferred check; but an Irishman of the name of John O'Brien was checker at the pit, and we might as well have attempted to jump over the moon as try and hoodwink him if we

had not been in before. He not only kept us out, but he used to belabour us upstairs with feet or hands. None of us who knew him would have dared for our lives to beard him. Whenever we secured a pit check, as we used to do sometimes, we would get hold of some green boy and induce him to attempt to gain admission, and stand and laugh at seeing him being half-murdered. Complaint regarding O'Brien was made to Pollock more than once, but whether anything was said to him we never knew. Had a few of us ever got him in a quiet corner he would have got something to remember, but, peace to his manes! I have no doubt he is quiet enough now. Another well-remembered name in connection with the Marischal Street house was that of decent George Wood, an old soldier, who was money-taker at the gallery for, I suppose, 30 years, and who shuffled off this mortal coil not many years ago.

One name more, and I am done with the establishment. Who does not remember Elliot, who year after year used to make us laugh till we cried and who, in the long run, stuck so long about the place that he fairly tired us out, and we were glad when the old place knew him no more?

OTHER PUBLIC ENTERTAINERS.

We used now and again to get a visit from the great Ducrow, and I can remember Van Amburgh and his lions being down at the Poyner Nook, where the railway station now stands, about 60 years ago. But the most popular visitor in that line of entertainment was the late Mr James Cooke (uncle of John Henry Cooke), with his circus, which was far and away superior to anything we see or hear of at the present time. For one thing, he had some of the finest clowns that ever trod the sawdust—Messrs Charlton, Tomlinson, and the inimitable J. P. Seal, to wit. The last-named you had only to look at to laugh, although he had never said a single word. In fact, the whole get-up was superior to anything we see here at the present time. Mr James Cooke used to keep a school for horsemanship, and, I believe, lived for some time permanently in Aberdeen.

Our townman Professor Anderson, who at that time was in the zenith of his fame, used to be often in Aberdeen, and lots of the old folks as well as the young thought there was something uncanny about him, and he used to help them a good deal to think so by the practical jokes he was wont to perpetrate on some of them with his sleight-of-hand performances.

Mr Drummond, the Scotch singer and comedian, was another of our popular entertainers of those days; he used to put up in the Temperance Hall, George Street, now a Baptist Church, or something of that sort. Springthorpe was another, with his wax-work. There were panoramas and dioramas innumerable, threepenny circuses and theatres, Scott's Penny Theatre in John Street, and Giles's Penny Theatre, or "Rattler" as it was called, in the Bool Road, and street acrobats galore. Tammy Fraser, already mentioned; Professor Devon, the ventriloquist, and others were always to the front with their varieties, and whenever there was an empty shop between terms, it was taken by one or other of those worthies, and improvised into a penny show. I remember that, one winter, in Union Buildings alone there were two rival marionette shows running, conducted respectively by Tammy Fraser and Sandy Ruddiman, the joiner, a capital hand at the business. It was an open question with the boys which was the better.

The Union Hall in Blackfriars Street, where the Drillhall now stands, and where they used to hold the Chartist meetings, &c., was a great place on Saturday nights, when the Trades held amateur concerts. The place used to be packed to the doors with people eager to hear Moody, Greenfield, Dan Geddes, etc., etc., and there used to be some good singing among the boys—especially among the carpet weavers.

A German, named Herr Maus, came now and again with a threepenny circus. He was supposed to be a modern Samson, and could haul against four horses and lift heavy weights—but whether he was bona fide or not, I do not remember. There used also, now and again, to be great numbers of shows of all kinds in Weigh-house Square. One,

in particular, we used to patronise greatly, as it was the one in which we got the most fun. The proprietor was a conjurer and sword swallower. With regard to the sword business, it went into his mouth and entered his stomach seemingly without a doubt. He used always to wind up his entertainment with "cloddies" and treacle, and we used all to go in for that. The *modus operandi* was as follows. The "cloddie" was dipped in a basin of treacle,

then taken and hung by a string from the ceiling, and set swinging like a pendulum. Our hands were tied down to our sides, and we had to try to catch the clod with our teeth, and keep it for our pains—a thing which few of us were able to do. The mess our faces got into, by coming in contact with the treacle, was a sight to see, and the fun was excruciating. So much for "Rowley Powley's" show—for that was the only name we ever knew him by.

CHAPTER III.

NOTABLE INCIDENTS, 1848-52.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S FIRST VISIT.

1848 was a notable year, both at home and abroad. The whole continent of Europe was in a state of unrest or insurrection, including our near neighbours, the French, who succeeded in getting rid of their ruler, Louis XVIII. I mention these events, as they had far-reaching consequences in this country. Aberdeen and Woodside felt the effects for many years after. The unsettled times were the cause—or, at any rate, were said to be the cause—of a number of our manufacturing firms collapsing, notably the firm of Leys, Maason, and Co. As a great number of people were thrown out of employment, a good deal of suffering and discontent was experienced in our midst. Chartism was then in full blow. Our authorities did what they could to mitigate the distress by setting the able-bodied men to break stones, and other measures were resorted to, and gradually the crisis wore away.

During the summer it was rumoured that, Prince Albert having bought the estate of Balmoral, the Queen and family were coming through in the autumn to Aberdeen. This set the inhabitants in a ferment, and the powers that were set to

work arranging how they could best receive Her Majesty, no sovereign having visited the city for very many years. A royal arch and jetty were erected on Waterloo Quay—the arch was kept standing for a long time, but was taken down in a dilapidated state several years ago—and everything was done that was thought necessary to give the Queen a proper welcome on her arrival by sea. Triumphal arches were also erected along the route between Aberdeen and Balmoral, which was by the turnpike road, there being then no railway. We east-enders were determined that we would not be outdone in loyalty; and our irrepressible friend John Black (of whom more anon) set to work and built a triumphal arch for himself of evergreens and relics from his celebrated museum (which I may mention, *en passant*, among other wonderful curios, contained a piece of the original pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was transformed!).

The Queen's visit to the city was timed for the 8th September, but about a fortnight before that time, and just before the end of the herring fishing, the east coast of Scotland was visited by one of the severest hurricanes of modern times, and all

along the coast there was nothing but lamentation. The number of fishermen and boats lost from Wick to Berwick was something appalling. At Peterhead alone there were 25 fishermen drowned, 26 boats totally lost, 36 boats partially lost and damaged, and between 700 and 800 nets lost. Our local boats were nearly all fishing from Stonehaven, and almost all managed to reach that port in safety, with more or less damage and loss of nets. A Portlethen boat, however, went ashore in the Bay of Nigg. The crew were all saved with one exception, but the boat became a total wreck. Very few of our local boats fished from Aberdeen then, or for a great number of years after. Two or three, or four at the most, fished to supply local demands. There was little or no curing thought about at that time, or for long after. It was after the diversion of the Dee that the trade began to look up here.

RECEPTION OF HER MAJESTY.

The 8th of September was now approaching, and everything was getting into ship-shape order for the forthcoming eventful visit, when, lo and behold! on the morning of the 7th the rumour spread that Her Majesty had arrived. Many shook their heads, and would not believe it, but when a strange steamer, flying the Royal Standard, was seen steaming up the harbour, doubt was changed to conviction. The magistrates were summoned in hot haste, and by the time the Royal yacht was moored opposite the arch of welcome, the magistrates, with the Lord Provost, Mr George Thompson, jun., at their head, and other representative men, including ex-Propost Henry (the last man, by the way, who used hair powder in Aberdeen), were alongside. They were invited aboard to learn Her Majesty's pleasure. They were received by Sir George Grey, the Minister-in-Attendance, who consulted the Queen, who elected to remain on board for the day, and land next morning. Prince Albert and some of the courtiers, however, drove to several places of interest in the city, including the Colleges and Messrs Macdonald and Leslie's granite works in Con-

stitution Street. At the granite works I had the pleasure of seeing His Royal Highness for the first time, it so happening that a number of us were coming up from the Links at the moment.

Next morning the city was en fete in honour of Her Majesty. The weather was lovely; and all we (the school children) were ranged along the quays on the left, while the general public occupied the space on the right. We had thus an uninterrupted view of the procession. Her Majesty, on landing, was presented by the Lord Provost with the city keys, as also an address of welcome, which the Queen gracefully acknowledged. There was a great controversy at the time as to whether the Royal party would proceed by way of Marischal Street or Market Street. There were only a few houses in the latter street, and it was suggested that the blanks should be filled up with decorations; as to the former, it was considered that the incline was too steep. Marischal Street carried the day, however, and up it the procession went. I may add that Captain John Cargill, of the steamer "City of London," who was specially appointed pilot of the Royal yacht, took full charge of its navigation from the time it left Woolwich until Aberdeen harbour was reached. Captain Cargill made the vessel steam ahead as fast as it could, being determined that it should arrive before rather than behind time. This was the first visit of Royalty for almost 200 years, the immediately preceding visit having been made by Charles II. in 1651.

The late Mr James Adam, the editor of the "Aberdeen Herald," composed a humorous poem descriptive of the Royal visit, the first and last stanzas of which were as follows:—

"Is it the Queen, or is it but a hoax?"

"I know not," was Hugh Fraser's safe reply,

"But I saw Cargill on the paddle box,

Giving directions with an anxious eye."

"Then she is there, by Jove! and I must fly,"

And off the inquirer ran, with fiery speed,

Spreading abroad the astounding hue and cry—

"The Queen is come; it is the Queen indeed."

Now, God help Bon-Accord in this her hour of need

But there were sundry folks assembled there,

Who had small cause indeed grumblers to be;

They saw their gracious monarch—sight how rare—

They saw her Consort, and her children three;

The ex-French King's drosky also do they see,
 Besides, to keep alive their morning glee,
 Of currant wine they had a glorious treat,
 And Morkeu's much-desired dejeuner a la fourchette.

Her Majesty returned to Aberdeen about the end of the month and re-embarked. She arrived in the city in the evening, and the route along Holburn Street, Union Street, Marischal Street, and Regent Quay was brilliantly illuminated. It was calculated that on the morning she landed, in Union Street alone there must have been at least 80,000 spectators, and as the whole population only amounted to about 60,000, there must have been a tremendous influx of visitors. Her Majesty was credited at the time with the remark that she saw no poor people in Aberdeen, which, if true, shows that fifty years ago we were getting the rust well rubbed off us in Aberdeen. After this first visit of the Queen, the word "Balmoral" became so commonplace that everything imaginable was called after it. At the harbour there were even "Balmoral" pilots.

CHARTISM—FERGUS O'CONNOR.

I have already referred to Chartism. About this time we had a visit from one of the leaders of the movement, the notorious Fergus O'Connor. I was only a boy then, but a prominent member of the Chartist body, Mr Tawse, tailor, was a neighbour of ours, and I used to go to Mr William Lindsay's shop in the Gallowgate for his paper, the "Northern Star," edited by Julian Harney. Mr Tawse's house was a meeting place of a goodly number of Chartists, who spent the whole day in reading and discussing the contents of the paper; and thus circumstances made me, although I knew little and cared less about Chartism, more interested in O'Connor's visit than I otherwise would have been. This visit was O'Connor's first and last visit to Aberdeen, I believe. He met with a rather funny reception. For some reason or other, which I have forgotten, if I ever knew it, a number of the Chartists were either hostile to him or held themselves aloof from his meeting in the Union Hall, Blackfriars Street, now the Drillhall. On O'Connor's appearance on the platform—

wearing a blue coat with gilt buttons, a yellow waistcoat, and brown trousers—a band, organised for the occasion, and consisting of four fifers and a drummer, played, amid roars of laughter, "See, the conquering hero comes." Archie M'Donald, who died not very many years ago, and who was leading speaker among the anti-physical force Chartists, was called to the chair, and he proceeded to introduce the said hero; but before he began, an Irishman, named Courduff, rose and denounced Fergus, alleging that he had not proper blue blood in his veins, that he was leading the people to destruction, etc. A great turmoil arose as Courduff proceeded, and at length the late Councillor George Smart, then a young man, took Courduff by the collar, and put him to one side. Upon this Courduff brandished a heavy shillelagh over Smart's head, amid the greatest excitement. He did not let it drop, however, and some of his friends having succeeded in pacifying him, the lecturer was allowed to proceed, although his remarks were made amid a good deal of noise. O'Connor's friends took him away to supper in the Caledonian Hotel in Exchequer Row, better known in later years as "Mother M'Cuag's," and that was the last of Fergus in Aberdeen.

THE MEAL MObS.

It must have been about the time of O'Connor's visit that the authorities sent for a troop of dragoons for the purpose of quelling the meal mobs. These dragoons were the last cavalry corps permanently quartered in Aberdeen. They were accommodated in the old Meal Market, where Messrs Lawson, Turnbull, & Co.'s premises now stand, and they were the cause, during their stay, of half the schoolboys playing truant, as they drilled daily on the sands, and the children could not resist the temptation of witnessing the interesting manœuvres. With reference to the so-called meal mobs, they were about the most stupid affairs I ever saw. Great crowds kept running about aimlessly here and there, armed with sticks and paling posts. I remember having followed one section out

the Stocket Road until I was tired out; but where the men went or what they did I never heard.

AN EXECUTION.

Towards the end of the year of the Queen's first visit, Aberdeen was startled one morning by the news that a man had been brought in from near Strichen, charged with poisoning his wife. The news proved only too true. The culprit, James Burnett, at the Spring Circuit of 1849, was found guilty, on the clearest evidence, and received sentence of death.

Shortly before Burnett's trial we were startled by the news of another brutal murder in the Auchterless district. The criminal was James Robb, the crime was rape and murder, and the victim was an old woman. Burnett was executed on 22nd May, 1849. The gallows was erected in front of the old Town House, less than 20 yards west of Lodge Walk, and the execution created a painful feeling in the east end, the immediately preceding one having occurred as far back as the early thirties. As the number alive then who remembered the yearly hangings for sheep-stealing, theft, etc., had become extremely limited, the sensation was all the greater. I ventured down as far as the Gordon Statue. A crowd of several hundred persons had formed round three sides of the scaffold. The procession made its appearance through a window in the Town House. The town's officers, to the number of eight or ten, headed by Charlie Dawson, Horne, Mellis, and Leslie, led the van, and then followed the culprit, supported by warders and prison officials. The wretched man wore a black suit and a white night-cap, and he was attended by Rev. Dr Macintosh, of the East Church. As soon as the procession appeared, I fled the scene, and saw no more of James Burnett.

Within an hour after the execution, Duncan M'Kinley, otherwise "Blin' Bob," and others of his fraternity, were parading the streets, shouting "A full, true, and particular account of the dying confession and execution of James Burnett, with a full account of the

murder. Only one penny," etc., etc. This cry was generally supplemented by the crier carrying a long pole on which was displayed a picture of an execution. Although the people knew that the prints contained probably a tissue of falsehoods, thousands of the sheets were sold. This sort of thing was always sure to take place at the sittings of the Circuit Courts, which marked a harvest season for sensation-mongers and "flying" stationers. Speaking of Circuit Courts, if one takes up a newspaper file of, say, half a century ago or even later, and turns to the list of prisoners that were tried, one is surprised at the number. Sometimes there would be 20 prisoners at one court; nowadays, with the population more than doubled, there is sometimes not a single case to be tried.

James Robb, I may add, was executed on 16th October, 1849.

HEAVY CIRCUIT COURT—ANOTHER EXECUTION.

The Autumn Circuit Court at Aberdeen in 1849 was long spoken about as having been the blackest ever held. Crime seemed to have been rampant in the district, as the roll of cases down for trial showed. There were three murder cases (one of them aggravated by rape), one child murder case, one rape case, one forgery case, eleven cases of robbery and theft, and one case of uttering counterfeit coin—truly, a dismal calendar. In one of the murder cases, two travelling tinkers, a man and a woman, were charged with murdering at Eilon the male prisoner's paramour, but a verdict of not proven was returned. Another of the murder cases was that in which a man was charged with drowning his child in the Don. The case was converted into one of culpable homicide, and the accused received sentence of twenty years' banishment to Australia. The third murder case had a more tragic result. The prisoner was James Robb, mentioned in the preceding section, and it appeared from the evidence that he had committed the crime by entering a house by a chimney. The death sentence was passed—the second within six months. The accused in a child murder

case was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, and in most of the others the sentences were from five to twenty years' banishment. A notorious thief named Killoolie got seven years, and his howling and yelling on receiving sentence was heard in Castle Street.

Shortly after Robb's execution, which took place on 16th October, a controversy sprang up in the local press with regard to an allegation that the governor of the jail, the late Mr Chalmers, had gone to the murderer's cell, prayed with him, and got him to partly confess his crime. Mr Chalmers was for this called the "amateur chaplain." The local prison board held a meeting, at which the governor was called upon for an explanation. It turned out that Rev. W. D. Strahan, the chaplain, had only lately resigned—(to become headmaster of Robert Gordon's Hospital). Robb had sent for him, and, in his absence, the governor had obeyed the summons. The board, in the circumstances, fully exonerated Mr Chalmers.

Rev. Mr Strahan subsequently attended Robb to the last; as also did Rev. P. Cheyne and Rev. Mr Wagstaff, of St Andrew's Church, the wretched man having been an Episcopalian. The scaffold was again brought into requisition, it being erected near the end of Lodge Walk. Calcraft was the executioner, and I saw him perform his gruesome task. This was the first, as it was the last, execution I ever saw. It was enough to last one a life-time. Untold gold would not have tempted me to witness another similar scene. Strange to say, of the hundreds that assembled round the gibbet, the majority were women.

THE KITTIBREWSTER MURDER.

The inhabitants of the city during the latter part of 1852 were again startled by a brutal double murder, which was committed almost at their very doors, the culprit being in custody before people heard the details in the morning. The late Mr Peter McRobbie, farmer, Sunnyside, had engaged a man of the name of Humphreys to thresh some bere for him at a barn he had at Cattofield,

within 200 or 300 yards of what is now the Northern Hotel, and about where Lilybank Place now stands. He had engaged an old soldier of the name of Christie to assist him at the job. Contiguous to this barn was a small cottar house, occupied by a woman of the name of Ross, and a grandchild, a boy about five years of age. On the evening of Monday, October 4th, about nine o'clock, Mr McRobbie, who was not satisfied with the threshing operations, went over from his farm to the barn (separated at that time by the canal) on purpose to get the key, which used to be left at the cottar house. On his passing the window he saw the figure of a man by the candle-light, which he thought rather strange, and, on his going nearer, the candle was blown out, and the man—Christie, to wit—appeared at the door and told him the woman was out. Mr McRobbie heard peculiar moans, and fancied he saw a body lying before the fire. Suspecting something was wrong, he hovered about the place, and in a short time the man came out, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and, whistling, passed Mr McRobbie with a bundle under his arm. Mr McRobbie, now thoroughly convinced that something was wrong, called on a neighbouring farmer and some others, and sent out to Woodside for Richardson, the rural constable there. The door was broken open, and the sight that met them was horrible. Both the old woman and the boy were lying on the floor dead. Word was immediately sent to the Police Office, and Richardson and the late Inspector Cran, then clerk of county police, in Lodge Walk, were set upon Christie's track, and about twelve o'clock that night found him in a dazed state, and safely landed him in prison. Christie was a tall, muscular, unprepossessing man, who had been a soldier for a number of years in the H.E.I.C. service in India; and had at one time been a sergeant, although discharged with only a private's pension. Some time prior to the murder, he had forfeited it for some act of robbery. At the time of the murder he was 51 years of age.

The murder having occurred only a short time after the holding of the half-yearly

autumn Circuit Court, Christie was tried in Edinburgh on December 23rd, and sentenced to be hanged on January 13th, 1853. During the whole time he lay in prison he was very quiet and tractable; and on the night before his execution he slept for some hours, and arose and took some breakfast, and calmly told Calcraft he was quite ready. He was attended by Rev. Dr McTaggart and Rev. Mr Baxter, the jail chaplain; and in the grey of a cold, frosty January morning he was executed. It was said he acknowledged to the clergymen the justice of his sentence, and that his reason for killing the old woman was that he owed her some money. She would not let him out without paying it, and he murdered her in his passion. He also struck the child, who commenced to cry for his grandmother. The real reason, however, was, it was stated, that the woman told Christie on the Saturday before the murder that she had sold two pigs. This had aroused his cupidity, and on the Monday night he had gone in to demand the money during the time Mr McRobbie was about, and on her refusal to part with it, he had murdered her in cold blood.

The fourth and last execution in Aberdeen in my days was that of a man named Booth, for the murder of his mother-in-law at Oldmeldrum in 1857. I happened to be out of Aberdeen for a few years at that time, and I cannot speak from personal knowledge about it.

The powers that be never did a wiser thing than to abolish public executions, as it was impossible to find anything more demoralising for those who attended them. A few of the more respectable members of society attended, principally from a morbid curiosity, but the great majority of the spectators were recruited from slumdom, and there was as much crushing and pushing to see a public execution (and the rankest offenders were women), as if it had been a Coronation procession; and even before the poor victim had met his fate the streets were crowded with paterers of the Blin' Bob species, proclaiming his dying confession, speech on the scaffold, etc., etc., accompanied by a hideous picture which

served them for a lifetime. Circuit Court trials were published in the same way, and also any remarkable occurrence that took place. This was not to be wondered at, as at that time we had only two newspapers in Aberdeen, the "Aberdeen Journal" on Wednesday morning, and the "Aberdeen Herald" on Saturday. Each cost 3d, and, as working people could not afford the price, they had to take the literary gab-fum they got, or go without.

A NOVEL LAUNCH.

The inhabitants of Church Street had the unique pleasure in 1849 of seeing a ship sailing or rather aliding past their doors. I refer to the launch of the brig "Centaur." She was built by Blaikie Brothers in their yard alongside St Clement's Parish Church, and was launched into the harbour at the foot of Church Street. It was a difficult job to get her into the water, but, after a day's labour, the work was successfully accomplished without mishap. Some time before this, another vessel, named "The Gem," was launched from Provost Blaikie's Quay, where Messrs Gordon's woodyard now is, by the late Mr Andrew Leslie, afterwards of Hebburn Quay, Gateshead; but this launch was not such a novelty as the other. At this time the Leith and Clyde Navigation Company had the "Newhaven" plying between Aberdeen and Granton in six hours, and we have not improved upon that yet on the sea passage.

I have referred to the execution of James Robb as having been the first and last I ever witnessed; but, although it will not be found in the Black Calendar, there was another of a rather unique kind that came under my personal observation. During the Parliamentary session of 1849, the repeal of the Navigation Laws was effected. The repeal was very repugnant to the shipping interest, and the Aberdeen sailors gave vent to their spleen by hanging from the yard arm of a ship lying in the harbour the effigy of the Hon. Henry Labouchere (afterwards Lord Taunton, and uncle of the present Mr Henry Labouchere), who, as President of the Board of Trade, piloted the measure through Parliament. A multitude

of people assembled on the quays, and the effigy having been hauled down and thrown ashore, it was carried away and burned, amid the cheers of the onlookers.

The first model lodging-house in Aberdeen was opened in Exchequer Court, where it remained for a great many years, until the Victoria was opened in Guestrow.

THE INTRODUCTION OF RAILWAYS.

The railway by this time was getting slowly but surely towards Aberdeen. The local newspapers were congratulating their readers that they were now able to give them news 12 hours old, instead of news about 72 hours old as formerly, and the late Mr Lewis Smith published a pamphlet showing how he thought it might perhaps be possible, when the railway reached Aberdeen, to have two London mails a day. The pamphlet was discussed at the Town Council, when it was agreed to leave the matter over until such time as the railway was actually opened. They were very modest in their expectations in those days; they would have been the better of Mr James Tulloch to have spurred them on a bit.

The year 1850 was an eventful one for Aberdeen, inasmuch as it saw (16th March) the completion of the railway to the city, which put us into rapid and direct communication with the whole island south of us. I remember one day playing truant, and marching off to Portlethen to get a look at a real locomotive, as the only ones I had ever seen were on my copy-book covers; and my first look of a railway train, I am free to confess, was of a disappointing nature. I do not know exactly what I expected to see, but, whatever it was, I did not see it; and, to add to my disappointment, I lost myself—or, rather, my road—somewhere about the Looch of Loirston, and it was far into the night before I reached home. It was supposed I had fallen into the harbour. That was my first impression of the railway.

Shortly after the railway had reached Portlethen, and before the Cove cuttings were finished, the city was startled by the mysterious death of a well-known gentleman, who was contractor for the section of

the line comprising the cuttings. To this day the strange affair remains a mystery. I refer to the case of Mr J. Shanks. Late one night, or early in the morning, his horse, with which he had left his home at Nigg, returned by itself without either the gig or its master. His friends naturally got alarmed, and went in search of him. They had not proceeded very far when they found the gig overturned in a ditch, but no trace of the owner. Search was made everywhere, and the body was ultimately found in the Dee, between the railway and suspension bridges. The whole affair up to the present remains, as I have said, a profound mystery.

The acme of speed was thought to have been reached when the railway company were advertising that they would convey passengers to London in 23 hours, and to Glasgow in 7½ hours, the public little thinking that within fifty years it would be cut down to fully one half of the time. In the next year, 1851, however, they undertook to convey passengers to the first great Exhibition in 17 hours, which was a considerable improvement. It was during the summer of 1850 that the first raid by Southrons took place, in the shape of a cheap trip from Perth, when upwards of a thousand came north. Aberdeen can boast of an annual holiday from that same year, when, on Monday, August 5th, the shopkeepers led off the ball, followed by the tradesmen, on Wednesday, the 7th, when some thousands left the town for considerable distances—the majority for the first time in their lives.

A DAY'S OUTING.

A red-letter day in my life occurred during the first summer after the railway reached Aberdeen. The members of the temperance society in connection with the mission in the "Boal Road," or Albion Street, started by the late Rev. Dr J. H. Wilson, to which reference has already been made (p. 14), received two invitations that year—one from Lord Panmure, Fox Maule's father, to visit Brechin Castle, and the other from Captain Burnett to visit Monboddo—the Captain, as I previously mentioned, was a great friend of the mission. It was agreed to accept both

invitations, and a special train was chartered. We left Albion Street early one Monday morning for Ferryhill Station with bands and banners, and in due time we reached Brechin. We there marched to the Salutation Hall, where we were regaled with rolls and cheese. Some of us youngsters, not having digested our breakfast, thought the refreshment offered not tempting enough, and that we might perhaps get something better soon. Forgetting the old proverb that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, we allowed the opportunity to slip. We then set off to inspect the castle and grounds, which were open for us, with an injunction to turn up at the hall at a certain early hour in the afternoon. After duly "doing the lions" of Brechin, we made our appearance at the hall, expecting nothing less than a great spread. To our intense disgust, famished as we were, we got nothing, but were marched off to the station. We took train for Fordoun, en route for Monboddo. We got to Fordoun all right, and marched to the house, a distance of about a mile, more dead than alive on account of the ravages of hunger, and wondering if we would fare any better than we had done at Brechin. We were told to go and seat ourselves on a grassy slope near the house, and found we were in luck.

Large basins were distributed, and by-and-bye the servants arrived from the house with pannikins of tea and basketfuls of Bath buns the size of twopenny loaves. And did not a few of us urchins make up for our long fast! The buns were the finest I ever ate, but how many of them I consumed I will keep to myself. The rest of the afternoon was devoted to games and dancing, with occasional short addresses from some of the ladies and gentlemen about the place. Before leaving, we were asked to respond to a vote of thanks to the captain for his hospitality, and I am bound to say, for a few of us at any rate, that we did make a cordial response. I never come across the name of the Monboddo family but I remember that day. We then marched to the station, and ultimately reached home all safe and sound.

THE GREAT NORTH RAILWAY.

The first turf of the Great North of Scotland Railway was cut in 1852, on the 26th November, by the wife of the late Sir J. D. Elphinstone, M.P., at Westhall; but it was 1856 before there was any railway communication north of Aberdeen, and passengers, as well as goods, were sent along the harbour branch—the station then being at the foot of Commerce Street—until 1866, when the present Joint Station was completed.

CHAPTER IV.

CHURCH AND SCHOOL.

ST ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

I was a humble actor, about this time, in an episode which has now become historical, in connection with the Episcopal Church of Scotland. I was a scholar at Dr Anderson's day school, Crown Court (the site now occupied by the Crown Mansions, Union Street), the scholars being children of members of St Andrew's, King Street, and St John's (Crimon Place). I may remark, en passant, I had for schoolfellows, amongst other clergymen, the Rev. A. G. Creighton, Kilmarnock, and the present Dean of

Brechin, Rev. Mr Hatt, Muchalls. The schoolmaster, during the eight or nine years I was there, was the late Mr Thomas Berry, originally of Leeds, whose wife was Miss Watson, only daughter of Mr S. Watson, butler to Mr Gordon of Fyvie, afterwards hotelkeeper in the house now Forsyth's Hotel. Besides being schoolmaster, he was also for a number of years organist of St Andrew's Church, and a number of the senior boys were all members of St Andrew's choir. We had not quite got to the stage of surpliced choirs, although on the comple-

tion of the new St John's Church in Crown Terrace one was formed there about 1850. At this time, in St Andrew's, Deacon Robb was precentor, and the late Mr Matthews, sen., mason, his two sons, the late Mr William Matthews (of Macdonald, Field, & Co.), and Mr George Matthews, with one or two other adult males, some seven or eight women, and about a dozen of us schoolboys, completed the choir. Good old Bishop William Skinner (grandson of the author of "Tullochgorum") was getting at this time old and frail, and left the management of the church affairs pretty much in the hands of his two curates, Rev. Messrs Wagstaff and Allan, both Englishmen, who were both very High Churchmen, especially the latter. Thinking they could improve upon the services by introducing some innovations—the services hitherto having been very plain and unostentatious—they resolved to make a new departure on Christmas Eve by shifting the choir from the organ gallery, and grouping them round the reading desk, which stood in the centre of the church before the alterations. They made the attempt, and the service was not long begun when the bishop's wife and a number of the leading members of the church rose and left. Needless to say, they never repeated the experiment, which caused considerable excitement for a long time in the congregation.

In speaking of St Andrew's Church, any reference to it would be totally incomplete without a reference to John Rough, who—for how many years I would not like to calculate—was, to use an Americanism, "boss" of the church. Whence John originally came I cannot say, further than that he had a brother who was a large farmer at Gallowhill, Newhills, for many years—and his descendants may be there yet for anything I know to the contrary. But John himself was verger of St Andrew's Church from before my day until I had almost reached manhood; and, by some means or other, he got the upper hand of everybody concerned, not excepting Bishop Skinner. Nothing could be done unless John was consulted. John used to make a deal of money, as he was a very skilful

chiropracist, or corn-utter, and people came from far and near to him for relief. He was twice married, his second wife being a lady well known to all the boys in the east end. Her name was Mary Murray. She was sister and shopkeeper to the well-known Mr Robert Murray, confectioner, Castle Street, whose premises were those now occupied as the Ayrshire Shoe Shop. Neither of them was very young, and on his sister's marriage Mr Murray took unto himself a wife, and died not so many years ago at a farm he had near Montrose.

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

There was a Sunday school in connection with St Andrew's Church, of which John was superintendent. Although the school was regularly supervised and visited by the church clergy, even including the old bishop, the week-day schoolmaster, and a regular staff of male and female teachers, still John had the full power and sway. Numbers of the children who did not know him so well as some of us did, he used to frighten almost into fits—so much so, indeed, that the clergy, and even the bishop and his wife, used often to have to entreat him not to be so rough with them; but John held on the even tenor of his way, and paid little or no heed to their expostulations.

That same Sunday school was carried on upon different lines from any other Sunday school I ever heard of. For one thing, although the place was always packed to the door with scholars, we were kept in from 5 o'clock to 8 every Sunday night. The first two hours were devoted to class teaching, and the last hour, when the whole school was seated round the room, was given up to examination by the bishop and clergy. Before leaving, we received our rewards (those who were entitled to them) in the shape of a new halfpenny, generally from Mrs Skinner, who usually brought the bag of coins to the school. When a scholar gained a place in the class, he or she was presented by Mrs Skinner, or someone in her absence, with a tin check with the letters S.S. on it for each place, and on the presentation of six to Mrs Skinner, the bearer was entitled to a new halfpenny. I

remember some of us, boys especially, used now and again to drop to the bottom of the class one week, and perhaps next week get to about the top again, and so we came in for a good haul.

The Sunday dress of the boys of that day was white trousers, girls' frocks, and large white collars. Their large caps—made of cloth after the style of the Salvation Army caps—had on the centre of the crown a button, from which hung a tassel that came down the side of the head some six or eight inches. The girls wore white trousers, down to their feet, with frills, large tippets, and poke bonnets, very much also in the style of those of the Salvation Army.

Had John Rough been a Sunday School superintendent of the present day, the boys, I fear, would have used him as the boys of Free St Clement's Sunday School did their superintendent about 30 years ago. This gentleman—the late Mr John Henderson, lithographer—by some means had become unpopular with them, and they waylaid him to stone him. However, he got scent of it, and was escorted home, and I believe had to give up the appointment. John Rough, with all his brusqueness, which I think was more in his manner than in his intention, was highly respected by many of the congregation, and the trustees presented him with a silver snuff-box, which, on his death, in 1860, he willed back to the church, with the quaint injunction that on the occasions of the seat-letting it should be filled and laid on the table of the vestry, so that all who desired might have a pinch. He was head of St Andrew's for 35 years, and survived his second wife by two years. The very antipodes of John in manners was Deacon Robb, the precentor, who was a great favourite with his choir boys. Living, as he did, in Crown Court, close beside the day school, we saw him daily, and always got from him a word of encouragement. I was only a youngster when Rev. Mr Browning died in 1843, but I perfectly remember his funeral day; and his memory is still venerated by old members.

PROMINENT EPISCOPALIANS.

