

THE PARISH OF WEMYSS.

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THE delightfully situated estate of Wemyss, or Wemyss-shire as it was anciently called, derives its name from the caves which are found on the shore within its bounds, the Celtic for cave being Uamh. The history of the parish is practically the history of the "Kingdom"—indeed the history of the Kingdom of Scotland. The caves or Weems, with their rude sculpturings, take us back to the period of the Roman invasion, perhaps further, while in the history of the Wemyss Family we have, as Sir William Fraser reminds us, one of the longest and purest of Scottish pedigrees, going back for seven centuries. Many members of the family held high office in the State in far-off days, and in the archives of Wemyss Castle there are documents which are of national as well as local interest. From time immemorial coal has been worked in the district, and the documents which have been preserved bearing on the great mining industry for centuries are to many as interesting as the papers which give us glimpses at the politics and the government of other days.

The extreme length of the parish from south-west to north-east is about $5\frac{3}{4}$ miles, while its breadth varies from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 miles. In contradistinction to the sea-beach of Scoonie, the beach is bold and rocky. The parish is bounded on the east by Markinch and Scoonie, on the north by Kennoway and Markinch, and on the west by



Kirkcaldy 3½ miles

Kirkcaldy 4½ miles

3°

Dysart. The Government census returns only go back to 1801, but according to returns drawn up by Dr Webster there were 3041 souls in the parish in 1755, and here is a fairly accurate return which was compiled for the minister of the parish in 1791 :—

	Families.	Males.	Females.	Total.
West Wemyss, . . .	235	353	416	769
East Wemyss, . . .	153	268	289	557
Buckhaven, . . .	163	277	324	601
Methil, . . .	81	153	161	314
East and West Coaltown,	93	166	227	393
Kirkland, &c., . . .	71	191	200	391
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Totals, . . .	796	1408	1617	3025
Totals in 1755, . . .				3041
				<hr/>
Decrease, . . .				16

In 1801 there were 3264 souls in the parish, and in 1811 there were 3691. The following are the returns from 1821 :—

	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Innerleven, . . .	—	—	—	—	337	358	501	579	792
Methil, . . .	966	1112	1165	1073	522	648	754	1662	2686
Buckhaven, . . .	1141	1363	1526	1769	1965	2187	2952	4006	4522
Beyond Burgh, . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	828
East Wemyss, . . .	648	753	859	802	799	777	846	1010	2522
W. Wemyss, . . .	592	858	947	1013	1128	1231	1206	1300	1253
Coaltown, . . .	400	460	537	600	408	343	369	381	731
Kirkland, . . .	—	—	—	—	448	355	297	441	361
Methilhill, . . .	—	—	—	—	—	480	466	503	442
Rural, . . .	310	455	369	390	773	379	417	652	894
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Totals, . . .	4057	5001	5403	5647	6003	6400	7307	10534	15031

Since 1901 the village of Denbeath has sprung up, and at East Wemyss and other places there has been a big increase in the housing. In the spring of 1905 it was computed that the population of the parish could not be less than 18,000.

The Valuation of the Parish.

The following is a table showing the valuation of the parish of Wemyss since 1855-6 :—

1855-6, -	£14,484 18 0	1885-6, -	£34,328 7 4
1865-6, -	19,218 1 3	1895-6, -	58,949 0 2
1875 6, -	27,445 2 8	1904-5, -	102,121 4 0

During the decade between 1855 and 1865 the valuation increased by £4733 5s 3d; between 1865 and 1875 the increase was £8227 1s 5d; 1875 and 1885 it was £6883 4s 8d; 1885 and 1895, £24,620 12s 10d; and 1895 and 1904-5 the increase amounted to £43,172 3s 10d. This, like the census returns of the parish, indicates abounding progress.



The Burgh of Buckhaven, Methil, and Innerleven.

The villages of Buckhaven, Methil, and Innerleven, which lie on the shore between the river Leven and Macduff's Castle, were formed into a Police Burgh in May 1891. On the date of the formation of the Burgh the combined population of the three places was computed at 6000. During the decade which passed between 1891 and 1901 the population rose to 8000, and this figure did not

include the part of Buckhaven town which is beyond the burgh boundary, and in which 828 people were resident. Just after the taking of the census in 1901 the burgh boundary was extended at Methil so as to include Methil Brae, and the change gave an addition of 600 people at the town of Methil. The following are the names of the Chief Magistrates, and the dates of their respective terms of office:—Wm. Bowman Simpson, June 1891 to March 1893; Wm. Greig, April 1893 to November 1895; Wm. B. Gillespie, November 1895 to November 1901; Wm. Greig, November 1901 to November 1904; R. G. E. Wemyss, appointed November 1904, and continues in office. Mr W. T. Ketchen, W.S., who is a native of Elie, has been Town Clerk of the Burgh since the date of its formation, while the duties of Treasurer are fulfilled by Mr David Robb, solicitor.

Innerleven and Dubbieside.

Innerleven has changed its name nearly as often as it has changed its industries. In some of the old Wemyss titles it is called Caldcoits or Innerleven; in others it is referred to as Dubbieside; and Lamont, in his "Chronicles of Fife," gives us yet a fourth name when he tells us that by the storm of November 1662, "a great pairt of my Lord Wemyss' harbory, that he was building bewest the *Salt-griene*, was thrown down and spoilt." Of the four names, Dubbieside is the one which students of place names delight to hold by.

The name Dubbieside takes us back to the days when the "Kingdom" was inhabited by a Celtic race, and when its localities were known by Celtic names. *Dubhagan*, in

Gaelic, means a dark, deep pool, and, as Taylor in his "Historical Antiquities" reminds us, is truly descriptive of the deep, dark water where the Leven and the Forth meet, and which for centuries formed the ferry between Dubbieside and the town of Leven. *Dubham* is another Gaelic word which gives a further clue to the name. *Dubham* means a hook, and here we have a word which takes us back to the distant past when Dubbieside was a



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[Edinburgh

Innerleven.

fishing hamlet of a few huts. In early times, when Markinch Priory was the dominating religious institution of the parish of Markinch, the fish for the Priory were drawn from Dubbieside. The small fishing hamlet thus became thirled to Markinch, and it was only in 1891 that Innerleven became disjoined from the parish of Markinch and was thrown into the parish of Wemyss.

AN INCIDENT OF 1388.

Innerleven first comes into view historically in the days of Sir John Wemyss of Reres and Wemyss. When Sir John acquired the lands of Innerleven, he did so on terms which cast some light on the customs of the times. In 1387 the lands of Innerleven belonged to Thomas of Innerleven. Thomas it appears had become impecunious, and in October 1388 he, in presence of a notary and other witnesses, admitted that he had given up his rights, present and future, in Innerleven to Sir John Wemyss, for assistance given and to be given, especially in recovering the lands from the superiors for the use of Thomas. In these days the Church was generally the superior of the lands, and a pretty hard taskmaster the Church was, but it appears the Earl of Fife and Monteith was superior of Innerleven. In the "Wemyss Memorials," Sir William Fraser tells us that Sir John became bound to labour faithfully and diligently to recover the lands for the benefit of Thomas within the next two years. On this being done, Thomas became bound to resign the lands in favour of Sir John, and failing that to pay the sum of £40 sterling with expenses. If Sir John failed to recover the lands within the two years, he was to pay a sum to Thomas. Sir John fulfilled his bargain to the letter, but on appearing within the prescribed time with his notary and demanding fulfilment of the agreement, Thomas took up the position of the "dog in the manger" and refused to carry out his part of the contract. A second endeavour on the part of Sir John to get Thomas to complete an honourable bargain was as fruitless as the first, and about six and a half years expired before Innerleven really became the property of Sir John Wemyss under a charter

from the Earl of Fife. The charter of Innerleven to Sir John Wemyss also contained a grant of the Westhaugh of Scoonie.

In the days of James VI., Sir John Wemyss of that ilk, the first Earl of Wemyss, who in 1609 married Dame Jeane Gray, eldest daughter of Patrick Lord Gray, had a new grant of the barony of Methil to him and his wife. Besides the lands of Methil, this barony included the lands of Hill and Pirny, the superiority of Caldcoits, the half of Kilmux, and the office of Bailie of the river Leven, which among other dues yielded to the holder every ninth salmon caught in the stream, and entitled him to hold courts, appoint inferior officers, and deal with delinquents. The charter was granted by George Gledstones, Archbishop of St Andrews, in 1611, some six years before the Laird of Wemyss was knighted by James VI., who in 1617 made a pilgrimage through Fife. The Laird of Wemyss had a baronetcy conferred on him by Charles I. in 1626, and in 1628 the King conferred on Sir John the dignity and rank of a Lord of Parliament, by the title of Lord Wemyss of Elcho. In the days when Lord Wemyss was Bailie of the Leven, and could claim every ninth salmon caught in the stream, the water was not disturbed by either bleachworks or distilleries, and the river abounded in trout and salmon.

THE HANDLOOM AND RED ROOFS.

Dubbieside, like Methil, has seen a good many changes during the past thirty-five years. A great many of the houses where the click of the shuttle of the hand-loom was in the olden time heard have given place to modern dwellings, and the Caldcoits of other days is fast giving

place to the Innerleven of to-day. Here and there on the beach and on the main street there are still a few examples of the outside stairs and the red roofs of two hundred years ago. One of the best examples of the seventeenth century dwellings stands at the entrance from Leven to Dubbieside. It is a long stretch of plain walls with forestair, with the front turned westwards, and the gables facing the south and the north. The date stone above the door-way bears the figures 1671. Just beyond this is Lawson's Square, which stands on the entrance to the Steep Wynd, which took the name of the "Dead Wynd." The Wynd was the highway to the Leven and Wemyss road, and took its name of "Dead Wynd" because it was the path along which the remains of residents were carried to their "long home" at Methilmill.

SWEET DUBBYSIDE.

George Outram, the talented author of "Legal and other Lyrics," who frequently played golf at Dubbieside, gives us the following glimpse of the village of 1850 :—

"The foam-flakes flash, the black rocks scowl,
The sea-bird screams, the wild winds howl ;
A giant wave springs up on high—
'One pull for God's sake !' is the cry :
If struck, we perish in the tide—
If saved, we land at Dubbyside.

O Dubbyside ! our peril's past,
And bliss and thee are reached at last !
As sprang Leander to his bride,
Half-drowned, so we to Dubbyside.
What though we're drenched, we will be dried
Upon thy banks, sweet Dubbyside.

Are we in heaven, or are we here,
 Or in the moon, or Jupiter?
 These velvet links, o' golfers rife,
 Are they in Paradise, or Fife?
 Am I alive, or am I dead,
 Or am I *not* at Dubbyside!

Through Eden's groves there flowed a stream,
 And there its very waters gleam—
 Its pebbly bed, its banks the same,
 Unchanged in all except the name
 Since Adam bathed in Leven tide,
 And Eve reposed at Dubbyside!

And still it is a blissful spot,
 Though Paradise is all forgot;
 The fairies shower their radiance here,
 The rocks look bright, the dubs are clear;
 Deem not that bush the forest's pride—
 Remember you're at Dubbyside!

Is that an angel shining there,
 Or sea-nymph with her flowing hair,
 Or Neptune's pearl-embowered bride,
 Kissing the foam-bells of the tide?
 Tis neither angel, nymph, nor bride—
 Tis Podley Jess of Dubbyside!"

History of the Church on the Links.

Although the golf links and the hand-loom weaving of "sweet Dubbieside" have gone, the Dissenting Church still remains. The early history of the little church throws some light on the habits and character of the people who lived on both sides of the river Leven from 50 to 200 years ago.

PRAYING SOCIETIES.

After the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine and his colleagues met at Gairney Bridge in 1733 and took the step which brought the Associate Church into existence, the Praying

Societies gradually cast in their lot with the Dissenting Church. Some of the Dissenters who were connected with the Praying Societies of Leven, Dubbieside, and Methil joined the Secession in 1738. Others followed in 1739, and in 1742 the Associates had a considerable accession to their ranks. When the Dissenting residents on the banks of the Leven first joined the Associate Church they cast in their lot with an Abbotshall congregation, and even with the accessions of 1739 and 1742 the disciples of the new sect found that they formed such a small company that they did not dream of forming a Dissenting congregation for the district. They retained their connection with Abbotshall until 1744, when they joined the little church at Ceres. When the Burghers oath of 1745 was imposed by Parliament and the "breach" occurred in the Associate Church, the church of Ceres went over to the Anti-Burgher Synod, and most of the worshippers from Leven district went with them. In 1769 the Dissenters thought they were of sufficient strength to warrant them forming a congregation, and they applied to the Synod for disjunction. On the plea that there was nothing to hinder them finding their way to Ceres every Sunday, the request was met by a negative. As a compromise, however, the Rev. Thomas Bennet, the minister of Ceres church, who was strongly opposed to the disjunction, was asked by the Synod to conduct services in the Leven district at least four times a year during the winter months.

WHEN A CONGREGATION WAS FORMED.

The Rev. Dr Mackelvie, the author of "Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church," says:—
"Matters continued in this state till 1793, when the mem-

bers of the congregation of Ceres resident in Leven, Largo, and places adjacent were formed, under sanction of the Presbytery, into a separate congregation." The Rev. Jas. W. Drennan, one of the ministers of the Dubbieside church, rightly doubts the accuracy of Mackelvie's date as to the formation of a congregation. Under date 22nd February 1788, Mr Drennan found the following minute in the Manager's book:—"The Session having met and reckoned accounts and found to be in Thomas Kirk's hand the sum of eleven shillings and elevenpence three farthings." At a meeting held in 1789, the congregation was found to be indebted to Thomas Kirk to the amount of 2s 7½d, "sterling money, errors excepted." The Dubbieside Session minutes only go back to 1828, but in a minute of the Session of Ceres, dated 6th June 1793, we are told that the names of 15 persons who desired to be disjoined from Ceres and annexed to that of Dubbieside were handed in, and the Session agreed to the request. Presbytery dues were also paid as far back as 1781, and so far as can be gleaned from sidelights, one is justified in coming to the conclusion that the Dubbieside congregation was formed about 1780. For many years the pulpit was filled by itinerant preachers. It was only in May 1796 that the congregation met in Thomas Kirk's house and resolved to subscribe what each one could give "to have the Gospel in a fair way in this corner, and after subscribing, to petition the Presbytery for moderation and to offer fifty pounds of stiping every year." A call was given to the Rev. John Macdonald, Ireland, and the congregation, finding that their funds were "not strong," collected the necessary funds privately for presenting the minister with the customary "suit of clothes, hat, shoes, and stockings."

The ordination dinner was purveyed by John Beatson, in the Methil, and here is a copy of the account :—

David Christy, a chopin of gin and ten backes,	£0	3	0
Mr Beatson's account for dinner, - - -	1	16	3
David Christy, for house room, - - -	0	1	0
Tent prepared, - - - - -	0	8	4
Instruments taken at the Presbytery, - - -	0	3	0
To Mr Beatson's servant, trouble, - - -	0	1	0
Borrowed cash, - - - - -	2	1	0

HOW THE FIRST CHURCH WAS BUILT.

Dr Mackelvie says the church was built in 1794 ; but there is no mention of this in the accounts, although in 1797 we are told that a subscription was made in order to put a "loft" in the church. From "Poems on Different Subjects," by William Rankine, Leven, which was published in 1812, we get some light on the building of the church. Rankine opens with a pen and ink sketch of the first minister, describes the building, and then the congregation. He thus writes of the minister :—

" Wi' solemn gloom his brow he deck't,
 An' joined a pious, haly sect ;
 An' now a flock was straying wide,
 An' he was sent that flock to guide.
 But how to get a house to hold them,
 That he might weekly stand an' scold them,
 Their want o' siller sair perplexed them,
 An' night an' day wi' torment vexed them.

But what is't zeal cannot perform,
 When splinder new, an' piping warm—
 A house which was the famed resort
 For every kind o' jovial sport,
 Hung round wi' dirty tousy pallets,
 An' crammed wi' beggars' mealy wallets,
 Of wham ilk night came here a score
 To drink, an' fight, an' curse, an' roar.

How wond'rous now the alteration,
 Purged clean o' a' sic consternation,
 That house were Clooty nightly ranted,
 To sighing saints it's walls has granted ;
 Where impious actions once abounded,
 The strains o' Zion now are sounded ;
 Where drunken discord shook the air,
 The groans o' haly love are there."

The Rev. John Row, minister of the parish of Carnock, near Dunfermline, was one of the originators of the open-air Communion services which Burns gave the name of "Holy Fairs." Row was an uncompromising opponent of Episcopacy, and because of his non-conformity he was "confyned to his own congregation" by the High Commission of St Andrews. Row invited the ministers who had been deprived of their livings to Carnock every year, and people flocked to the gatherings which he organised from all parts of the "Kingdom." The open-air Communion services survived the deposition of the Bishops, but the services fell sadly from their "original state," and in 1785 they received a staggering blow from Burns in the greatest of all his satires, "The Holy Fair." Mr Macdonald, the first minister of Dubbieside, was a believer in the open-air services, and at the very time Burns' poem was being recited in every town and village he instituted the series of tent-meetings through which thousands of people were for years brought together on the banks of the Leven. Rankine tries to catch the spirit of Burns in his reference to the open-air services. He says :—

" His stipend was but very spare,
 Nor had they means to mak' it mair ;
 To mak' amends an' do nae wrang,
 His holy fairs came thick and thrang,
 Which made the lads an' lasses run
 To shew their claes, an' taste the fun ;

An' gin sic days brought pleasant weather,
 Platefu's o' bawbees he would gather ;
 An' sometimes feeling fowk, wha kend him,
 Wad hens, an' eggs, an' butter send him."

FROM THE MANAGERS' BOOK.

The Managers' book shows that the poverty of the congregation did not keep them from doing princely acts. Mr Macdonald had assistance at the Communion gatherings from many ministers outwith the district. The ministers were put up at the "manse," and the congregation thoughtfully subscribed £4 towards Mr Macdonald's household expenses. In 1778 four labourers were engaged at the church for some days, and the following item shows that the toilers were regaled with the nappie ales which were so popular in far-off days:—"To drinks for four men severally employed, 1s 7d." Mr Macdonald resigned in 1817, and went to Thurso. Two years elapsed before the congregation was able to call the Rev. William Harper from Kilmaurs. Mr Harper was ordained in April 1819. He died on the 16th October 1853, in the 35th year of his ministry. He was succeeded by the Rev. Andrew Nicol, who had itinerated as a probationer for 40 years. Mr Nicol was ordained on 13th February 1855, and demitted his charge on account of age and infirmities on 24th September 1861. Successive calls were given to three ministers, but they declined to go to Dubbieside. The Rev. Robert Fisher, from Perth, ultimately accepted, however, and was ordained on 19th January 1864. The flock suffered during the vacancy of three years, but despite this and the fact that the handloom was vanishing away, Mr Fisher took up work in the district with much pluck. Before many years had expired he had a manse built, and

as soon as it was clear of debt he inaugurated a church building scheme. The church, which was built on the site of the old building and was opened in 1878, cost £1400. Mr Fisher resigned in 1880, and was succeeded by the Rev. James W. Drennan, M.A., who was ordained on 9th May 1882, and who died in 1901. The Rev. H. W. Cochran came next, and after labouring in the district for two years left for South Africa. The Rev. Robert Ingles, the present incumbent, was ordained on 19th May 1904. Mr Inglis studied in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Munich Universities. He is an M.A. of Glasgow.