Old Bishop Skinner was perfectly idolised

by the younger members of his congregation. From my earliest years until I left school I almost daily came in contact with him, and I do not think I ever saw him lose his temper on any occasion. He had ever a kind word for each and all of us, and I have often thought it unfortunate for him in his latter years that those unhappy controversies with Sir William Dunbar and Rev. Patrick Cheyne arose, as he was essentially a man of peace. He was bishop of the diocese from his father's death in 1816 till his own death in 1857; he was also incumbent of St Andrew's Church from 1816 to 1850—34 years. His successor in both the incumbency and the bishopric, the late Bishop Sutther, who died in 1838, was also well known in the east end, and highly respected by rich and poor. He was bishop for 26 years. In connection with the same church was Mr Alexander Chivas, advocate, the agent for many years of the National Bank, who lived in the bank premises in Castle Street. Both Mr Chivas and his wife, who was a Miss Abercrombie, were very charitable, and many a poor body in the east end missed them; he died in 1871, and his wife a few years later. Mr James Chivas, grocer, King Street, was another friend to the poor, and he was sadly missed both in the church and locality when he died—so late as 1896, aged 75 years. It was mainly through his exertions that the new chancel in the church was erected. Another name in this connection, and I am done—that of Mr John Beattie, mealseller, Gallowgate, a very worthy little man in his day and generation, but who was sadly annoyed by the gamins of fifty or sixty years back. By some means or other he had obtained the sobriquet of "Sma' Tackies." It was the custom of some of us who knew to send some greenhorn into his shop for "a bawbee's worth of sma' tackies," and Johnnie would say—"Jist wait, laddie, and I will gie you them," at the same time slipping round the counter. If the victim had not the sense to bolt, he got it hot from Johnnie, and took good care never to get in his clutches again. Johnnie used to sell fine "saft" grey peas—an article that is

never seen or heard tell of now among boys. If a boy had a few coppers to spend in those days, grey peas, Jeannie Milne's rock, candy glue, and sweetie wigs were favourite commodities, as also were pies, spruce beer, and plums. Half a dozen of us boys would go into one of the shops and order three twopenny pies and six spoons. Like Jamie Fleeman and his dog with their porridge, we drew a score across the pie, and woe betide the greedy wight who encroached upon his neighbour's territory. To wind up our orgie, if the funds permitted, we had a bottle, or perhaps two, of spruce beer. There are still pies to be had, but the boys do not go in for them with the same avidity.

PIE-SHOPS—"FREE-AND-EASIES."

What old boy of 50 or 60 does not recollect John Fiddler's pie-shop in the Upper-kirkgate? John removed to the top of Castle Street, where he remained some years, and then during the Crimean War he removed to the Shiprow. John, being eccentric, gave all the rooms in his house military names. There were some rooms underground; these were called "the trenches." Another place was called after the celebrated Russian fortification, the Malakoff; another was the Redan, and so on. At nights, especially on Thursdays and Saturdays, the place used to be so crowded that many had to leave unerved; but John himself has long crossed that bourne whence no traveller returns—peace be to his manes! It was a brother of John's, Mr Alexander Fiddler, coalbroker, who erected the fountain at the end of Guild Street, universally known as Fiddler's Well.

Other old institutions that are now things of the past were the free-and-easies that used to be held on Thursday and Saturday nights. About 50 years ago, the two principal ones in the city were held in the Wallace Tower—at that time newly renovated—and in Mother M'Cuag's Caledonian Hotel, Castle Street. At the first, then kept by the genial John Taylor, there used always to be two candidates for the chairmanship (a post filled mightily), who each had hosts of friends—Arobie

M'Farlane, then "Rescue" at the beach, and John Maclean, better known as "Candy John," whom I have already referred to. Sometimes John received the majority of votes, but Arobie was the more popular, and generally secured the coveted position. Blind Willie Grant, who in latter years travelled with Peter Milne, the fiddler, on the Granton and Burntisland boat, was the accompanist; and, whatever the song was, Willie could accompany it. It was not a bad job when these free-and-easies were stopped, as there was a fascination about these places that had an insidious effect upon young men that was not easily shaken off, as I knew by experience.

JOHN BLACK.

Not to give some detailed account of John Black would be as unpardonable as to enact the play of Hamlet with the prince left out. I cannot do better than let my old friend introduce himself, as he does in the following advertisement:—

CARD.

JOHN BLACK, Boot and Shoe Maker,
 Dealer in Old Boots and Shoes, and Repairer of Shoes on reasonable terms, Letter-writer on any subject to any part, and no charge made, returns his grateful thanks to his Friends and the Public in general for their liberal support bestowed during the last fourteen years he has been in business in Justice Street. Old Boots and Shoes bought and sold. He now respectfully solicits a continuance of their patronage. No exertion shall be wanting on his part to please his friends and the public.

23 Justice Street, Aberdeen, Aug. 9, 1859.

John Black first saw the light in Manchester in the closing year of the eighteenth century. His father had been a quarter-master-sergeant in the 64th Regiment, who ultimately, in the early years of the present century, came with his family to settle in Aberdeen, and who died in the Gallowgate after having attained a good old age. John served his time to the shoemaking trade, and started business on his own account about the year 1825 in the Justice Port, where he remained until his death, in 1858, at the age of 59 years. Though born in an age when the schoolmaster was more abroad than he is in the present day, John was fortunate in having been rather better

grounded educationally than his compeers, and was in a position, on this account, although orthography was one of his weakest points, and on account of his knowledge of military affairs acquired from his father, to help his humbler neighbours, either in writing letters for them to their sons or other relations in the army or the navy, or in drafting memorials from veterans to the authorities, soliciting pensions, prize-money, etc. What with this, looking after his newspaper readers, superintending his son Tommy (or "Tam," as we boys called him) at the cobbling, and gossiping with friends and neighbours, John's time was fully occupied.

Had John been living now, it might have been said of him that he "wanted twopence in the shilling," but my own opinion of him, based on knowledge derived from being a near neighbour of his for the first twenty years of my life, was that, although he was undoubtedly eccentric, he had all his wits about him, and in many things was before his time, as was shown in his advocacy, in season and out of season, of public baths and wash-houses, etc., etc.

When in full dress, with white vest, surtout coat, "chimney-pot" hat, and carrying his celebrated ivory cane, John was a man of striking personal appearance. He was, at the very least, six feet in height, and proportionately stout; and a peculiarity of his was that he wore no stockings. His wife Susannah—or Susan, as her husband called her—was in strong contrast to him. She was a short, podgy body, with a merry twinkle in her eye, who seemed to know how to manage John, who always had a great respect for her opinion.

John had a family of seven, of whom five (three sons and two daughters) grew up to manhood or womanhood—William, who was a master shoemaker in Aberdeen; John, a seaman; and Tommy, already referred to, who also went to sea—all now dead, Tommy having been drowned; and Charlotte and Maria, none of whom now survive.

From his earliest years, as he used to tell us, John was a great lover of curios of whatever kind; and through his wide acquaintance with sailors and soldiers he became the

possessor of many peculiar nick-nacks. Truth to tell, he was often sadly imposed upon by the givers, as, for instance, when he received what purported to be the cocked hat Lord Nelson wore at the battle of Trafalgar and other articles, which, if they had been genuine, would have made his museum worth more pounds than it was worth pence. John was satisfied as to their genuineness, however, and that was enough. One thing in the museum he prized above all others—at any rate, it was the first thing he showed to strangers. This was a box containing an official letter of thanks from Prince Albert's secretary for a present of a pair of Wellington boots sent by John to the Prince. Whether John himself made the boots, or got someone to make them for him, the fact remains that the boots were duly despatched; but I was of opinion then, as I am still, that John would often have been the better of being presented with a pair of boots for his own wear. John was an ultra-loyalist, however, and he did not grudge the Wellingtons.

To describe John's dwelling is rather a ticklish business. The house was one of those old-world erections, with the gable to the street.

An outer stone stair led up to the apartments above, and the entrance to John's dwelling-house was directly under the stair, with the shop door at the side. This door was divided into two halves like the old-fashioned country smithy doors; and, as regularly as the meal hours came round, John was to be seen leaning over the lower half having a passing word with the mill girls, some chaff with the butcher boys, or a gossip with some of the neighbours. Everybody knew John Black, and strangers from far and near found their way to the Justice Port to have a look at John and his wonderful museum, the fame of which had reached every corner of the wide world—and he it said that nothing else gave him greater pleasure than that fact. Part of his treasures were stored in his hall; but the more valuable ones, such as Moses' whip, a piece of Mrs Lot, Nelson's cocked hat, etc., were all stored in the rooms above his shop. Seen in work-a-day attire, John Black

presented a picturesque appearance, the most striking features of his garb being his soldier's cocked bonnet, his white shirt sleeves, and his leather apron. The latter was of ample proportions, extending from beneath his chin to his never-to-be-forgotten "bauchles." Inside his sanctum one could not fail to observe the gas meter, which occupied a prominent position, and upon which, generally, lay one of Henry Pont's coloured drawings of a Highland soldier, or some of John's plans of the baths and wash-houses whose erection on the Inches he so strenuously advocated.

Looking through the shop window, one could see, on one stool, John, busy at work letter-writing, having for desk his cutting board resting upon his knees; and, on another, his son Tom — foreman, journeyman, and apprentice combined—hammering away at a piece of old leather; while, standing in the centre of the apartment, facing the former, would be a client dictating his or her petition to the Secretary for War or the First Lord of the Admiralty, as the case might be. Oftener than not the picture was completed by the presence, in the background, of Susan, who was ever ready to contribute her quota to whatever conversation might be going on.

JOHN'S "HALL."

Then there was the "Hall." In it prayer-meetings, a Sunday School, etc., were held, and it was, besides (as already mentioned), a receptacle for some of John's curious "relics." The "Hall" was not a magnificent affair. The name was ironical. A sand cadger would scarcely have accepted the place in a compliment as a stable for the veriest screw of an antiquated horse. Neither were its surroundings of a character to redeem it from disrepute. They were, indeed, worse than the place itself, if that were possible. Pensioners' Court was the most disreputable alley of a most disreputable locality, being inhabited almost solely by thieves and women of bad character, who could be seen hourly and by the dozen lying about the entrance; and at the foot of it stood John's so-called "Hall." Dispensing with the language of irony, the hall was

simply a shed, with a tiled roof, an earthen floor covered with sawdust that was never removed from year's end to year's end, and walls that were utterly devoid of lath or plaster, but that were hung with evergreens that had been placed in position on some special occasion long before my day, and which, so long as I knew the place, were never taken down. Fir "backs," nailed to upright wooden posts, formed the seats. John used to put himself to no end of trouble in endeavouring to get us youngsters to attend the Sunday School. He was accustomed to bribe and cajole us by promises of sweets and social meetings. But as regularly as some of us did attend, as regularly were we ejected for making a disturbance. John could get plenty of Christian young men, who were both willing and able to teach us something that would do us good, to come to the hall, and he himself, never attempting to pose for what he was not, only acted as drummer-up and general superintendent of the place. As it happened that we were not at all frightened at him, his admonitions caused us to rebel, which in turn caused us to be ejected. In revenge, we resorted to calling names, and John's particular designation, whose origin I never fathomed, was "China Head."

In addition to conducting a Sunday School, John used to get ministers, missionaries, and others to come and hold prayer meetings in the hall—a leaf, I think, that he took out of the book of Rev. Dr J. H. Wilson, of "Bool" Road fame. When he had invited any "big gun," he made a hard canvass of the locality, in order to secure a large attendance. On an occasion of this kind, happening to meet my mother and another neighbour, he accosted them in high glee, telling them Reverend So-and-So was coming, and extending a cordial invitation to them. They did not seem altogether inclined to go, whereupon John said—"Well, I would like to have a big meeting, and as you two are amongst the most respectable ladies in the locality, your coming might be the means of making others attend. If you will promise to come," he added, "'pon my soul, I'll give you a half-gill each when we come out!"

They went; and John would have been as good as his word, if they had wished it.

Pensioners' Court was demolished many years ago. A similar fate befell John's house, and upon the site a building was erected, in which the late Mr Martin, baker, carried on business for a good number of years prior to the reconstruction of the street.

CELEBRATING THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.

I have referred to John's ultra-loyalty. He used to be in great form on the occasion of Her Majesty's birthday. It gave him a splendid opportunity of frightening all the old women of Justice Street almost out of their wits. On such occasions John, with unflinching regularity, used at daybreak to convey two pieces of ordnance—the one an old horse pistol, the other a small iron cannon—to the Castlegate; and once he was there, sleep, so far as the residents in the locality were concerned, was out of the question, for the "artillery" was kept blazing away at intervals from "early morn till dewy eve." Beyond the approval of his own conscience, John likewise enjoyed, as a reward for this dutiful, if rather too demonstrative, expression of loyalty, the curses—if not loud, at anyrate deep—of those old women referred to! On the occasion of the Queen's first visit in 1848, in addition to giving a two-gun salute, John erected a triumphal arch of evergreens, which the Justice Port boys thought superior to any of the others.

One Queen's birthday an eventful incident occurred. John had commenced the day's proceedings by firing off the usual salvoes. For some reason he had to leave the scene of his labours, and in the hurry of going he had forgotten to lock up his artillery and ammunition. Tommy, his son, who was about my age, or perhaps a little older, thinking it would be a pity to spoil the sport, secured, in his father's absence, the horse pistol, as the more manageable of the two pieces, loaded it to the muzzle, rammed it tight, and then went to the shop door and fired it off. By some means or other Tommy, instead of pointing the pistol up in the air, let blaze at the window, with the result that the glass was blown to

smithereens, and Tommy's mother was nearly frightened to death. The whole locality was in a ferment, the rumour having spread that John's house was blown up. John kept a leather strap, and Tommy got enough to make him remember the occasion long after.

CHARTIST INCIDENTS.

Upon one occasion, John Black, mounted on a white charger that he had borrowed from a farmer in the neighbourhood of Bridge of Don, rode at the head of a Chartist procession. John had not stated what he required the animal for; but the farmer had heard of the use his beast had been put to, and, on its return, began to chaff John. "Man," he said, "little did I think you were gaun' to mak' a Chartist o' my beast, else you waud' never a' gotten 'im. He winna be o' muckle eese noo."

When Fergus O'Connor was in Aberdeen some of his admirers subscribed for a tartan plaid to him. It was arranged that the presentation should be made by a deputation of young women from the various factories in the city, and it so happened that John Black's daughter, Maria, was one of those selected for this purpose. The presentation was duly made, but when Maria returned to her work she was sent home, being informed that her services were no longer required. John was in high dudgeon, imagining that this treatment was meant as an indignity upon himself, and everybody was told the story again and again. Ultimately, however, Maria was re-admitted to employment in the mill, and there was an end of the matter.

"PASSING ROUND" NEWSPAPERS.

One branch of John's business which gained him notoriety was the letting-out of newspapers at a charge of a halfpenny for two hours; and among his customers were men whom one would have thought would have been able to procure a newspaper for themselves, although the price was 4d. A general rule was for four or five people to buy a newspaper amongst them, and take the first read in turn. I remember a near neighbour of John Black, the late Baillie

Bothwell, the candlemaker, was one of a syndicate that used to read the "Aberdeen Journal." I was often the messenger conveying it to the readers. Some of my relations in the country, within ten miles of the city, used to get the Wednesday's "Aberdeen Journal" on the following Wednesday, and it had not finished its round even then. In many cases it was passed round till it was almost in tatters.

A great friend and newspaper-reading customer of John's was a namesake, although no relation, of his—George Black, druggist, whose shop was in Castle Street, almost at the top of Peacock's Close. He was in business there for a number of years. I used to go messages for him, and I often went to John's for the paper. George Black was a tall man, about six feet high. He was what would be called now a masher, with well-oiled, dark, curly hair, and people used to call him "Dandy Black."

POETICAL DESCRIPTION OF JOHN BLACK.

In the early fifties the "Aberdeen Journal" had a correspondent at Cluny, who, although not quite a second Burns, used to contribute some passable rhymes now and again. John Black, with his usual astuteness, thought he might give his baths and wash-house scheme a lift if he could secure the services of the "Journal" poet, and he accordingly sent him the following letter, which I give verbatim et literatim:—

23 Justice Street, Aberdeen,
17th September, 1851.

Frien' Gordon,

Being a reader of the "Journal" often admires your Poetry, as you and I are long acquaint—I think you would spare an hour to inform the courous and untravled and unlearned where such a man resides as I, that those coming from the countrey or resednttors in our large and Poplas city might have the rights of their relatives either soldiers or sailors that have Died ether abroad or at home, see my museam of couriosets or hear a Lectur on a Sabbath Evening, all without anney charge being made, the prencaple Newspapers given out by me to read at one half pennie per three

Hours. Has Don so for this eighteen years, has obtaned pensiones 10 Seamen To there Widows, 10 Soldiers pension prize money, Balla money, obtained discharges for them from the Services, by you making a verree or two on this, and add the Promoter of the Public Baths for the working Classes, offered all my couriosets to the hall of the Public Baths in a present with a Librery for information Gratefacition to the working Classes if you cause this to appear Next week in the "Aberdeen Journal" when you come in you and I shall have a glass.

Your well wisher,

JOHN BLACK.

A few weeks after John Black's letter was written it was published in the "Journal," along with the following editorial note and poetic effusion from Mr Gordon:—

"Modesty is an uncommon commodity, and the greater on that account the reason for greatly prizing it. A man who applies to a poetic friend to sing his praises must certainly have a satisfactory confidence in his own claims to public consideration. The following notes and the poem accompanying it, as will be seen, are respectively the application of Mr John Black to have his brow bound with the laurel, and the poetic wreath indited by Mr Gordon, an occasional contributor to our columns. We give both as we received them, and shall not take upon us to make any alterations; for, not having the pleasure of Mr Black's intimate acquaintance, we cannot take the liberty of interfering with small matters of orthography or punctuation. [Editor.]"

The "poem" was given thus:—

JOHN BLACK.

'Tis the parson disease in the conscience who heals:
When the stomach goes wrong we try Morrison's pills;
But a bundel of evils to lift from your back,
There's no one so cheap or handy's John Black.

The soldier or sailor returned from the wars,
With nought for his trouble but bruises or scars,
Of prize cash and pension would ne'er get a plack,
If he did not apply for redress to John Black.

If a crofter or cottar disagree with the laird,
Or a herd kills a patrick or rabbit has snared,
Or a farmer has found out a flaw in his tack,
They are soon set to rights by a call on John Black.

For John he is crafty, and knows P's from Q's;
 He will barter or bargain, or cobble your shoes,
 At fixing a taebit or driving a tack
 There's none in the trade can compete w' John
 Black.

Both reading and writing he nightly doth teach;
 To the sinners around him he hires one to preach;
 A magazine, newspaper, novel, or track
 Are lent for a farthing an hour by John Black.

There are few but hae heard of his wonderful hall,
 It answers for theatre, prayer-house, or ball;
 Sometimes the teetottlars there tak' a smack,
 And hear a good lecture when sober's John Black.

He has all curiosities in his museum,
 From Nelson's "cocked hat" to the trumpet of
 "Tuam,"
 And Sergeant Shaw's sword, which the Frenchmen did
 hack,
 Now rusts in the hands of peaceful John Black.

At all public meetings he aye tak's the lead;
 Of all lists of subscriptions his name's at the head,
 He directs monstre pleasure trips, all knows the fack,
 For public baths, too, we're obliged to John Black.

In the Crystal Palace great wonders are shown,
 But were John and his museum but publicly known,
 The Commissioners' prospects would soon go to
 wrack,
 The visitors all flock here to John Black.

Cluny, October, 1857.

Someone had given the Cluny poet such an account of John that the latter is depicted to the very life; but whether John and he ever met to have their glass together I am not aware. The poet deserved it for his truthful delineation. But the then editor of the "Journal" seems to have been rather incredulous regarding John's virtues.

Despite all the rebuffs he got, however, John always came up smiling, and held on the even tenor of his way until the summer of 1853, when he was attacked by typhus fever. He passed through the ordeal, and was getting better, when a relapse occurred, from which he never recovered. For those interested in John's memory, I may state that he lies in the north-east corner of St Peter's Cemetery, near King Street. There is a small square granite stone over him. A weeping willow tree prevents the inscription from being seen, but the stone is just in front of the grave of Sir George Reid's father, and close beside those of the late Mr William Hogarth and his old friend, Police Commissioner George Stirling. John's museum, I may mention by the way, came into Mr Stirling's

possession, but its ultimate fate I never knew.

WILLIAM BENNETT.

Another well-known East-Ender, who was a member of St Andrew's Episcopal Church, was the late William Bennett, printer. His printing office was for a great number of years in 42 Castle Street, and he himself resided in Constitution Street. He was the printer of the "North of Scotland Gazette" from its inception in 1847 until it was merged in the "Free Press" in 1853, its editor being the late Mr James H. Wilson (afterwards Rev. Dr J. H. Wilson, of "Boal" Road and Ragged School Union fame). Mr Bennett was not a native of Aberdeen, having come originally from Montrose; and so he was a great friend of Mrs Pollock and the Ryder family, they having at one time been wont to play in Montrose. He was a man of strong personality and great judgment, and of good taste in his profession; and many of his apprentices are now filling important positions in nearly every part of the civilised globe. I may mention two—Mr John Thomson, of the Aberdeen University Press; and Mr William B. Cook, editor of the "Stirling Sentinel." Mr Bennett had not a few claims to recognition—if I remember rightly, he printed many, if not all, of the volumes of the original Spalding Club. He is also to be remembered as the first man who published an evening paper in Aberdeen—the "Northern Telegraphic News"—which appeared during the Crimean War in 1854-5. The "News" consisted of four pages folio demy, and contained a few advertisements, one or two of Lord Raglan's telegrams from the seat of war, and excerpts from William Howard Russell's letters to the "Times," which made such a stir at the time. The price was 2d, but the Government received half of that in the shape of Stamp Duty. At the end of the war the paper was discontinued; and no other attempt was made to start an evening paper until the middle of the sixties, when the late John Duffus started the "North Star," a halfpenny publication, which, for some reason or



Rev. Dr. Kidd.



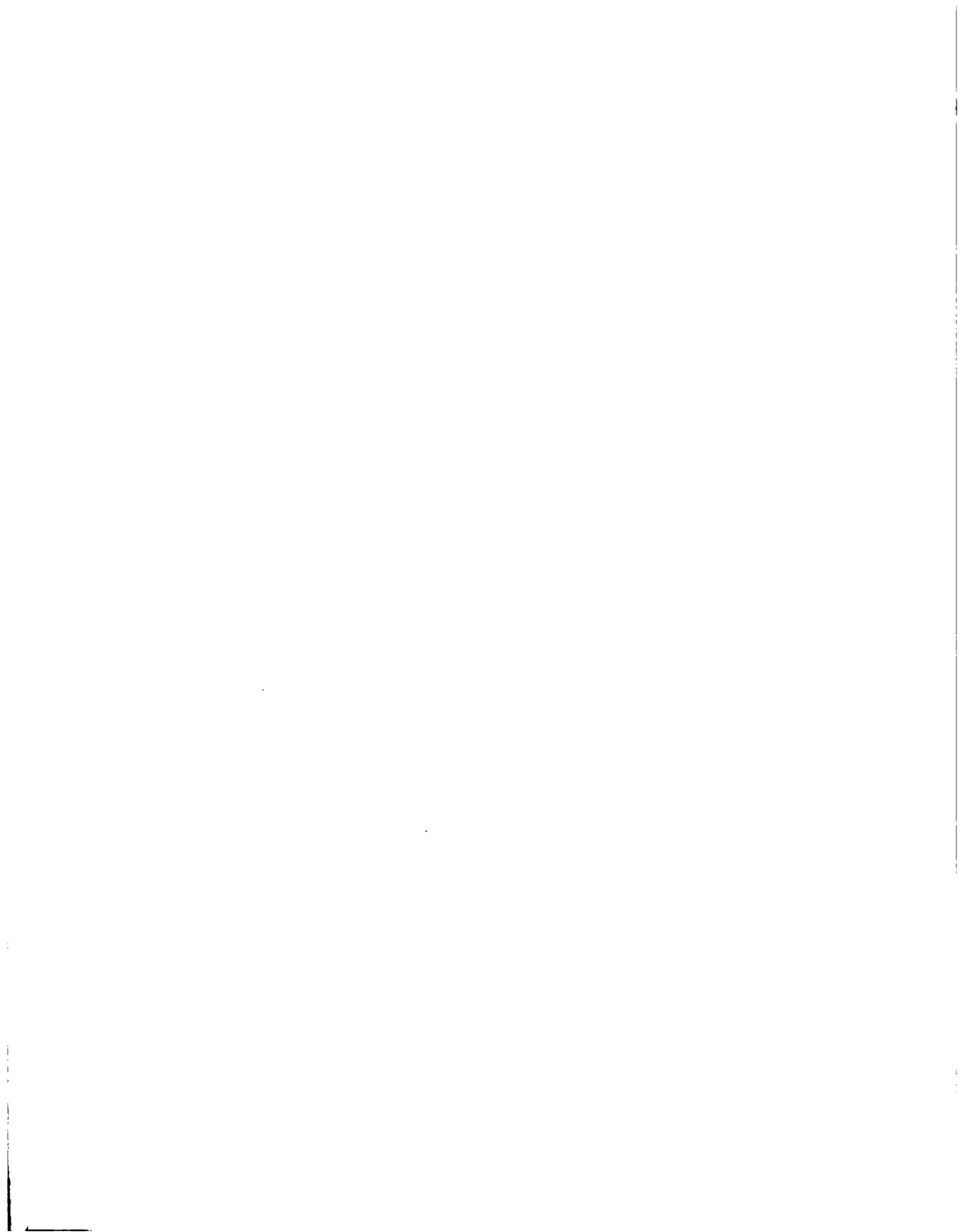
Priest Gordon.



Rev. Hugh Hart.



John Ramsay.



other, soon died a natural death. Mr Bennett died on 26th May, 1888, and was buried in Banchory-Devenick Churchyard.

PRIEST GORDON.

Another denizen of Justice Port, as well known as John Black, was Rev. Charles Gordon, better known as Priest Gordon, who for more than half a century performed more charitable acts than any other individual in the city. For very many years he was the priest in charge of St Peter's, Justice Street, then the only Roman Catholic Church in the city. He had charge also of the orphanage and schools in Constitution Street, where his living likeness, cut in imperishable granite, now stands. He was ably assisted in his duties by a number of competent priests, including Priests Reid and Stopani. On Sunday mornings, at mass, the church was always filled with devout worshippers, and at the evening lectures it used also to be crowded. A great number of the youth of the city, both male and female, used to attend for the sake of the fine singing and the novelty of the ritual, but their behaviour was not always of the best, and sometimes some of them had to be expelled.

Before Aberdeen became a regimental depot, the soldiers marched out to church. When an Irish regiment happened to be in Aberdeen, I have seen as many as 500 or 600 men going to St Peter's, and I used often to wonder where they were all stowed. The Episcopalians used to attend St Andrew's, and the Presbyterians the North Church.

Much attention used to be attracted in the vicinity of St Peter's in those days by

the arrival at the church every Sunday morning of the carriage of Sir Michael Bruce, Bart., of Scotston. Lady Bruce, who was a Roman Catholic, used to alight and enter St Peter's, whereupon the carriage would drive off to St Andrew's, in King Street, where Sir Michael, who was an Episcopalian, was wont to worship.

Every Monday morning the Chapel Court used to be crowded with poor people from far and near, for on that morning every week throughout the year, there was a bounteous distribution of "cloddies" by the priests. The gifts were awarded not only to Roman Catholics, but to the poor of whatever denomination.

Regarding the Orphanage in Constitution Street, which was for both boys and girls, we youngsters used, in passing the place, to chaff the boys by calling them, amongst other names, "The Twelve Apostles." They usually retorted by dubbing us "Disciples of Luther," but we took it all in good part. A good story regarding the Orphanage, which may or may not be true, was told in my young days. As anyone who has ever passed the place will know, there is along the front of the institution, in large letters, the Latin inscription—"Religioni et bonis moribus" (Religion and good morals). Two countrymen were passing one day, en route to a cattle show on the Links, when their attention was attracted by the motto. They spelt it and re-spelt it, but seemed to make nothing of it. At length one said to the other—"Man, this is the funniest house I ever saw, for it has the queerest sign I ever heard of. It says—'Really, Johnnie, eat bones and murphies.' I canna mak' it out ava!"

CHAPTER V.

THE CASTLEGATE AND ITS "CHARACTERS."

EAST-END WORTHIES.

The late Mr Charles M'Gregor, bosier, was a worthy long and favourably known in this locality. He was a very quiet man, and lived in Chapel Court; and he held for many years the post of choirmaster or precentor of St Peter's. The late Mrs Wiseman's family, the Wilsons, were all brought up in the same place. Mrs Wiseman's father, Mr James Wilson, was a teacher of music. He was a member of the orchestra at the old theatre in Marischal Street on week nights, and played the violin in St Peter's on Sunday. The whole family received a thorough musical education. I do not know if any of them are now alive. Mr Wilson, as I remember him, was a tall, thin man, and nearly always wore, as was then the fashion, a long cloak reaching almost to his feet; and the late Mr James Frater, of the City Chamberlain's office, also lived in the same locality for a long time. To my own personal knowledge, he was a servant of the Corporation for more than fifty years. The late Mr Munro, artist, who at one time kept the County Rooms, also lived in the same locality for a long period. His family, along with the families of the others mentioned, and one or two outsiders, myself included, used to keep Chapel Court so lively with our din, that Priest Gordon—who could not, I suppose, get a moment's peace for his studies—used to lose his patience with us, and drive us off. And we were not long in skedaddling, because we stood in perfect awe of him. On one occasion, Mrs Wiseman's brother, who was a delicate boy, went into hysterics after one of these chases.

BELL MILTON—SOWENS.

Still another worthy who flourished in those times, and who, in a way, was almost as well known as John Black, was a lady

who was a professor of an almost lost art. I refer to Bell Milton. What east-ender does not remember her and her celebrated sowens? She was, in fact, known all over Aberdeen as the best maker of that commodity in the city. Then the demand at all times exceeded the supply, although nowadays one scarcely ever hears of sowens, except occasionally about Christmas time. In the time of which I write sowens was an every-day article of diet. Bell was one of those persons who have a bee in their bonnet, or who, to use the expressive description, are "hallyrocket." When I first knew her, she lived with her only daughter in a small shop, where sowens was the only article retailed. George McKay, a street porter, who had formerly been a soldier, came a-courting o' Bell, and the courtship ended in marriage. For a time they got on well enough together. She was the essence of cleanliness, and he was quite a dandy, wearing as part of his ordinary working attire a brown velvet coat and a yellow waistcoat. About pension times, however, George began to get on the spree, and bye-and-bye, he and his better-half led pretty much a cat-and-dog life. In the long run George died, and Bell was once more a free woman. But another suitor came to woo, in the person of my old friend, Sandy Crawford, the printer of the "Aberdeen Journal," who was a widower, with a son and daughter, and who lodged in the locality. This eventuated in another wedding, and I am happy to say that the couple got on remarkably well together till death separated them. Bell's daughter, Jean Lindsay, now an old woman, still keeps up her mother's trade; and she and her two sowens pails are well known to a great number of the denizens of the west-end. She is as deaf as a post.

Forty or fifty years ago, and down to a



Turkey Willie.



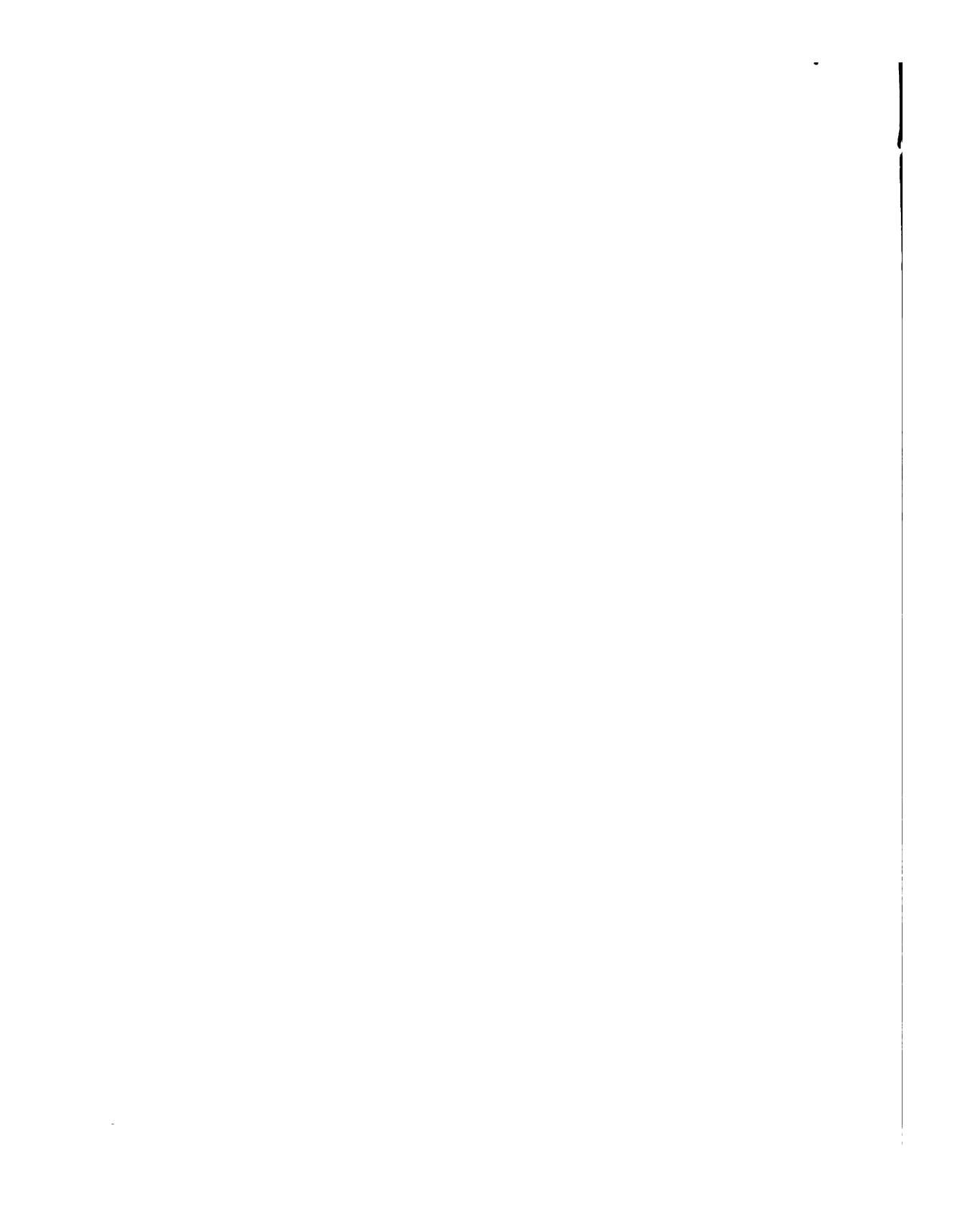
Lang Willie Milne.