When Mr Fisher left there was a debt of £400 on the church. To the credit of the congregation the debt was soon wiped off. In connection with the centenary celebrations of 1893, a scheme of renovation was carried through, and a debt of £400 incurred. Mr Ingles and his Session have decided to make an effort to clear off this adverse balance in the year of grace 1905.

THE SALT INDUSTRY.

The firm of R. & D. Gibb have established a saltwork in Innerleven. It is the only remnant of the salt trade of other days. The Messrs Gibb commenced work at Methil in the seventies, but on the dock being extended they built a new work at Innerleven and stopped operations at Methil.



THE SHIPPING PORT OF METHIL.

Because of the changes brought about by a revival in the mining industry, Methil at first sight looks a place of yesterday. Yet the town has a history which goes back for centuries. As far back as the twelfth century, in the days of William the Lion, Michael of Methil and Wemyss, we are told, flourished in the district. Since the days of Michael, the Wemyss family have been closely identified with Methil, and the successive branches of the family have had a good deal to do with the industrial revivals which at intervals have come to the district like a tidal wave. The estate of Methil or Methkill—a name derived from the Culdee cell or church which stood on the slopes of Methilmill—was held by Michael under the bishops of St Andrews. Michael was succeeded by Sir John of Methil and Wemyss, and Sir James Fraser, in his exhaustive work, which bears the title of "Memorials of the Family of Wemyss of Wemyss," tells us that the earliest known date at which Sir John appears on record as Sir John of Methil is the year 1212, when an important decision was given by the Bishop of St Andrews in connection with lands held by the Church between the burgh of St Andrews and Boarhills. John of Methil witnessed various charters of Malcolm, Earl of Fife, and he received the rank of knighthood between 1231 and 1240. David Wemyss, the son and heir of Sir John Wemyss of Reres

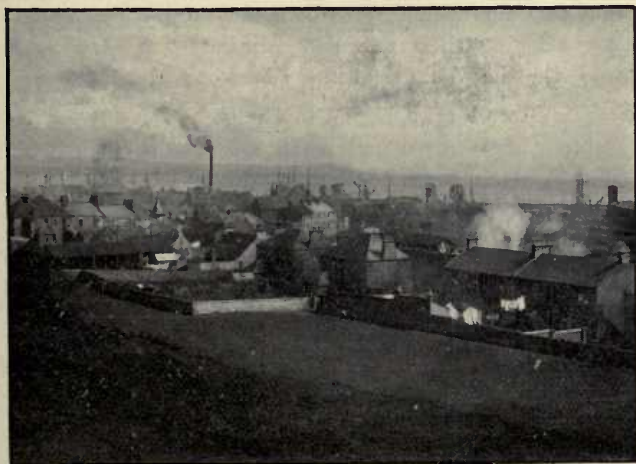
and Isabel Erskine, was often styed the lord or laird of Methil, and he received a charter of the lands in 1424 to himself and his wife on their marriage from Henry Wardlaw, the Bishop of St Andrews. In 1575 John Douglas, Archbishop of St Andrews, created the lands of Methil into a barony called the Barony of Methil. Sir John Wemyss of that ilk, the first Earl of Wemyss, who succeeded to the estates in 1622, was the first to take up the development of the minerals at Methil, and from his time Methil figures very prominently in the papers of the Wemyss family.

Sir John Wemyss had a strong scent for the treasures which lay hidden under the surface. He engaged an English boring engineer and had tests made in the hope of discovering coals on the various estates which belonged to the family of Wemyss. He was the first to discover coal at Methil, and he had some of the seams opened up. In the year before his death he wrote a document in which he gave instructions to his son, Lord Elcho, how to work the coalfields on the Wemyss estate. The Earl of Wemyss was also an extensive salt manufacturer.

Methil as a Burgh of Barony.

In 1572 John Douglas, Archbishop of St Andrews, created the lands of Methil, with its grain and "fuling" mills, and mill lands, Hill and Pirny, the superiority of Innerleven, and two parts of Little Kilmux, with the office of bailie and keepership of the water of Leven, to which was attached the duty of every ninth fish and other fees, into the barony of Methil. David, second Earl of Wemyss, attended the first Parliament of Charles II. in 1661, and in 1664 he was summoned, as a Commissioner, by Archbishop Sharp to visit the University at St

Andrews. This was the beginning of a close friendship between the Bishop and the Earl. The establishment of Episcopacy was followed by the restoration of the Church lands to the Bishops, and the Earl's barony of Methil once more came under the superiority of the See of St Andrews. The Earl maintained friendly relations with the Archbishop, and he obtained the erection of Methil into a free

*Patrick]***Methil from Bayview.***[Edinburgh*

burgh of barony, with a weekly market on Wednesdays, and two fairs in the year—22nd June and 27th December—and the feu-duty he then paid for the barony was 20s Scots yearly. In 1665 the Earl raised the question of a regrant of the lands to himself and his heirs. Mr Patrick Scott of Langshaw, to whom the work of procuring the necessary documents was entrusted, had a difficulty in getting the papers. In a letter to the Earl, Mr Scott

states that the Archbishop's chamberlain had told him that there was more to be said than the payment of the "few-dutie," "that lykewayis thair behoved to be wryt gevin be your lordship for coalles yeerlie." The demand for coals "stumbled" Mr Scott, and it also "stumbled" the Earl. Despite this, the Earl sent the Archbishop a boatload of coals on the 20th September 1665, and seven days thereafter the infestment in the barony came. Earl David was proud of the documents when they did come, and in acknowledging their receipt he intimated to the Archbishop that he would send him a boatload of coals yearly.

The Methil fairs began to be held in 1666, and the Countess of Wemyss had much interest in them. She spent as much as 100 dollars on wares from the chapmen, and a horse race was, according to the custom of the times, inaugurated—a saddle, a bonnet, and a pair of shoes being the prizes. So that Methil might become a place worthy of the title of a burgh of barony, he erected a cross. The cross, we are told by Lamont, was built "beyonde James Lundy's howse in the linkes, not nire any howse, 5 steps high rownd abowt, and in the middst of it a long piece of wood standing up with a thane (vane) on itt, having Er. D.W. and C.M.W. cutt on the iyron."

The Old Church of Methil.

On 6th September 1582, John Wemyss and his heirs were appointed patrons of the rectory and vicarage of the Parish Church of Methil. There is no trace whatever of the church and rectory of these far-off days. When the Methilmill cemetery was being extended some years ago, the foundations of a building of considerable demensions were laid bare in connection with some excavations, and there can be no doubt that this was the site of the church,

which very possibly dated back to the days of David I. In 1665, David the second Earl of Wemyss had some correspondence with the Archbishop regarding the Kirk of Methil. The Earl and his father had during the Protestant wave which followed the Reformation cheerfully given up their rights to the Kirk. The restoration of Episcopacy resuscitated the old rights, and the church was once more in the Earl's hands. In 1711, David third Earl of Wemyss obtained a charter of regrant of all his estates, and the patronage of the church of Methil is mentioned among the lands for which a new charter was granted. Methil church from this date drops out of view historically, and the old church in East Wemyss becomes the ecclesiastical centre for the parish.

The Great Earl David's Coal Works.

The first Earl of Wemyss was succeeded by David the second Earl, who to this day is spoken of as the "Great Earl David." He carried out many improvements on his lands, and launched many big coal and salt work schemes. Earl David was not slow in taking the advice of his father about the minerals, and shortly after his succession he commenced an extraordinary scheme of development, for the times, at Methil. The mines of those days were all "in-going-eyes" run in from the sea shore or from the sides of burns and rivers, so that the water might run from the working faces to the "day" without the use of machinery. Earl David found coal cropping out in the glen of Denbeath, near Methil, and here he opened out what afterwards became "The Happy Mine." In a valuable MS. document which he left, written by his own hand, the Earl tells us that he had struck as many as seven seams of coal in the mine, while running through

the metals for a distance of 600 fathoms. Writing in 1671, the Earl says :—

“I am still working that level in stone with two men in it day and night, except Sundays. I give them 10s Scots a day, their bearers 4s Scots a day, the windles men get 6s Scots a day or night. I sharp their picks and furnish their candles.”

The mine was run through the strata all the way to Kirkland.

The First Harbour at Methil.

Before he had proceeded to open up the “Happy Mine,” the Earl recognised that the development of the minerals would be of little use without a harbour, and in 1660 he applied to the King for power to proceed with the construction of a harbour. The royal sanction was duly forthcoming, and the Earl writes :—“The King—God bless him—did give me a new gift to bould a herbure at Methill, 1660.” In the ensuing summer, 1661, the Earl commenced the work. Satisfactory progress was made for 18 months; but in November 1662 a terrible set back was experienced through a storm. Lamont thus chronicles the destruction caused to the new harbour of Methil :—

“A great part of my Lord Wemys new harboury, that he was building be-west the Saltgreine, was thrown down and spoilt; yea, some of the very foundation stones were turned up, so that some did report that ten thousand markes wold hardly make up his losse againe in it.”

The devastation caused by the storm did not paralyse the Earl of Wemyss. Within two years of the date of the catastrophe the harbour was finished. The Earl thus records in his diary the loading of the first boat at the harbour :—

“I was one 6 September 1664, 54 yeirs of eaydge. One 15 September 1664, Andrew Thomsonsone in Leiuen did leade his botte in the new herbure of Methill, with colles from the colle of Methill,

being 60 leades of colles, and he did tak them to Leith on 17 of September 1664, which was the first botte that did leade with colles att that herbure. The colles was well loued att Leith, and since thorrow all sea ports in Scotland. I sould them then att 5 li the 12 lodes and 2 sh. to the griue. I give 22d for uining them to the coller, and 1 sh. 2d to the caller (driver) of them from the colle pitte to the herbure."

There was no end to the Earl's enterprise, and within a year of the opening of the harbour he built two saltpans at Methil. "With," we are told, "a new howse, high and low, with divers rowms, att the said harbowlr, the roof being a plaitforme." So as to give greater facilities for carting coals, a bridge was thrown across the Leven at Bassmill. The Earl's expenditure on the harbour and other works amounted to £100,000 Scots, and the following entry in the diary is interesting, inasmuch as it gives the detailed expenditure connected with the other works:—

I must tell you what thes works has beine to me since 2 May 1662, that I begoude the herbure or peire of Methill to this 2 Febr. 1677, being many yeirs. The stone herbure was thrisse our throwin or I gott itt to any perfectione, and it hes beine to me 40,000 lib Scotts to this day, 2 Feby. 1677—"Wes." Then the mynd for to drye the 7 colles was 30,000 lib; then the boulding of 7 pans and ther patts 20,000; then the gritte doubell housse, and the horsse work that was 5 yeirs one colle att the Hill of Methille or the mynd was wrought, cost 10,000 lib—"Wemyss."

The Earl left numerous documents behind him bearing on the mineral resources and developments. A short time before his death he "sett doune the trew conditions of all his colles" in his diary, "so that his posteritie may know how he left them." He says:—"It is weil known that I leaue them many good colles att West Wemyss, and also att Methill, 7 ther; uich colles serves the most part of Fife by land."

Glimpses at Coal Working in Eighteenth Century.

David third Earl of Wemyss succeeded to the estates in 1705, and died in 1720. He was born in 1678. He inherited all the enterprise of his grandfather.

In 1700, Andrew Mellville, M.D., offered to improve the coal workings at Methil and Kirkland, and, as the result of various meetings, Lord Elcho handed over the control of the mining operations and the superintendence of the transit of the coals to this medical man. On his succession to the estates, however, his lordship once more assumed the command of the coal workings and their connections with the Methil harbour. Miners in those days were slaves. They were *adscripti glebæ*, or slaves of the soil, and were liable to be sold with the colliery, or handed over on loan by one coalmaster to another.

We have an illustration of the condition of the miners of Wemyss in the days of Lord Elcho in a document which lies in the Wemyss charter chest. The document takes the form of an acknowledgment by Mr Christopher Seton, brother of the Earl of Winton, of having received on loan from David Lord Elcho the persons of six colliers and eleven bearers, all belonging to Lord Elcho, who were to be employed at Tranent, at Lord Winton's colliery, so long as Lord Elcho had no use for them in the parish of Wemyss. Lord Winton obliged himself to re-deliver the miners and bearers on demand. The document is dated 1704.

The system of lending miners was not by any means confined to the Wemyss estate. In a Dunfermline Corporation minute it is stated that the Earl of Rothes sent a letter to the Town Council asking for the loan of

two colliers, and the Council "warranted the Bailies to lend to the Earl David Murgain and George Brown, upon the Earl's bond to restore them upon demand without expense. And in case Lady Pittencrief wants William Watson, warrants the Bailies to lend Watson to her."

James fourth Earl of Wemyss did not take a prominent part in the politics of the day; but he took an active oversight of his salt and coal workings. From the voluminous correspondence which he leaves behind him it appears that, although the salters and miners were practically slaves, they could sometimes give a good deal of trouble. In a letter written from Norton, Durham, to his factor, Lord Wemyss says:—

"Since these tenants are so stubborn that they won't coall the pans without their own price, I know no other way than first to protest against them for damnadges done me by their not working, and then to cause Baily Malcolm hold a Court on Munday, and any who stand indebted to me by the list of rests to throw him in prison untill he pay'd, and to break one of their tacks to deterr them from doing so in the future. I think all the salt that's lost by the pans not going should be stated to their account."

Further correspondence shows that when an arrest of one of the salters was attempted, the officer was deforced. The miners at the same time were giving trouble. In one of his letters the Earl says:—

"Don't forgett to write the name of the coallier and his wife which run away from Methill a few days before I left home, and desire William Forbes to search for them at Pinkie, and for Lindsay, and gett them over."

It is impossible to say whether William Forbes was successful in his quest for the collier and his wife and Lindsay; but it is apparent from the correspondence which follows that the Earl and his managers did not then get

over their labour troubles. About a year later he writes as follows :—

“I do not see you had any occasion to delay requireing back stragled coalliers till you had advis'd with the commissioners, for that was a strict charge given you to look after them, and in consequence of the coal propititors meeting at Edinburgh ; therefore the moment a coallier leaves his work he ought to be sent after immediately, otherwise it gives him time to get into England, where he can never be recovered. And when the grieves don't represent this to you in time, they ought to suffer for it. Besides the coalliers, their children should be all look't after and sett to work below ground when capable, and not allowed to hirr'd cattle, or go to service, as many of them have done, and I wish may not be the case as yett. And if you see it for my benefitt, and that there's work and room for more people below ground, why don't you gett some of Balbirny's coalliers, who are now in different parts of the country, and nobody's property. Pray are Alexander Leslie's and Thomas Lumsden's children now working at the coal work ?”

In another letter written from Norton, Lord Wemyss says, just as he was finishing his note, William Cairns, a sailor; who lived at Campveer, brought him a present of chocolate, and ask't the favour of credit for ten dozen coals. He is, the Earl proceeds, “Archibald Cairns, Methill coallier's son, and I suppose has elop't from the works. However, as the lad has been long absent, I could not discourage him by refusing his demand.”

Methil Coals seized by Government.

In 1722, an incident occurred beyond the Isle of May which brought a protest from the Earl of Wemyss, and throws some light on the export trade then done in Methil coals. A Dutch laden ship was seized by the Custom House authorities, taken to Burntisland and detained. The Earl wrote the Commissioners stating that in consequence of a gift from the crown, granted as early as 1330,

“he had been in the possession of granting coquets, searching all ships, and of an exemption and freedom of paying any duty upon coal from the harbour of Methil,” and that as well before the Union as since that time. The Earl also argued that the Treaty of Union accepted and reserved all special rights of exemption enjoyed by persons in either kingdom. The exemption enjoyed by the Earl applied only to coal drawn from his own collieries, and no claim had ever been set up for merchandise. The Earl’s arguments for a continuance of the exemption sound extremely like the arguments used by coalmasters to-day in connection with the coal tax. He stated that he and his late father had expended large sums of money in connection with their coal works, and had entered into contracts with Dutch merchants, and had worked out a considerable trade with other foreign ports. If the privilege was to be infringed, the Dutch would be driven to trade with other countries, and irretrievable injury inflicted on the Wemyss coal trade. The trade, it was further set forth, if once diverted would not easily be recovered, “as by experience was found when an interruption was made by the privateers on the coast during the late war.”





(By permission of Messrs Buntine & Mitchell.)

Leith Dock

Methil Dock of To-Day.

Robert Louis Stevenson writes somewhere of the "flight of time and the succession of men." In the "flight of time and succession of men," Methil has seen a good many changes. It is worthy of note that the biggest change of all has been experienced during the past 35 years. Writing in 1789, the Rev. George Gibb says:—

"A waggon way of two miles from the pits at Kirkland to Methil has just been completed, and everything promises an extensive trade It would not be at all surprising to see in a few years Methil rank among the first coal ports of Scotland."

Before Mr Gibb's notes had been put in print, operations had been entirely suspended at the Kirkland pits. In 1803, the east pier at Methil was ruined by a strong gale. In 1815, General Wemyss was fully alive to the necessity for reconstruction, and he applied to the Government for a loan of £5000 or a partial grant of money towards the improvement of the harbour. In his letter to the Government the General pointed out that the harbour had been built by private enterprise one hundred years previously, and while the Wemyss family derived no revenue from the use of the harbour, the Government drew custom-dues annually from the port for salt alone amounting to from £8,000 to £10,000. A direct negative was returned to the appeal. The harbour remained in its wrecked state until 1838, when £1,800 was spent on repairs. At this time there was really little to justify a big expenditure on the harbour. With the withdrawal of the salt tax, the staple industry of Methil received a terrible blow, and one by one the salt pans were stopped. By 1830 there was left a range of buildings which only depressed people who could look back on the days when

the windmills and the seawater pumps of the pans were in almost perpetual motion. At one time it looked as if the fallen fortunes of the village were to be retrieved by shipbuilding, and by the manufacture of oil; but, alas! neither industry stayed, and in the sixties the traffic at Methil harbour consisted principally of an occasional cargo of parrot from the Methilhill district and the imports and exports for the Kirkland spinning and linen manufacturing works.