Piddie Guyan.



Davie Frost.



much later date, Castle Street on week days was occupied by a number of hucksters' stalls. Among the number was that of Eppie Still. It consisted of an old soap box, on which were one or two trays, displaying a conglomeration of "chippit" apples and pears, partans, fish roes, "buckies," etc. Eppie often got obstreperous, and her language then was susceptible of refinement and polish. She was not unfamiliar with the "New Times." Eppie's son, an old soldier, known as "The Captain," kept a cook shop in Justice Port, and he used to be terribly tormented by the butcher boys.

THE CASSIES.

Another notable family that I was intimately acquainted with in my young days was that of the Cassies, whose home for many years was situated at the top of Castle Street, where the new Salvation Army Barracks now stand. Mr James Cassie, sen., had a licensed grocer's shop at the top of Chapel Court, in Justice Street. There was one son, Mr James Cassie, jun., the artist, and four daughters, Jane, Eliza, Margaret, and Kate. Jane married Mr Walter Gray, for long a silk mercer in Union Street, and had a large family. Their only son, Tom—a companion of my youth—who was a rising young artist, died in early manhood. Mr Cassie, jun., used to give me a pencil and set me to draw; but as drawing was never my forte, he ultimately gave up the practice. He had a favourite little dog that became mad and had to be poisoned, and he presented me with a painting of it. I retained possession of it for many years, but ultimately it went amissing. Mrs Cassie, sen., was supposed to have died from fright. She went to her bed one night rather poorly. During the night a thunderstorm arose, and Mrs Cassie was found dead in the morning. Old Mr Cassie did not long survive her. I remember Mr Cassie was an adept at making "tee-totums" or "totums," which used to be much prized by boys.

CASTLE STREET MERCHANTS—THE BOOTHES.

I have already referred to Baillie Bothwell—a very reserved man, who had the greatest resemblance I ever saw to the pictures of the great Duke of Wellington.

Police-Commissioner John Airth's shop was directly opposite, but he was of a more genial temperament than the baillie. Then, in Castle Street, we had Police-Commissioner George Stirling, and a few doors further down was the late Provost Jamieson's, widely known as the "corner shop"; and in Albion Court dwelt William Booth, principal chimney-sweep and fireman, and his four sons, who all did good service in their day at fires. James, William, and Alexander are all dead; but the youngest, Frank, is still in the service. The present race of Booths are all grandsons of old William. The late "Alickie" Booth (who died a few years ago) was quite a character in his day. Alickie's nephew and companion, John Gibson, "Tuckie Jock," is still to the fore. I remember seeing "Tuckie" and a notorious pickpocket, Henry Murphy, fight a pitched battle on the links about 50 years ago, with nothing on but their trousers, though the snow was more than a foot deep. "Tuckie" mastered his opponent. With about half a dozen falls from housetops, fights, etc., etc., the wonder is he is still alive. Alickie Booth was such another; his falls were numerous and his general career chequered, but he managed to fully outlive the three score and ten, and ended his days calmly and quietly.

Another master sweep, William Gardiner, who lived in Castle Street, was much in demand. Gardiner and Booth were the two autocrats of their profession in the city in their day. I remember another character in Smith's Court—at that time the worst close in the locality—Johnnie Mann, bill-poster and lamplighter. He was a little fat man, and at the time did all the bill-posting in the city—only there were not so many glaring posters in those days.

"TURKEY WILLIE."

Jemmy Mann, the broker in Gordon's Court, Broad Street (now demolished), was a son of Johnnie. Near neighbours of Johnnie Mann were the celebrated pair, "Turkey Willie" and his wife, "Turkey Betty." They were both well up in years before I knew them, and I can remember them as far back as I can remember anything—casually seeing them moving about;

but my first personal acquaintance with them gave me such a fright that I am not likely to forget it in a lifetime, and it taught me a good lesson in caution.

I was standing in Castle Street, not far from the close where "Turkey Willie" lived, when a man accosted me, and asked me if I would go a message for him, and he would fill my cap with pears. I said I would. He had, he replied, some "doos" (pigeons) to sell, and he did not like to take them himself down to "Turkey Willie's." He wanted so much for them, and I was told, if I was asked as to the ownership, to say they were my own. I said it was all right—I could easily do that. I swallowed the bait, got the pigeons, and off I set down the close; clambered up the rickety old stair, knocked at the door, got admission into Willie's den, and told my story. What did I want for them—so much? Who owned them? where did I live? and so on. The price asked for was paid over, and I clambered down again. My friend was waiting, and I gave him his cash, got my fee, and thought I had done a good stroke of business. I ate my pears, and by the time I got home had forgotten all about the transaction. On my arrival, my mother set on to me tooth and nail as to when or where she had sent me to sell "doos," or where I had got them, as by this time the police had been at her about them. I told her the whole transaction, and I then got special injunctions not to leave the house, as the police were to be back for me. I really did feel frightened, and had a "bad quarter of an hour." On the policeman's reappearance I had to go along with him to the Police Office, with an idea that I would never get back. Mr Barclay, the then superintendent, was there. I told him my story. He asked me if I would know the man that sent me the message. I said I would. He then told me not to speak if I should see him until I was asked, and a policeman went and brought in a man out of the cells. They asked the man some questions, and then took him back. I was then asked if that was the man. I said "No." Another man was produced; then a third. He was the man. After a lecture from Mr Barclay as to being on my guard for the future if asked

to go upon any such errand, I was dismissed. The man who stole the pigeons got 30 days. They did not ask me to be a witness against him, as I was too young. That was my first and last episode with "Turkey Willie."

THE POULTRY AND MEAL MARKET.

Willie and his better-half were to be seen together daily, she leading him round the town; and on Fridays they were together in the poultry market as regularly as the day came. Here Alex. Graham, better known as "Bass Sandy," was also to be found, at the King Street entrance, with a large supply of his stock-in-trade—door mats made of sea-grass, locally called "bassas." The poultry market has been so long non-existent that the present generation knows nothing about it, and more than likely many may never have heard of it. The market stood on the triangular piece of ground bounded by King Street, Queen Street, and Lodge Walk, which now forms part of Mr Coutte's lemonade manufactory. It was also the meal market, after the market in Mealmarket Street was discontinued. It had three entrances—the principal in King Street, now part of the Inland Revenue Office; the second in Queen Street, where Mr Coutte's manufactory extends; and the third in Lodge Walk, now the County Police Office. Around the sides and the centre were covered-in seats for the butter-wives on Fridays, and on wet days the place was a perfect paradise for the east end boys, who used to take shelter on the shed couplings, and sit and chatter for hours together.

SINCLAIR'S CLOSE.

Another well-known East-Ender and old residenter, known by everybody, was Robbie Mason, joiner and funeral undertaker. Robbie was a very lively fellow. He was a neighbour of John Black, and used to hold John in supreme contempt when John got on his high horse. Robbie reared a very large family, and was much respected in the locality. His death occurred under melancholy circumstances, and caused deep regret in the neighbourhood. His workshop was for many years in that notorious place,

Sinclair's Close, better known by the boys as "Tink-a-loe"—even then condemned—which ran from Justice Street towards the Barracks, and is now the back of the Salvation Army Barracks. It used to be said that more robberies were committed in that court in one year than in all the other rookeries in Aberdeen put together. William Cameron, alias Hewkie, a notorious Glasgow beggar, vagrant, etc., who wrote his autobiography some years ago—a book that created a sensation on its appearance—mentions that on his arrival in Aberdeen he was taken to Sinclair's Close. He says—"This close contains the rummieest characters Aberdeen can produce." William Thom, the Inverurie Poet, was at one time of his life a resident in this "classic" locality, but before it had become the notorious place here described.

Speaking about Sinclair's Close recalls a thrilling incident which happened there in the early fifties, whereby an individual had a most remarkable escape from sudden death. One night, pretty late, a hue and cry was raised that a man had got out at an attic window of a house in Justice Street, and had fallen into the street or down at the back, and was killed. People ran hither and thither, and for some time could make nothing of the affair, as, it being dark, they could see nothing. After a short time, however, some people said they heard low groans, but had no idea where they were coming from. Some ran into a wood-yard at the back of the house known as the "Howff." They heard the sounds, but they seemed to be as far off as they were in the front. Everyone in the crowd by this time heard them. It seemed mysterious. At length, some one suggested that the sepulchral groans were issuing from a chimney in Sinclair's Close. Robbie Masson (already referred to) was sent for, he being the only tenant, his workshop being there, and it was then discovered that the individual, whoever he was, was firmly imbedded in the chimney, and as the fireplace was not 18 inches high, the only way to get him out was to break down the front of the fireplace. Willing hands got picks, and set to work to take out

the bricks, and in a short time the prisoner was relieved—more dead than alive, and covered with soot from head to foot. After his release, he was walked away to the police office. It seems the individual—quite a young man—had been in the attic in question, which entered from the Mussel Close, a well-known place. There had been a good deal of liquor agoing, some quarrelling occurred, and in a wooden dream the young man, not knowing what he was about, clambered out by the skylight, and on to the roof. He ran along the ridges until he came to the end, and as the chimney tops were levelled down close to the roof, when he came to the end, instead of dropping off the housetop, he dropped miraculously down the chimney feet first. Had he missed going down the chimney-hole, he would have been dashed to pieces. He turned out to be an old schoolmate of my own. He learned to be a druggist at the top of Broad Street, then enlisted in the Scots Fusiliers; was drummed out for bad conduct; turned street fiddler, quack doctor, china merchant, etc.; and the last time I saw him in Aberdeen, some years ago, he was a window ticket writer.

CASTLE STREET CHARACTERS.

Another well-known worthy in Castle Street was Maggie Brown's father, who, during the winter season, used to supply the denizens with a luxury never heard of now, and whose strident cries, as he went through the streets, of "Fresh Mussels! Caller Mussels!" will not readily be forgotten by the older folks. There was also another vendor of the same commodity—Hardacre—a man who will be remembered by the old folks for his fine, musical voice, in contrast to that of his compeer. Then there was "Cracking dry, bonnie lasses!" with his stick barrow and his cheery old face. There was also "Cheen-ey, oh-h!"—a little wizened-face man, with a basket on his arm that had once been new, and the invariable clamped jug he carried as a specimen of his handiwork, but which the east-end boys used to declare belonged to somebody else and he could not find the owner. We had "Chelsea Buns!"—a Cockney with a white jacket and

cap; but I never thought his wares particularly nice—not half so fine as Murray the confectioner's noted Banburies. Then there were that walking hardware shop, covered over with his whole stock, "reddin' combs, bone combs, side combs, a penny the pair," etc., etc., and Mrs Martin, a little jocular Irish woman, who sat at the fish market door selling candy every day, except Friday, when she sat in Castle Street, almost at the top of King Street. Almost every mill-girl in Aberdeen had some of her candy on Friday. In addition, there were the sisters Jane and Bell Falconer, with their apple stall. They sat in Castle Street daily selling fruit for more than forty years.

For many years, a preacher used daily to frequent the Gordon monument, in Castle Street. If I remember rightly, his name was Hill. Austere of countenance and speech, and dressed in a Quakerish style of costume, he was not popular with the general public. I recollect he always carried a small tin basin, which he invariably deposited in front of him, for the reception of the collection.

Then, who does not remember old John Sim? He was almost invariably to be found in front of the Union Bank, at the top of Marischal Street, waiting for a job. John was what was called a "backman," or, in other words, a coal-carrier. In those days, if a person wanted a single bag of coals, the custom was to give the order to one of the "backmen," who would, for a consideration, carry the coals from the ship's side to the cellar. Coal carts did not perambulate the streets then. At the time I knew him, John was an old man, with a patriarchal beard, which led us to set him down as a Jew. But John was in reality a member of a sect rarer in Aberdeen than even the Jews, and defunct, I suppose, long since. He was a "Joanna Southcottian," and he used to preach and expound the tenets of the sect, although, I think, he made very few, if any, converts to the imposture.

Another well-known figure was that of Mr Gordon, a kindly old man, who took up his quarters every week day, wet or dry, at the Courthouse door. It was said he was at one time a minister, and although he was regarded by us boys as a bit soft, we never

played off any tricks on him, as we did on many others of his class. We would get a shake of his hand and a pinch of his snuff, and then off we would march without molesting him in any way.

WILLIE GODSMAN AND OTHERS.

There was also "Feel Willie Godsman." He used to frighten us to such an extent that we would fly to the very garrets, and hide below beds to be out of his reach. I have a faint recollection of a character of the same kind, of whom the late poet Anderson wrote—"Wha is he that gangs dressed in militiaman's claes?—the well-known "Moorican Room." There were also "Jumpin' Judas," and, coming down a little later, the well-known "Dicky Daw," who always seemed to me the most thankless of the whole lot. Woe betide the hapless urchin that came within reach of her walking-stick. Dicky was no insignificant creature, but she was most repulsive-looking and merciless.

The Poor Law Act of 1845 did a good thing in clearing the streets of such customers. The present generation can have no conception of how town and country used formerly to be overrun with beggars. Begging was, in fact, a sort of regular profession all over the land. Every beggar carried his or her meal bag—"blaw bag" it was called—and I have seen them, times without number, coming into the city laden with meal and potatoes. Part of the meal was given to the lodging-house keepers for lodgings, and the remainder sold to small shopkeepers. Some of the shopkeepers made a good thing of it, and I remember that, during a warm discussion, a neighbour told one of them not "to be so big, as if it had'na been for the beggars and their beggit meal, she wadna' hae been see weel aff." The shopkeeper went away perfectly floored. In those days poor town's folks thought they were highly favoured if they got loaf bread on Sundays only, while poor country people perhaps only got loaf bread once or twice a year. At that time there were dozens of meal-sellers' shops in Aberdeen; now those who use oatmeal are the exception, and it seems to be going out of

use as human food, which, I think, is to be regretted.

Another character well known in the east end occurs to me. Happy, smiling-faced Sandy Cameron was the darling and delight of the Bogmill (otherwise Bannermill) lasses. On any high occasion or gala day, when the girls would start off in procession, Sandy would invariably be found leading the van, dressed in a clean, white moleskin suit, and carrying a handkerchief fixed to a walking-stick as a flag. Sandy was of rather weak intellect, but the girls simply adored him, and if anyone had interfered with him—which I never saw anyone attempt to do—he would probably have been torn to pieces. Sandy had a good voice, and it was a sight to see the girls coming up Justice Street at six o'clock, Sandy singing, and the girls joining in the chorus—

A sailor, a sailor,
A sailor and a rolling eye;
I'd lay my life to be his wife,
And for his sake I'd die.
He tell't me to keep up my heart,
He bade me nae be dull;
He tell't me to keep up my heart,
He'd tak' me frae the mill.

or—

The day will come when we'll win free,
For the Bogmill bell winna ring for me, etc.

The day Sandy sang about came for him long ago, as for many of his hearers. Peace be to his manes!

Still another funny crank was "Weel-maybe - a - white - hat - winna - eat - and - a-black-ane-winna-chew." This somewhat long name was given him because he was always repeating the words. I have a rather hazy recollection of him, but I remember him going from door to door. Then there was "Buttermilk Benjie." Benjie was sometimes to be seen helping to pull the butchers' carts from Wales Street to the New Market, sometimes with and sometimes without a basket on his back, neither looking to right nor left, but muttering and swearing to himself, and every now and again making a half turn, and snapping with his teeth at his arm as if he would bite it. Roddy Stewart—"Feel Roddy" already referred to—used also to assist the butchers to drag their carts along, and, like "Buttermilk Benjie," he also, whenever he

was displeased, used to bite himself, and bellow like a bull. There were some sweet scenes in Justice Street in those days!

PIEMEN.

I next wish to introduce "Pie Bob." "Come away, toss and win; a pie if you win, and plumcake if you lose; come away, my hearties!" I fancy there are few East-Enders who have forgotten that harangue, with which Bob used to induce the public to purchase his stock-in-trade. The charge was a halfpenny, and I can testify that the article supplied was worth the money. I sometimes wonder what has become of all our piemen. Forty or fifty years ago, we used to have no fewer than three men supplying our daily wants in this respect. There was our friend Bob, otherwise Robert Nicol; there was an old baker of the name of Moggart; and there was a scruffy old weaver who took to the business. The weaver had an elaborate apparatus, but as he was a somewhat dour personage, and was always suspicious that we young folks were going to cheat him—a suspicion that was not altogether unwarranted—we did not patronise him much. Even yet, I speculate as to the ingredients of the pies with which we were supplied. To be charitable, one would suppose they were the finest mutton, but I very much doubt it. Be that as it may, we took all we got, and as the pies were palatable we never gave any consideration to their composition.

The late Davie M'Kay used to supply us with drinks to wash down the pies. Davie was a perfect genius; but he fulfilled the adage "Everything by turns and nothing long." Moreover, his genius did not spell "success." After trying dozens of things, he ultimately settled down as a foreign-money changer. Latterly he gave up that occupation, however, and ended his days as a manufacturer of blacking, ink, sauce, etc. He was the most versatile man I ever knew, yet he died poor. Davie was a great friend of "Blin' Bob," and was credited with giving him some valuable tips. Davie died in Chronicle Lane shortly after Bob.

AN UNADULTERATED WAIF.

Amongst the East-End worthies, however,

none will be better remembered by old fogeys than the mysterious Abel Cole. Cole was the "Jean Findlater's Loon" of my day, but he had no Jean Findlater to take his part. He was about my own age, and he ran about among us. He was not so bad as some of us, perhaps, in the mischief line, but by some curious fatality the blame was generally assigned to him. If ever there was an unadulterated waif, Cole was one. Where he came from or to whom he belonged probably no one knew. Where he resided was, indeed, a mystery. He depended for his lodging on public charity, and he was consequently harboured sometimes by this one and sometimes by that. To the credit of the women of the East-End, it must be said, however, that they were not backward in affording an asylum, and that Cole generally found shelter in one or other of the closes that opened out upon Castle Street. It need to be said—but with what truth I never was able to ascertain—that an elderly woman of the name of "Maggie Diack" was Cole's mother, and that the waif's real name was "Geordie Diack." But Cole never acknowledged the relationship, and the old woman took precious good care that she should not be burdened with his maintenance and support.

When the Crimean War broke out, just fifty years ago, Abel—who, by that time, had reached early manhood—enlisted in the 79th Highlanders, who were then in the Barracks. He made a very smart soldier, and was soon drafted out to the Crimea; but, unlike Jock Findlater, the hero of Anderson's poem, who managed to get safely through the Waterloo campaign, poor Abel, from the day he left Aberdeen Barracks was never heard of again, and, although a number of us lads enlisted the services of our friend John Black to make inquiries about him, we never got any information whatever. Like dozens of Aberdeen East-End boys, and hundreds of others, Abel's bones were probably left to bleach on the Crimea.

BLIN' BOB.

I now come to our old friend Duncan Mackinlay, better known as "Blin' Bob." Bob's speciality was literature, which he hawked at the feeing markets. Although a

number of his productions were smartly written, and particularly suited for the class he principally catered for—the farm servants—forming, as they generally did, a tirade against some fictitious farmer or his wife, who starved and oppressed the servants—I often thought, knowing him for many years, that had he been less vitriolic he would have fared better than he did. During most of his later years, he was a complete misanthrope, altogether different from what he was in his younger days, when he used to make the Castlegate ring again with his singing of "My New Surtout," "There you go and your eye out,"

The money's wanted now, you know,
For to keep up the Queen, ains, etc.

Bob was very reticent with regard to himself and his early years, and I believe that there was only one individual in Aberdeen to whom he would have unbosomed himself, and that was the late Sandy Durno, the printer. Sandy was his man of business for many years, and would have given him credit to any extent for printing—and he always got his money too. I often met Bob in the printer's shop, and used to have long confabs with him; and during Bob's latter years he used to stuff old Durno's head with mighty projects that were to make both their fortunes, and the old man unhesitatingly swallowed it all. Bob's father was said to have kept a book-stall in Castle Street, although I cannot remember him. They lived for a long time in Gardener's Lane, and afterwards in Pensioners' Court. Bob was rather unfortunate in his marital associations, and that was supposed to have something to do with his alleged misanthropy. In his younger days, singing was principally his forte. On a feeing market day, he had always something spicy for the farm servants in the shape of a tirade against some farmer "within a hundred miles" of somewhere, who starved his servants. He dared not sell the publication, he said, it was so libellous, but he would sell them a straw for a penny, and present them with a copy of the effusion gratis, said effusion being harmless in almost every case. At the Aberdeen races that were held during the



"Reed" Tapple.



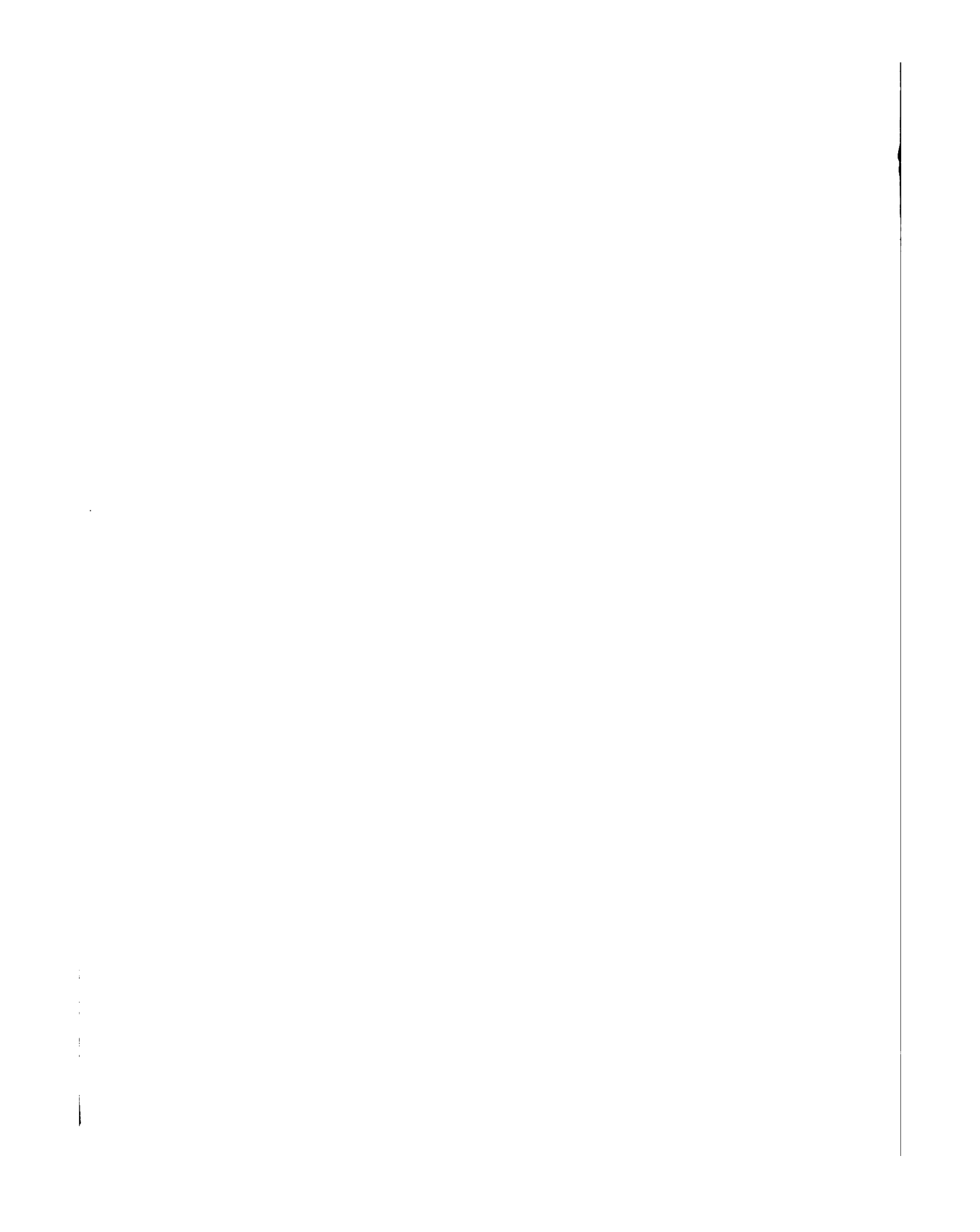
Moorikin Room.



Blin' Bob.



Qurk Middleton.



forties, Blin' Bob used to make a good deal of money, as he was wont to sell a list of all the sporting ladies and gents. who attended the races. The initials of both sexes were put in juxtaposition, and, the parties being pretty well known by the initial letters, a good deal of amusement was created. It usually happened that the whole stock was bought up and destroyed; but unless the copyright was bought along with it, off went Bob to his printer's for more.

Shortly after the opening of the St Nicholas and Oldmachar Poorhouses, Duncan took up a hostile attitude against the places; and the two inspectors—Mr William Clark in particular—came under the lash of his sarcastic tongue. Crowds used to stand around him for hours, hearing him vituperating them, and depicting the misery of the paupers, but he took care always, when he was on that topic, to have nothing printed concerning the inspectors, the abuse of them being only a draw to sell his wares. After a ten minutes' harangue, he would start off with "Five-and-twenty 'shewing' needles for a halfpenny, four bootlaces for a penny, five boxes of matches for a penny, a beautiful cambric handkerchief for a penny, etc., etc.; and then when he had got clear of a lot of his stock, he commenced the harangue again, and so on, ad infinitum. Duncan knew what he was about. There was method in his madness. During his latter years he indulged rather freely in strong drink, and when in that condition used to say things that would have been better left unsaid, which brought him often into collision with the powers that be. After all his bluster of the night before, he generally made a very poor show before the bailies in the morning, and they, knowing with whom they had to deal, let him down as gently as they could.

A number of the wholesale houses in Aberdeen doubtless missed Duncan Mackinlay—for some time after his death, at least—for clearing out any unsaleable stock they had, especially in the soft goods line and ironmongery, as nothing came wrong to him if he could get it cheap enough. During the Crimean war, when people were at fever-height for war news, he secured a large

number of very old illustrated papers from the late Mr William Russell, bookseller, for a mere song, and in a very short time they were all disposed of as the latest news from the seat of war. When any of his customers expostulated with him and declared that there was nothing whatever about the war in the papers, he quite imperturbably told them that the newspapers "tell't lees" about things, and that he had as good a right to tell "lees" as the newspapers had. His "five boxes of matches a penny" were the old sulphur ones, and generally would not strike, and when complained to about them he used to coolly reply that they were good value as firewood, and that they would just "dee" to light the fire. On one occasion he bought some thousands of the first penny part of "Claude Duval," accompanied by a coloured plate of Claude stopping the stage coach. They were made to do service in connection with some sensational murder case that occurred about the time—the book for the life of the murderer and the plate for the scene of the murder. The best of it used to be that purchasers, when they found themselves sold, went away quietly and generally said nothing, and allowed other people to find out the "sell" for themselves. The Circuit Court trials used to be another paying job for Duncan and others until the daily newspapers appeared. The vendors of the broadsheets containing reports of the trials had then to reduce their charge to a halfpenny; and when the evening papers appeared the business was destroyed altogether, and they had to find out some other game to play. Duncan Mackinlay died in 1890. Till within two days of his death he was in the streets selling his wares. It was rather the effects of exposure to the elements, and privations, debauchery, etc., than any actual disease that carried him off. He could not brook going into the poor-house. He had queerer ideas about things in general than most people. His peculiar bringing-up and life might account for that. I have come across a great many worse people than Blin' Bob. I have known him sit for a whole afternoon stuffing the head of old Sandy Durno (who was a simple-minded man) with what he was going to do

for them both. Durno declared he was the cleverest man Aberdeen had ever produced. Bob's printer did not long survive him.

FRUIT AND CONFECTIONS.

At the time of which I write, Mr George Pegler, fruiterer and confectioner, was advertising confections as "the cheapest in the market" at "only" 1s 4d per lb.; better can be had now at 2½d. Speaking about Mr Pegler, would it be believed that at that time there were only two fruiterers' shops in Aberdeen—Mr Pegler's, in Union Buildings, and Mr Crombie's, in Broad Street? Oranges, except sour ones at the New Year, were totally unknown, unless bought in these shops for a sick person at 6d or 8d per lb. It was the same with grapes, which were a luxury of the rich; but apples, pears, and berries were as cheap then as now, if not cheaper, there being no demand for them to make preserves. The only preserves that were then to be had (always excepting those home-made) cost about 1s per lb. or more.

"SAMMY" MARTIN, "HATTER TO THE PEOPLE."

Another well-known public man in those days was the inimitable "Sammy" Martin, the "Hatter to the People," who was one of the most ultra-loyal subjects Her Majesty ever had in these parts. "Sammy" was an original in every way, but never realised the dream of his life—that much-coveted knight-hood, of which he talked so much. Some people were of opinion that Sammy really wished the honour, and expected to get it; others as strongly maintained that it was all a joke—for advertising purposes. Be that as it may, there was no public function or gala-day but Sammy was visible in the saloon above his shop, with the windows wide open. (His shop, by the way, was No. 34 Union Street, now part of the site of the Bank of Scotland.) There he stood, wearing a red Garibaldi shirt and a fancy head-dress, and displaying the everlasting cornet, on which he was quite an expert player. Sammy was ahead of his generation in many things, and in one thing in particular—advertising. It used to be said of a certain local weekly

paper that it would not be a paper at all without his advertisement, he never having missed a week in advertising in it for over 40 years. A little man of the name of Kelman—a character in his way—was generally credited as the drawer-up of Sammy's advertisements. Whoever wrote them, they did the writer credit. People often wondered why Sammy remained a bachelor all his life. He was a very handsome man, and in his brown velvet coat and white vest, with a "nobby" hat, he looked the perfect gentleman. That he was eccentric to a certain extent is without a doubt; and certainly there are not many men with the moral courage to erect their own tombstone in their lifetime, and inscribe thereon—"This is the last resting-place of —." Sammy had his tombstone ready for him for many years in Nellfield Cemetery, with the inscription—"The last resting-place of Samuel Martin, Hatter to the People." It used to be a favourite discussion with us boys, when we read it in the cemetery—"What would be the use of the stone if Sammy went out to the bay to fish and got drowned?" However, that catastrophe never occurred; and Sammy lies peacefully and quietly in Nellfield.

THE CANAL.

Then there was "Kelly o' the Locks," an individual who could have seen all us East-End boys at the bottom of the canal, and to whom we had a mortal aversion. He was a lock-keeper on the Aberdeenshire Canal, before the days of the railway, and his duties were to attend the boats, and put them through the locks between the harbour and Mounthooly; and as—when no other mischief was brewing—we were always clambering and interfering with the locks, to the imminent danger of our lives, it is little wonder we made him our enemy. We used to dare and defy him, and call him all sorts of names, till we would have had him so maddened that had he ever caught any of us he would have had little compunction in throwing us into the Canal, to sink or swim at leisure. The harbour branch of the Great North of Scotland Railway now runs in the bed of the Canal, and the Canal basin was

where the station at Commerce Street now is. The Canal entered the harbour by a passage below the quay. The boats were punted over from the lime sheds, where they were loaded, into the basin, and then they were hauled to their destination by horses along the bank. It was a very slow process, as they had to be locked through. It took about ten minutes at every lock, and, as there were about eight locks between the basin and Woodside, it will be readily understood that the boats did not make rapid progress. They were very large, strongly-constructed affairs, one of which could carry a good few tons of grain, coals, etc. Passengers by the "fly-boat" (as it was called) from Inverurie or places between usually left it at the "Boat House" at Kittybrewster, which still remains to the fore.

"SNUFFIE BROWNIE"—"THE PARTAN."

Still another character is recalled to my recollection—I refer to James Brownie, the paper-ruler, or "Snuffie Brownie," as we used irreverently to call him. His place of business was almost where the "Aberdeen Journal" office now is. I used frequently to convey messages to him from my employer, but I remember we were never admitted into his workshop proper. I used to wonder at the queer remarks he sometimes made, not knowing till long after that he was a confirmed opium eater. The reason for his keeping us out of the workshop was said to be that Brownie—who was the first male paper-ruler, having learned the art from his master's wife, the mother of Principal Brown—was afraid that outsiders might pick up the business. You could have heard him half a mile off stumping along with his wooden leg. In the same category may be placed the well-known "Stumpy" Ewan, the advocate, whose residence was at the top of Queen Street; and David Bain—"Uncle Davie, the pawnbroker"—who resided in Broad Street.

Then there was the well-known Mr George Weir, the tailor, otherwise designated by a name that has an association with the sea—"The Partan." He was often to be seen

about the Townhouse door—the old door in Huxter Row, of course. His stature was not gigantic—about 4½ft. would cover it. An idea of his seemed to be that the Town's officers could not get on unless he were about to lend a helping hand. At public meetings he was a regular attender, and on one occasion at a meeting of his own ward, the Second, where the most fun was usually to be got—it was generally held in the old Grammar School—after all the candidates for municipal honours had been proposed and seconded, "Stumpy Ewan" rose and expressed his regret that, as he put it, "an eminent citizen of Bon-Accord had been overlooked in the nominations; one," he added, "well known to everybody present, remarkable for his upright standing, his lofty position, and erect, straightforward walk and carriage." Here "Stumpy" paused, and all looked about them to see if they could discover this mighty man. Then when "Stumpy" proceeded to nominate his friend, Mr George Weir, the explosion of laughter almost burst the roof.

Jews IN ABERDEEN.