In 1864, when Messrs Bowman & Company commenced operations at Muiredge Colliery, Methil was a ramshackle place. The coals were at first driven in carts from Muiredge pits to the harbour, and shipped in boats of from 50 to 200 tons. The carts ultimately gave place to a horse waggon-way from the pits through Muiredge den, and when the output of coals had increased, horses gave place to a locomotive. By 1880, the Fife Coal Company were drawing a considerable output of coals from the Leven pits, and with developments at Muiredge and Leven collieries, Methil changed rapidly—crumbling walls and red roofs and outside stairs disappeared at every turn.

Between 1870 and 1880 the coal output of Fife was doubled, and being fully alive to the necessity for greater facilities for shipping coals, Mr R. G. E. Wemyss of Wemyss Castle resolved upon the construction of a dock at Methil. In his scheme he had every encouragement from the Fife Coal Company and Messrs Bowman & Company, who guaranteed to ship a certain amount of coals annually. Mr Wemyss only reached his majority in 1879, but really before he was of full age and legally entitled to act for himself he had obtained the sanction of his curators for the expenditure of £25,000 on the Thornton-Buck-

haven Railway. This was followed by the purchase of the Leven Dock at a cost of £12,000 and the launching of a scheme for the construction of a dock at Methil involving an expenditure of £100,000. In the days of Earl David, Methil harbour was the best shipping port in the east of Scotland. To-day, Methil Dock is the greatest coal shipping port in this part of the country. History does not content itself in bringing back the dignity which Methil enjoyed as a port in the seventeenth century, but it gives us a dock to-day which originated with a direct descendant of the man who was in touch with Archbishop Sharp; and who sent the Archbishop "a few coalles, the best that the coalle of Methil can afford," for his kindness in confirming Earl David's right to "Methil toune and harbour."

How much the Fife coalfields have made Methil dock and Methil dock has made the Fife coalfields will be apparent when it is stated that in 1877—ten years before the dock was opened—the mineral output of the county was not more than one and a half million tons a year, and there were not more than 6000 people employed in and about the pits. Although trying trade times were experienced during the next decade, considerable developments were witnessed at several collieries, and in 1887 the 8500 people engaged at the pits produced 2,585,412 tons of coal and other minerals. The wages of the miners of Scotland are based on the rates ruling in 1888—wages to this day rise and fall on the 1888 basis. 1888 was one of the most trying years experienced in modern mining for masters and men, and wages fell to the low figure of 4s per day. Coals would not sell at a price nearly equal to that drawn by Earl David for the first cargo he shipped

from his new harbour at Methil—£5 Scots for twelve loads—and the output of Fife, like the output of other coal producing counties in Scotland, showed a shrinkage. The minerals produced reached a total of 2,459,395 tons, a decrease of 126,017 tons. This was a bad start for the Methil dock, but happily a change for the better came in 1889, and with the exception of 1894, when operations were suspended at the pits of Scotland for seventeen long weeks over a wages dispute, the record since then has been one of uninterrupted progress.

In 1897—just a decade after the dock was opened—the output was 4,152,173 tons, and something like 12,000 people were employed. In 1904, when 18,424 people were at work above and below ground, the record output was touched of 6,586,154 tons. The following table shows the coal shipments from Methil from the date the gates were thrown open and the first steamer entered, and the coal output for Fife for the same period:—

			Coals shipped at Methil. Tons.	Coal output of Fife. Tons.
1887,	-	-	219,884	2,585,412
1888,	-	-	410,131	2,459,395
1889,	-	-	556,040	2,761,616
1890,	-	-	666,403	3,121,646
1891,	-	-	701,085	3,301,000
1892,	-	-	810,545	3,573,818
1893,	-	-	832,305	3,619,530
1894,	-	-	* 527,565	2,784,019
1895,	-	-	727,680	3,911,235
1896,	-	-	857,892	3,633,455
1897,	-	-	1,090,324	4,077,818
1898,	-	-	1,230,554	4,447,569
1899,	-	-	1,316,937	4,927,489
1900,	-	-	1,685,476	5,419,373
1901,	-	-	1,574,896	5,601,501
1902,	-	-	1,759,041	6,134,171
1903,	-	-	1,779,078	6,376,985
1904,	-	-	1,985,826	6,586,154

* Miners on strike for seventeen weeks.

There is an inner and an outer dock. The inner dock, which covers an area of $4\frac{3}{4}$ acres, was acquired by the North British Railway Company from Mr Wemyss. The Company had not had control of the undertaking for many years when they came to the conclusion that a big extension was necessary, and they forthwith set to work and made the new or outer dock, which covers something



Methil Dock.

like $6\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and which was opened in 1897. At high water in ordinary spring tides there is 27 feet of water on the cill, and it is no uncommon thing to see from twenty to thirty steamers of from 1000 to 4000 tons burthen, and many small sailing vessels, in the docks and roads. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co.'s famous hydraulic hoists are in operation on both docks, and it is not unusual for as much as 2,000 tons of coal to be handled at any of the six hoists

in operation within twenty-four hours. An effective installation of the electric light pierces its way into every corner of the docks, and coals are handled with as much facility at midnight as they are in a noonday sun. The empty waggons are whisked from the cages of the hoists on to high-level runaway rails, and in time they reach the respective sidings on what an employee at the dock suggestively speaks of as "their own feet." There are miles of sidings; there are thousands of loaded and empty waggons; and night and day we have the perpetual puff of steam, and the sharp piercing whistle of locomotives. The organisation is wonderful. What a striking contrast the Methil of to-day presents to the old Burgh of Barony when its cobble-stoned streets echoed and re-echoed to the feet of Earl David of Wemyss, or the tumble-down, depressing Methil of 45 years ago, when the shipments consisted of a "wee puckle parrot coal," and an occasional barrel of herrings. The docks and their fixtures cost something like half-a-million pounds sterling.

An Interesting Incident.

The Rev. Dr Harry Spens was minister of the parish of Wemyss from 1744 to 1780, when he took up the Professorship of Divinity in St Andrews. In 1770, during his incumbency, a case was called in the Court of Session which brought Methil prominently before the country. It appears that a gentleman who had taken up residence in Methil from the West Indies, had brought with him a negro servant who had been his slave. During his residence in Methil the slave embraced the Christian religion, and on 10th September 1769 was publicly baptised in the Parish Church of East Wemyss, taking the name of David Spens. The action of the slave does not seem to

have had the approval of the West India merchant, and he resolved to send him back to the West Indies, selling him to another master. Spens was delighted with the freedom he had had in the bracing village of Methil, and having had an inkling of his master's intention, he left him, and took up his abode with a farmer in Wemyss parish. The desertion resulted in the master raising a process in the Court of Session praying that Spens should be ordained to return to his slavery, and against the farmer for advising the foreigner to desert, and for affording him protection. What added importance to the action is the fact that it was the first case raised in England or Scotland in which it was judicially asserted that although slavery was allowed to exist in the British colonies, a slave was free the instant he set foot on British soil. In the parish a great amount of interest was taken in the case, and a large sum of money was raised to enable Spens to defend what were considered to be his just rights and privileges as a British subject. The case was enrolled for January 1770. Four lawyers were engaged for the slave, and the case was debated on 2nd February 1770. Memorials were ordered to be given in by both parties, but before another stage had been reached the master died and the case was dropped. A most creditable feature in connection with the case is the fact that the four advocates and solicitor who were engaged for the defender refused to accept any fee for their services. With the collapse of the case the slave obtained his freedom, and he returned to the parish of Wemyss to do good work for the kindly farmer who had espoused his cause. The action of the miners and salters and agricultural labourers in the parish of Wemyss in subscribing for the defence of the slave must appear all the

more creditable when it is kept in mind that in 1770 the miners and salters were not far removed from serfdom. What is known as the Emancipation Act was only passed in 1774, and it was after all a half-hearted measure. The preamble set out with the frank statement that "Many colliers and coal-bearers and salters are in a state of slavery and bondage, bound to the collieries and salt works where they work for life, transferable with the collieries and salt works when their original masters have no further use for them." The statute provided that after 1st July 1775 no person beginning to work as a collier, coalbearer, or salter was to be bound in any other way than other servants; but boys and men who were engaged at the mines or at salt works before the passing of the Act were left as they were for a certain number of years. Complete emancipation only came in 1799, and how much the Act of 1774 failed of its purpose will be evident when it is stated that the Act of 1799 opened with the words "Many colliers and coal-bearers still continue in a state of bondage."

The Salt Pans of the Olden Time.

At one time salt was a national industry in Scotland. The principal seats of the industry were the shores of the Firth of Forth—the coal and the sea supplying the necessary conditions for its manufacture. The southern shores of the Forth, from Prestonpans to Portobello, were studded with pans and bucket patts, and at Pittenweem and St Monans, and from Leven to Kirkcaldy and from Charleston to Kincardine on the north side, the collieries and salt works were so numerous that they led James VI. to compare the ancient "Kingdom" to "A beggar's mantle with a fringe of gold." How much the coal industry

depended on the salt trade is brought out by an incident which happened in the days of Charles I. Some stupid people, who were evidently afraid that the salt trade would lead to the early exhaustion of the coal supplies, presented a petition to Charles praying that the export of Scotch salt should be "limited to a small quantity, saleable only to a few persons" The Magistrates of the city of Edinburgh were wise in their day and generation and inaugurated opposition to the proposal, with the result that the Privy Council took up the matter, and in a letter addressed the King as follows:—"Without the benefit of the salt these sumptuous water-works and mines required for maintainance and winning of the coal cannot be upheld, and which being forsaken but for a month the coal must perish, never in any age to be regained." The Council, says Mr Hume-Brown, also represented that half of the shipping of the "kingdom" was employed in the export of coal and salt, and they pleaded with Charles not to strike a deadly blow at the "mutual freedom of trade" which his father had maintained with "princely care."