Another to whom the Townhouse door was a favourite rendezvous was Lazarus Myers. I can fancy I see him yet—wizened, round face and stubble beard, keen eyes looking through spectacles, and everlasting blue cloak, with brass chain at the neck. In "Reynolds's Miscellany," which was very widely read 50 years ago, appeared a short history of Aberdeen, in which it was stated that there were no Jews in the city, the following story being given as the reason. James VI. had been under some obligation to the Jews, and as a recompense to them, granted charters to settle where they pleased in the country. A few came to Aberdeen, but were not long in returning whence they came. His Majesty got word of it, and sent for them to know the reason. They seemed diffident to answer, and His Majesty thought it might be the cold climate; still, he thought it could not be that, for there were Jews in St Petersburg. After a lot of fencing, they said the reason why they came back was because they could not make a living, "as the people of Aber-

deen were all Jews together." Lazarus Myers had evidently not been of that opinion, for by all accounts ever I heard he found money-lending, etc., profitable, and, like his great prototype "Shylock," he always secured his "pound of flesh" when it was obtainable by possible means. The late Sheriff Watson had a few of Lazarus's customers before him in his time. I believe Lazarus was the only Jew in Aberdeen for many years. He ultimately left the city, I understand, to end his days in his native Germany.

THE PYNOURS.

Then there were the "Pynours" or "warkmen" of those days. What a contrast between the modes of working then and now! The men then did all the slavish work themselves; now it is done by well-appointed horses and lorries. In those days one could not walk along the quays without meeting some of the "warkmen"—one with perhaps a 2-cwt. box on his back, then perhaps half-a-dozen tugging a hogahead of sugar up Marischal Street on an iron bogie, every one with a rope over his shoulder. Unless at a funeral one cannot now recognise "warkmen." They wear the Sunday dress at funerals, but their old everyday dress seems discarded. However, they seem to have as much to do as ever they had. I can remember seeing their sedan chair in use occasionally when I was quite young. I often wonder if it is still in existence; it would be worth preserving as a relic of the past. I can remember the late Mr James Saint, sen., when a very old man, going about with light boxes on his back; and on the first and last occasion I ever was at the riding of the city marches—in 1861—who created a greater sensation than the late John Smith, the city standard-bearer and burly "warkman"? I believe John acted in that capacity more than once. I remember Fiscal Lamb's father as one of the fraternity. He was an East-Ender for a number of years when the Fiscal was a student.

POLICE OFFICERS.

I have referred to Mr Barclay, the Superintendent of Police, in connection with the "Turkey Willie" episode. I steered clear of coming in contact with his successor, better

known as "Muckle Watson," who was succeeded by another of the same name, "Little Sandy Watson," who, prior to his appointment, was a well-known town's officer. "Little Sandy," in turn, was succeeded by Mr Duthie, who rose from the ranks in the night force. Of course, the responsibilities devolving upon the police in those days were nothing like what they are to-day. In the early sixties, a number of us young men used regularly, every Sunday forenoon after service, to adjourn to the "Rising Sun," in Huxter Row (Johnny Allan's), in full sight of the police office door. Mr Duthie, or some of his subordinates, would be, perhaps, standing looking at us going in. After we had leisurely got what we wanted, we came out again, and perhaps the same policemen were still standing there, and the slightest notice was never taken. After Mr Duthie came Mr John Swanson, who was succeeded by the late Mr Thomas Wyness. If, in some respects, severe, Mr Wyness was a most efficient Police Superintendent and Chief Constable—the latter title was given to the head of the police in his time. He is being worthily followed by the present holder of the post, Chief Constable Anderson.

I was too young to remember the celebrated Simon Grant, who was said to be equal to the whole police force of his time; but I remember his successor, the celebrated William Gilbert, criminal officer and thief-catcher, whose fame was all over Scotland in his day. Some of his clever captures are to be found in a book entitled "Reminiscences of a Police Officer," written by another old "bobby," the late Mr Alexander Clark, Rosemount. Another member of the force of those days was the well-known local poet, William Anderson, author of "Jean Findlater's Loon" (a piece that will be remembered as long as Aberdeen exists), "Annapple Bain," "My Auld Auntie Meg," etc., etc.; as was also the well-known Alexander Chasser, afterwards a town's officer, whom we as boys used to think was well named—as he could "chase" in fine style. He was for long a policeman on the Union Street beat, and a number of us used to play at the "books" in Adelphi Court

after school hours—a thing which was prohibited there. Mr Chasser used to slip up Adelphi Lane upon us, and, before we were aware, it was a case of "Lakes a-sprawling!" as he used to clear the ring, and we used to think it "hard lines" that he should do it so often. He had a number of boys of his own, and we maintained that it was to increase their stock of "boots" that he did it.

A great attraction to East-Enders was to go up the Lemon Tree Court (off Huxter Row, demolished to make way for the County and Municipal Buildings) to have a look of Mrs Ronald's eagle, which was kept there in a cage for many years. It was about the largest and prettiest specimen of that species I ever saw, either alive or stuffed, and the old lady always seemed very much gratified and pleased at the interest we took in admiring the bird. Almost opposite the Lemon Tree was the residence of another fine, old, genial Aberdonian, Mr James Walker, the keeper of the Townhouse. Mr Walker was always to be found upon the spot if wanted, with his blue coat and red collar. He had a slight halt in his walk.

The almost forgotten face comes up before me of the well-known Exchequer Row and Shiprow watchman, "Little Sandy Bain." Sandy was upon that beat for a great number of years, and was so much respected by the people of the locality, that, on his retirement from the force, a great number of years ago, they subscribed a considerable sum of money, and presented him with a handsome watch and chain. Sandy, with his 5 feet 5 inches, would scarcely suit present-day requirements in the force; but he was a tough little man, and managed to keep order in a rather noisy, quarrelsome locality, with both credit to himself and satisfaction to the surrounding neighbourhood. With his Tam o' Shanter bonnet, and double cape, "rungg," and lantern, Sandy managed to bawl out his "Pa-ast Ten!" to the full value of his 12s or 13s a week.

POCKET-PICKING.

At that time there were only from 12 to 14 day policemen to a city of upwards of 70,000 inhabitants. It will, therefore, be

seen that their powers in the matter were limited. The East-End then was full of gangs of adult thieves, and they in turn kept schools for training boys and girls in thieving and pocket-picking. So much was the latter crime in vogue, that there was scarcely a day but there was one or more cases before the courts. I may give an instance or two. Mr Cooker, sen., florist—who in his younger days was the superintendent of a Sunday school in Canal Road—one day, while engaged as a teacher, got his handkerchief removed out of his pocket by one of his young scholars, who was caught in the act. Another day, Mr Chasser, the well-known policeman, caught a young girl in the act of picking a pocket in the New Market, and took her into custody. On the way through the market a crowd followed up, and as he walked along he discovered a boy in the crowd in the very act of picking a pocket too. He made a grab and seized him also, and on the way to the Police Office the young scamp made a dash at Chasser's hand, and set his teeth through it, and before he reached the office the blood was streaming from it. Bad as we are now, we seldom see or read of such incidents as these.

GREAT FIRES IN THE CITY.

I have seen almost every large fire in Aberdeen for more than fifty years—the fires at the East Church, the New Market, Milne's woodyard, the Palace Theatre, etc., etc. To my mind, however, the grandest conflagration I ever saw, from a spectacular point of view solely, was that at Miller's Chemical Works, one night in the early fifties, during the provostship of the late Sir Thomas Blaikie. An alarm got out that the Bannermill was on fire. It turned out, however, to be the chemical works. From the inflammable nature of the materials burning, great dense clouds of smoke rose in the air, and every now and again the flames rose up through the smoke. Great fears were entertained that the gaometers close at hand would explode, and the Lord Provost himself and a number of the Magistrates and Councillors worked at the fire hose the whole night. For a week some of the liquid could not be handled.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HARBOUR AND SHIPPING.

CAPTAIN PENNY AND ARCTIC EXPLORATION.

During the spring of 1850 Aberdeen was stirred to its depths by the departure of a well-known citizen, Captain William Penny, to discover (if possible) traces of the fate of Sir John Franklin and his unfortunate associates. As is generally known, Sir John Franklin left the country in the summer of 1845, in command of two vessels, the "Erebus" and the "Terror," to try and discover a north-east passage in the Polar regions, which has been the great ambition of all Arctic explorers for generations. He reached the Arctic regions safely, and was spoken by an Aberdeen whaler that year. That was the last time Sir John and his crews were seen alive. As time went on, and no news of them reached this country, the Government became alarmed on their account, and one or two vessels were sent out in search of them, but in vain. Time went on, and, Sir John's wife getting seriously alarmed, two vessels were fitted out at Aberdeen—the "Lady Franklin" and the "Sophia"—and Captain Penny was placed in sole command. The vessels left Aberdeen in April, in the presence of thousands of people, who had crowded down to the harbour to wish the voyagers God-speed. It is needless for me to say that Captain Penny was not much more fortunate in finding any trace of the navigators than the others who had gone before; and on a second voyage, which he made in 1853, the results were no better. One or two other search parties were fitted out from Aberdeen after that, including one on the "Fox"; but, as is well known, the traces by which the ultimate fate of the Franklin

expedition was surmised were not discovered until some time afterward, when all hopes of there being any survivors had been given up. A number of men belonging to Aberdeen and other towns in the north were with the Franklin expedition, and their families received their half-pay until the Government were fully assured that there could be none alive. Captain Penny was the hero of the hour. His portrait is in the National Portrait Gallery, along with others connected with the Arctic Exploration.

CAPTAIN MARTIN.

Another well-known figure in the East End of Aberdeen and upon the quay, about sixty years ago, was Captain Alexander Martin, who will be better recognised as "Nosey Martin," so-called from a protuberance on his nose. During the latter years of his life he acted as agent for the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society; and he was universally liked among the sailors. His residence for many years was in Constitution Street, and his office was above ex-Lord Provost Mearns's shop. From the fact that he lived in more stirring times than the present—stirring as regards war and its attendant horrors—he came through more vicissitudes than fall to the lot of the majority of mankind. Besides having been wrecked on two or three occasions, he underwent an infliction which in some cases in those days was thought worse than death—namely, an imprisonment of a year or two in France, his ship having been captured during the Napoleonic wars in the early years of the nineteenth century.



The Weigh-house.



SHIPPING REMINISCENCES.

A sight we used to get every spring at the quayside was the departure of the local Canadian emigrants. A number of vessels left regularly for Quebec in the timber trade, and used to make two voyages a season. Two of them in particular never sailed on the first trip without a cargo of human live stock; and, like many others, I have seen many a sad parting scene on Waterloo Quay. The ships I refer to were the *Berbice*, under Captain Elliot, a brother-in-law of the Duthie's, to whom the vessel belonged, and the *St Lawrence*, under the command of Captain Tulloch, father of Mr James Tulloch, who, I remember, had just commenced business at that time at the corner of Garvock Street and St Clement Street, and lived a few doors farther down. In fact, all the houses in Footdee from the Pier up to and across the Canal Bridge, and along all the streets adjacent to the quays were occupied by shipbuilding and seafaring people. In Prince Regent Street alone in nine dwelling-houses—the whole number in the street—no fewer than thirteen shipmasters were located—which is not greatly to be wondered at considering the number of ships belonging to and frequenting the port. One day there might be scarcely one ship in the harbour, and perhaps next day the place would be packed with ships in tiers, in many places perhaps six deep.

Sailors, especially on coal vessels, now on arrival hand over their vessels to the shore labourers, who, with their steam appliances, discharge her between tides; but the sailors of fifty years ago, and less time than that, as soon as they got their sails and rigging into ship-shape, had to start away with the hand winch, and get the cargo out, and according to the demand they had to regulate the supply. A 100-ton brig or schooner was thought fairly smart if it could accomplish a coal voyage in three weeks. At the present day, a coal tramp steamer of 1000 tons has managed to make three voyages within one week. Another instance of the altered circumstances in connection with the harbour:—In 1851 the number of vessels owned in Aberdeen (and

with a few exceptions they all frequented the port) was 250, with a gross tonnage of 51,757 tons, or an average tonnage of 207 tons, and of that number 234 were sailing vessels, and 16 steamships of every description, including the old *Sea Horse*. This was one of the first of the steam tugs, built about 1838; and the best work the Harbour Commissioners got for her to do, they being her owners, was to bind her into the dockgates to pump the water out before their completion. The other steamers included the *Victory*, *Dorothy*, *Paul Jones*, and *Samson* tugs; the rest were the *Leith and Clyde and Aberdeen Steam Navigation Company's* boats.

The largest vessel belonging to the port in the early fifties was the *City of London* steamer (of Crimean War fame), 1116 tons; and the largest sailing vessels were the *Cromwell* (barque) and the *Monarch* (ship), both owned by the *Cattos*, the one of 707 tons and the other of 701 tons register, which were thought "whoppers" in those days.

SHIPOWNERS.

The principal owners of shipping at that time were the *Nicols*, *Duthies*, *Roses*, *J. T. Rennie*, *G. Leslie*, and *G. Thompson, jun.*, who at that time filled the provost's chair. The *Thompson* firm's fleet of ships even at that early date comprised nine vessels—the smallest the *Alexander Harvey*, of 292 tons; the largest the *Oliver Cromwell*, 707 tons, and the total tonnage 3855, or an average of 428 tons per vessel. The firm's largest vessel at the present time, the *Sophocles*, has a gross tonnage of 4673 tons, or 818 tons more than the whole tonnage of the fleet of fifty years ago. Nothing shows the altered state of matters with regard to shipping more clearly than this. At the present date, not taking any account of fishing vessels, our shipping list has decreased in number from 250 to 107 vessels with a gross tonnage of 115,821—an average of 1083 tons per vessel—there being only 25 sailing vessels all told belonging to the port, and 13 of the 25 belong to *G. Milne's Inver Line*, with an average tonnage of 1350.

As there were no big ocean tramps in

those days to swoop up a half-dozen small ships' cargoes, we were well visited by Dutch galliots laden with bones, gouda cheese, apples, etc.; also Italians, Russians, Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians, with all sorts of cargoes. We had our spring fleet to America, the White Sea, and the Baltic; we had a number of clipper brigs, in good trim, belonging to the Lime and Commercial Companies, engaged regularly in the cattle and paving stone trade to London, returning with lime in the summer and coals in winter. We had also a large number of trim clipper schooners in the coasting trade belonging to the shipping companies in addition to their steamers—the Aberdonian to Newcastle, the Fairy to Leith and Shetland, and the William Hogarth in the same trade. The William Hogarth went away with the Shetland mail on one occasion and was never heard of again. We had also the Paragon and the Gazelle, in the Hull trade, as also the Dee and the Don, in the Glasgow trade. We had a goodly number of well-found colliers, and likewise, let it be recorded (it was before the days of Samuel Plimsoll and Board of Trade load lines), we had a goodly number of what were designated (and rightly, too, in too many cases) coffin ships. There was never a winter but a few of them strewed the north-east coast between Aberdeen and the Tyne. Notably one recurs to my recollection—the Edward (brig), best known as “The Old Smiddy,” whose fate was foretold year after year, but it was little wonder in that particular vessel's case, as she was 80 years old if she was a day, having been built some time about 1780.

During the winter season in Aberdeen at that time, with the American and Baltic traders being laid up, there were large numbers of sailors knocking about the quays. A few of the younger ones went to school, but the majority of them were to be found (the younger ones, I mean) up at the Barrack Hill playing at the “boole” with the East-End gamins, who generally contrived, by fair means or foul, to win the boole from them, and then sell them back to the sailors; and I have often wondered since how Jack ever had any coppers to spend during a spell

of a long winter at home. His wages at that time did not exceed the magnificent sum of from 35s to 45s a month, and he had not even the present-time resource of the Naval Reserve which the remnant of our sailors have now to eke out their resources.

Waterloo Quay at that time, from the foot of Commerce Street down as far as Mortimer's Bend, was a howling wilderness—nothing whatever, from the Canal Basin till almost opposite the London boats, but causeway stone yards. There was a row of houses in the line of Canal Terrace which ran right down past the foot of Church Street, and stopped before it quite reached the quay; but previous to the railway company coming along the bed of the canal, and before Canal Lane was pulled down, it was a very pleasant place to live in, and a number of the best families in Aberdeen were located thereabouts. A well-known man of that time, who was pretty prominent in public affairs, was Dr A. C. Matthew, who added to his healing reputation by carrying on a big lemonade manufacturing business, and who was married to one of John Duthie's daughters.

Farther along towards the harbour you came to Middlethind, where lived another shipmaster of the old school, Duncan Walker, of the Heroine, another brother-in-law of the old Duthies. I have often inquired why Middlethind got that name, but I never got anyone to give a satisfactory answer to my query. The place has been for many years non-existent. You came right along until you emerged upon Waterloo Quay, and the first door in Mortimer's Bend brought you to the residence of another brother-in-law of the Duthies, Captain John Cargill, of the City of London, the man who had the honour of piloting Queen Victoria into Aberdeen Harbour on her first visit in 1848. Captain Cargill had two sons about my own age, whom I used to fraternise with, as also some of their cousins about the same age (old John Duthie's sons, I mean), and I remember the oldest one, John, died when quite a young man, and the other, Captain William Cargill, died about two or three years ago. Captain James Duthie is still alive, and for some

considerable time has altered his occupation from ropemaking to ropemaking.

SHIPBUILDING AND SHIPBUILDERS.

There is no part of Aberdeen where less material change has occurred during the last fifty years than in the lower parts of Foot-dee. There is, however, a great change in the mode of working. At that time shipwrights were the predominant workmen in the city, as the building of the Aberdeen clipper ships was then at its zenith; and it was the ambition of almost every boy to be either a ship carpenter or a sailor. Messrs Duthie, A. Hall and Sons, and Walter Hood and Co. (which was the name of Provost Thompson's firm, Walter Hood being the managing partner) for a great number of years never knew what dull trade meant, and as fast as one vessel went off the stocks the keel of another was immediately laid.

The ship carpenters of that time were a very enterprising lot, for, as far back as 1848, they (principally Hall's men) formed a co-operative society, this being either the second or the third society ever formed in Aberdeen. It was called the Foot-dee Saving Association, and it carried on business as grocers and bakers, in premises at Waterloo Quay, till far on in the fifties. But the business collapsed owing to the members having been unfortunate in those entrusted with the management of affairs. I was a number of years in the concern during its earlier career, when it was thriving. The gentleman I served under succeeded the late Alexander Campbell, baker (father of the late Rev. George Campbell, of the Free North Church), as salesman. Mr Campbell at that time opened a baker's shop in Yeats' Lane; and I can remember the late minister, then a student, going round his father's customers with bread in the mornings before he went to school or college. Besides their co-operative shop, Hall's carpenters had a ship. She was not a large one, being what is termed a "sloop with a driver," and was called the Elizabeth.

At that time, almost next door to Mr Hall's house, was an erection which, in the present advanced state of sanitary arrangements, would be voted a nuisance. It was

required for an industry which is now totally defunct in Aberdeen, and of very small proportions in other centres—the whale fishery. We had then three whalers going regularly to Davis Straits—the St Andrew, Pacific, and Flamingo, and I believe that during the first year of the nineteenth century Aberdeen had from ten to fifteen vessels employed in that industry. The trade in this country is now of infinitesimal importance compared to what it was then. The whalers laid up for the winter at the top of the harbour where the railway station now stands.

Another large employer of labour in the district, who lived amongst his workers, was the late Mr John Duthie, sen.; he resided for many years in Wellington Street, facing York Street. "Old John," as he was generally styled, was a man of the good old type that called a spade a spade. He was a rare joker to boot. In those days, when the city was not so large, people knew each other better than they do now—at least by sight—and nicknames were more common than they are now. One of our leading ministers, who was a strict Calvinist, was said to have owed his cognomen to Mr John Duthie. The story goes that a ship arrived in Aberdeen with a cargo of sulphur from Girgenti, in Sicily, unconsigned. The captain—a stranger—was recommended to call upon Mr Duthie, which he did. He told his story; he wanted a consignee. Mr Duthie could not think of anyone that was likely to take the cargo over. At last a happy thought struck him. He said he knew one gentleman who dealt largely in brimstone, and if the captain would try him he might succeed in getting the cargo disposed of. He accordingly sent him off to the minister in question. The reception the poor captain got may be readily imagined. Nevertheless—so, at least, the story winds up—from that day forth the minister was known as "Brimstone Johnnie."

At the time of which I write, from the foot of Commerce Street down to opposite the London boat shed, there was nothing but a wilderness of stoneyards and logs of wood. The Great North of Scotland Railway was unheard of, and it was the middle of the fifties before even the Northern Agricultural Company came into existence.

The Duthies had some "whoppers" of ships in the American trade then, such as the Hero, Heroine, Brilliant, etc., etc. Andrew Leslie, one of our first iron shipbuilders—who built the Gem over at Provost Blaikie's Quay, and who died a few years ago at Newcastle almost a millionaire—and his sister, who kept a grocer's shop in York Street, lived there; as did ex-Councillor Skinner's father—John Skinner, the boatbuilder—who was long in York Street before he removed to Wellington Street. I knew the Councillor when a boy. He is a genuine "Fittie bird"—nearly the only one who has been there all his life.

Walter Hood was about the only man in all the shipbuilding fraternity who was not a genuine East-End. His tragic death—as also that of Mr James Hall—threw a gloom over Footdee for a long time. Mr Hood, one Saturday night, went on board a vessel to see the captain before he sailed. The ship was lying at the top of the harbour—almost opposite Weigh-House Square. The night was dark, and the vessel was the outside one of a row of three or four. There were some planks to cross from one to the other. By some mischance, Mr Hood slipped off the plank between two of the vessels, and he was never again seen alive. The whole city was in a state of commotion next morning, as big guns were fired, on the idea that the concussion would raise the body to the surface. The noise brought thousands of people out of doors, wondering what the firing meant. However, the late David Ogilvie, referred to farther on, who was an adept with the grappling-irons succeeded in securing the body, after some trouble, almost at the very spot where it had sunk. Mr James Hall's death was not in the same manner, but it was almost as tragic. His firm had built a ram for the Japanese Government—the Jo-Sho-Maru. They got it safely launched, and were busy fitting it out at the east end of Provost Blaikie's Quay, when one night Messrs Milne's wood-yard, directly opposite the ram, took fire—and a great conflagration it was. There was a southerly wind, which blew the flames in the direction of some vessels in the harbour, including the ram, which put Mr James

Hall into such a state of excitement—he being in indifferent health at the time—that he dropped down dead. He was sadly mourned and deeply lamented by all classes of the community.

SHIPPING DETAILS—CLIPPERS.

I remember the first two tugboats that were in Aberdeen—the Paul Jones and the Seahorse. They were almost used up at the formation of the Victoria Dock. After them came the Dorothy and the Victory tugs. A number of us boys were allowed on board the Dorothy to wash decks, etc.; and, as payment, we were allowed to go out to sea with her for that tide; and not a few of the East-Enders got many a good pitch in the bay on board of her. But we were not allowed on board the Victory, of which the late Captain Gauld, the pilotmaster, was skipper for many years. I have often wondered what was the ultimate fate of a great many of the hundreds of wooden sailing vessels which at that time belonged to the port. Numbers, undoubtedly, went to the bottom, but the greater proportion must have been broken up at one time or other, as there are few of them to be seen nowadays. We had some crack coasting clippers then—the "Fairy" and the "William Hogarth" in the Shetland winter trade, the "Paragon" and the "Gazelle" to Hull, the "Scottish Maid" to Newcastle, the "Dee" and the "Don" to Glasgow by Forth and Clyde Canal, the "Granite," "Luna," and others in the London stone and cattle trade, etc., etc. All these sailing vessels were said to go as fast as the steamers, with any sort of a fair wind; and it was nothing very uncommon for 20 or 30 to arrive in the bay at one tide. While speaking about clippers, I may mention, as a specimen of what was going on at Footdee at that time, that I remember three large clipper vessels being all launched within an hour one afternoon towards the end of the forties—the "John Bunyan" from Hood's yard, the "Ben Macdhui" from Hall's, and the "Countess of Seafield" from Duthie's. This was a red-letter day that has not been equalled since.

FAMOUS BOAT HIRES.

One of the outstanding amusements of the boys in Aberdeen fifty years ago was boat-sailing on Sunday afternoons. At that time there were two boat hires. They were known far and wide amongst the boys, and the two could only boast of a pair of legs between them. What old "boy" in Aberdeen does not recollect "Davie Ogilvie" and "Cripple Campbell"? Every Sunday the pair were to be found, with their ramshackle fleet of boats, at the "Pottie o' Dee," a spot well sung and much written about, but now the centre of the Fish Market. "Davie Ogilvie" had one or two fairly decent boats that he let out to those who were able to afford it, but "Cripple Campbell's" were a sorry lot, being generally a lot of old ships' boats that he bought for "a mere song." He used to cobble them up himself, give them a coat of pitch, and sometimes, if he was in a temperate mood, they got a coat of paint; but as his charges were low, they suited us as well as better ones, as the slowest of them could generally cover a mile in two hours, which was the time allowed for sixpence. Who that ever knew Campbell will forget the Tam o' Shanter bonnet he always wore on Sunday and Saturday, the short jacket reaching only to his waist (the fashion with men and boys at that time), the dirty face and hands—which I believe were not washed once in six months—and the invariable high-water mark around his mouth from chewing tobacco, a substantial quid of which was ever in his cheek, except when he took it out to drink a glass of rum, said rum being drunk as often as he had threepence? I said that there were two legs between the two; when I recollect, Campbell had both his legs, but one of them hung horizontally from the knee. I remember another boy and myself once bought an old ship's boat for a trifle. It was sadly in want of repairs, and we, not knowing "Cripple Campbell" so well then as we did after, gave him the job to put her in order, and also appointed him caretaker. In a very short time she ate her own head off in the shape of coats of tar—the said tar, be it understood, went down Campbell's throat, not on to the boat. I got so dis-

gusted with shipowning at that time that I have never been ambitious to repeat the experiment. "Davie Ogilvie," as I have already said, had a better class of boats, and it is not so very many years since he died. His son and a brother continue the letting-out of boats at Victoria Bridge.

The "Pottie" was the regular bathing-place for all those who preferred fresh water to sea water; and at meal hours especially there would be hundreds of urchins disporting themselves in the water, some learning to swim, while those who had already learned, if they were able to swim across the river at high water, were looked upon as something more than human.

HARBOUR CHARACTERS.

A well-known character at the harbour was "Old Johnnie Crombie," and his "coffin." Johnnie was one of a race of characters that used to fish in the harbour channel, and sometimes, if the day was very fine, would attempt the bay. Johnnie was an old man-of-war's man, who came originally from Newburgh, and fought his country's battles under Lord Nelson, and in his latter days (it was said he lived till about 90) used to be found with his hand lines in the "Burn," in a coffin-shaped punt, which all the boys knew as "Johnnie Crombie's coffin." Johnnie had the peculiar gift—which the majority of the sea-going fraternity possess—of spinning interminable yarns. These yarns generally had to be swallowed by the listener with the proverbial grain of salt. One of John's stories, which will serve as a specimen, was that "on the ship in which he served under Nelson he was the only man on board that was allowed to swear, and that was for good behaviour." Another set of Johnnie's set was "Jock Walker," who was the hardiest old fisherman I ever remember. "Jock" would be found sitting in his boat fishing in the "Burn" in the heaviest snowstorm or amidst torrents of rain and wind, quite well pleased with himself and seemingly impervious to the weather, and "Kirsty," his wife, was always to be found down at the boat landing at the fixed time with her creel, waiting for "Jock," and off she went to sell the fish, wet or dry.

An original character well-known in Footdee at that time was Charley Hillyer, the carver. Charley was a Cockney of the Cockneys. He was brought to Aberdeen by some of the shipbuilders, there being a good deal of carving required in those days of wooden ships—the trade then being at its best—in the shape of wooden figure-heads, scrolls, etc., etc., and a number of people were kept constantly employed at that sort of work. Charley's workshop was on Waterloo Quay, where some of the London Company's sheds now stand, next door to Mrs Anderson's public-house, which stood back a little from the quay. Charley himself, although clever, was about the most conceited little man I ever knew. His height was only about 5ft. 3in. or 4in. He was always dressed in the top fashion of the day. A saying of his came to be proverbial at Footdee—"My brother Tom is the best caw-ver in the world, but I can beat him." However, there was another thing besides carving in which he did excel, and that was as a shot. It was said he seldom or never missed his mark. Another artist in the same line, and in the same locality, but of another stamp altogether, was James Wishart, jun.—Jamie being quite a jolly, unassuming fellow, and a clever hand with the chisel. And there was jolly John Lyon, mine host of the London Tavern, who was universally known throughout Footdee as the dispenser of a good dram. John was an Englishman, a native of Liverpool, who came to Aberdeen as manager of the boiler-maker department of Messrs Abernethy and Company. Nearly next door to him was "Auld Johnnie Duffus," the ship chandler and iron shipbuilder, whose place of business was a great rendezvous of those engaged in shipping and shipbuilding.

"THE MONSTER."

In connection with shipping, another well-known figure in his day comes to my recollection—one who, although not an East-End'er by residence, was as well known in every part of the city as any of the characters I have already referred to—James Fraser, better known as "The Monster." The very mention of his name will bring

pleasurable recollections to the minds of hundreds of middle-aged Aberdonians. "Jamie" Fraser was one of the most original of men. Although not an Aberdonian by birth (he hailed originally from Upper Deeside), he spent the greater part of his life in Aberdeen, being an overseer with the Aberdeen Commercial Company for a great number of years. Jamie, from my first remembrance of him when I was a boy, was a perfect Anakim of upwards of six feet, and was stout in proportion. He used to pride himself on the amount of meat and liquor he could consume, and although he was not a perfect Adonis, either in figure or gait, it was in nowise owing to his size that he received his cognomen. In fact, he was the originator of the name himself. From the nature of his employment, the dispensing of hospitality to the Company's customers fell to his lot; and he used to brag that it was a common occurrence "ony morning to hae ten half-gills afore his brakfast, an' nae a bit the waur." About the beginning of the sixties, however, "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream," and, as he used to tell often afterwards, he began to feel the bad effects of this drinking. He thought it time to stop it. He became a total abstainer and public lecturer; and it was in the latter capacity that he got so publicly known, especially amongst the young women and men, who flocked to his meetings, where they were sure of a good evening's entertainment. From the day he took the total abstinence pledge, at all times, in season and out of season, James denounced that "monster, alcohol," and it was from his steady use of the expression that the word came to be personally applied to himself.

James formed a Teetotal Society—of which he himself was perpetual president—from amongst the labourers at the lime sheds and others, including one or two old sailors. The society held its meetings weekly, for a number of years, in a hall in the Gallowgate known as "The Dogs and Monkeys Hall" (from an entertainment of that kind having been once there), and the public were invited to the meetings, which used to be crowded regularly. A collection

at the door was requested, to which the young men generally acceded; but some of the young women, when they had not the necessary coin, generally managed to get hold of a brass button, while, if that was not forthcoming, they just drew their hand across the plate. James, from his daily intercourse with the sailors on board the coal and lime ships, used to affect the nautical phraseology, and "Sons o' Neptin'" and "Half a gill—sax baps ony day, boys," were some of the occasional flowers of rhetoric he indulged in. Another of his stock phrases was—"Noo, boys, we'll tak' the monster, we'll tak' the rascal, and we'll doon the Gallowgate wi' 'im, and we'll doon the Broadgate, and we'll doon the Shiprow, and doon the Shore Brae, and sink him in sax faddoms o' water, boys."

In 1870, when the Good Templar Order found its way to Aberdeen, so many joined it that on its first anniversary 5000 of its members went on a "celebration" trip to Keith-Hall. Jamie Fraser joined the Order. A new lodge was formed, with Jamie and the late James Stewart, a mason, at the head of affairs, and nothing would satisfy James but that it should be called "The Anchor of Hope Lodge." His nautical proclivities still remained, and for a good number of years he wrought well for the cause; and I am happy to say that a number of his converts are still sticking to their colours. Latterly (he by this time being a widower) he took unto himself another wife, and, like his Scriptural prototype who was invited to a feast, made the same excuse, and gradually withdrew himself from any active service for some time before his death—his end being accelerated by some unfortunate speculations in which he was involved. Jamie was also for several years treasurer of the Northern Friendly Society, when its office was in St Nicholas Street, before it had reached its present prosperous condition. This worthy man was born long before the days of School Boards, which, perhaps, partly accounted for the grotesque arrangement of his sentences, never to be forgotten by those who heard him once or twice; but his droll mother-wit and sympathetic heart will keep his memory green

in the recollections of those who knew and understood the man.

"YANKEE JACK."

Besides the three principal shipbuilding yards already referred to, there were, up till within twenty years ago, other two on that once well-known spot, the Inches (now Provost Jamieson's Quay). One was carried on by the late Mr William Duthie and the other by Messrs John Humphrey and Company, where a large number of creditable specimens of the Aberdeen clipper were produced. Towards the end of their career as shipbuilders, however—the day of wooden ships having almost gone by—the business gradually dwindled away. The first man who commenced shipbuilding on the Inches was in his time a well-known character about the quay—John Schmidt, or Smith, better known as "Yankee Jack." I was once well versed in "Yankee's" history. He was, I believe, a Dutchman. Jack was a big, burly, laughing-faced man, about six feet in height, and stout in proportion. At one time he kept a hotel on the quay, but the business he followed principally, and at which he made some fortunate hits, was the buying up of old wrecks, such as iron steamers principally. In the case of one of the Leith and Clyde steamships which went ashore at the Cove (it was either the Duke of Richmond or the Royal Sovereign, I forget which) it was said he got thrice as much for the boilers alone as he paid for the whole lot. Another gold mine for the salvors was a German-American liner that went ashore about Rattray Head. The brass recovered was alone worth a great many hundred pounds. "Yankee Jack" built one or two respectable craft, some of which were engaged in the Australian and South African trade. It was after he gave up business that John Humphrey commenced, he having been Jack's draughtsman. The wreck of the Duke of Sutherland in 1863 was the first job he had in the salvage line, and it turned out successfully for him; in fact, put him on his feet, and he was ably backed by Messrs John, William, and Alexander Duthie, sen., who took an interest in him.

THE INCHES.

The Inches (now Provost Jamieson's Quay), prior to the shipyards referred to being planted there, was green grass all along the centre, and the housewives in the immediate locality utilised it as a bleachgreen, for which it was well fitted, there being no restriction as to the use of it by all and sundry. It was the happy hunting-ground of all the urchins far and near, for all sorts of games and pastimes (football, I may mention, was then unknown). One favourite diversion was sailing in the harbour on a plank. The police in those days did not seem to give themselves any trouble about what we did, and we got leave to enjoy ourselves at it to our hearts' content. There was then a great demand at the north of England collieries for Shetland ponies, and they used to arrive in droves of 30 to 40 at a time with the Shetland boat, for transhipment to Newcastle. Sometimes they would reach Aberdeen a day or two before the Velocity (the Newcastle boat) sailed; and then they were generally pastured on the Inches until it was time to take them on board. No sooner was the word passed that there were ponies on the Inches than every one of us was off "hot foot" to have some fun with them, and emulate the feats of "Mazepa"—and a character of the present day, "Buffalo Bill." I often wonder a number of us were not seriously injured, as we generally rushed in, and each secured an animal and mounted—only, in nine cases out of ten, to be sent flying over their heads before we knew where we were.

The back part of the Inches, between the green grass and the river, was solely taken up by woodyards, for the production of railway sleepers and pit props—a business largely carried on in those days, but now defunct. What is produced now is wrought up where the wood is cut, and conveyed to its destination by railway. The whole of the wood that came from Deeside at that time was brought to the riverside in tree lengths, and then formed into rafts of, perhaps, 20 or 30 trees. If the season was dry, the rafts had to remain until such time as a fresh or spate came on, when each raft was sent off in charge of one of a hardy race of men, called "rafters" or "floaters," who, with nothing but a pole to guide him, brought the unwieldy mass 20 or 30 miles down the river to Aberdeen. It was rather a precarious employment, and now and again—though rarely—a fatal accident occurred, such as in shooting bridges, more especially if the current was strong. On the whole, however, the "rafters" generally reached the city safe and sound, and found their way home again as best they could to resume the operation. The regular place for landing the rafts was about half-way between the Chain Bridge and the Pottie o' Dee, where they were broken up, and the trees hauled up the bank by horses to the woodyards referred to, where the wood was cut to the lengths required; and a housewife got as many chippings as she could carry home for a penny—and even gratis, if she happened not to have a penny.



Pizzie Grant.



Sawdust Calder.



Jean Carr.



Jumpin Judas.

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CHAPTER VII.

MORE "CHARACTERS."

"PIZZIE" GRANT.

I remember another famous character who sometimes worked on the quay—the immortal "Jeems" Grant, otherwise "Pizzie" Grant. As far back as I can remember him, "Pizzie" was a denizen of Rhind's Court, Gallowgate. His father was a soldier, and had lost a leg in his country's service, for which he received a pension. One of his brothers was a carpet weaver for many years at Hadden's Carpet Works, in Wapping Street, now merged in the Joint Station; another was a soldier. Both were men about the usual stature, although "Jeems's" height scarcely reached 4ft. 6in. When beside his wife, who was a tall woman, "Jeems" looked like a little boy with his mother. Although I cannot remember him as other than a "wizened-faced, cankered-looking carle," yet he was a strong, sinewy little fellow, and could lift weights and carry burdens that many a big man would have sunk under. On one occasion the late Mr John Webster, baker, Green, was getting some flour delivered at his shop door when "Pizzie" made his appearance. With his usual pertness, he commenced to criticise the carter who was delivering the sacks, whereupon Mr Webster said to him—"Jeems, ye canna carry a sack." "What'll ye wager?" says "Pizzie." "Weel, Jeems," said Mr Webster, "if you will carry a sack into the shop, I'll gie you saxpence." "Done," said "Jeems"; and, by hook or crook, he managed to stagger into the shop with the 20 stones on his back; but it was all he could manage, which was not bad for a man of his size. On another occasion, however, in which he, with his usual conceit, wanted to show off his powers, he came off second best. There used to be a stabling at the foot of Young Street, where Loch Street Brewery now stands. One day a stout farm servant was delivering some grain, in sacks, and "Jeems," being about hand, started to "chaff" the countryman,

telling him that he did not know the way to carry grain sacks, and that he ("Jeems") could carry them better himself. "Keep yoursel' quate," said the countryman, "an' we'll see fat ye can dae." "Pizzie" kept arguing away at the man until the job was completed, when the countryman deliberately went up to "Pizzie," and, catching hold of him by the back of the neck, coolly lifted him up and deposited him in the ash-pit—to the uproarious delight of the assembled urchins, who assisted in fishing him out in a dilapidated condition.

"Pizzie's" general attire consisted of a dark velveteen coat, which reached to his heels; pantaloons about six sizes too large, and turned up almost to the knees; a cap with about three reefs in it to bring it down to the size; and an old muffler, or handkerchief, about six times round his neck. "Pizzie" and his wife lived for a number of years in Rhind's Court, Gallowgate. The late Mr Macaskowie, brushmaker, owned some of the dilapidated property there, and "Pizzie" was a tenant of his—or, rather, was a squatter on the property, as I believe the owner was afraid to go down the court to look after rents or anything else, and so numbers of the residents got leave to do as they liked. In the house in which "Pizzie" lived, the "tenants" found it too irksome to go through from one room to another, as they ought to have done, so they simply bored a hole through the lobby partition, by which they came in and went out; and nobody ever called them in question about it. How "Pizzie" lived was a mystery. He sometimes did a little work as a coal-heaver; sometimes he got other labouring jobs. He had all his wits about him, and there was a number of people he periodically visited, who assisted him. There were several tailors' and other workshops that he regularly visited, where the men got a bit of fun with him in exchange for a few half-pence. "Jeems" used to smoke a cutty

about 1½ inches long, and he always had a pipe-top, which he called his "kiddie." He used regularly to visit Mr Gray, watchmaker, Netherkirkgate, and other watchmakers, for a "bittie chain to his kiddie," and if he did not get that he got something else.

Whenever we boys wanted to bait "Pizzie," we, knowing our man, went about it systematically. One half of us used to start to "rug" and tug at him, and the other half professed to side with him. "Pizzie" then commenced to tell his friends his general grievances—which were ordinarily very comical—until they got out of him all he had to say, when the whole gang began to pull and haul at him. He would get perfectly savage, and then woe betide the unlucky urchin that fell into his clutches, for "Pizzie" belaboured him most unmercifully. When we got him perfectly enraged, we generally thought it time to decamp, leaving him master of the situation until such time as we came across him again, when we attempted the same old game. Although not a drunkard in the ordinary sense, "Pizzie" was always open for a glass, or as many glasses as anyone was inclined to give him; and numbers of people used to take him away and fill him drunk for no other reason than to get fun out of him. Although he was voluble at most times, he was ten times more so when in that condition; and he was not over-particular as to his liquor. For a long time the waiters at Ransome's Coffee Rooms, Market Street (now Davidson's), used to keep a jar of "all-sorts" for "Pizzie's" special delectation, for which he generally called. The "all-sorts" consisted of the "heel-taps" of all and sundry liquors consumed on the premises, and a little of it went a long way, as "Pizzie" often found in his experience. One day, on coming out of Ransome's, a young fellow got hold of him by the back of the neck, and started off down the street, pushing "Pizzie" before him at full speed, and he never halted with him till he was along the Cross Quay. "Pizzie" used to say that it was his quickest race, and he thought it was to be his last one—he got such a fright.

During his latter years, "Pizzie" Grant took to wandering about the country. He used to go to Dundee; but whether he had any friends there, or how he lived when he was there, I really cannot tell. On several occasions he tramped to Dundee and back, and it was after tramping from that city that, weak and exhausted, he was discovered lying at the roadside, near Aberdeen. He was removed to Oldmachar Poorhouse, and shortly afterwards became an inmate of St Nicholas Poorhouse, where he died on 4th July, 1870, aged 70 years. He was buried in St Peter's Cemetery. My old friend, Mr James Ogg, well known as a poet, wrote an "In memoriam" poem on "Pizzie." It runs as follows:—

"Where much is given, much will be required."

Inspire me, I charge you, ye Muses sublime;
Hush! Nature, I pray thee, and list to my rhyme;
The heart o' your minstrel is riven in twa;
I'm thinkin' on Pizzie—but Pizzie's awa'.

There's mony will miss him, we'll a' feel a want,
The toon's incomplete since we lost Pizzie Grant;
Cauld, cauld are their hearts—oh! they're nae men
awa',
Wha think nae on Pizzie since Pizzie's awa'.

Ah, laddies! ye're greetin'; weel, greet till ye're
tired,
Ye lost a gweed playmate when Pizzie explord.
Ye ill-trickit urchins! on whom will you fix
See humorous as Pizzie, sae up to your tricks!

I'm nae to upbraid; ye min' brawly yersel's
Hoo angry he was when ye tittit his balls;
Hoo fiercely he glared while ye fearless did chant—
"Hailoo, little Pizzie! Hailoo, Pizzie Grant!"

Ye min' hoo he cursed ye for ill-trickit geets,
An' chased ye thro' alleys, thro' bleachgreens an'
streets;
He ran like a deer—tho' his legs were but sma'-
When ye shouted "Pizzie!"—but Pizzie's awa'.

Ah, laddies! nae mair he will join in the chase;
He's sleepin', puir bodie, in death's cauld embrace,
Oor tears to his memory unstinted will fa';
A queer fish was Pizzie—but Pizzie's awa'.

Thou grim, grinnin' spectre, thou death-dealing king,
Why did ye tak' Pizzie, the puir little thing?
I'm sure ye nicht fa'en on a worthier prize—
At least on a man o' respectable size.

But sma' is yer triumph, grim monarch, I wot;
His puir little body may moulder an' rot
In the dark, clammy grave where his forefathers lie,
But his soul may have fled to the regions on high.

If landed on high, I will vooch he has seen
Great lots o' kent folkies frae dear Aberdeen;
Oh! glorious thocht, they will hail as a saint
The crabbit bit mannie we ca'd Pizzie Grant.

But noo my memento I'll bring to a close,
In peaceful seclusion his dust shall repose;
Yet I think oor brave toonsmen, and ballies an' a',
Micht raise a bit statue since Fizzie's awa'.

I mib' on the mannie since I was a bairn,
I don't think my stane would be last on the cairn;
Let's rear a nice monument, polished fu' braw,
In mem'ry o' Fizzie, 'cause Fizzie's awa'.

"EMILY BETTY."

I recollect another Footdee worthy, the well-known "Beley (oily) Betty." Betty, who originally hailed from the "Squair," was an employee at the boil-house in York Street, where the whale and seal blubber was prepared for the market—an industry now totally defunct in Aberdeen. Forty or fifty years ago, where Lime Street now is, there was a great number of small houses between St Clement Street and the Back Road (now Clarence Street)—known as Middlethird—the houses being built in every shape and form. Betty had a slight impediment in her speech, and she spoke as if she always had a cold in her head. She wore the egg-shaped mutch or head-dress and a man's jacket. She kept her hands generally in the pockets, and never went without her pipe and snuff-mull. She was "hail fellow well met" with both rich and poor. Betty had a great weakness for snuff—a habit which was very much indulged in in those days. Her tin snuff-mull being empty one day, she thought she saw a chance of getting it replenished. Seeing Mr James Hall and another gentleman in conversation, she walked up to them, snuff-box in hand, giving it the usual three taps. She then held it out, with "Bister 'All, hib a pitch o' snup." Mr Hall took the box and opened it. "Ah, Betty," he said, "I find the box is empty." "I ked dat," said Betty, "put I jist thought you would gie be somethin' to fill't, Bister 'All." Needless to say, she got it. One day two gentlemen were discussing the merits of a new vessel on the quay, and they were arguing as to who built it. One maintained it was Mr Hall, and the other that it was Mr Hood. Betty, who had overheard the conversation, turned round to the gentlemen and said—"If you gib me somethin', I'll tell you." "Agreed," said the gentlemen, handing her a trifle. "Was it Mr

Hall?" said one. "Doo," said Betty. "Mr Hood?" said the other. "Doo," again said Betty, adding—"Id wis deather Bister 'All dor 'Ood, bit Bister 'All's carpeders." She then marched off, thinking she had said something very smart. An acquaintance of Betty's—a young man—had been promoted to be captain of a small collier. Having heard of his arrival, she marched over to the quay, just about the breakfast hour, and seeing him prepare to set out for breakfast, she saluted him, to the amusement of the crew—"Hi! Jibie, fou ars ye? Could ye gie's a pittie coal?" "Jimmie" good-naturedly went and looked for the largest piece of coal he could find, and carried it ashore for her, when she asked him—"Jibie, ye bight carry't tib me acrost." The simple-minded man, amidst the merriment of the bystanders, put it below his arm till he came to Betty's door. She then took it from him, with—"That'll tee, Jibie, think'ee," and marched in. "Jimie's" wife's wrath when she heard the story was unbounded.

Betty invariably wore a blue baise petticoat, and, whenever her "cruise" required replenishing, she divested herself of her petticoat, dipped it in the "bluber vat," and then carried it home over her arm. When she got home, she wrung the oil out of it, hung it up for the night, and put it on again in the morning. A number of the coopers employed at the boilyard, taking an airing on the beach one Sunday morning, desoried Betty at a common occupation of her's—searching for waifs and strays along the shore, she being a bit of a "wrecker." They resolved to have a bit of fun with her, and set to work as follows:—As she was at some distance from them, and was coming in their direction very slowly, they all hid themselves, with the exception of one, who laid himself flat on the sands, with his face downwards and his arms spread out, like a drowned man. As Betty approached, she quickened her step until such time as she reached the strange object, when she stealthily approached his feet, then touched his legs, and muttered, "A cork!" She then gradually brought up her hands in the direction of his pockets, and was in the act of thrusting them in, when the sup-

posed corpse gave himself a stretch and omitted a groan. This was too much for Betty, who fled across the Links in terror, shouting out at the top of her voice as she ran, "A livin' cork!" She never halted till she reached her own domicile. The seaside saw no more of her as long as she lived. Many other episodes could be told of Betty, but the above will suffice.

"FISHERWIVES"—THE FISH MARKET.

In these days a great game among us boys, on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, was to go and fish at Donmouth, where we used to catch a few flounders, generally not larger than the face of a watch; hence the name we gave them of "watch faces." As we were usually not in time, or too lazy, to dig for bait, we went on a plundering expedition to procure it. At that time—and, perhaps, sometimes yet, for anything I know to the contrary—during the summer months, the fisher women used to go in parties along the shore in search of bait for themselves in the shape of sand or silver eels. They had a very fine-meshed net, covered in some parts with flannel, and they used to wade into the sea, holding out the net, and every now and again come ashore with it and transfer the contents into a "murlan." A number of us would wait until they had gone into the sea again, when we filled our caps out of the murlans and off we went like deer. The "fisherwives" would pursue us hotfoot, and often we narrowly escaped capture. Woe betide us had we been caught! When I was a boy I would not have gone into the Fishers' Square for love or money, for fear I would be identified as one of the culprits. Under the altered conditions of the fishing industry in Aberdeen a fisher woman's life is very pleasant compared with what it was then, when they had the whole of the fish to carry from Pooira Pier up to the old Fish Market, at the foot of Market Street (now the site of the Post Office). A woman might then be seen bending under a load that it sometimes required two men to lift upon her back. Any old residenter about York Street or Pooira Pier cannot but be struck with the great contrast between the bustle that used to pervade the locality

at that time, especially at night, and the quiet of the present time, owing in great measure to the removal of the Orkney and Shetland Shipping Company's landing wharf to the dockgates. At that time there were three public-houses within a stonethrow of Fishers' Square; now there is not one.

In the "Pottrees" lived a well-known couple—Betty Allan and her husband, "Geordie" (better known as "Turpentine"). Mrs Allan, who was a kindly, pawky little woman, for very many years used to keep the only fixed stall there was in the old Fish Market, and supplied all and sundry with fresh fish, there being then very few, if any, fishmongers' shops. Old Geordie ("Turpentine") used to be seen every afternoon marching up to the market to escort his better-half home.

FEMALE "CHARACTERS."

Another well-known face in the old Fish Market was "Mrs Tam Dearie." In those days, the fisherwomen sold their own fish, and a number of them, besides selling them in the market, used to go with them, in their creels, to the houses of their friends and customers. Friendships were thus commenced with up-town people, and many funny stories used to be told in this connection. Mrs Dearie lived in the days before school boards. She had ideas of her own upon things in general, and could give one the vernacular to perfection in the quaintest fashion. One day the old lady called at the door of a friend, when the following conversation ensued:—"Are ye in, Grinnie?" said Mrs Dearie, calling up the stair. "Is that you, Dearie? Come awa' up," was the answer. "A 'inna time the day, ma lammie; I've hidden ower lang, and it's time I wis 'ame. I jist cried in to lat ye ken I 'ad 'ard frae oor Davie." "I'm glaid o' that," was the reply. "Foo is he, and faur is he?" "Ow, 'e's fine, and fin he wrote me the ship vis new landit at Wallop-a-razor. Gweed day, ma lammie."

Another well-known woman in Footdee was Jenny Kemlo. Jenny kept a candy-shop—almost opposite Davidson's ropework—which was known to every youngster, and where she manufactured and sold the afore-

said dainty. It was the ordinary black "claggum" made from common molasses, and she was terribly annoyed by the gamins of the day, whose notions of "menm" and "tunm" were rather hazy. Another Jenny comes to my recollection, although not a native of Footdee. She was known as Jenny Milne, and also sold famous candy. When I was a boy at school she had her shop in the Netherkirkgate, and, if we had no money, we used to barter our old copybooks for her famous ware, and, as paper was a valuable article in those days, we got weight for weight from her. Jenny was an Episcopalian of the old school—being a member of St Andrew's, King Street, under old Bishop William Skinner—and a staunch old Jacobite to boot. Jenny's shop was hung with pictures of the Stuarts, from Queen Mary down to Prince Charles Edward, and her delight was to expatiate on their merits as compared with the present dynasty. I remember her seated on her chair, with her white-net dress cap with treble border, with her brown hair "ringletted" all over her brow, and a Queen Mary frill round her neck; a dark little shawl round her shoulders, and antique rings and brooches about her. She looked a very superior person indeed, and it was said she was the possessor of a goodly number of genuine Jacobite relics, which were willed to her friends at her death.

HALL'S CARPENTERS' BALL.

The great event of the year in Footdee in those days was Hall's carpenters' ball, which was invariably held on the 31st December in the draughting-loft in the shipyard, and gave the young women of Aberdeen something to talk about for at least three months before and three months after. With the exception of some dancing clubs that had a ball sometimes, it was the only working-class "affair" that was held in Aberdeen, which will seem incredible to the present generation of young men and women, when every work that has a dozen hands has now its annual fete. I believe it was the custom with the Messrs Hall in those days to retain what was called the launch money of their apprentices—a certain sum they were

allowed at a ship launch—and this, with a donation from the firm, enabled them to get up an elaborate affair in the shape of a social meeting and ball. A girl who was fortunate enough to get an invitation was envied among her companions, and many a plot was hatched to secure an invitation. A carpenter at that time stood almost next to a millionaire as a sweetheart.

REMINISCENCES OF MARISCHAL STREET.

In Marischal Street—just round the corner from the Union Bank—was the shop of a well-known citizen—Mr Bain, confectioner (better known as "Hoastie" Bain). This name was acquired from a habit he had of interlarding his conversation at intervals with a short cough, but whether the cough was constitutional or simply the force of habit I am not aware. But there it was. "Hoastie" was a bachelor, and lived with his three sisters above the shop. For many years, although it was a little place, he had the most select business in the city as a confectioner. His pastry was famed in town and country, and I have often seen the county gentry's carriages at "Hoastie's" door. The whole of the manual labour in connection with the business was performed by himself. When in the shop he always wore a black coat, a chimney-pot hat, and a long white apron reaching to his feet. Whenever there was no other mischief brewing, we would make for "Hoastie's" shop door, open it gently, thrust in our heads, and begin to imitate his cough. Before we knew where we were he was round the counter and after us, and it generally took us all our time to get clear of him. Many old playgoers will remember the shop, even though they did not know the man. It was extremely handy for obtaining sweets before entering our "glorious little old theatre"—the only house the removal of which I ever regretted. "Hoastie's" death created somewhat of a sensation, from the fact that he was found dead in his chair. From the appearance of the body it was supposed he was in a trance, and his remains were not interred for a whole fortnight. "Hoastie's" father and mother both died as suddenly as he himself.

Almost next door to "Hoastie" was the well-known Thomas (otherwise Tom) Laurie, the tea merchant. Tom was born before his time, inasmuch as that in the year 1850 he equipped a smack for the deep sea, which was to revolutionise the fishing industry; but, for some reason or other which I cannot remember, the enterprise never came to anything. The smack was latterly dismantled, and the fishermen took once more to their primitive methods.

A few doors farther down the street was the equally well-known shop of the Misses Deans, whither both high and low came from all quarters to purchase their home-cured ham and bacon, and also the Deans's renowned sausages. It will scarcely be credited at the present day that this was about the only place in Aberdeen at that time where such things were to be got. The reason the Misses Deans had for starting in that line of business was rather peculiar. They were in a different line of life, and one of them was about to be married to a young man who was a ham-curer somewhere in the south. Unfortunately, however, the young man died, leaving all his money to the two sisters, with the injunction to commence that business, he having initiated them into the methods of curing. They left a good round sum of money behind them.

It was about this time—nearly fifty years ago—that the Marischal Street tragedy occurred—one of the most romantic affairs that ever happened in Aberdeen. An English gentleman, Captain Parrott, who was commander of one of the Leith or London boats—I forget which—having lost his wife, sent for her sister, a good-looking young woman, to act as his housekeeper, and take charge of the children. Things went on smoothly for some time, when the young lady fell hopelessly in love with her brother-in-law, which brought on temporary insanity; and one night, when the captain was at sea, the neighbours were disturbed by the loud crying of the children, who would not be pacified. The doors being locked, a person was sent for to pick the locks, when the young woman was discovered hanging by the neck at the foot of the four-posted bed, and the children all grouped round her, crying to their aunt to speak to them.

Those who were present said it was the most heartrending scene they had ever beheld, and it was a long time before it was forgotten in Aberdeen.

ARTHUR SMITH, MARINE PAINTER.

A few doors down the Quay from Marischal Street was a shop at the windows of which the East End boys—especially those with nautical proclivities—were wont to stand for hours criticising a picture shown therein—a representation of the latest clipper ship fitted out from Aberdeen. The painting was minutely correct in every particular—ropes and spars and all. The artist was Arthur Smith, marine painter; and I do not think a new vessel left the port for very many years without Arthur transferring her to canvas. The only adverse criticism I ever heard of Mr Smith's paintings was that he invariably had his ships sailing with a fair wind, and always sailing off the Girdleness. Be that as it may, whatever else he could do, Mr Smith could paint ships, and I should think there are a great many of his productions decorating the walls of several of our older citizens. Amongst other notables of that time who then resided in the East End were Dr Dyce, Provost Fraser, and Baillie Crombie, in Marischal Street; old Dr Jamieson, at the top of Castle Terrace; Dr Steel, Dr R. Smith, Johnnie Ramsay, and Arthur Thompson, of the Bank of Scotland (who was known to the whole of the boys as a crack golf-player of those days), all in Castle Street, as also Provost Jamieson, Baillie Bothwell, and Police Commissioners Stirling and John Airth, already referred to. The last survivor of this list was Provost Jamieson.

"BLIN' JAMIE MELVIN."

Other two well-known worthies occur to my recollection—"Blin' Jamie Melvin" (otherwise Mellon), and his partner, "Blin' Jamie M'Donald." About fifty years ago, passers up and down the Windmill Brae—then a street of some importance—would have observed a signboard with a ship in full sail, and, underneath, the words—"John Melvin, musician." John Melvin



Ginger Blue.



Jamie Melvin.



Pistoler.



Forty Piggies.



was the father of "Jamie," and at that time was the principal musician in the city; and there was not a ship launch or any public function but his services were called into requisition. Hence the ship on his sign-board. The old gentleman, who was totally blind, used to dress very neatly. He wore a suit of black clothes and a white neckcloth, and was thus sometimes mistaken for a clergyman. Some funny stories used to be told of him, he being a bit of a humorist. At one particular launch, owing to want of ballast, the ship went over on her beamends. The old man was busy playing up "Rule Britannia," when, before he knew where he was, he was up to the neck in water, and away went the fiddle out of his grasp. By some means or other he managed to recover it, and hugged it to his breast. When the vessel righted again, there he stood hugging the instrument tight, and on his being asked how he felt, he said—"I am all right since I got my fiddle." Its safety, not his own narrow escape, seemed to have been the only thing that troubled him. He had a large family. There were, at least, seven sons and one or two daughters. The eldest son, "Jock Melvin," was pretty well known as a musician, as Jamie and he used sometimes to play together. He was a big, dark man, and latterly was almost blind. The second son, "Willie," was also well known. He was in a different line—a coal carter—and his peculiar cry—"Co-lol-coo-lol-lol"—will be well remembered by the older folks. The next was "Gavin," who was also a musician, and enlisted in the army. I believe he gained the rank of bandmaster, and was known in his latter days as "Signor Mullong." The next was our friend, the well-known "Jamie." Then came "Clark," who was a little of everything; and it is said of him that he was the original of a now well-known "chestnut." When employed as an assistant gravedigger at St Clement's Churchyard, someone asked him on one occasion—"How are you getting on, Clark?" "Bad, bad, bad," was Clark's answer; "I hinna buried a living soul this sax weeks." Then came "Prince," who was a hairdresser in Elgin; and, lastly, Davie, the well-known barber in Huxter Row.

Jamie Melvin, although almost totally blind latterly, was not always so, and in his younger years was a gardener; but, having been taught music by his father, he ultimately took to it on finding his eyesight failing.

James Melvin had travelled all over the country before he ultimately settled down in Aberdeen; and it was during his travels that he picked up his wife, Janet Craig, who, in her earlier years, was said to have been a circus rider with the well-known Mr James Cooke, an uncle of John Henry Cooke. She, however, was a native of Aberdeen, having been born in the Netherkirkgate, where her father was well known. They had no family, and, had he been more careful in his earlier days, "Jamie" might have been a fairly wealthy man. They resided for a long time in that well-known locality, Red Lion Court, Broad Street. During the summer season "Jamie" used to ply his avocation on board the steamers between Leith and Shetland, and during the winter he was much in demand for balls and marriages; it was only in his later years that he took to the streets. Latterly, James and his wife lived on the bounty of their neighbours, supplemented by an allowance from the parish authorities, till "Jamie" passed away at a good old age.

"BLIN' JAMIE M'DONALD."

It was said that it was when upon his travels that Jamie Melvin first foregathered with Jamie M'Donald, who was a southron, and brought him to Aberdeen, where he remained for the rest of his life. The two will be well remembered by the older folks—the little, dark man, with his peak cap and buttoned-up topcoat; and the other one with his long, melancholy-looking face, and his faithful dog leading him by a string. I never saw Melvin with a dog. Their usual place of rendezvous was at the corner where the Queen's Statue now is; they were seldom or never to be seen at any other spot. It was said that for some time after his first arrival in Aberdeen M'Donald wrought in the Blind Asylum, but finding the employment irksome, he soon left it, and took to

the singing business. The late Rev. Thomas Dewar, the minister of the South Parish Church, took a kindly interest in both him and his wife, he having married them. Jamie's wife, like himself, was totally blind; her name was Annie Bryce. The story went that she had been a farmer's daughter, and on attempting to get out at a window to go to a ball which she had been forbidden to attend, she met with an accident which brought on inflammation of the brain and loss of eyesight. Jamie himself used to sit in the baptismal seat in the church and assist the choir, he at that time having a good voice. I believe they had one child, which was blind, and which, I think, died in infancy. Jamie remained with his friend Melvin as long as the latter was able to go out, and towards his later days his voice fairly gave way. His rendering of a number of Scotch songs was fairly good, especially "The Pedlar and His Pack," which was his special favourite. Both Jamie and his wife were laid aside with illness at the same time, his death occurring in March, 1891, and his wife's about three months later. He was about the last of the Aberdeen worthies of fifty to sixty years back.

"JOHNNY MILNE O' LEEVIT'S GLEN."

Another of the old minstrel worthies, who was even better known than the two just mentioned, inasmuch as he was well known in all the country round, as well as in the town, was "Johnny Milne o' Leevit's Glen." There was not a feeing market held for miles around Aberdeen but "Johnny Milne" was to be seen with a delighted crowd of rustics around him, buying up his ballads, which were entirely his own composition.

Johnny Milne—not very prepossessing, as I remember him—was a little man. He was about the last of the old race of characters. He wore knee breeches and Tam o' Shanter bonnet, and if the weather was unpropitious, also a grey plaid, and a cap with flaps that came down over his ears. When in country districts, Johnny had a donkey on which he rode from place to place. I have no recollection, however, of ever seeing him on it,

as on his arrival in town it would likely be housed up. Johnny generally recited his ballads or effusions before disposing of them, and as there were some with 45 stanzas, or perhaps more, the task was one that everybody would not have tackled. Usually, before he got done the foam was working at the sides of his mouth; and whether the matter was funny or not, Johnny himself would not have smiled for love or money—he always seemed so much in earnest. He never forgot, however, to wind up his peroration with the well-remembered, "Now, my lads and bonnie lassies, they're sellt for a penny the piece, or twa for three lawbees."

Johnny Milne was born at Dunnottar, about 1792. His father, William Milne, who was a sailor, went away on a voyage to the West Indies, when Johnny was quite young, and never returned. Mrs Milne died shortly after. She was a sister of an Aberdonian well known at that time, Dr Campbell. Johnny then resided with his grandfather, a blacksmith at Fetteresso, where he received his schooling. Afterwards he came to Aberdeen, and was engaged as an ostler to an uncle—a horseshoer in Bon-Accord Street. He then learned the shoemaking, and wrought at it for some time. At the age of 25 he took unto himself a wife. By this time he was settled at Durris, where for three years he had been living by himself. Shortly after his marriage his health broke down, and he then removed to Glenlivet, his wife's native place. From this place he ever after dated all his effusions—"I'm Johnny Milne, o' Leevit's Glen." Johnny shortly afterwards commenced an occupation little heard of now in comparison with those days—namely, smuggling. It was this avocation that confirmed him in rhyme-writing, as—although he had tried his hand at it when eighteen years of age—it was only after an incursion of the Excise authorities that his first lengthy piece saw the light, entitled, "The Highland Lads, or Naughty Glens." There were about 70 stanzas in the piece. The first, which ran as follows, will give an idea of Johnny's genius:—

L. M'Bain, an officer of Excise,
The Highland smugglers did despise,
And got Preventive men to rise,
To survey their glen i' the mornin'.



John Milne o' Livet's Glen.



William R. Broomfield.



Blin' Jock Ross.



Boxer Jock.

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Paradoxical as it may seem, "Johnny" advocated temperance principles in his writings; but, apart from that, I believe, practised what he preached.

About 1828 he gave up the smuggling, and commenced to make a steady "retour" of the markets, which he continued doing until well on in the sixties, when the infirmities of old age compelled him to desist. "Johnny" was a particular friend of the farm servants far and wide, and was largely patronised by them. Anyone with a grievance had only to tell "Johnny," who embodied it in rhyme, and, as he was an adept at keen sarcasm, the culprit, whoever he was, generally got it hot. In politics he was a Radical, and he wrote a number of political squibs at different times, which was the means of bringing him in direct contact with the late Colonel Sykes, then our city member, as also the then Lord Fife, and many other county gentlemen, who were very kind to him. A pet aversion of Johnny's was the great Sir Robert Peel, and on many occasions he had a hit at him in his rhymes:—

Sir Robert Peel, that turncoat chiel,
Head of the Tory faction,
Doth boast he'll mak' the Kirk to feel
His mighty poo'er in action.

Johnny continued wandering about to markets, far and near, for the space of forty years—that is, from 1828 to 1868—when, feeling the infirmities of old age growing upon him apace, he retired to a son's house at Cullerlie, Echt, where he resided until his death, in January, 1871. It must have been towards the later years of his life that he penned the following effusion, which shows him as a bit of a moralist:—

There's nothing sure to you or me
Beneath the moon,
But only that we balth maun dee—
Lord kens how soon.

To anyone reading Johnny Milne's rhymes who never saw or heard him recite them himself, with his peculiar drawl and verve, they will not seem of much account, but to those who remember the author, the re-perusal will bring him graphically before them. As a specimen of Johnny's best-known poem, "The Deil o' Baldarroch, or

the Banchory Ghaist," will recall to those who knew him his inimitable style:—

Some time ago I heard a story telled
About some fouk that had amaist been felled
At Baldarroch, wast frae Aberdeen—
The like for mony a year there haas been.

The evil spirit—to his name rebuke —
Took up a hauntakip in the fouk's peat-neuk;
Afore the fire fouk couldna sit for fear,
For peats and clods cam' bungin' ben the floor.

The bere-beater, of great weicht and aise,
Aff like a bird into the air did rise;
It flew ower the houses like a lark,
And down on the fouk's taeas fell wi' a yark

The fouk gave out that everything was lost,
The vera cheese ran to the fire to roast,
The fouk were terrified where nocht was seen,
For ilka thud was like to blin' their e'en.

An' 'cause they daured him wi' the Word o' Gweed,
He drave the very house maist heels ower head,
He split and bursted ilka pot an' pan,
The fouk, through fear, took to their legs and ran.

The steels an' chairs in heaps o' boords were ca'd,
The very wheels got tee, and ran like mad;
Balth out an' in the fouk were clean bombased,
An' far an' near the country was amazed.

The swful cloddin' scarcely e'er devauid,
Until at last the parson he was called;
The parson cam', an' gained the hoose wi' prayer,
But still the clods were thudding here and there;
An' when the sun went down they grew sair thick;
The fouk saw naething till they laun the lick.

Johnny, I may add, had a family of six sons and four daughters, a number of whom obtained good positions in life.*

THE BROTHERS HOGG.