Writing in 1662, Lamont speaks of the "Saltgriene" of Methil, and in the interesting MS. documents which he left behind him David the second Earl of Wemyss tells us that in 1665 two new salt pans were constructed, and at the same time there was built "with them a new house, high and low, with divers rowms at the harbower, the rooffe being a plaitforme." In another note the Earl states that the "seven pans and ther pattts" at Methil cost 20,000 lib. Scots. The salt pans of Methil were ultimately extended to nine, and how much they figured in the industrial life of Methil will be apparent when it is stated that in 1815, when General Wemyss applied to Govern-

ment for a grant of £5000 towards the improvement of the harbour, he stated the Government drew annually from £8000 to £10,000 as customs dues for salt alone. With the withdrawal of the salt tax in 1825, and the discovery of the rock salt mines in England, the whole aspect of things soon became changed along the shores of the Firth of Forth. Operations were suspended at work after work, the waves were allowed to play at their own "sweet will" in the bucket patts, and very many of the pans and "salt-girnels," which had formed the storehouses for the daily output of the once prosperous works, were deserted and allowed to decay. Methil shared the same fate as many of the burghs and villages on the banks of the Forth.

The reports on the salt works by the ministers who wrote on the parish in the "Old" and the "New Statistical Accounts" present a striking contrast. Writing about 1790, the Rev. George Gibb says:—

"There are nine salt works at Methil, and seven at West Wemyss. These works have been long carried on, and much salt is made at them both for land sale and exportation."

Writing in 1838, the Rev. John M'Lachlan says:—

"At Methil, where there were formerly nine salt pans, there are now none; and at West Wemyss, where there were formerly seven, there are only two, and at present one of them is not working. 6,200 bushels may be about the annual average of salt made for the last three years, the average annual value of which may be £470. This forms at once a very striking contrast to the quantity of salt made in this parish previous to the abolition of the salt duties. In 1818, 1819, and 1820, the annual average sale of salt at West Wemyss and Methil was 50,400 bushels. The salt made here is excellent, and obtains a ready market."

The salt made in the district had all the merits claimed for it by Mr M'Lachlan, but it did not find a "ready

market" at the price it was possible to produce it for, and hence it was that at the very time he was writing the old Burgh of Barony was living on the memory of days when it was a busy and thriving place, with whirling windmills, smoking salt pans, and a busy harbour.

The Haunt of "Thrummy Cap."

The "Gritte Doubill Housse" which the Earl of Wemyss built on the harbourhead had ceased to be the "salt house" it had once been, and in Mr M'Lachlan's days had become the haunt of "Thrummy Cap"—Methil's ghost—the spirit of a Dutch wood contractor, who had often journeyed with wood to Methil and who had failed to get an account squared with one of his Fife patrons. For many long years the spirit of the Dutch merchant made periodical visits to the "Salt-Girnel" of Methil and presented the unsettled account. The visits from the unseen world have ceased. Some say that "Thrummy" ultimately had the satisfaction of having his promissory note met with golden guineas, but people who believe in the spiritual dictum that we brought nothing into the world and can take as little with us, do not hesitate to say that the busy Methil port of to-day is not a place for ghosts, and that when the first blast of a steamer's horn was heard, the visitor from the dim beyond took his farewell. And so the present generation have as little dread of "Thrummy Cap" as they have of Bailie Malcolm, who in 1725 was called upon by the lord of the manor to punish the salters who refused to "coall" the pans and to lay by the heels the miners who attempted to run away.

Two Glimpses of Methil.

Barbieri, who visited Methil in 1856, says:—

"It is an ancient and decayed place. It has a better harbour

on the Forth than any in the neighbourhood. Population, 530. Many of its houses are in ruins, and its trade is nearly gone. It seems to be the shrivelled up skeleton of a once important place."

Barbieri is brutally frank in his criticisms of the manners, customs, and villages in Fife, and in his desire to find fault he often overlooks redeeming features. He has not a single word to say for the links and the game of golf, and evidently failed to recognise that the people were struggling to the best of their ability with an ebbing industrial tide. The Rev. Peter M'Ainsh, who came to Leven after the Disruption as the missionary under the late Mr Forman, spent a good deal of time for several years in Methil, and at a bazaar held two years ago, in connection with Methil United Free Church, he gave us the following glimpse at the village of fully half a century ago:—

"Fifty years had passed last May since he began his labours as preacher in connection with Methil Mission. Fifty years were a long look back, and the Methil of 1853 was very different from the Methil of 1903. He could scarcely realise he was standing in Methil. If time had permitted he would have told them something of the Methil of 1853—of its beautiful clean harbour; of its venerable buildings, many of them two storeys in height with outside stairs; the frank furthy folks, with always a kindly welcome to the minister; of the beautiful links to the east and to the west, and of the comfortable meeting-place, known as the 'Salt-Girnel.' Its floor was strewn with sawdust; it had beautiful chandeliers; its pulpit was covered with blue cloth, fastened with brass nails, and there were two rows of seats with backs. He gathered £7 for those seats. They had forenoon and evening services and Sunday school. People came from Leven, Dubbieside, Kirkland, and Buckhaven to the evening meetings. The gatherings in the 'Salt-Girnel' were the origin of the Free Church, now the United Free Church, of Methil."

The "Salt-Girnel," like "Thrummy," has vanished. The dock and railway occupy the site of many of the two-

storeyed, red-roofed houses, the "Sandy Wynd" and "Beatson's Close" are so very greatly changed that if "Thrummy" were to come back to Methil he would lose himself. The old dominies, Mr Boon and Mr Steven, can only be spoken of by a few links with the past, and "The Crown," where the nappie ale of old was kept, and the last green at Jenny Nicol's well, where many a keen game of golf was decided, are no longer with us. In this restless age all is change. The Methil of to-day presents a striking contrast to the Methil of 1860. It seems but yesterday since Peter Ballingall and Peter Graham stood in the "Sandy Wynd" and declared that the Wynd was henceforth to be known as Commercial Street. And Commercial Street it is. Short as the interval has been, Methil has sprung from a mere village to a town of nearly 3000 inhabitants.

The Established Church

can scarcely be ranked among the modern buildings. As far back as 1582, Sir John Wemyss was appointed patron of the rectory and vicarage of Methil. Methil ultimately dropped out of sight as an ecclesiastical station, and after a hiatus of many years it again appears in the church records of the district, through an appeal to the Kirkealdy Presbytery to erect a mission station in the village. A local committee and the Presbytery took up the work with zeal, and in 1838 a church was opened at a cost of £1200. The foundation stone was laid in June 1837. At first it was difficult to get probationers to go and labour in Methil, and as the result there were a good many holidays. In 1840, however, Mr John Wilson took up duty as a missionary, and was succeeded by Mr James Duff. Mr Duff was succeeded in 1857 by Mr James Morrison,

through whose labours in 1876 the church was raised to the dignity of a *quoad sacra*. On the death of Mr Morrison, the Rev. A. Aytoun Young was called to the charge. On Mr Young's departure to Clunie, Perthshire, in 1891, Mr Thomas Muir, the present incumbent, was called to Methil. Mr Muir was educated at Glasgow University, graduating M.A., B.D.

The United Free Church.

As far back as 1850, services were now and again conducted in the "Salt-Girnel" at Methil by Free Church students. In 1882, when the place showed signs of permanent growth, Mr Robertson, now Dr Robertson of the City Temple, London, took up regular work in the district. Other students followed, and in 1892 Methil was conceded the status of a mission station. Mr R. Francis took charge of the station, and within two years the station was erected into a regular charge. The church was built in 1890, at a cost of £700, and in 1902-3 an extension was made at a cost of fully £800. Mr Francis was educated at Glasgow University.

The Seamen's Institutes.

If there are any buildings in the town which strike one more than others, these are the German Mission station in Durie Street, and the Scottish Coast Mission's "Seamen's Bethel" in Dock Street. On Methil giving promise of being a place which would be visited annually by many German seamen, a missionary began to make periodical visits from Leith. In 1898, the heads of the German Church in Edinburgh and Leith arranged for a missionary, and Herr Voss was accordingly sent to the "Kingdom." In May 1900, the building which bears the inscription "Deutes Seemannshaus" was opened at a cost of £750

It is now upwards of eleven years since the Scottish Coast Mission commenced services among the seamen at Methil. A building fund was inaugurated three years ago, with the result that the Bethel was opened in September 1904, at a cost of fully £800. Mr Boyd, who has charge of the Mission under the auspices of the parent society, has been fully six years in Methil.

Pastor Storen, Leith Norwegian missionary, pays frequent visits to Methil, and conducts services in the Bethel in Dock Street among sailors hailing from "The Land of the Midnight Sun."

Some Industries.

The Methil Engineering Company, Limited, was formed in the beginning of 1900, and in May of that year they commenced operations in the spacious works which run along High Street and Wemyss Place. The Company employ from 15 to 20 hands, and make a specialty of steam winches and ship repairing. Mr Chas. A. Jackson is the general manager of the concern. Messrs Buchan & Duncan, engineers and shipwrights, first commenced work in the saltworks to the west of the dock. The works they now occupy overlook the dock, and were built in 1902. Mr Donald Rose's steam joinery is one of the best appointed works in the country. House building is the trade he has concentrated his energies upon since he commenced business in 1891.