Other two worthies who flourished in the East-End about fifty or sixty years ago were the Brothers Hogg, better known as Jock and Geordie Hogg. Their father was, in his day, a well-known shipmaster in Aberdeen, but he died when his sons were quite young, and they were left in charge of their mother. Time went on, and the brothers commenced to thrive, and each of them soon had an equipage of his own in the shape of a horse and cart. Before very long the eldest brother, Jock, had as many as six carts and

* See "Selections from the Songs and Poems of the late John Milne, of Glenlivet" (Aberdeen, 1871), Walker's "Bards of Bon-Accord," and "The Last of the Scottish Homers," by William Alexander, in the "Scottish Art Review," May, 1869.

horses—or, rather, “screws”—each one worth at the most from 2s 6d to 10s. I may mention that in those days the S.P.C.A. had no terrors for carters, it not having—even if then in existence—reached the far north. Jock took unto himself a wife, a well-known East-End damsel, and retired from the sand-cadging personally. He opened a cook-shop in Justice Street, where (his wife having left him shortly after marriage) he was to be found from morning till night, with his sleeves tucked up to the shoulder, cutting up and boiling skate, etc., etc., while crowds of us boys used to stand and watch him. Jock was a tall, lanky fellow of over six feet, and there was a good deal of the “old woman” in his ways, which made him a mark for the butcher boys, who passed and repassed daily with their carts, and never missed annoying him by calling him all sorts of opprobrious names. Jock, however, nearly always showed fight. Among a certain class Jock was well patronised. Geordie also left the sand-cadging and took to fish-hawking, and from that he started in the old Fish Market as a fishbuyer. He was one of the pioneers of the trade, the railway being open to the southern markets by this time; and Geordie, had he taken care of what he made, would soon have been a wealthy man, but he spent his money as freely as he made it. Before his death his nearest friends would have scarcely known

him—with a protuberance on his nose the size of an ordinary apple. At that time Geordie, “The Queen of the Market,” and Maggie Brown had the whole of the wholesale business almost to themselves. He will be remembered as a big, burly man, with “splay feet,” who, as regularly as Sunday came round, was to be found walking down the Pier (then the regular Sunday promenade of thousands) in company with his friend, the late Allan Eddison, butcher—another East-End worthy. On these occasions he dressed in the latest fashion, with the indispensable glowing alk neckerchief, for which he seemed to have a weakness. About the last of the race of sand-cadgers died not so very long ago, in the person of poor “Jock Malone,” who was a very harmless creature, but had to suffer the jibes of the gamins of his day.

Another estimable East-End, who suffered severely at the hands of the boys of that time, was the late Mr John Mowat, cabinetmaker, Justice Street, whom everybody knew as “Johnny Mowat,” and who, for some reason or other that I never could find out, was nicknamed “Skookener.” He made the mistake, when the shouting commenced, of giving chase, which only made matters worse. Had he taken no notice, the boys would have very soon tired, and have left him alone, and it was of very little use to the victims to apply to the police.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENTERTAINMENTS AND PERFORMERS.

PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENTS.

During the latter years of the fifties and the first few years of the sixties, Aberdeen had quite a plethora of high-class entertainments. Shortly after the building of the Music Hall, in 1859, we had the formation of the Choral Union, which has remained in existence ever since. A meeting of leading citizens was held in the early sixties, headed by the Lord Provost of the day—Sir Alexander Anderson—for the promotion of Saturday Evening Concerts (for which the best talent of the day was engaged) at popular prices, ranging from 2d to 2s. The Music Hall (at that time not so extensively run upon) was taken for the winter season. Amongst others engaged, whenever her services could be obtained, was one who proved, perhaps, the most popular singer that visited the city—the talented Helen Kirk. Her voice was a beautiful contralto, and her repertoire of songs was large—principally Scottish, such as “My Boy Tammy,” “Afton Water,” etc. The two songs in which she principally excelled, however, were “The Three Fishers” and “The Murmur of the Shell”; and during her rendering of either, so complete was the silence, that a pin might have almost been heard fall. “Nelly” was said to have had a very romantic career. The current story—and I have never heard it contradicted—was that she and a younger sister, Jessie—who was also a vocalist, but not so able as Nelly—were discovered when girls singing in the streets of Glasgow by some gentlemen, who took them in hand, and put them through a course of musical training. We had also frequent visits at that time from the original Christy Minstrels, with their high-class repertoire of songs and ballads that took the public of those days by storm.

At the Mechanics' Hall we used to have yearly visits from Springthorpe and his celebrated waxwork for a few weeks, and in his company was an Italian performer, who went by the name of Signor Fumarola, who, thinking Aberdeen was sadly lacking in music halls during the winter season, took it permanently, and engaged companies of professionals, who never remained longer than a week or a fortnight, including the Scottish tenor “Stembridge Ray,” “Furness Rolfe,” William Ross (the great comic singer of his day), and many others; and a host of talent appeared week after week. This went on for a considerable time, but for some reason or other Fumarola retired from the Mechanics' Hall, and took the Bon-Accord Music Hall in Union Street, and still carried on the same business. The Mechanics' was then taken over by the well-known Willie Gray, who also engaged first-class companies, and the two halls ran in opposition for a length of time. This went on until the Bon-Accord fell into the hands of the Bros. M'Leod, of waxwork fame, and the Mechanics' fell into the hands of Willie Gray's manager, and the M'Leods, to compete successfully with the other hall, engaged the finest talent of the day, including the “Great Vance,” then at the zenith of his fame, who, during almost the whole winter season, appeared to crowded houses nightly.

Another craze—for so I must call it—that possessed Aberdonians then was the getting up of amateur concerts. They were organised for every conceivable purpose, the principal being to aid the Royal Infirmary, the funds of which were at a very low ebb. Some of the trades were able off one concert to benefit the institution to the amount of £50; and a good deal of ill-feeling was engendered owing to the unwillingness of

those at the head of the Infirmary affairs to admit the various trade nominees as managers of the institution, on the ground that it was the public at large, and not the trades, that subscribed the money. After a good deal of acrimony, however, the matter was amicably settled.

THE WIZARD OF THE NORTH.

A "great card" in Aberdeen when he sometimes visited it was a "Deaside loon," John H. Anderson, the Wizard of the North, who was then in the zenith of his fame, before he had commenced his later days' wild pranks which culminated in the burning down of Covent Garden Theatre, London. Anderson, it is said, commenced his professional career when quite a boy at that far-famed "Scottie's Show" which used to stand in John Street, almost next door to the present St George's-in-the-West Parish Church, and the boys in Aberdeen came from far and wide to have their evening's enjoyment for a penny. There was a whole evening's entertainment for that sum; and—as also at another establishment as well known, namely, Giles's Penny Rattler—we were treated to two or three long dramas in an evening, besides the usual amount of singing and dancing between the pieces. It was in Scottie's Show that I first had the pleasure of seeing Tammy Fraser playing in his masterpiece, "The Dumb Man of Manchester"; and many an actor who ultimately reached fame and fortune made his appearance for the first time at these and such-like establishments. Anderson then graduated to the Theatre Royal, Marischal Street, where he acted as handy man in a number of capacities, and ultimately he reached the pinnacle of fame in his profession as a sleight-of-hand performer. A brother of the Wizard, Sandy Anderson, was for a good number of years a night watchman in the Justice Port. He eventually went abroad, and died a number of years ago. Another brother, Gordon, was a gardener, and used to work with Mr Aitken, about Cornhill. He fell into bad health, and had to go into the Nelson Street Poorhouse, where he died, being almost bent double, and going upon crutches. In

later years, some bad feeling arose between the parochial authorities and the "Wizard" in connection with an application made by them to him regarding his brother's maintenance in the poorhouse, which he repudiated, solely on the grounds of the peremptory manner in which it was demanded from him. But I believe it was ultimately settled by him.

A number of the common folks, especially the old women of the north of Scotland, actually thought the "Professor"—as he called himself—was in league with the Evil One. On one occasion, after leaving Aberdeen, he went to Elgin, and after being a day or two there, he thought he would see what could be done in Forres, and took a run through one morning, to come back in the afternoon in time for the evening performance. But he got more in Forres than he had bargained for, which considerably upset his calculations. After arranging with a printer there for bills, he asked the printer to recommend him to lodgings that he might go to them on arrival. The printer sent him to a decent old lady. He took her lodgings for a week, but she told him she had often people taking the lodgings who never came back—would he leave a deposit? He said he had no objection, and handed her four half-crowns. He said he had another call to make, and, as the day was fine, he would leave his umbrella for two hours, and would call for it before leaving. The said umbrella had "The Wizard of the North" engraved on it. On his reappearance, the old lady was surveying the umbrella, and trembling from head to foot. He told her he thought the place would suit him very well. She commenced to cross-question him, when he acknowledged who he was. Then said the old lady—"Ye're the de'il, an' I widna lodge you yae night for the war! I fin' the smell o' bramstone, and my bluid is rinnin' cauld." When he proceeded to leave—"Stop, dinna leave ought belongin' tee ye wi' me. Tak' your devilish umbrella an' your siller wi' ye, and never let me see your face again," and putting her hand in her pocket, she exclaimed—"The de'il's in my pouch dancing wi' the half-crowns." She mustered courage to put in her hand again, and then she

screamed out that the half-crowns were sticking to her fingers and burning them. She managed to get them out of her pocket, and then fainted. Unfortunately, as her fall she struck against a stool and slightly cut her cheek, and the blood commenced to flow. Her screaming alarmed the neighbours, who flocked in in shoals, and fairly paralysed Anderson, who was rooted to the spot. The upshot was that two men firmly seized him for robbery and murder, and the coach he was to proceed back to Elgin just came to take him up when they were apprised that a murder was committed. The guard carried off the news to Elgin about the murder, and the Wizard was walked off to Forres Jail. The constable returned to see if the murdered woman was dead, but by this time she had recovered, and her first words were—"Oh, that terrible Weezard, is he awa'?" "Oh," exclaimed the policeman, "was it the Wizard frae Elgin? If it's him, the deevil, he's aff; for naething can keep him fast." On approaching the cell door they called out, "Are you there?" "Yes," answered Anderson, "I am here." "Od, man, we have heard o' you an' your strange tricks. Noo, there's a fine chance for you to come through the keyhole." Next morning he was taken before the Forres baillies, when the old woman told her story, and the matter ended. He returned to Elgin, where he had to prolong his stay a week, as also in Forres, where he drew immensely, but he acknowledged he was "done for" once upon that particular occasion.

In his frequent visits to Aberdeen the Wizard generally, if the weather was at all suitable, had a trip up Deeside, his parents having been cottars at Kincardine O'Neil, where he was born. On one occasion when at the Brig o' Potarch he came across some labourers at their noonday meal. Sitting down by the side of the peat moss where they were at work, he recognised an acquaintance of his boyish days, with whom he entered into conversation, without telling him what his occupation was. During this time he had been busy maturing some of the practical jokes that he so dearly loved to play, and brought the conversation round to peat mosses, and said he

believed silver and gold were to be found in them. "Yes," said his old friend, "by eident hard work." "Oh, not so very hard," said the Wizard. "It seems to me as if I saw silver upon that peat there; hand it to me till I break it," when upon breaking it out rolled a silver sixpence. "Hand me that one," addressing a young woman who was assisting at the peat-casting. It was produced and broken up, when a shilling fell out of it. Anderson then asked to be allowed to dig a peat for himself, when, better still, a sovereign fell out of it. The money was left with the finders as an incentive to hard labour. The story soon got wind that the Wizard had been at Banchory, and it is said that the incident did him more good on Deeside than twice the amount of money he left with them would have done in advertising. One great feature in his success was the bold course he struck out from the commencement of his professional career—dubbing himself "Professor" from the outset; and, as the Waverley Novels and Sir Walter Scott still held the people spellbound, they being in the heyday of their success, he purloined the appellation of "The Wizard of the North," first applied to Sir Walter, and stuck to it through life.

HIS EARLY CAREER.

It is said that Anderson in his younger days in the country was for some time in the employment of a rural blacksmith, and while at that occupation he developed his great talent for mechanics, in which he excelled for the carrying out of his various tricks. It was also said that one of his principal reasons for starting "on his own hook" as a full-fledged professor was that being Scottie's principal assistant and right-hand man (he ultimately married Scottie's daughter), he picked up his masterpiece, "the great gun trick," from him, he having been in the habit of performing it sometimes as an interlude between the dramas in the show. Be that as it may, from the very outset of his career, and for many years after, success followed his efforts, and during that time he earned and spent two or three fortunes. Owing to his early connection with the drama he

could act a bit, and occasionally, while in Aberdeen at any rate, used to appear in the old house in Marischal Street in one of his two favourite characters of Rob Roy or as Wandering Steenie in that fine old Scotch drama, "The Rose of Ettrick Vale, or the Bridal of the Border," in which Wandering Steenie makes his appearance on the stage playing on a shepherd's pipe or flute—but it was generally one of the orchestra who really played the air, the actor's performance being a make-believe. One night the Wizard was playing the part, and was getting on fairly well. When he appeared in that particular scene there was generally an arrangement between the two as to when the music should cease, but on that particular night, by some unfortunate missing of the cues, Wandering Steenie stopped piping and took the instrument away from his mouth, but, to the great delight of the gallery boys, who were not long in discovering any hitch in the performance, the air was still coming from the performer behind the scenes. The roars of laughter very nearly brought down the house, and it was some time before the Wizard got quietness to finish the piece, which he managed to do quite successfully. I have no doubt that the musician, from the nature of the man he had to deal with, "got it hot" that night.

It was such episodes as these in the old playhouse—which frequently occurred—that made the theatre so attractive; and if any old playgoer who has reached the age of sixty years was asked his candid opinion of theatres then and now, the verdict in 99 cases out of 100 would be in favour of the old regime. We criticised the actors openly, as we thought we had a perfect right to do. We criticised the orchestra, commonly the reverse of complimentary; as also certain sections of the audience. In fact, had the curtain never risen we would have had the worth of our money amongst ourselves in the shape of fun without the slightest effusion of rowdyism, as whenever the curtain rose (unless the place was overcrowded, when we were lying on the top of one another like herring in a barrel) we were as still as

church mice. Theatre audiences sit nowadays waiting the commencement of the performance as if they were in church, waiting for the minister; and the raising of the "hippen" does not seem to them of the slightest importance, and under the greatly altered conditions of society perhaps it is as well. But when the curtain of the present theatre is rung down for the last time—and it has now reached the age of thirty years—it will not leave a tithe of regret as compared with its predecessor; but rather the other way about.

VICISSITUDES.

During the latter part of the Wizard's career misfortunes, one after another, came across him. It was said that there was no part of the civilised globe that he had not visited. He was at the Antipodes when gold was first discovered there, and his bills were posted on the Pyramids of Egypt. One of the principal sources of his success was his own business ability, combined with his always having advance agents selected for the same quality; and almost all of them eventually secured independence as public entertainers, touring managers, etc. He commenced on his own account about the middle of the thirties, and had thus a varied career of almost 40 years, having died from exhaustion at Darlington, in the north of England, in 1874, at the age of 60 years. He left one son, Oscar, whose ultimate career I never knew; and a number of adopted daughters. If I remember rightly, his wife predeceased him by a number of years. For many years of his career he had a rival in his profession, of transcendent talent—a Frenchman of the name of Robert Houdin—who used to perform some wonderful feats of legerdemain, but who, I think, never reached our northern regions; and opinion was divided as to the merits of the two. Both performed wonderful tricks, but those who favoured Houdin thought his superiority lay in his discarding paraphernalia altogether, and working without any assistance from confederates, whereas the Wizard depended almost entirely on elaborate ap-

paratus, almost all of his own invention; as also on the smartness of his assistants, a number of whom at different times left his service and started for themselves as full-blown wisards.

Anderson's mother had died in Aberdeen, in 1830, at the age of 40, and is buried in St Nicholas Churchyard, at the back of the foot of Schoolhill, where a stone is erected to her memory—very likely by her son. There is no mention on it of his father whatever, who must have been buried elsewhere prior to that. He must have had a great regard for his mother, as before his death he expressed his wish to be brought down to Aberdeen and buried in the grave beside her, which was accordingly carried out in fulfilment of his wishes. The stone is one of the ordinary blue slate slabs that were in vogue before granite came into common use, and, but for his own name being added since his death, there is nothing to indicate otherwise who she was; and those who have ever gone to look for the Wizard's tombstone have generally looked for something more ornate than the shabby dark slab, and have come away disappointed that those he left behind him did not put up something more in keeping with the fame of the occupier of the tenement beneath. However, there is one thing that will very likely strike visitors to his grave-stone—namely, that he must have felt a rankling for some injury or fancied injury his mother must have received from someone in her lifetime, before he penned or got penned the following lines upon the tombstone:—

Yes, she had friends when fortune smiled;
It frowned, they knew her not;
She died, the orphans wept,
But lived to mark this hallowed spot.

I may add that the stonemason who had the cutting of the inscription had been in a quandary with regard to whether the word should be wept or weeped, and very likely he was unable to come to a definite decision in the matter, and compromised it by putting it "weept" on the stone. The in-

scription below the poetry on the stone is simply:—

John H. Anderson,
Wisard of the North,
Died February 3rd, 1874,
Aged 60 years.

The last time I was at the Wizard's grave, I remembered a Latin quotation I learned at school, and have never forgotten—"Sum quod eris, fui quod es," and thought how true it was—"I am what thou wilt be, I have been what thou art."

POETICAL POLICEMEN.

In my various references to the police forces of long ago, I omitted to mention that the force contained two poets of no mean order, in the persons of William Shelley Fisher (or William Shelley, as he called himself) and William Anderson. The former's poetry was a good deal of the fanciful and sentimental strain, and did not go down very readily with "the men in the street"; but Anderson's poems were very generally known and appreciated from the fact that they nearly all referred to local worthies and places. His masterpiece, "Jean Findlater's Loon," will likely never be forgotten as long as "Braif Bon-Accord" exists. Then we had "The Auld Bow Brig," "Eppie's Aumrie," "Tibby Hogg," "Annaple Bain," "My Auld Aunty Meg," and "Wha is he that gangs dressed in Militiaman's Claes?" our old friend, "Moorican Room"; as also the "Complaint of the Weel o' Spa"—in conjunction with which last must be mentioned the amusing poetical rejoinders of "The Corbie Weel" by our old fellow-citizen, Mr William Cadenhead, a poet of no mean order, who died on 11th December, 1904, on the verge of being a nonagenarian.

FACTORY LASSES.

One phase of life in the past was the rivalry of the different factory lasses—the factories themselves, in a great measure, being now only memories of the past. In my young days there were four principal mills or factories in Aberdeen—Broadford, Banner Mill (or the Bog Mill), Spring

Garden, and the Wool Mill in the Green; and of the four the only one in existence now—and under entirely new management—is Broadford. In the olden time there was a distich in current circulation, which I believe was fairly characteristic of the employees of each factory—

Spring Garden for poverty,
The Woo' Mill for pride,
The Bog Mill for a bonnie lass,
And Broadford for a bride.

Spring Garden Factory, which belonged to some of the firms involved in the crash of 1848, survived until some time in the early fifties, when it went under, the premises being now occupied as a meal mill and for other business purposes. I can well remember that the workers all seemed of a lower rank of society than those at the other mills. There were songs specially applicable to each mill; and for extensive variety those of the Bog Mill lassies bore the palm. It was quite a common sight any night to see one or two hundred girls coming up the Justice Port, with "Feel Sandy Cameron" at

their head, singing one of their favourite songs—

When I cam' by the salmon fishers,
When I cam' by the ropersie,
There I saw my sailor laddie,
Sailing on the raging sea, etc.

Another favourite was "He'll tak' me frae the Mill"; but the sailor always seemed the favourite lover of the Bog Mill girls. Whether the locality of the mill, bordering on the sea, had anything to do with that or not, I cannot tell; but such was the fact. They were all bare-headed, too. Had a girl with a head-dress attempted to enter a mill in Aberdeen fifty years ago, she would not have gone many yards before she would have got it torn off her head. Now, hats are the rule and bare heads the exception in most of the factories. I remember a grand affair the Broadford girls had on the present King's marriage day, March 10th, 1863, when figures of the bride and bridegroom, in full uniform and dress respectively, were carried in procession shoulder-high through the town, all the workers following. Times are greatly changed. In the past, the factory girls had some "rare jinks."

CHAPTER IX.

PERSONAL HISTORY.

THE BEGINNINGS OF WORKING LIFE.

It is a little over fifty years since I, a youngster of 15 or 16, made my debut in the famous establishment of Messrs Keith and Gibb, engravers and lithographers, which was unique in two particulars—namely, it turned out more prominent artists and precentors than any other establishment in Britain ever did. The premises were then and for long after at 15 Union Buildings, now occupied by Mr Bisset, clothier, with workrooms above (now the offices of Messrs Wight and Aitken, advocates), which were then entered through the shop only. During the summer of 1852 I left a situation in a co-operative store, where I was in receipt of 7s or 8s weekly (which was a big wage for a lad in those days). Thinking the grocery business not good enough to follow out, and determined that the epitaph that was good enough for the Yankee should never grace my headstone (if I ever got one)—“Born to be a man, but died a grocer”—I aimed at the only fashionable calling in those days—a ship carpenter; and applied in all the yards, but there were so many names down before me that I might have waited for months before my turn came round. My parents lost patience, and I was ordered to secure employment of some sort. Seeing a placard in the firm's shop window for a stout apprentice (and unless you were that you were no use for Mr Keith), I boldly entered, and after about half an hour's cross-examination from him, at which he was quite an adept, I was told that I would suit, provided my friends were agreeable, and that I would have the magnificent sum of 2s 6d weekly, with a yearly rise of 1s for

seven years, when I would receive from 15s to 20s weekly. A grand outlook indeed! And unfortunately my friends were agreeable, simply for want of thought at the time. Fortunately for me, however, I signed no indenture or agreement whatever, which enabled me after a few years to better my position by leaving the city and seeking my fortune in the north of England, as many a day I knew I had earned my week's wages in a few hours, which I suppose made me and some of the other boys a good deal more self-assertive than we otherwise would have been, and more contemptuous to those in authority.

In this connection, I sometimes think, when I hear our Socialist friends talking about “the living wage,” and when I contrast things now with the times I am speaking about, they might have had some occasion to speak then. A youngster in those days for going messages was content with 1s or 1s 6d a week. If you offer them anything less now than 5s to 6s weekly, they turn up their noses and walk out. Journeymen bakers' wages in 1852 were 14s weekly, and if they are offered less than twice that now there is a row; and let anyone say what they will, with the exception of house rents, living is as cheap now as it was then, and some articles, such as tea and sugar, only one-third the price.

MEMORIES OF “KEITH AND GIBB'S.”

When I entered the service of Keith and Gibb, their old foreman, Bob Millar, had not long left, and there had been some unpleasantness with him and the firm, which had culminated in a lawsuit with regard to a workman's right to an impression of a pic-

ture. I do not remember who it was who gained or lost. I did not know Bob Millar, the lithographer, but I discovered that it was my old friend Bob Millar, the cricketer, the champion of the Union Club, and the delight of the East-End boys, as the beau ideal of what a cricketer should be—and cricket was then in its palmy days in Aberdeen. Young Aberdeen used to flock to the Links in their thousands to witness the two rival clubs fighting their battles. That stupid game football had not been invented then.

I entered the establishment, having not the slightest conception of what sort of business it was, the only things I had seen in connection with the trade being the chalk portraits exhibited in the firm's windows, with the inscription underneath—"On stone, by Lamstrouski," or some other jaw-breaking name. The Continental upheaval of 1848 drove shoals of foreign artists, etc., to this country—Poles and Germans in particular—until the country was inundated with them. I can remember old Keith sneezing and almost choking himself trying to get round their names. Although it was only the other year he died, he looked almost as old fifty years ago. Had anyone told me the portraits were printed off causeway blocks I could not have contradicted him. The foreman of the printing department was a Glasgow man, Patrick, better known as Pat Gibbons, who had learned his trade with the celebrated firm of Maclure and Macdonald. He was a very genial man, and was much liked by the employees in the place. The oldest apprentice in the printing department was my old friend Alexander B.—best known as Sandy—Sheriffs, for from thirty to forty years preceptor of the South Parish Church, where he succeeded the late Sandy Clerihew, who is still alive and well. He left the firm about the beginning of the sixties, and along with another old apprentice, William Nicol, commenced business in Broad Street at the top of Longacre. They ultimately dissolved partnership. Nicol went south, where I believe he died some years ago. Sandy carried on business by himself for some time, and gave it up on securing a clerkship with the Northern

Agricultural Company, where he has now been for upwards of thirty years. Sandy Dakers, John Mitchell, the artist; Sir George Reid, the famous painter; and myself are the sole survivors of the establishment as it was in 1852, as Jamie Donald, alias Dory, alias the Gardener, died some time ago. Reference was made at his death to his having been for several years with Messrs Cornwall. I may have forgotten, but I am strongly of impression that he was with Keith and Gibb solely all his life, from the time he commenced. Donald was another of Keith's "strong boy" bargains, as he, like Alexander Dakers, had reached manhood before he went to the trade, having been a gardener (hence one of his nicknames; and if these two were as munificently paid during their apprenticeship as I was, they had not lived on the best. Another employee in the printing department was the aforesaid William Nicol, who was a very genial fellow, and was also a preceptor in George Street U.P. Church (Rev. Mr Stirling's), where his father was church officer. (This church is now the shop of Mr James Shirras, draper.) He, as I have already said, left the city in the early sixties, and I have never seen him since.

John Henderson, latterly of the firm of Taylor and Henderson, who was the next older apprentice to me, was a native of Dunfermline. He was only, at the outside, about a year older than myself. Henderson had a thorough knowledge of music, and could do a little at shorthand, and soon after this time he got the preceptorship of Free St Clement's. Along with David Taylor, litho. artist, another thorough musician, who by this time had got the preceptorship of Free Trinity Church, he left Keith and Gibb about 1858; and the two commenced business at 75 Union Street, prior to going to their present premises in the Adelphi. Mr Taylor was a different sort of a man from his partner altogether. It was a case of extremes meeting. In connection with music, I may add that the late James Donald, as well as Alexander Dakers, were both musical, and, like the others quoted, were all members of different societies, Choral

Union, etc. I believe Sandy Sheriffs has been a member of the Union since its inception more than forty years ago, and, although these two may never have been precursors, Donald, I know, used to act in cases of emergency.

Among other apprentices of the firm, although younger than I, was the late James Duncan, of the firm of Thomson and Duncan, Union Row. He was for some time at the press, when his legs gave way through a weakness, and Mr Keith took him downstairs to the front shop, where he remained until Taylor and Henderson commenced business, when he left with them, and was in their employment for a good many years, until Mr Thomson and he started business on their own account. Another apprentice was Willie Sheriffs, a younger brother of Sandy, and a sworn chum of my own in the place. Being a rather delicate lad for press work, after being a year or two in the front shop and workroom, he thought he would not be able for the work, and left to be an upholsterer, served out his time, and ultimately went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne to work. Going down the river one morning in the passenger steamer to the shipyard where he was employed, the vessel collided with another passenger boat. The majority were drowned, and he amongst the rest. Some months after me another apprentice made his appearance in the printing department in the person of John Altria, a son of Cæsar Altria, an Italian, who carried on a successful business as a glass blower and optician for many years in that house with the outer balconies nearly at the foot of Skene Street. It is said that Joey Grimaldi, the celebrated clown, was an Italian; John must have been a lineal descendant of his, for from the day he entered the place until he left it he kept it in a roar, his grimaces and attitudes being something remarkable. He was a handsome fellow about 16, but a man in strength and bulk. But, oh, what a masher! Some of the other lads used to try it on, but John was the only one that could make a job of it, and he had the wherewithal to carry it out in the shape of good clothes. He never appeared in the morning without his kid gloves and his

pockets full of baps to divide amongst a few of us, and we all appreciated him the more thereby, as he never gave himself any airs among the boys in the shop. For a long time we were all questioned by our associates what nobleman's son he was.

Altria, from the time that Mr Dakers first became foreman, was, like some more of us, a thorn in the flesh to him, but in a greater degree; and Dakers was constantly reminding him that he was the mountebank of the shop. John used to take that as a compliment, and acted accordingly, and we, his satellites, backed him up in his insubordination, as we were invariable sharers in his good things. Altria some years after drifted away south, and the last time I saw him was in Aberdeen sometime in the seventies. At that time he was travelling for a London west-end firm of perfumers—the very job for him—and he was as big a masher as ever. His father died about the end of the sixties, and the last time I remember seeing him his eyes were sunk in his head, and he had a very dreamy look.

As already mentioned, Pat Gibbons was foreman on my introduction, and I commenced with floor sweeping, cloth and sponge washing, and the inevitable litho stone grinding and polishing that all beginners do. The whole place seemed a revelation to me, I never even having seen a litho stone. I was told off to damp the litho transfer book every morning, which was a number of sheets of plate paper with either soiled or spoiled portraits of clergymen, etc. I thought the damping process was for the purpose of cleaning them. I did it for a fortnight. At last I told the foreman it was no use, as they were dirtier than when I started. The amount of chaffing I received over that made me inquire within upon everything after that, and I was never again caught napping.

Shortly after I went there the great Duke of Wellington died, and the whole nation went into mourning for him. Her late Majesty issued a proclamation recommending (which was equivalent to a command) her loyal subjects to close their places of business at one o'clock on the day of his funeral, and Keith and Gibb's boys were

delighted with the prospect of a half-holiday, as they were not quite so rife then as they are now—we had only the two fast-days and New Year's Day—but Keith ordered all hands back to work again after dinner. The front shop shutters were put up and the door locked, and we were worse than if there had been no funeral, for Keith came upstairs and walked sentry through the printing room till closing time, and there was no skulking for the boys that afternoon. Maledictions not loud but deep were uttered that day. The hours wrought I always thought badly arranged, especially for young, growing lads, who were always hungry. They were 57 hours weekly—from 9 to 2 and 3 to 8 five days a week, and 9 to 4 continuously on Saturday.

WORK AND PLAY.

Our principal occupation, when not "basting" our superiors, was discussing and rehearsing the latest drama or pantomime produced at the dear old theatre in Marischal Street. These performances yielded me an intense enjoyment such as I have never since experienced. Mrs Pollock was then in the zenith of her powers, and we got a glimpse now and again of such men and women as G. V. Brooke, Barry Sullivan, Charles Dillon, Miss Heath, etc., etc. There was an attraction, too, in the stock company engaged, who each had to play from twelve to fifteen different characters a week during a season that sometimes lasted from August to the end of March, and entailed an amount of study and work that our one-part touring actors have no conception of. The "young bloods" in Keith and Gibb's in those days were all theatrical mad, and scenes from plays were enacted whenever we got the chance. Of course, we would have been nowhere without the assistance of our principal comedian, John Altria; and sometimes, to oblige the younger members of the company, Sandy Shirreffs and Willie Nicol, though more sedate than we boys, would assist us in our performance. Often in the middle of our performance, Sandy Dakers—by this time the foreman—would swoop down upon us, and would (metaphorically)

kick our show to pieces. However, we just had it over again whenever we got the chance. Even after the lapse of fifty years, I can remember that at Christmas, 1852 or 1853, a pantomime was produced at the theatre—with the writing of which, I think, Mr William Carnie had something to do, as he had in general in those days, and for long after. It was called "Harlequin King Discontent and the Demons of the Hartz Mountains," or some such title. The stock actor, Mr Brindal, a well-known man in those days, played the leading part. It was a success at the theatre, as also a glorious success in Keith and Gibb's workshop, where it was played for about a whole year. In the first scene, King Discontent and his demons are in the pit of Acheron, or some such dismal abode, when the demons commence:—

Hall, Great Discontent, we, your slaves, obey.
 King—You'd better, or there'll be the devil to pay.
 From earth I've just returned, and regret, the truth to say,
 That education is on the increase every day,
 What with cheap books, "Household Words,"
 and you'll scarce believe, the fools
 They have actually established lots of ragged schools,
 And what I tell you now, you may in truth believe,
 They wish to make folks honest.
 Demons—Haw, haw, haw!
 King (with a blow)—Ah, how dare you laugh?
 I'll teach you next time how you the "General" chaff.

Etc., etc.

During this time the drawings for the "Sculptured Stones of Scotland" were being printed off, amongst other things, and at James Donald's death he was referred to as the printer of these sheets. If, however, any credit is to be attached to anybody in connection therewith, I may say that I never saw anybody printing them but Mr Dakers, and I worked as his assistant, sometimes for months on a stretch, as needleboy—a process that has given place to more modern methods. Of course, I take no more credit for what I did than the organist in the old story conceded to the idiot organ-blower. Dakers and I were also sharers in the production of a coloured plate of the wreck of the Duke of Sutherland on April 1, 1853, shortly after the occurrence. Mr Andrew Gibb took a sketch of the wreck as it lay along the pier, and reproduced it

in lithography. Had anyone speculated in 100 copies of that picture when published, and laid them aside till now, it would have paid him. It was published at about 1s, and it is now so scarce that £1 1s was paid not long ago for a copy.

Along with his artistic abilities, Mr Gibb was a man of good literary taste, and was a member of a number of learned societies, including the Eclectic Society, the members of which were those who, recognising an element of truth in all systems, construct a newer and fuller one out of the whole. (Now-a-days we seem to be all Eclectics together, with Number One as the fundamental basis.) He was also a member of the Spading Club, which was not to be wondered at, having so much of their archaeological work coming through his hands. He was also a member of the Phrenological Society. The establishment used to be visited by a number of the pundits of those days, including Mr Stratton, phrenologist; Dr Linton, and many others. Mr Gibb's wife was, if I remember rightly, a niece of the doctor's, she being a Miss Johnston, formerly of Peterhead, and a sister of Fraser L. Johnston, who was for a number of years a grocer in Provost George Jamieson's old shop, No. 1 King Street. The marriage took place about the times of which I have been writing. There was one grand point in the firm's favour — they never overwrought any of their men or boys. At that time they were almost the only firm in Aberdeen who did any lithography, Bob Hughes in Broad Street being their only rival on a very small scale (Cornwall and Sons only took up that branch about this date). They had the whole trade to themselves, the others being—J. H. Stephen, George Petrie, and James Stevenson, who carried on as engravers solely.

John Mitchell, who was a few years older than I, was then serving his time as a lithographic artist, and it was not till about 1854 or 1855 that Sir George Reid entered the place. I remember him as a very quiet lad; but I cannot remember that the younger members of the establishment were even struck with any idea of the future eminence of either of these two. For one thing,

George Reid never engaged in any of our mischievous pranks, being of a very earnest, quiet disposition. John Mitchell and I were great friends. He and I, like Jamie Fleeman, belonged to the "gentle" persuasion, I being a Bishop Skinnerite, and he a chorister in St John's Church under Rev. P. Cheyne, where a number of my old Dr Anderson's schoolfellows were also in the choir. St John's was, by the way, the first church in Aberdeen that had a male surpliced choir.

OLD-TIME PERIODICALS.

Although the boys of fifty years ago had not the terror of a "Tak' e'" hanging over their heads (we had not reached that stage by many a day), some of us got as good a grounding in the three R's from the old dominies as the headmasters of our board schools are able to drive into the heads of the pupils of the present day. Having remained at school until I was thirteen, I left it against my friends' wishes to start work at 1s 6d weekly, modestly equipped for the battle of life. I oft-times envy the advantages the youth of the present day possess, both literary and educational, over the boys of the middle of the nineteenth century. I do not so much refer to free education, which is the common boon of all, and is paid for by the community at a too lavish rate for the results attained—I refer more to the superabundance of literature in all shapes and forms—good, bad, and indifferent—as also the boon of free libraries. With regard to monthly magazines and weekly periodicals, which can now be counted by the hundred, their number was few in these old days, their price was high, and they were seldom or ever seen by the community (the magazines, I mean). With the exception of the "Quarterly Review," "Blackwood," and one or two others, the whole of them have come into existence since that time. We had no process blocks, not even photography—in the common cheap sense we now use it. The discovery was made at that time, but Daguerre had not been able to cheapen the process much. I remember one of the first Daguerre typists in Aberdeen, Ernest Donald, in Rose

Street, who, for the cheapest portrait, which was done on a silverised plate, charged £1 1s. Then it became cheaper by being done on glass, but the carte-de-visite and the cabinet portraits were not evolved until the sixties had well commenced.

The late Mr Lewis Smith, bookseller, in his prime published two magazines in Aberdeen at different times—the "Censor" and the "Aberdeen Magazine"; but whatever was the cause—either dearth of talent or lack of subscribers—they had only an ephemeral existence. Periodicals at that time—I mean of the penny a week, to be continued in our next order—could have been counted on the fingers of one hand. First and foremost, there was the evergreen "Family Herald," which commenced publication about the year 1843, and has changed neither in look nor style of literature up to the present time. The "London Journal," which fifty years ago was at the height of its popularity, and read by everybody, was commenced about 1846 or 1847 under the editorship of a well-known man of his day—and his name is far from being forgotten yet, as a weekly newspaper he founded is still published under his name, although he himself has been dead many years—George W. M. Reynolds. To such a reputation did the "London Journal" attain that its readers during the Crimean War were, if I am not very much mistaken, credited with having subscribed, through its columns, the sum of £40,000 in aid of the Patriotic Fund for behalf of the widows and orphans of soldiers and sailors killed during the war. John Cassell, the London tea dealer, and one of the pioneers of pure literature, started a weekly periodical, "The Working Man's Friend," which was stopped, and another issued in its place—"Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper." Its editor—Percy B. St John—was a capital writer of boys' stories. A particularly good one, which had a long run in the paper, was "The Arctic Crusoe," which cleverly depicted life in the Far North.

Be it remembered, no news of recent date could be introduced into any of these publications at the risk of heavy pains and penalties. Some of the Chartists openly

broke that law in some of their publications, with the result that their editors and printers had in very many cases to suffer long terms of imprisonment; but at that time the day was drawing near when all those shackles were to be removed. Mr Reynolds, after retiring from the "London Journal," established another periodical upon the same lines, "Reynolds' Miscellany," or, as one of my companions whose early education had been sadly neglected, used to call it, "Rendel's Missionary"—a name that stuck to him for long. This publication, which had also a big circulation, and was also of the blood-and-thunder order, was superseded by "Bow Bells Magazine." This was all the light literature we had to read in those days, and, as the sale of the whole of these was in the hands of one agent, Mr William Russell, bookseller, who died a long time ago, and who was the eldest brother of Mr Russell, the painter (of salmon particularly), and Mr Russell, the sculptor, he must have made a good thing of it. He also kept a circulating library; as also the box plan of the old theatre in Marisohal Street. In our visits for our literature we generally found one or two of our actor or actress friends standing in the shop discussing the gossip of the day, and, as already mentioned, their faces were as well known as the town's clock.

Amongst other literature that was in high repute fifty years ago, and which is now only to be found in the cabinets of curio collectors, were "Park's" small quarto pictures of great actors in some of their favourite characters, such as "Mr Edmund Kean as Macbeth," "Mr T. P. Cooke as William" in "Black-Eyed Susan," etc., etc., the price being 1d plain and 2d coloured. They used to be bought up by thousands.

I can remember Mr Cassie, senior (father of James Cassie, artist), who kept a small grocer's shop for many years in Justice Street, almost next door to where I was born and brought up, having his windows filled with valentines year after year, and many an hour was spent by us youngsters criticising the merits and demerits of the various productions.



Dr. Linton.



Mr. James Vessie.



Samuel Martin.



Willie Grant.

JAMES VESSIE.

One of the pioneers of cheap literature in Aberdeen, and the last of the old school, passed away about ten years ago in the person of a well-known man, James Vessie, who, for about sixty years, carried on the trade of a new and second-hand bookseller. Mr Vessie was born about 1813 in Forres, where he learned the combined business of a bookbinder and bookseller; and, coming to Aberdeen a young man early in the thirties, he commenced business in the lines mentioned, to which he added a small circulating library. He was well known to the youth of the city in my early days, as he was able to supply a felt want—to those so inclined—in the reading line, at a moderate price. He was for some years in the Gallowgate, then Upperkirkgate, Queen Street, and latterly in George Street, where at one time he did a large trade in second-hand books. For some years before his death he gave up his business, the frailties of old age creeping upon him, and he died peacefully at the house of his daughter, Mrs Wilson—his wife having predeceased him—in February, 1895, at the good old age of 83 years. Aberdeen was fairly well to the front in the shape of cheap circulating libraries for the masses, as, besides Vessie's, there was an old carpet weaver in the Windmill Brae of the name of Mackay who kept one, as also did the late Mr John Wilson in Marischal Street and the late Mr George Middleton in Skene Square. A great cry is sometimes made about boys reading "penny horrors," and about their pernicious effects. The boys of fifty years ago did not read them—simply because they were not there to read—but they read books of the Harrison Ainsworth class.

LOCAL BOOKSELLERS, ETC.

From the directory of 1851-2 I find that at that date there were 32 booksellers' shops in Aberdeen. Of all the 32, there are only four firms now carrying on under the original name, viz., A. Brown and Co., William Lindsay, Lewis Smith, and D. Wyllie and Son; while a fifth firm, G. and R. King, now James Murray, has been carried on

in the same premises all that time.* At the present time there is not an original member of any of the thirty-two firms of fifty-two years ago alive. The last two were Mr William Lindsay, who at that time carried on business on a very small scale, and died about three or four years ago; and Mr William Stevenson, who died two years and a half ago, aged 80 years. The bookbinding firms numbered eight, of which only one remains—Messrs Edmond and Spark. The number of bookbinding firms in 1901 was 11, and booksellers, to which is now appended newsagent, 108. The number of letterpress printers in those days was eight, and in 1901-2 they had increased to 38 firms; and of the eight firms of those days four are still in existence. One of them is still carrying on business in the same shop—James Daniel and Company. The others are D. Chalmers and Company, J. Avery (now a limited liability company), and George Cornwall (now "and Sons"). The lithographic branch was so insignificant then that there were only two firms mentioned—Keith and Gibb and my old friend Bob Hughes, whom I did not know much about then, but was destined to know better at a later date. These were then the only two recognised firms, although Cornwall had newly started that branch about this time, the late James Duncan, who was buried about the end of 1902, having left Keith and Gibb's to go there shortly before I went—from the fact that Keith often gave him the grinding of the black ink—a good deal of ink at that time was ground by hand labour—he received the cognomen of "Black John," the original of that name being a negro who used to go about the town with a donkey and home-made cart, or, rather, a box on wheels, collecting swine's meat. The engraving firms numbered five, including the two mentioned. One of the three is still in existence—Mr J. H. Stephen—the business being carried on by his son, Mr John H. Stephen. The other two were the late Mr Stevenson, No. 2 Queen Street, and Mr George Petrie,

*Mr James Murray retired from business in the spring of 1904, and was succeeded by Mr George Dickie, the shop being removed from 28 St Nicholas Street to 88 Union Street.

who was also a bird stuffer, and carried on business for many years in Huxter Row, next door to the old Police Office. There are now twenty-eight firms in the trade in Aberdeen. Some, like Mr Stephen and one or two others, devote themselves to engraving only; the others carry on all the branches of the trade.

CURIOUS STATISTICAL COMPARISONS.

Amongst the curious statistics of fifty years ago as compared with now, we had twenty-five meal-sellers, when oatmeal was the staple food, and wheat bread, so the majority of working men's families, purely a luxury to be tasted on Sundays, and in many families not even then. In a number of parts of the country they had oatmeal three times a day all the year round. We had upwards of forty midwives, and with the city twice and one-half the size we have only twenty now. There were seven candle-makers, including Ogston. There is now only that gigantic firm, who call themselves soapmakers, but, I suppose, still manufacture large quantities of candles, and where tons upon tons of material go out and come in daily. Fifty years ago a boy of fifteen did almost all the portering of the firm in the shape of carrying a stone of candles — or two stones at the out-stretch — to the customers' places of business; and the factory was a little shop, with the old-fashioned, many-paned windows that were in vogue in those times, when a square foot of glass, from the heavy duty imposed upon it, could be scarcely bought for 1s.

In those days the electric telegraph had scarcely reached us, and the railways were a novelty. Few of us had ever had a ride in a train. A great many had never seen one, especially old people, as the train had only just arrived at Ferryhill Junction — which was in the suburbs in those days — and had not long even arrived there, for, a considerable time before that, it could get no farther along than Portlethen Station. Railway passengers had to take a 'bus to that place, owing to the rock cuttings at the Cove having proved nearly insurmountable.

The railway navy was then to be seen in his pristine vigour, more especially on the monthly pay Saturday, when Aberdeen was turned into a perfect pandemonium, and, to use a Yankee expression, "they painted the whole town red." True, we had a day patrol of 12 men all told, and 48 old fogeys of night watchmen, at about 12s weekly, who would not turn out for day service when required unless they received double pay. They were of any height, from 5ft. 6in., or less, up to 6ft. 5in., and were often accompanied on their routes by a crowd of East-End boys, who whistled them on to their various beats, the standard two tunes for them being "The March of the Cameron Men" and "The Campbells are Coming," as "Caller Herrin'" was the standard tune for the Mariechal Street Theatre. Few people in Aberdeen were sorry when the railways were finished and the last of the navvies had gone, but they returned again when the Deeside and the Great North were under way, and it was several years before we got clear of them altogether. Had any serious riot occurred in those days, the police force would have no more been able to cope with it than Mrs Partington was able to stem the Atlantic with her broom. But a strong military force was always kept at the Barracks in those days, which would have soon quelled it.

JEWELLERY SHOP ROBBERIES.

The stupid custom, as I have often thought, of the watchmen calling the hour through the night had not been done away with then; and the calling of from "Pa-ast ten" to "Half-pa-ast five" was just, as it were, paying a premium to rogues and thieves to carry on, as the policeman simply gave them notice of his approach, when they, in nine cases out of ten, generally got clear away. On one occasion, someone broke into Mr Sangster, the jeweller's shop at the top of Red Lion Court in Broad Street. Getting into the shop from a door in the court, he heard the policeman coming along calling out the hours. The thief prepared for action by making ready to leave and blowing out

the light. The policeman came along, and, not suspecting anything, tried the door, which he found unlocked. Before he had time to act, the thief made a rush with the candle in his hand, and rammed it into the policeman's mouth, nearly choking him, and was off like the shot from a gun; and if I am not greatly mistaken (trusting entirely to memory) he got clear off. I believe that was the end of calling the hours.

Talking of jewellery robberies brings up the recollection of another robbery, which was the talk of town and country for many a day, and was the most skilful and mysterious piece of work of its kind ever done before or since. That was the jewellery robbery at G. Jameson and Sons, Union Street; and I suppose to this day none of the plunder has been recovered, or the thieves found out. It was supposed that it was some of the cleverest of the London "cracksmen," as the term is, who were the depredators. One Monday morning, on the doors of the shop being opened, the locks being quite intact, it was discovered that some one or more had been in the place, and that a number of safes containing (I write from memory) valuable jewellery of every kind—rings, gold and silver watches, and all manner of precious stones—had been opened, and that no one had seen or heard of anything unusual about the place from the time that the shop was shut on Saturday until it was again opened on Monday morning; but one glance round the place soon showed the "modus operandi," as it was discovered that a hole had been cut through the ceiling from the floor above, and the thieves had descended through the hole into the shop, smashed open the safes and cases, and ascended by the hole again. It was supposed that they had gone off on the Sunday south, very likely to London, and were safely landed at their journey's end before the people in Aberdeen were aware of what had happened. The room above the shop had been vacant, and taken by some one for an office or something of that kind, and the thieves had commenced operations as soon as the coast was clear—a daring plan, too successfully carried out.

THE "ROSE STREET OMNIBUS"—THE "NEW TIMES."

In the days I have been principally writing about we had no "Black Maria," but we had something else in the shape of the "Rose Street Omnibus," as Blin' Bob had it christened in a song he wrote or got written for him, and which he used to sing and sell. The vehicle was somewhat like a monster wooden box or a monster caravan on four wheels without any windows, and just a door at the back. It used to convey the prisoners between the prison in Lodge Walk and Bridewell, in Rose Street, the city prisoners being confined in Lodge Walk and the county ones in Rose Street, which fell into disuse and was demolished nearly thirty years ago. The omnibus was painted green, although its occupants were not always greenhorns. There was another conveyance in those days of vastly more importance to the boys of Aberdeen, especially the East-Enders, than the other, and whenever it appeared upon the scene it was the cause of more fun and jollity than anything I know could have produced. I have often wondered that after its disappearance no successor ever took its place, and for a time it must have been greatly missed. I refer to the "New Times," that famous vehicle. On the slightest hint of its services being required, the boys of Aberdeen would fly in their hundreds to the old Police Office in Huxter Row and off with it from the side of the door, where it used to rest. They speak of the alacrity of fire brigades. We could have given them points when harnessed to that barrow, and, oh! when we got the poor "drunk and incapable" on board, with his head and feet in the air, and his body sunk down in the centre, the tossing and the jolting he got from us, if the victim had been the least conscious, must have been excruciating—but that did not trouble us in the least. I have often wondered, in these days of ambulances and up-to-date-ness of everything, that our city policemen have not got a police ambulance for the "drunk and incapables." I am sure that the tippy are as plentiful as they were in the days of old, and an ambulance would save the policemen many a weary carry.

CHAPTER X.

REMINISCENCES OF EARLY MANHOOD.

THE CRIMEAN WAR.

In 1853 ugly rumours reached Aberdeen that the Russian Bear was to gobble up the sick Turkey, and that Britain and France (which was again an empire) would have to play their part, being bound by treaty to support Turkey, or, in other words, to "maintain the balance of power." Time went on, and gradually the booksellers' windows—Sammy Maclean's in particular—got full of war maps and lots of German lithographs of all the principal ports and fortresses in the two countries, and I can remember a picture in Maclean's window of a place I had never heard of before, but which before long was in everybody's mouth—the Fortress of Sebastopol in the Crimea. Young Aberdeen especially began to get interested. Time went on, and during that autumn the Russians invaded the Turkish principalities, but met with more than their match. Omar Pasha, the Turkish commander (whose name became a household word) defeated them at all points—notably at the siege of Silistria—and the Russians had to retire, having been baffled on every hand. Matters were in this state all the winter. The year 1854 came, and nothing was done until March, the Government being very much blamed for their procrastination. On the opening of Parliament her late Majesty proclaimed war (as also did France) against Russia, and there and then the Foot Guards were ordered off direct to Malta, followed by other troops from all branches of the service as fast as they could be shipped. The French were to send 100,000 men and the British 50,000, the difference being made up by our sending a preponderance of ships of war—a large fleet under Admiral Seymour—to the Mediterranean, and the old naval hero, Charley Napier, being ordered off to the Baltic with another big fleet. Napier sent some of his

ships to the Aland Isles, where there was a large fort at Bomersund, which he captured. That was the sum total of Charley's work. We used to visit the Barrack Hill regularly two or three times a day to see if we could ever get a look of Charley coming along the offing with the Russian fleet in tow, but invariably our experience was that of the well-known lines:—

"The Spanish Fleet thou canst not see
Because—'tis not in sight!"

All the news we got in those days was at second-hand, and the first question one asked another was—Is there any news to-day? We could not get "special editions" then, nor even ordinary editions, except Wednesday's "Journal" or Saturday's "Herald," and the price was prohibitive, so we had to take the news as we got it, or take a halfpenny read of two hours from John Black, the cobbler. The summer was wearing away, and we were wondering what the upshot of all this hanging-on meant when word arrived in this country that cholera and other sickness had broken out amongst the troops, and that they were dying in hundreds, if not in thousands, like rotten sheep. A general outry got up throughout the country, and all young and old, were now on the tenter-hooks of expectation after the long wait. It was the month of September when intelligence reached this country that the armies at last were on the move, and that the fleets and transports were en route for somewhere—some said one place, and some another—all one gloomy, murky Sunday afternoon towards the end of September the city was thrown into a state of excitement, telegrams being exhibited at the two newspaper offices that the troops had landed on the shores of the Crimea, and after a march of some miles had come upon the Russians entrenched on the heights of Alma, and utterly

defeated them, and that the Russians were in full retreat to Sebastopol. The allied army kept possession of the field and rested themselves prior to advancing, and some severe censures were directed against Lord Raglan and Marshal Canrobert, the commanders, for not immediately following up the beaten troops, when they might have entered Sebastopol instead of besieging it for twelve months at the expense of thousands of lives and many millions of money. At this time, orders were sent down by the Government to start recruiting for the Aberdeenshire Militia, and a bounty of £12 per man, besides a handsome bonus to the bringer-up of recruits, was offered; and soon all the eligible loafers and shore labourers, etc., were enrolled, and had a high old time of it for a long while, the publicans of the day reaping the principal benefit. It was some time after, however, before the regiment was embodied.

The troops, after resting some time at the Aikie, marched on and took up a position on the heights of Inkerman, overlooking Sebastopol, being joined by some thousand Sardinian troops, Victor Emmanuel having joined the allies. October brought the news of the battle of Balaklava, fought principally by cavalry — the unfortunate charge of the Light Brigade, immortalised by Tennyson. November saw the battle of Inkerman and the great storm in the Black Sea, when so many ships were wrecked, our own City of London steamship, chartered as a Government transport at that time, having a very narrow escape. The battle of the Tchernia, fought principally by the Italians, followed, and then the troops settled down to the dreariest winter's work that ever an army undertook.

RECRUITING—EMBODIMENT OF THE MILITIA.

We had a very severe winter in Aberdeen and all over the country. The snow lay on the ground for months on end. I remember there was a pile of snow in Castle Street at least 12 feet high, which took weeks to melt. Work in the country, owing partly to the storm, was in a bad way. The army was offering big bounties to recruits. The 79th Cameron Highlanders' Depot was in the barracks, and every day there were from

20 to 30 recruits from all parts of Scotland arriving in Aberdeen. In fact, the army tailors could scarcely cope with the clothes-making. Any day you could have seen 50 to 100 recruits, in their civilian clothes, getting drilled amongst the piles of snow in the square. Six or eight weeks' drill was all they got, when the new material was stripped off to the Crimea to join the regiment, which, along with the 42nd and 93rd, composed the Highland Brigade, under Sir Colin Campbell, afterwards the great Lord Clyde of the Indian Mutiny. The new year of 1856 came and went, and still the cry went on for men for the Crimea. Every available man that could be sent was shipped off—the majority never more to return—and when I state that from the Castle-gate alone, with the adjoining streets and lanes, more than 30 joined the army and were sent off, I am safe to say that half a dozen was about all that ever returned.

In February an order reached Aberdeen for the embodiment of the Militia, and then the fun began. On the 20th February the regiment mustered in Castlehill Barracks. The shore was denuded of all—or nearly all—the labourers, who to a man, if eligible, had joined; and as there was no accommodation in the barracks they had to be billeted with the various stables and inn-keepers in the city, and they started their drill in the grounds of Gordon's Hospital (now College). The amusement we East-Enders got out of the awkwardness of our quasi-military friends in their new war paint, with the scenes of the nightly piquets chasing them home at night from all over the city to their billets, was something never to be forgotten. We had no King Street Barracks then, nor for many years after, and a part of old Spring Garden Works at the corner of Loch Street and Windy Wynd was got in order for them as a barracks—the premises now occupied by William Paterson and Sons and others. The Militia remained in training until some time in 1856, when they were disembodied (by which time they could hardly be distinguished from the regulars). They were drawn up again in the following year owing to the Indian Mutiny, and sent off to do garrison duty in Dublin, where they remained eight

months. Ever since that time, with a few exceptions, they have been drawn up yearly, the calling-up in 1855 having been the first since the early years of the nineteenth century during the Napoleonic wars. Of all that were called up in 1855 I only know of four who are alive, and, strange to say, they were all drummers—Bandmaster Wood, of the A.A.V.; Mr George Forsyth, hairdresser, Gallowgate (alias "Strapper"); Jos. Gaiters; and William Fulton. Forsyth was then a butcher boy of 12 years, and the youngest "man" in the regiment.

POETRY OF THE WAR.

The Crimean War, like all other wars, was the cause of the production of a great many lyrics—good, bad, and indifferent—and the odd corners of the weekly papers were filled week by week with all sorts of patriotic effusions, the majority of them now buried in oblivion. It also produced one outstanding masterpiece which will live as long as the English language is spoken—Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade." It also gave us the songs "The Red, White, and Blue," "Just before the battle, mother," "The Boy in Blue," and many others which are not quite forgotten yet. There was one piece in particular that was published in the early spring of 1854 in some of our local papers. The piece was of considerable length, and in the light of what really took place afterwards it showed that the writer, though he may have been a good poet, was a poor prophet. It was called "A Remonstrance to the Emperor Nicholas," and the first verse ran as follows:—

Don't you know the wrong you're doing, mighty Czar,
mighty Czar,
Don't you know the wrong you're doing, mighty Czar?
France and England, one in counsel, are preparing
for the day,
And are steaming to the Baltic, ripe and ready for
the fray.
We have hearts that never fail us, so look out for
wounds and scars,
For there's Charley Napier coming and his gallant
Jack Tar.

It is known to history how the troops lay before Sebastopol for a whole year, and that the Russians, beginning to find the place untenable, sank their warships and blew up their remaining fortifications and quietly retreated one night and left the in-

vaders with the ruins. The Emperor thereafter sued for peace, and this ended the biggest blunder this country ever made. Everyone was glad when it was over. Some of our local firms made a good thing of it. The firm of D. Hogarth and Co., College Street, had the supplying of a large quantity of the preserved provisions required both by the army and the navy. The Factory Acts not having been in force at that time, they used to commence work on Monday morning at one o'clock and work on till about four o'clock on Saturday afternoon. This they did for a very long time, as many as 90 bullocks being boned in the works in one day, and the Glasgow tinsmiths and the publicans in that locality got the benefit—or at anyrate the latter did. The tinsmiths in these works at that time, for some reason or other, were almost to a man from Glasgow.

THE ENGRAVING TRADE—"BOB" HUGHES.

Before the Crimean War was quite ended, I left old Keith (owing to inadequate remuneration). I thought I would try my fortune in the north of England, where I soon got employment at treble the wages I got from Keith, and I engaged myself to serve out my apprenticeship with the best-liked and the most generous master that ever I worked with, who—though to some it may seem strange to say it—was a Jew (a much maligned race), or, rather, a Christian Hebrew, if he was of any religion at all. However, with him and elsewhere I remained until the beginning of 1861, when, during a temporary slackness, purely caused by the very severe winter of 1860-1, I paid a visit to my native hearth, intending to return again in a short time. Bob Hughes who, when I left home, had a small shop in Broad Street, had removed to the old Post Office in Netherkinggate, the site of which is now the back part of Sangster and Henderson's premises, it having been pulled down to make way for them. There was a big change in the trade in Aberdeen. Sandy Dakers had left Keith and Gibb and commenced upon himself. Shirreffs and Willie Nicol had also started upon themselves in Broad Street, at the top of Long-sons. In fact, Keith and Gibb were nearly

demanded of all the old hands. My friend John Altria had joined some perfumers' firm in London as traveller (the very job for him); and, with the exception of Jamie Donald, there was scarcely an old hand left. Cornwall was also going in for lithography. M'Nab, a south country foreman they had, had gone away, and Lewis Bain, my old friend, originally an Edinburgh man, another of the old school, as also William Hutcheon, who died some time ago, were serving their time there, with Lewie as foreman. With all this opposition around them, the old firm were not getting it all their own way. Shirreffs and Nicol, both being printers, were not in a position to give me a job, but told me to go and try Bob Hughes, who was getting a fairly good connection in the city. I was keen about getting a situation for some time at any rate before going back to the north of England. I applied for a job, and, as trade with him at the time was humming, got it, and my return south for good has not come off yet, although I have been many times in Newcastle since.

Robert Hughes was an Edinburgh engraver who settled down in Aberdeen towards the end of the forties, when he commenced business in the New Market. He afterwards took a shop in Broad Street, where he commenced lithography. Two of his first apprentices—Jim Wight, the litho. printer, and Johnny Shanks, the well-known engraver, and also a well-known violinist—left him and commenced business on their own account in St Nicholas Street about the end of the fifties, but they were not very long in business until they collapsed. Wight went south, while Johnny Shanks continued working to the trade, and secured an engagement as leader of the orchestra in the old Marischal Street Theatre under Mrs Pollock. He continued in the city for a good number of years, then betook himself to London, and died there somewhere about twenty years ago.

On engaging myself with Bob Hughes, I was treated with a great deal of suavity and politeness (of which he was a perfect master), and if there was an earthly paradise, I had just found it out. I commenced work, and for a few days everything went

on swimmingly. Amongst my shopmates was my very old friend, Hugh Imlay, now head of the firm of H. Imlay and Company, envelope manufacturers, Park Road, who was getting towards the end of his apprenticeship as an engraver; Geordie Robb, now of the Adelphi Printing Works, who was apprentice in the printing department; and, during the later period I was there, John Macmahon, photographer, Union Street, a lithographic printer at that time, who came down from Edinburgh, but ultimately abandoned lithography for photography; Willie Crum, apprentice engraver, and others. Mr Hughes himself, as all alive who knew him will remember, was a tall, pompous, good-looking man, always dressed in the fashion in a top hat and swallow-tailed coat; in fact he was the Aberdeen "Beau Brummel" of his day. He was a great Freemason, and at the time I was there, was R.W.M. of the St Nicholas Lodge; and he was then considered the finest amateur tenor singer of his day in Aberdeen. He was a man of a highly-strung, nervous, excitable temperament. When in his normal condition, a finer fellow could not be found; but when anything took place to upset him, the whole place might look out for squalls. Everybody in the place, except Hugh Imlay got the benefit. Hugh being a superior engraver to himself, he could not afford to fall out with him. No one else escaped, and after he had stormed at everyone the generally went out and calmed himself down, and invariably came back and apologised for what he had said and done.

PRINTING BANK NOTES.

Amongst other good customers Mr Hughes did work for was the North of Scotland Bank, who for a considerable time gave him the printing of their one-pound notes. He prided himself upon that order, and being rather original in his ideas, had a way of his own of advertising himself quite different from the style of the present day, and that cost him nothing whatever. I was not long in the place till one day an order came from the bank to print 10,000 one-pound notes (the usual order); other jobs,

if at all possible, had for the time to take a back seat. Preparations had to be made to commence. The blank notes, carefully counted, were sent in to be damped, and then to undergo the first printing, the word "One" in green ink on the back, when they were carefully sent back, with all spoilt impressions, to be recounted before proceeding with the printing proper. The lithographic stones upon which the notes were printed were transferred from the steel plate, which was never allowed out of sight of the bank officials when out of the bank safe. These stones were severally kept in a wooden box securely locked, and they were always lodged in the bank. Every morning they were brought to the printing office at 10 o'clock by a street porter, accompanied by a number of the bank officials, including the late Mr Francis Smith, accountant of the bank (Francie), who was a brother of Willie Smith, the tea merchant in Union Street; Mr Mollyson (who was quite a young man then), and many others I have now forgotten. They were carried down to the dungeon—as the printing place below the shop was called—and there the officials sat and received the notes out of the printer's hands as fast as they were printed; then they were counted, bundled up in hundreds, and placed in cash boxes, and there they remained till 4 o'clock, when they were replaced in the boxes and taken back to the bank until the next morning. Impressions from the stones even on the commonest paper were handed over and destroyed, and there was as much probability of purchasing a note from the bank itself as getting one in the printing of it.

I vividly remember that the first printing of notes I witnessed occurred about the commencement of the Civil War in America, when this country narrowly escaped going to war with the Northern States in connection with the affair of the Trent. Mr Hughes himself invariably attended at the note printing all day, and used to take his share in debate, and on these occasions was always on his best behaviour. On ordinary days he was very erratic, like the comets, in his appearances at business. Once perhaps in a month he would appear by 9 in the morning, and woe betide anybody that was

late. Perhaps it would be 12 next day before he showed face. He used to take a trip by rail now and again to Edinburgh, and before leaving used to say he would be back in half an hour, to keep all hands diligently at work, but one way or another we soon got sent where he was, and acted accordingly.

THE RIDING OF THE MARCHES.

In the autumn of 1861 (12th October) there was a grand turn out of citizens, for a day of conviviality and recreation, to do the "Riding of the Marches," when every conveyance and horse for miles around was called into requisition. The procession, headed by John Smith, "the warkman," carrying the town's banner, on horseback, set out on their ride round the boundaries, and amongst the others was our friend Robert, on a horse that he had either got upon loan or else commandeered for the day. The going away was grand, but the coming back was a second return from the "Battle of Harlaw." I have mentioned that Mr Hughes had rather an original method of advertising himself. When any of his customers called, perhaps to give him an order, he would apologise, and say he would endeavour to get what was wanted done at the time mentioned (although perhaps there were not two jobs in the place), but he was very busy, and then he would make a rush to the top of the dungeon stairs, and would yell out to Geordie Robb, "George, how many receipts were there printed for the Scottish Provincial?" George would reply "Five thousand." Then he would turn to the customer, and remark, "You know, sir, I have an order for 5000 receipts from the Scottish Provincial," etc., etc. The receipts lay in the place for weeks, and the same formula was gone through two or three times a day "ad nauseam" till it got to be a bye-word. Mr Hughes had no family, and his wife, "The Duohess," was a daily visitor at the shop. Hugh Imlay, on the completion of his apprenticeship, went off to London, and was employed for a number of years with the well-known firm of Maclure and Macdonald, when he returned and commenced business as an engraver and printer

in St Nicholas Street—a business which he carried on for a number of years, until, in conjunction with his brother John, he commenced an envelope manufactory on a small scale, the whole of the machinery being of John's invention. The business year by year has increased, and it is still flourishing. His brother John, to the regret of everyone who knew him, died ten years ago.

My old friend George Robb (Geordie), on the completion of his apprenticeship as a printer, wended his way to the Irish capital, and, after a few years' sojourn, found his way back to his native place, and started in business, in a very small way in Correction Wynd, and gradually raised a capital business, in which he is still going ahead. John Macmahon, the other printer, came through to Hughes from Edinburgh as a turnover apprentice. He did not remain very long with Bob, went away south again some time after I left, relinquished lithography for photography, got married to an Aberdeen lady, came back some years after, and settled down as a photographer in Aberdeen, where he still remains. Mr Hughes ultimately went back to a shop in Broad Street, where he died a great number of years ago—how many I cannot just recollect; but his ohm Brodie and he died about the same time, and that was not very long after Brodie's statue of the Queen was erected. Mrs Hughes carried on the business for some time after that, but it gradually dwindled away, and she herself, being left a lonely woman with scarcely a relation in the world, was not very long in following her husband to the grave.

Some time in the spring of 1862 the firm of Wight and Shanks (two of Hughes' old apprentices) came to grief, and John Duffus, the bookseller (an old acquaintance of my own when we were boys), as principal creditor, took over the business, and removed the plant from St Nicholas Street, where it was, to a room near his house in Exchange Court, Union Street. One day Mr Duffus asked me if I would accept a situation. I gladly jumped at it, and told Hughes I was leaving. He was busy at the time, and went nearly mad with rage at the thought that a friend of his own would take

away any of his employees. However, I went, and got on very well.

JOHN DUFFUS.

John Duffus, a son of James Duffus, confectioner (and a brother of Baillie Alexander Duffus), served his apprenticeship with George Davidson, bookseller, 1 King Street. This gentleman was the author of "The Legend of St Swithin," and a brother of Charles Davidson, the druggist, of Davidson and Kay. It was during Duffus's apprenticeship that I got acquainted with him. After that, he went to London, where he was a number of years with Partridge and Co., the well-known publishers of the "British Workman" and similar works. He got married there, came back to his native place, and commenced business as bookseller and stationer in Union Buildings in the shop now occupied by the Gas Stove Department. He, as already stated, then commenced lithography on a small scale. Photography, in the shape of cartes-de-visite, began to be greatly in vogue, and Duffus, being the first dealer in photographic papers, soon got a big connection amongst the photographers of the north, especially Mr G. W. Wilson, the pioneer of that branch—an order from Wilson for 50,000 mounts printed was nothing in those days, and there were orders from other photographers in proportion. The workshop was in Exchange Court (old Charley Cattanach, who made all the volunteer clothing at that time, being Duffus's nearest neighbour). The house was remodelled a few years ago, and the court taken away; it is now part of the premises of ex-Baillie Henderson, 35 Union Street. John Duffus soon went in for typography as well, and speedily had a big staff of typos, including John Mason as overseer, John Herd, James Tait, the father of the trade in the city, who at over 80 was able to do his day's work as well as the best of them (Mr Tait, hardware merchant, late of Upperkirkgate, and now of Gallowgate, was his son). Being of rather a go-ahead disposition, Duffus started a newspaper, "The Aberdeen Guardian," with the late William Webster as editor. This had an ephemeral existence;

as also had an evening paper, the first attempted in Aberdeen, the "North Star."

THE "SATURDAY POST."