METHILHILL.

The village of Methilhill is situated on the top of the hill beyond the town of Methil, and it was undoubtedly the situation which gave rise to the name. Writing in

1677, Earl David of Wemyss writes of the hamlet which then rested on the "Hill of Methille," where the "Mhynd was wrought costing 10,000 lib." The present pit at Methilhill dates back to 1869, when it was in the hands of Mr Binney, with the late Mr J. W. Kirkby as manager. In 1878 the Pirnie field was taken over by the Fife Coal Company. Since the opening of the pit, parrot coal has been the principal mineral gotten, but now the Bowhouse seam is being worked. Parrot coal was worked at Methilhill long before 1868, and some of the houses date back for centuries. It was one of the older houses which Mr Charles Carlow, the managing director of the Fife Coal Co., in 1902 transformed into an Institute as a memorial of his late father and mother, who were natives of the parish of Wemyss. Reading and recreation rooms are provided in the building.

KIRKLAND VILLAGE.

The village of Kirkland is situated on the banks of the Leven, about a mile to the north of Methil. There is no village in the neighbourhood which has seen more industrial changes. In the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the closing days of the eighteenth centuries, the rattle of the pit machinery common to early times provided an accompaniment to the noise which came from the rush of the River Leven; as time went on the pits were stopped, and instead of mining, the staple industry of the village became that of linen manufacturing, flax spinning, and bleaching. Time came when the rattle of the power-loom became as silent as the hand-loom, spinning and bleaching ceased, and

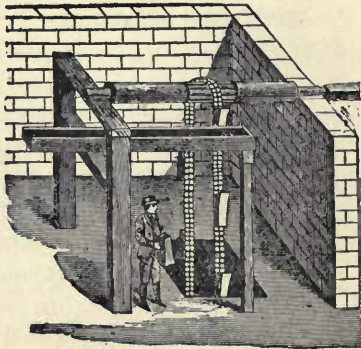
the residents of the "New Toun" as well as the "Auld Toun" were forced to look mournfully on the past, and to sigh for another change in the industrial kaleidoscope.

Just at the time when it appeared as if the "New Toun" was to be surrounded by depressing and decaying buildings, the Cyanide Company appeared upon the scene, and one of the finest works for the manufacture of cyanide in the country was built in the nineties.

Early Coal Workings.

In the inventory of the title-deeds of the Family of Wemyss there is a charter, dated 2nd November 1542, by David, Archbishop of St Andrews, in favour of David Wemyss of Wemyss, in which reference is made to the corn and wauk mills of Methil. Another charter by George, Archbishop of St Andrews, dated 7th November 1611, specifies not only the corn and the wauk mills of Methil, but the coals and coal-heughs of the Kirklands of Methil. These charters prove the existence of corn and other mills as far back as 1542, and the existence of coal workings in 1611. The upper seam of coal is at least 20 fathoms below the surface and the water level at Kirkland. This precludes the idea of coal-getting by the day-level system, and drives one to the conclusion that as far back as the days of Sir John Wemyss of Wemyss coal must have been gotten by machinery on the banks of the Leven. In 1612, when it seemed as if the days of the coalfields of Scotland were numbered, because of the absence of a system of drainage, Sir George Bruce, the captain of Culross industries, hit upon the idea of draining Culross mines by pumps worked upon the chain and bucket system or the Egyptian wheel.

The Wemyss Family seem to have adopted the same system at Kirkland. The "Happy Mine" which Earl David of Wemyss ran from Denbeath to a point near Kirkland, and in which he had discovered seven seams of coal, by 1671 got completely beyond the water level and had to be stopped. At Kirkland the pit workers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries must have been independent of the water levels through which the mines



Chain and Buckets.

were drained into the sea or the burns. In the year 1700, David third Earl of Wemyss, then Lord Elcho, handed over the coal workings of Kirkland to Dr Andrew Mellville, who offered to effect great improvements. In 1705 Lord Elcho resumed the management of the mines, Dr Mellville retiring on a pension and the "use of the new house built at Kirkland." The old crow-stepped house still stands in the village.

In the evidence led in a Court of Session action raised by the Laird of Durie in 1790 against the Laird of Wemyss,

in connection with a Leven Water dispute, we have some glimpses at the Kirkland pits of far off days. Hundreds of years ago the Kirkland dam-dyke was erected on the Leven and ground was flooded to the extent of two and a half acres. From this dam water was for more than 150 years drawn for working the pumping engines through which the Kirkland pits were kept free of water. Two engines were, according to a witness in the Court of Session, worked by the Leven water from the dam in 1723, acting on the chain and bucket system. One of the chain and bucket-engines was displaced by a pump-engine in 1730, and the wooden pumps introduced proved such a success that a second pump-engine was erected in the days of William of Wemyss. The wheel for the bucket engines was about forty feet in diameter, while that for the first pump-engine was twenty-eight feet. For over a year coals were raised from one of the pits by water power; but the horse-gin system seems to have been more satisfactory, and the water-power winding engine was abandoned and the gin again introduced. One of the witnesses in the action thus describes the pits and machinery:—

“The new engine pit was 62 fathoms deep, and the pumps discharged their water about seven fathoms below the pit mouth. The engine wrought four sets of pumps, two upon each beam. The pumps consisted of two bottom pumps, a middle pump, and an upper pump. One of the bottom pumps discharged its water into a stone mine about nineteen fathoms from the bottom of the pit, which mine had a communication with the old engine pit, and the water run into the mine was raised by the two sets of pumps, wrought by the old engine. The working-barrels of the two bottom sets of pumps in the new engine-pit were ten inches in diameter, and the middle and top sets were nine and a half inches. The new engine went six strokes a minute.”

From statements made by some of the other witnesses it appears that during the summer months the management

were sometimes put to great inconvenience for want of water. The managers had to fall back upon the expedient of heightening the damhead by erecting boards; and in times of extreme drought the operatives at the pits and at the different mills on the river journeyed all the way to Loch Leven and cast trenches to bring down a rush of water from the loch. The lower workings of the pit ultimately became flooded with water, and the operatives took to the upper seams. The result of the change was that the most powerful of the two engines kept the colliery free of water.

In 1785, however, the water-engine suddenly gave way. One of the supports of the great wheel snapped, and the huge piece of machinery was thrown out of its place. While the laird of Wemyss was considering the advisability of repairing the engine or introducing a "fire engine," Messrs Neilson, Greenhill & Company appeared upon the scene and proposed to erect a great spinning mill. As the spinners required the whole of the water, the Laird of Wemyss abandoned the idea of reconstructing his colliery machinery, and colliery operations ceased. Recently, as the works of the Fife Coal Company approached Kirkland, the water was drained from the old workings. To-day the Leven colliery miners may have a peep any day at the old workings which received their motive power from the river Leven.

Spinning and Linen Manufacture.

Messrs Neilson, Greenhill & Company built a large spinning work and utilised the river Leven for motive power. Having established a great spinning business in linen and cotton yarns, they turned their attention to the manufacture of linen, and fitted up hand-looms in the building which to this day stands on the southern banks of

the river, and commenced the manufacture of sail-cloth. The firm did not stop at sail-cloth. Accepting Dunfermline as a model, the enterprising manufacturers of Kirkland imitated the city, and commenced the manufacture of damask. In 1794 about 300 hands were employed about the works, and the Company then imported flax direct from Russia to the harbour of Methil. A considerable extension was carried through in 1809, and in January 1810 the works were lit up with gas. This was the first introduction of gas into any spinning mill in Scotland. Rankine, the Leven poet of the beginning of the nineteenth century, writing in 1812 says:—

“ Nor can the philanthropic muse
 Pass Kirkland heedless by,
 Where elegance combines with use
 T’ arrest the traveller’s eye.
 Within the spacious, lofty dome,
 Where wheels unnumbered play,
 The brilliant gas dispels the gloom,
 And night surpasses day.”

Although the firm’s name of Neilson & Coy. was kept up until after 1836, the works at a comparatively early stage—indeed about 1800—were acquired by Mr James Peter, who was ultimately joined by his brother John, and in the hands of the Peter family they remained for nearly a century. Messrs James and John Peter were succeeded by Messrs H. T. and Thomas Peter—gentlemen who have left on record many pleasant memories, and the latter of whom wrote a charming little work which bears the title of “Golfing Reminiscences by an Old Hand.” How much the works progressed during the first half of the century will be apparent when it is stated that in 1836 there were 109 persons engaged in flax-dressing, 283 employed at the spinning mill, 48 in the bleaching department, and 241 at

cloth manufacturing—681 in all. The works were then consuming annually 1000 tons of flax and hemp, and the yearly wages amounted to £17,000. In addition to the works at Kirkland, the firm had looms employed in the manufacture of sail-cloth and damask in every village in the district. The Rev. John M'Lauchlan gives us the following glimpse at the Kirkland of 1836 :—

“The work is a model one. As far as the health and morals of the people are concerned, it is conducted in the best possible manner. It is not only the wish of the proprietors that the work-people's children should be properly educated, but they are really and truly so in all the common branches ; and particular attention is also paid to their instruction in the great principles of Christianity by a well-qualified and efficient teacher. Fewer applications have come for parochial relief from the people employed at this work than from any other quarter of the parish.”