About the beginning of the sixties, Mr James Smith, the eldest son of Lewis Smith, and the father of the present minister of St George's-in-the-West, opened a printing office in A. Pirie and Sons' old envelope manufactory in the Shiprow, and started a weekly newspaper under the editorship of John Spark, called the "Aberdeen Saturday Post." The initial letters of the title very aptly described the nature of its contents—the "A.S.P." John lashed out, right and left, at everything that did not suit his views. At that time, a great wave of religious revival was passing over the whole north of Scotland, more especially the fishing towns and villages, and Aberdeen had its share in the work. Great numbers of Evangelicals were down in the north—Grattan-Guinness, Brownlow North, Richard Weaver, etc., etc.; and open-air meetings were held in Castle Street and elsewhere, including Rev. George Campbell's church—the Free North—every evening of the week. Mr Campbell and Richard Weaver, from some cause or other, were John's pet aversions; and he was not content with lashing them in the paper, but he used to tackle them publicly in the streets. He commonly came off second-best, and always retreated—even although defeated—quite undismayed. The "A.S.P." soon died a natural death. Although John is still to the fore, he seems to have lost all the fire and spirit with which he was imbued in his younger days, and I do not think we have had a "Chameleon" since the last races were held on the Links nearly twenty years ago. I suppose we have seen the last of them. John Duffus, after the failure of the two newspapers, never attempted any more.

AMATEUR SINGERS.

During the early years of the sixties in Aberdeen, a perfect epidemic of concert-giving broke out in the city (amateur, I mean). The Infirmary funds at that time

were, as they have almost always been since, in a very unsatisfactory condition. The different trades in Aberdeen (with an alacrity that those old enough to remember forty years ago can verify) came to the front, and each trade, week after week, took the Music Hall for the Saturday night, collected all their local talent (who supplied their services gratis), and, having comparatively little expenditure, beyond the hall rent, were enabled to hand over from £20 to as high as nearly £50 for an evening's performance, and that in the face of two regular music halls being run at the same time—the Mechanics' Hall (now the Bon-Accord Hotel) by Willie Gray, and the Bon-Accord (later the Song School) by the Brothers Macleod, of wax work fame. We had a class of songs sung and produced in those days superior to anything produced at any period before or since. To account for the popularity of the songs I refer to, the American War produced some of the finest war lyrics ever penned. The original Christy Minstrels introduced some of the finest songs and ballads ever produced, and, in addition, we had an English song writer and singer of motto songs—Harry Clifton—who wrote the only sensible comic songs I ever remember, and every song was a sermon. One of the best amateurs we had in Aberdeen is my old friend and chum in those days, Jamie Smith, now "mine host" of the Waverley Hotel, Guild Street; and had he joined the profession in his young days, he would have held his own with the best of them. Nothing in the singing line, from the "Highland Sergeant" to Stead's "Perfect Cure" came wrong to Jamie. Amongst my own particular set who are still alive were Jack Dickson, painter, now foreman of that department with Messrs Garvie (a real East-End); an old friend, still a busy man (whom I shall not name), and the late Jack Rutherford, carver (who died a few years ago)—the two finest amateur "minstrels" in the city; Knox, the cabinet-maker; and one or two others. As duettists, there was a whole troupe. Their leader was the well-known James Flynn, the confectioner—one of the finest all-round stage men ever Aberdeen produced, who could

have secured a regular engagement in the profession at any time he wished. The troupe's headquarters for practice were alternately "Mother McQuag's" in Castle Street, and the "Warkman's Tavern" in the Shiprow.

JAMES STEVENSON—R. S. HOUSTON, ETC.

After I had been with John Duffus some four or five years, things were getting to be rather slack in the litho. line, he going in more for pushing the type branch of the business. Mr James Stevenson advertised for a litho. Intending to return to John Duffus when things got brisker, I applied for the situation, and got it. As a contrast to Bob Hughes, who was the most conceited man I ever wrought for, James Stevenson was the proudest man, but a perfect gentleman. James was a good engraver, and did a very select trade, being connected with some business families in Aberdeen. He had two journeymen engravers at that time with him, besides one or two apprentices—Robert S. Houston and Johnny Shanks; and in the printing department William McMillan, known to the whole trade as "The Doctor"—one of the last of the old school of copper-plate printers; and William Petrie, best known as "Auld Wully Paatrie." "Wully," when I knew him, was a pretty old man, and could only, and did only, print visiting cards from the plate, or, as he expressed it, "printed cairdies from the plattie." He was one of the quaintest old men I ever came across, and, as the "Doctor" had the oversight of the printing, and "Wully" was getting old, he was for ever running after him to keep him right, and making pretence of lecturing him, which used to frighten the poor old man into fits almost. The "Doctor" (who received that appellation from a namesake of his own who was a mesmerist or ventriloquist, or something of the sort, who used to give performances, and dubbed himself "Doctor") was a native of Edinburgh, and had served his time with the celebrated firm of Lizars and Company, engravers and copper-plate printers, when lithography was in its earliest crude state. He was the

greatest spinner of yarns (not in a mendacious sense) I ever encountered—as any old lithographer in Aberdeen could testify. In the workshop, from the time he started in the morning till the close of the day, one was kept laughing. The "Doctor" was for a good number of years with Mr Stevenson, and died about the same time as that gentleman.

At the time I went to Mr Stevenson's, Mr R. S. Houston, engraver, and Johnnie Shanks were there. Mr Houston was a junior partner with Mr Stevenson, and had frequently to take full charge. About twelve months after I was in the place, Houston left to start upon himself in Hughes' old shop in the Netherkirkgate, taking Johnnie Shanks and myself along with him, leaving the "Doctor" alone in his glory with nobody to yarn to but old Willie Petrie. Bob Houston was a man built upon quite different lines from Hughes, being of a very quiet, even disposition. He was also a great Freemason, and, strange to say, when I was with him was also W.M. of the St Nicholas Lodge—the very same position in the same lodge Hughes held when he was in the same shop. He was a deacon in Rev. Andrew Dickie's church, and, on the whole, a very decent fellow. About 18 months after he went into business, he unfortunately met with a cab accident, from which he never recovered, leaving a wife and a young family. One of his sons, who at that time was a little more than about six years old, entered Gordon's Hospital and received his education there. He afterwards entered the service of Messrs Anderson and Rae, advocates, where he remained for about 15 years, and during that time he displayed poetical and literary faculties of no mean order. The first volumes of the "Northern Figaro," as also other papers, contain a goodly number of his contributions. He was also the editor of a clever local pictorial venture, which had a very brief existence, "Hilloa!" and he was a clever amateur photographer as well. He left Aberdeen for Natal about 14 years ago, and died within a year of his landing. On Houston's death, Sandy Dakers, who had a small establishment in George Street,

bought over the business, where he remained a few years, then removed to Baillie Donald's old shop in Netherkirkgate, where he remained until he had to quit for the rebuilding of the premises. He then removed to his present premises, "Old Savings Bank," Guestrow. Mr M'Milhan, jun., engraver, Market Street, a son of the "Doctor," and the late Jack Keith, who died in Mr W. Milne Gibson's service about six years ago, and who in former years was in business on his own account, were the whole of the old school of lithos. in addition to the names I have already mentioned, with the exception of Andrew Paton in Avery's, who commenced his litho. career with John Duffus, and James Wishart, who has been all his days in that establishment, and the late Mr David Gullan, a native of Fife, who was in Aberdeen a great many years. Having succeeded the late Mr Thomas Menzies at the top of Marischal Street as bookseller and stationer, he also added lithography, his own trade, and ultimately removed to Market Street.

The old firm of Keith and Gibb were for a long number of years in business after I left them, and on the retirement of Mr Keith, one of the employees, who served his time there, was adopted by Mr Gibb as junior partner—Jamie Hay, better known as "Lord Hay," who eventually went abroad. At Mr Gibb's death the business fell into the hands of his son, Andrew Gibb, jun., who was following closely in the footsteps of his father as a designer and draughtsman, when death overtook him eleven years ago at the early age of 27 years. G. and W. Fraser, Gaelic Lane, then took the business over, and carried it on at the old premises, but ultimately the plant was removed to their present premises. It occurs to me that the father of Mr John Stephen, the engraver, was the means of bringing Bob Hughes to Aberdeen, where he served his time with Mr Stephen, senior. Great numbers of Edinburgh copper-plate printers were brought to Aberdeen at one time or other by him, as, before the fifties or the end of the forties, when lithography made its appearance here, it was the only way that the work could be done. What

Keith and Gibb's establishment was for training lithographers, J. H. Stephen's and his son John's was for engravers; and there have been ten times as many engravers through that firm's hands alone than all the rest of the establishments put together.

EARLY CO-OPERATION IN ABERDEEN.

I referred to leaving a co-operative store at Footdee to commence lithography. In turning up any encyclopaedia, it will be found mentioned that the first co-operative store in Britain was the Rochdale Pioneers, established in 1843 with a membership of 28, in £1 shares. But from a contract of co-partnership before me (printed at the "Herald" Office by George Cornwall in 1833), in which the Broadford Co-operatives undertake to sell and establish a trade in meal, groceries, and spirits "for the accommodation of the parties and others who may choose to deal with them," it would appear that Aberdeen was a decade ahead of Rochdale. There were to be only 150 shareholders, male and female, with a capital of £3000, which made every share of the value of £20. The surplus profits were to be used up for buying bank shares and building houses, and each member was allowed so much credit in proportion to the amount of capital invested. I also possess a reprint of the co-partnership (printed by G. Mackay, printer, 61 Broad Street, in 1842), and to my certain knowledge the company was in existence a number of years after that time. The shop was situated in George Street, three or four doors south of Charles Street, now occupied as a baker's shop; and there was also a Broadford co-operative grocery shop at 280 George Street, which shows that Aberdeen, even at that time, was not very far back.

A few years after, another co-operative company was formed in Aberdeen—The Aberdeen Meal and Provision Society. The chairman of the company for a long time was Mr George Mitchell, spirit dealer, 2 George Street (father of the late Mr Charles Mitchell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne), whose residence at that time, as it was for many years, was in Peacock's Close, where I was a daily

visitor, it being quite close to my own birth-place. I was a playmate of Mr Mitchell's second son, Sandy Mitchell, who was about my own age. I have only a faint recollection of sometimes coming across Mr Charles Mitchell, who was considerably older than myself, and who about the time I refer to left Aberdeen for Tyneside. George Petrie, engraver and bird stuffer, next door to the old Police Office, lived in the same house, the Mitchell family and he occupying the whole house between them. The Aberdeen Meal and Provision Society's shop was No. 7 George Street, in the old low buildings that were pulled down about sixteen years ago to make way for the large block where Mr Barron's ironmongery shop is now; and it was carried on until shortly before the Northern Co-operative Company was

founded. I do not exactly remember whether the share capital was as high as that of the Broadford Co-operative's or not, but they confined themselves to simply selling provisions. The other co-operative company that I was connected with was situated in a different part of the town altogether from the ones I have already mentioned. It was called the Footdee Saving Association, and was situated down at Waterloo Quay, directly opposite where the London steamers' berths are, in Mortimer's Pend; and, with a few exceptions, the shareholders either lived or worked at Footdee or Old Torry. The society was formed about the middle of the forties, and its shareholders were nearly all employed in connection with shipbuilding.

CHAPTER XI.

FOOTDEE AND ITS FOLK.

OLD-TIME PUBLIC-HOUSES.

Footdee has altered in one important respect from what obtained fifty years ago, and that is in the number of places for selling intoxicating drink. Where there is now only one licensed house on Waterloo Quay, fifty years ago there were no fewer than five, and on going round the corner from the London Shipping Company's office there were other three. They say that the workers at Footdee of those days were a far soberer lot than the present race of workers. The first place you came to was "Jolly John Lyons, The London Tavern." John was a burly Englishman, who originally hailed from Liverpool, and was employed daily as foreman boiler-maker at Messrs Abernethy's Foundry at Craiglug; and on the other side of the pend was old John Duffus, late ironfounder's shop, which was carried on as a ship chandlery, but Jamie Cumming, who was manager and partner, and who only died a short time ago, would have sold you a gill of whisky to be drunk either off or on the

premises as openly and readily as he would have sold a speaking trumpet to a ship captain. Drink-selling then, when you got a licence, was a go-as-you-please business. If you wished to sell liquor pure and simple, the classification was you were a vintner; if you aspired to a higher class of business, and could let off a bed or two, you were classed as an innkeeper; and the other class was grocer and spirit merchant. As I have said, you could sell whatever you liked, or nothing, as you pleased, along with the whisky, and in every ordinary grocer's shop there were generally two or three boxes fitted up, where the customers could sit and enjoy themselves for a whole month on end if the proprietor thought fit to wait upon them; and it was a joke in those days that great numbers of the public-houses never opened, for the simple reason that they were never shut. There was no fear of police interference, as there were scarcely any police.

About two doors below Johnny Duffus's shop, in a little house that stood back from

the street, just at the entrance to the London Company's cattle sheds, was another public-house kept by Mrs Anderson (Blocky Anderson's mother). It was a very quiet house, and did a very select trade. A few yards farther down, just before you come to the London Company's office, was yet another public-house. I remember one tenant of that house was an old sawyer, named James M'Kay, who worked in Hall's yard and was as Highland as a peat. The fifth public-house was up in the direction of Middlethird, and was kept by another well-known man in Footdee, Peter Stewart, who was for long a harbour employee. On turning the corner from the London Company's office into Wellington Street, you came upon another public-house kept by about the best-known man in Footdee, and most ingenious, poor Jamie Bate. He had the misfortune to have lost one of his legs from some cause or other prior to my day, but he was the finest maker of model ships I ever saw, and as his power of locomotion from the loss of his leg was limited, Jamie used to indulge largely in boat sailing, and to see him sailing a boat in a breeze of wind, with no one else on board, was indeed a sight. He had many ups and downs through life, and for a number of years, after my removal from Footdee, I lost sight of him, but in later years, when the world had not been very kind to him in the meanwhile, he became proprietor of the Netherkirkgate Shooting Gallery, which was opposite the Wallace Tower. During his tenancy there, he had the further misfortune to shoot off his other leg; yet after that second physical misfortune Jamie remained as cheerful as ever, always busy with some model or other, and great numbers of his old friends used to call and patronise him for "auld lang syne." When death overtook him at last, I believe he was still keeping the gallery—a complete wreck of a man who, in his day, had been above the average of mankind in physical development. Almost next door was another public-house, kept by another well-known woman, Mrs Ann Nicol, better known as "Blin' Annie Nicol"; and about three doors farther

along was a third house, kept by Widow Sword, as she designated herself, better known in Footdee as Lucky Sword. Towards the other end of the street, at the corner of York Street, was a fourth house, kept by Mrs Watt. For some reason or other, especially in Footdee, it was nearly all women who kept public-houses at that time. On going along to the corner of York Place and St Clement Street was Willie Cormack's shop (Highland Willie), in contra-distinction to another Willie Cormack further along. Then you turned down York Street and came to Miss Leslie's grocery, where the drink was sold, next door to John Skinner's boat-building yard (ex-Councillor Skinner's father). Right across the street was Lucky Still's, farther along was Lucky Anderson's, and still farther along was Jane Smith's, the Pilots' Tavern. Still farther was the Steam Yacht Inn on Pocra Pier, and the series culminated a little farther on with the other Willie Cormack's Ferry Boat Tavern. I have often wondered where the customers came from to keep all those places going. There were numbers of strangers arriving from the north and south daily with the Leith boats, and also a fair amount of traffic to Torry, and our friends in the Fishers' Square at that time had not come under that great religious revival which, a few years after the time referred to, wrought such changes on that locality.

Jinsie Smith, otherwise Jane, the keeper of the Pilots' Tavern, was one of the old school, who had some rather original ideas of her own with regard as to how a public-house should be conducted. These would scarcely be approved by landlords of the present day. Having a rather select class of customers, a good deal was left to their own discretion in helping themselves to what they required. Jinsie used to jump out of bed every morning at half-past five, and having no fear of "Forbes M'Kenzie" before her eyes at that time (his Act did not make its appearance till four or five years later), went and unlocked her front door, and coolly went back to bed, her bedroom being within hearing distance of the bar. There being often merry meetings at

her house the night before, there were generally a few of her customers who, having imbibed not wisely but too well, were ready for a hair of the dog that bit them the previous night. As six o'clock approached, Jinsie was on the alert. The door would open, and on the customer entering Jinsie would cry, "Is that you, Jamie Cumming?" The voice would reply, "Ay, Jinsie, it's me." "Oh, weel," Jinsie would reply, "there's a bottle and glass in such a place; help yourself." Jamie would just take his "noggin" and depart to his work at Walter Hood's yard. Then another made his appearance, when the same formula was gone through. "Is that you, Bob Penn?"—or John Clouston, as the case might be. These, being staunch props of the house, just took their "morning" and departed, she knowing every frequenter by his voice. On the appearance of anyone with an unfamiliar voice, Jinsie jumped from bed, and, huddling on some clothes, soon made her appearance and supplied the individual with whatever he wanted, and on his departure went back to her bed for an hour or two longer.

FISHING AND FISHCURING.

Prior to the days of trawling, a number of our local fishermen who owned herring boats used, in the spring of the year, to get them into the water prior to the autumn herring fishing, and commence the great line fishing. Before the 4th of June—then our removing term—the housewives, especially those going to remove, laid in a stock of flitting skate. One, about as large as a man would be inclined to carry, could have been had from 6d to 9d; but it cannot now be had from a fishmonger under 4d a lb. We used to have three or four herring boats fishing from the port, which used to land their fish at the Dock Gates. The herring were purchased principally for the purpose of being converted into red herring. At that time there was a far greater demand for these than there is now, and there was an establishment for smoking them at the corner of Garvock Street and Canal Terrace, and the other one was at

Pocra Pier. If I am not much mistaken, that was the whole extent of fishcuring in the city.

One autumn, the fishing seemed as if it was to wind up in rather a mournful manner, from the fact of the non-arrival of two of the three or four local boats owned by well-known individuals. Having been some days missing after a heavy gale of wind, everybody gave them up for lost. One of the boats was owned and skippered by Jack Gall, a plumber to trade, but who preferred the sea, and who to the present day can manage a boat with the best fisherman on the coast. However, in about four or five days after their departure, when everyone had given them up for lost, Jack sailed up the harbour as if nothing was the matter, and when asked where he had been, he coolly replied that as his nets were in the sea when the gale came, and as he was not able to haul them, and he could not afford to lose them, he just thought it best to hang by them during the gale, and there he remained until it abated, when he was able to haul them and come ashore. I remember Gall's boat was the first herring boat I ever saw with a screw propeller. At that time, the boats were only about half the size of the large full-decked boats we have now. Jack ultimately for some reason—likely the want of success—gave up that branch of the business, but he still goes to sea in a small yawl, generally by himself, to the hand-lines, and in the mackerel season Jack can have a few score any morning before breakfast time.

In those days Aberdeen had its share in that very speculative trade, now defunct in the city, the whale fishing. At that time we had three vessels every year engaged in it, the Flamingo, the Pacific, and the St Andrew. The four British ports that the business was carried on from were Aberdeen, Dundee, Peterhead, and Hull, with now and again one or two from Newcastle and some other ports. The Aberdeen vessels invariably sailed from and landed at Pocra Jetty, and at that time they were laid up every winter season at the Poyner-nook, just at the south end of the Joint Station. Pocra Jetty about the month of

October and through the winter had, more especially if there had been a good fishing (which sometimes happened), a pretty strong perfume, not exactly of "Araby the Blest," more especially when the boilyard was fairly started. The boilyard was situated in close proximity to where the vessels landed, and there the blubber was turned into the whale oil of commerce, for which there was always a big demand, although the gas was making way then. Paraffin and the many oils so much used now-a-days were then scarcely heard of, and candles and "eely lamps" were the order of the day amongst the community.

A nephew of "Nosey" Martin (already mentioned) was George Martin, a well-known whaling Peterhead captain, who settled in Aberdeen, and was in command of the Flamingo whaler. She was fairly successful for a number of years, until the scarcity of whales drove her into another trade. The Flamingo, which belonged to the late Provost Nicol, on her arrival from Davis Straits, was not sent to the head of the harbour like the other two whalers, but got refurbished, and was sent away to some foreign port, not perhaps very far away, for a cargo, and so went on until the spring arrived, when it was about time to start again for the far north.

TRAWLING (FIFTY YEARS AGO.

In connection with the trawl fishing industry, which has done so much for Aberdeen and Torry during the last 20 or 25 years, I am sometimes told that "Messrs So-and-So" or "Mr Such-and-Such" founded the industry in Aberdeen. But I am old enough to remember perfectly that we had the trawling industry more than fifty years ago, on a small scale; and although the first trawlers had not steam power, I often wonder, from the results obtained then, that the industry was not persevered with at that time. After a short trial, however, it was given up for some reason altogether, and I never remember of anything having been attempted between the fifties and the eighties. There may have been trawlers in Aberdeen

before the time I refer to, but in 1850 a well-known citizen of Aberdeen, Tom Laurie, the tea merchant in Marischal Street, equipped a small sloop or a smack (the rig being immaterial) called the Rob Roy, to start the trawl fishing in Aberdeen. If I am not greatly mistaken a small joint stock company was formed, it being long before the days of limited liability companies, and she went to sea. Whether the net was anything like what is used now I do not know, but that it could catch fish I well remember—in what proportion to what is caught now I am not prepared to say, as I know nothing whatever practically about the business; but in one week—and during the week the weather was far from good—she came in three times with hauls of turbot, soles, and what we used to call silver flukes, and I remember in one of the three trips she discharged three box-cart loads. Now, whether it was a paying cargo or not I am not prepared to say, as for one thing fish was cheap as well as good in those days, when you could see a penny haddock. Another thing that would militate against its success was that there was no outlet, as at that time the railway had not reached Aberdeen, and I know the Aberdonians of those days would not have paid 8s to 10s a stone for halibut, and 14s a stone or thereby for turbot. Any poor person could have got a large turbot head lying about the old Fish Market for nothing, or at the outside for a penny, and as much fish could have been bought in the market for about twopence as would have well dined six persons.

A "FITTIE LOON"—"SANDY" CHAPMAN.

A well-known "Fittie Loon" was Alexander Chapman, tailor—Sandy, as he was known to all his large clientele of friends and customers. Sandy's father was a carpenter who worked in Hood's yard, and his two brothers—Robert and William—were both carpenters. Sandy, when quite a boy, was playing in the house at "Blind Man's Buff," or, as it was commonly called in those days, "glim-glam," when he gave his foot a twist. Little notice was taken of

the accident at the time, but the foot gradually got worse, complications ensued, and the upshot was that he was threatened with the loss of a leg, which ultimately contracted at the knee joint, and he had to use a crutch for ever afterwards. Whatever ambitions he might have had as to his avocation in life—and doubtless his aims were high—were practically destroyed, and he betook himself to the tailoring profession, and learned the business with the firm of Simpson and Whyte, in Union Buildings. I can remember him from his boyhood days as one of the neatest-dressed men I ever saw—a trait he inherited from his mother, who was a very particular woman. Sandy's father having died when he was quite young, the mother betook herself to laundry work, at which she was said to be an adept. Sandy's admirable oiled locks, his swallow-tailed coat, and his frilled shirt front, without any neck-tie (he always wore 18-in. fronts for appearance, although 14-in. was his size), and the invariable flower in the buttonhole, if one was to be had, gave him a very distinguished appearance.

Shortly after the completion of his apprenticeship, his friend, Mr Findlay, of the firm of Steele and Co., hatters, opened a tailor and clothier's shop in connection with their hat trade, and engaged Sandy to look after it with a view to a partnership at some future period—an arrangement never carried out, for, on Mr Findlay's death, which occurred very suddenly a good few years afterwards, Mr Chapman had to relinquish the business. During the years he conducted the business, his shop was the happy hunting ground of all the politicians of the district; and it was said that candidatures were frequently arranged, and even magistrates appointed, in Sandy's shop. It was a treat to hear Sandy, who was a Radical out and out, discussing the topics of the day with some old Conservative. Sandy could hold his own, and never lost his temper. Numbers of the old wives of Fittie, when they had a letter to write, or an appeal to make, wended their way to his shop and got it done on the spot. Sandy's shop was also a great meeting-place for seafaring people, principally masters and mates of vessels, who had

come off long voyages, and who had come down from London or any of the other large seaports to see their friends, great numbers of them being old Footdee boys, who had not forgotten their old cronies. If one wanted any news about friends at sea, and the news could not be got at the "Aberdeen Lloyd's"—Chapman's shop—it could scarcely be got elsewhere. Chapman was a good judge of oil paintings, and it was said he was the means of helping one or two struggling young artists on their way to success. Besides, he was a bit of an antiquarian and natural history collector, and a gatherer of curios of every description, and his sailor friends were in the way of bringing him numbers of these things from every quarter of the globe. At Mr Findlay's death, which was sudden, as already mentioned, the agreement as to the partnership being only verbal, Mr Chapman had to betake himself elsewhere, and opened a tobacconist's shop in Marischal Street, where he continued for a considerable time, till failing health compelled him to give it up, and death at last overtook him some eight or nine years ago.

THE WRECK OF THE "DUKE OF SUTHERLAND."

A brief reference has been made to the wreck of "The Duke of Sutherland" on 1st April, 1853. This steamer, which belonged to the London Company, and was commanded by Captain Edward Howling, left London on the Wednesday with her usual cargo of goods and passengers, and reached the bay here about her usual time on Friday, about dinner time, the weather being rough. She attempted to make the harbour as usual, there being a tremendous fresh in the river running out from rain or melted snow, which, combined with the sea running in, prevented the vessel from answering her helm, and drove her athwart the very point of the North Pier, where she immediately stuck fast, and commenced to break up. The rocket apparatus was at once set to work, and the lifeboat was manned on this occasion by a crew of 12 pilots, who exerted themselves to the utmost to save life and property. The steamer, when it left London, had a

crew, all told, of 30 men and women, including stewardesses, as also 26 passengers, a goodly number of whom were ladies, the total number aboard being 55. One of our Aberdeen doctors of that time, who happened to be near the spot when the catastrophe occurred, Dr Sutherland, rendered yeoman service in the working of the rocket apparatus, and a number of those saved owed their lives to his exertions. The ship, as already said, commenced to break up immediately after she struck, and long before night came on the sea beach was strewn with the most heterogeneous mass of goods. There were drapery goods of every description, including parasols galore for the summer season—one draper alone lost £750 worth, and another £250—provisions of every description, including a large quantity of cheeses, oranges, etc., etc.; and upon the principle of "What's found's free," everybody started to appropriate anything that suited them. The military were called out to form a cordon along the beach, and fires were lighted, but in spite of every precaution great quantities of articles were taken away. Numbers of them were hidden in the sandbanks all along the shore, and in many cases when the thieves proceeded to disinter the goods, they could not identify the hiding places, and bundles of decayed ribbons and umbrellas and parasol frames were found among the sand years afterwards.

Amongst those lost were the captain and the second mate, Peter Ligertwood, who was related to Captain Howling by marriage, and the second mate's death was the more deeply deplored from the fact that he was saved in the first place from the steamer, and made one of a crew of five who manned a salmon coble in the harbour, and proceeded down to the wreck to render what assistance they could, when the coble was struck by a sea, upset, and all the five were drowned. There were eleven drowned from the steamer, which, with the five from the coble, made sixteen in all. One lady passenger, Miss Bremner, was coming to Aberdeen to get married, and had her bride's cake and marriage trousseau

on board with her. She was one of the lost. Another was a man Burness, who had been at the Australian gold diggings, and had all but reached his destination. A belt with nearly £50 was found upon him when the body was recovered. A number of seamen came down from London to join a new vessel that was built here. Some of them were drowned, and amongst them was a handsome young fellow. No one knew anything about who he was or where he came from, and I am not aware whether the mystery is cleared up to this day. However, he was buried with all due respect. Great numbers attended under the circumstances to show their sympathy. The principal steward, Duncan Christie, after he got ashore himself, wrought hard to help to save his shipmates, as did the crew of the lifeboat. It was a considerable time before the bodies were all found. The body of one sailor, who was lost in the coble, was not recovered for three months, having been held down during that time by some of the machinery.

THE CASTLEGATE IN THE OLDEN DAYS.

About the time of Queen Victoria's marriage in 1840, Castle Street was a very different looking place from what it is now, in many respects. For one thing, it was far from level; that was only accomplished afterwards. We had the "Mannie o' the Well" near where the door of the Salvation Army Barracks now is. The Cross then was opposite the top of Marischal Street, where it once did service as a post office, and later as a mail coach office, and the coaches used to start from the door. We had no Duke of Gordon monument then; in fact, the Duke was not very long dead, and in connection with that same statue there was more controversy than about almost anything that ever happened. As to where it was to be placed, some suggested even the Links, others Gordon's Hospital, others Marischal College, King Street, etc., etc., but as the North of Scotland Bank building was then nearing completion a committee of experts was appointed to decide on a site, including our townsman, Mr James

Giles, R.S.A., and the leading architects of the city. A wooden model of the statue was erected on the various sites suggested, and the experts then came to the unanimous finding that the only fit position for it was where it now stands; and as the bank with its Corinthian pillars was nearing completion, it was resolved to level and pave Castle Street, remove the Cross to its present form and position, and erect the Duke where he now is—a fitting memorial not only of the Duke himself, but of the men who out it—the pioneers of the granite polishing industry—Messrs Macdonald and Leslie.

In referring to the Cross and mail coaches, I can remember that, on high occasions, the decorating of the mail coaches was sometimes gorgeous, and it was said that on the occasion of the Queen's marriage the coaches were really grand. Isaac Machray had gone to the expense of not only covering the Edinburgh mail coach with flowers and evergreens, but he had it running that day with no fewer than six horses in splendid new harness. In connection with the Queen's marriage there was something unusual, too, at the Town Council banquet, at which the Provost, James Blaikie (whose statue stands in the vestibule of the town hall) presided, when a confectionery cake 8 feet high, in the shape of a Chinese pagoda, and weighing some 70 or 80 lbs., was demolished.

In my schoolboy days there were one or two of my class-fellows whose fathers belonged to the weaving fraternity, and who lived in the regions of Jack's Brae, Short Loanings, and Leadside, and I used to get an irritation sometimes to call up for some thrums for "dragon"-flying purposes. Although that district will undoubtedly undergo a clear-out before many years, yet there is little or no change in parts of it. They are identically the same as they were sixty years ago, when I first knew it. But undeniably the Old Castlegate was the scene of more funny incidents than all the other streets put together. Every morning as I used to wend my way to school, as regularly as the day came, the two town drummers — David Bannerman and James

Badenoch — would be found together in Union Street at the Town House door ready to set away to their day's work, and waiting to see if there were any more intimations from any new advertiser. The drummers started daily on their rounds at 10 o'clock from the top of the Castlegate. One commenced at Baillie George Brown's door, and then proceeded westward; the other at the top of Peacock's Close and went eastward—both keeping the public fully aware of what was going on.

The principal items were sales at the Cross, which were of everyday occurrence year in and year out. We had not the S.P.O.A. under weigh then. I remember once a sale of a sand cadger's horse or shelt, which, had these societies been in existence, would have never taken place. Previous to the sale of the horse the auctioneer disposed of a number of household articles, which, although of no very great value, had very nearly cleaned out the pockets of the spectators. They were then surprised by being told that he would wind up the sale by disposing of the horse, and for a considerable time he waited for a bid, which no one seemed inclined to give. Ultimately, losing his patience and his temper altogether, he said the animal must be disposed of. "I cannot afford to hang it on any longer," he exclaimed; "bid me what you please." Nobody seemed to want the animal, and, on looking around him, he espied a likely party fumbling in his pockets, who probably was meditating the starting of a sand cadging trade. He shouted—"Hugh, min, there's a beast that wid suit you to a hair; gie me an offer for't." Hugh looked the animal all over, and, thinking there must be something radically wrong with it from the way in which it was hanging on the auctioneer's hands, he made a bold bid for it at the top of his voice, "I'll gie you a shilling for't." Someone in the crowd thought he would be safe, and offered a penny more. Hugh, determined not to be done, and having likely made a mental calculation of what he was going to do with it, and seeming to know the real value of the animal, then said, "I don't care yet; I will give you fourteenpence," and immediately it was

knocked down to him at that money. A cluster of us boys got round Hugh to see how he was going to shape with the animal, when another individual appeared who was just too late for the sale, and, knowing the position of matters, he very generously offered to take the animal off Hugh's hands, giving him eightpence. But Hugh, after examining the animal all over to see what sort of a bargain he had really made, replied, "Na; I think I'll keep him; an' I'm think' if the beastie had a while o' the girse, I'll maybe get a better market for him." Hugh trudged away with his fourpence-worth dragging behind him, with a request from the boys that the best thing he could do would be to step inside the animal. We often looked again for the animal, but we never saw it in a sand cart, and it was in such a condition at that time that probably it never reached its destination.

As I have already said, the public life of Aberdeen sixty years ago was nearly all centred in Castle Street and the adjacent streets. I have been familiar with the faces of provosts and baillies since ever I can remember, and it never seemed to me that they were any better or worse than other men—as, for instance, the late Provost Jamieson who was for many years a grocer at 2 King Street, and whose shop I was sent to daily for years in going messages to my mother, and who always

spoke as frankly and kindly as any other grocer would have done. I found it impossible from my point of view to remove him from his counter, and as all the members of the council about that time, with only one or two exceptions, were living in streets not much better than the street I lived in myself, I was not much impressed with their dignity.

There was no "west end" at that time for the civic dignitaries to remove to had they been so inclined, and, with the exception of Mr Thomas Blaikie, Sheriff Watson, and the Hadden family, scarcely one of our civic dignitaries lived west of Union Bridge. Provost Milne used to live in the Gallowgate, almost next door to D. Bannerman, the town's drummer; Lewis Smith and others in the Guestrow; Baillie Leslie Clark and Mr George Henry at the top of Broad Street; Baillie Peter Williamson above his shop in Exchequer Row; and a few of the others about King Street, which did not stretch much further than Mealmarket Lane at that time. We stood in no awe of the six town's sergeants—William Adam, who lived in my own vicinity in Park Street; Charles Dawson in the "Park Roadie"; James Horne ("Hornie"), in St Nicholas Street, a few doors from Baillie John Urquhart; Alexander Mellis, in Gallowgate, nearly beside the provost; and Sandy Leslie, a long, thin man, in Queen Street.

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