The transition period, from 1848 to 1856, from the hand loom to the power loom, was got over wonderfully well. The hand loom gave place to the power loom on the banks of the Leven in 1857, and during the sixties, when starching warps were being turned out for Kirkcaldy Linoleum Works, and other departments were in full operation, as many as 800 hands must have been in employment at Kirkland. The foreign competition of the eighties, which sent many spinning works in Fife and other counties in Scotland to the wall, was severely felt at Kirkland, and in the closing days of the eighties work was, to the deep regret of many people, suspended. The huge water wheels were stopped, the spinning machinery became silent, the looms on which millions of yards of sailcloth had been manufactured ceased to click, and the great chimney stalks and huge buildings soon stood cold and deserted, a monument of the industry which had gone

from Kirkland for ever. Houses in the "Auld" and the "New Touns" became tenantless, and Kirkland presented a depressing sight. Such was the condition of things in 1896 when

The Scottish Cyanide Company, Limited,

started operations. The Company was formed with a capital of £200,000 for the purpose of making cyanide of sodium for extracting gold from the ore. The great water wheels of old, the chimney stalk, and many huge buildings were soon cleared away, and within three years one of the finest appointed works in the world had been erected on the site of the old spinning mill and bleaching works. The whole of the machinery is driven by turbines of 260 horse power, drawn from the river Leven. In addition to these, there is an electrical installation of ten large boilers, and four triple-expansion Willans engines, of nearly 1000 horse power each, and this power is utilised for heating the electric furnaces for producing cyanide. South Africa is one of the great markets for cyanide, and just before the Boer War broke out in 1899 the manufactured article was selling at 1s 2½d per lb. Unfortunately the process of manufacture had not been perfected at Kirkland when the boom at high rates was on. During the war exports of cyanide were practically stopped, and the market became glutted, with the result that the price fell from 1s 2½d per lb. to 6½d. Stocks were so large that for about three years the price remained at this abnormally low rate, and the works at Kirkland were ultimately shut down. Time has not been allowed to pass in vain, however. The process of making has been perfected, the producing plant has been added to, and the Scottish Cyanide Company are in a position to

turn out more cyanide than any other work in Scotland, with the exception of one, and the quality is of the finest. Reports from all parts of the country show that the trade is reviving from the war glut. In addition to the original capital of £200,000, debenture stock of £50,000 was further spent on the undertaking. The Company went into liquidation in September 1905, and a new company was formed, with a capital of £50,000. The directors are:— Messrs W. Sanderson, C. King, G. Readman, C. Carlow, A. D. Mackenzie, J. B. Readman, and Dr Dawson Turner. Mr R. Bryce Lawrie is the secretary and manager, and Mr Sparshott, electrical engineer.



THE TOWN OF BUCKHAVEN.

Trade brings wonderful changes, and in no part of the parish of Wemyss have the changes during the past forty years been greater than in the town of Buckhaven. Forty-five years ago the population of the town was 1950 souls ; to-day it is 5000. It is quite forty years since the writer passed along the East and the West "Toun." It happened to be a *fete* day. As the visitors passed into the narrow streets more than one of the residents declared that "A' the world's in oor toun the day." Then, even on a holiday, sculls, partan creels, coils of baited lines, and white-lettered bladders were met with at every turn in the narrow lanes and at the foot of the outside stairs of the streets, and when two names were mentioned the surnames of the village were practically exhausted. Identification had often to be helped by the adoption of a wife's Christian name or the name of the skipper's boat.

In the old-world days, perhaps a century ago, the name adopted was not enough in some instances, and nicknames were had recourse to. And if a well-known legend is to be accepted as anything near the truth, the "tee" or "slug" names had often to be used with caution. The legend tells us that on a stormy night two men met on the historic Braehead. "Windy, Willie," said one. "Terrible, Tammy," said the other. The weather greeting happened to be the nicknames of the men, and, according

to the legend, they fell on each other and fought out as tough a battle as if they had been struggling with the wind and tide at the entrance to Buckhaven harbour.

When "Tammy" and "Willie" fought on the Brae-head, fishing was the staple industry of the village. "Half dealersmen" only now and again came from the pits of Wemyss and Durie and joined the old salts for a brief



J. Patrick]

West Shore Street, Buckhaven.

[*Edinburgh*

season in the "herring draive," or at the deep sea lines. Now the process is reversed. Only a handful of the villagers hoist the dark brown sails at intervals, and some of the younger men fill in time in and about the pits. "Coal, coal, coal!" is the cry, and coal has raised Buckhaven from a fishing village to a place which is the centre of municipal life for the three towns which form the Burgh

of Buckhaven. Happily in the transformation scene which has been evolved during the past thirty years, the streets which formed the old fishing village are preserved. The old red-roofed houses still cling to the rocks, which rise boldly from the waters' edge, like limpets.

The "Buckhyne" of old is a village apart, and as one looks on the few old women who may now be seen shelling mussels, baiting lines, or mending nets, he may at least form an idea of the spectacle the streets and lanes presented when the entire residents of the old houses lived by the fishing industry.

The Original Inhabitants.

The Rev. Dr Harry Spens, who was minister of the parish of Wemyss from 1744 to 1761, writing in 1778 says :—

"As far as I have been able to learn, the original inhabitants of Buckhaven were from the Netherlands about the time of Philip II. Their vessel had been stranded on the shore. They proposed to settle and remain. The family of Wemyss gave them permission. They accordingly settled. By degrees they acquired our language and adopted our dress, and for these three score years past they have had the character of a sober and sensible, an industrious and honest set of people. The only singularity in their ancient customs that I remember to have heard of was that of a richly ornamented girdle or belt, worn by their brides of good condition and character at their marriage, and then laid aside and given in like manner to the next bride that should be deemed worthy of such an honour. The village consists at present of about 140 families, 60 of whom are fishers, and the rest land labourers, weavers and other mechanics.

Philip II. of Spain reigned from 1527 to 1599, so that if the tradition on which Dr Spens founded his statement is correct, the "original inhabitants" first arrived in the "Hyne" of Buckhaven when James IV. was King of

Scotland, and in the days of Sir John Wemyss of that ilk or David, first Earl of Wemyss.

The Origin of the Name.

Shelving rocks stretch out from the town into the depths of the Forth, and when the tide ebbs or flows there is a constant commotion and the sound of waves. In a storm the noise, as the waves lash over the skerries, is great, and it is probably from the roar of the sea that Buckhaven gets its name. *Buc* or *beuc* in Gaelic means to yell or to roar, and if we drop the *v* in Buckhaven we get Buckha'en, and naturally stumble into the local pronunciation *Buckhyne*. Certain it is that from time immemorial the people have spoken of the East and the West Hyne, and the name has been reminiscent of the sound of the surge which drove the Netherlands crew on to the rocks which lie in the "Hyne."

A Sixteenth Century Incident.

The first authentic notice of Buckhaven is to be found in the "Wemyss Memorials," under date 1516. In this year a dispute arose between the Laird of Wemyss and Sir John Dingwall, vicar of the parish of Wemyss, respecting the teinds belonging to Sir John. Besides the Laird, the fishermen of Easter Wemyss and Buckhaven were parties to the action. While the action was going on, the vicar appealed to the Court of Rome, a course of procedure which was opposed to the policy of the Scottish Kings of the time and the patriotic clergy. The vicar was punished for his conduct, the sentence of a heavy fine and a severe rebuke being announced at high mass in Wemyss Church. The difficulty about the teinds was ultimately got over by the parties agreeing upon a compromise and passing in to church "in oxtors" (arm-in-arm).

In 1667.

During the war between England and Holland, in 1667, David second Earl of Wemyss and another peer of the realm, had some special authority in the County of Fife. Their lordships were written to by Archbishop Sharp and asked to look to the condition of the coast towns on the Forth. The Earl of Wemyss was the means by his vigilance of saving some of the King's ships. Here is the story, as told in the Earl's diary :—

“On the last day of April 1667, the Hollands fleete inveaded Scotland, and cam up that day to Bruneiland, with 30 good ships, sum of 60, sum of 50 gunes a peisse, besides 10 littile ones. They did offer to land to have burnt all the ships in Bruneiland, but was beatten back, and they shotte above 1000 gritte shott att itt, sum of 24 bolle, and did not kill man, wife or child; shotte att noe other toune or please; killed one man in a botte off Buickheavin that day, the botte being at fishing, and they would not cum aboard of them, so they shotte att the botte, and killed one Alexander Christie ther. The botte gott off, and we bourried the man at Wemyss cairfully that day.—May 1667.”

This incident shows that the men of Buckhaven in 1667 were men of pluck. They had been pursuing their calling peacefully off Buckhaven when the Dutch fleet hove in sight. The fishermen refused to go aboard the war vessels, and they were fired upon. The crew do not seem to have become panic-stricken by the fact that one of the balls took effect and killed one man. Amidst the shouts and the shots of the Dutch bullies the fishermen rowed pluckily for the harbour, and in the quaint language of the Earl “the botte gott off.”

De Foe's Glimpses.

For many years the people of Buckhaven were a community to themselves. They married when comparatively young, and they invariably wedded fishermen's daughters

of the same village. The fishermen were a most industrious class of men, and many of them owned the red-roofed houses which stood on the Broken Brae and on the Links, in addition to their boats and all the furnishings common to the industry. Defoe, the talented author of "Robinson Crusoe," visited the "Hyne" about the year 1700, and he says:—

"Buckhaven is inhabited by fishermen, who are employed wholly in catching fresh fish every day in the Firth, and carrying them to Leith and Edinburgh markets. The buildings are but a miserable row of cottages, yet there is scarce a poor man in it; but they are in general so very clownish that to be of the village of Buckhaven is become a proverb."

Defoe, like the cynic who wrote the vulgar pamphlet which takes the title of "The History of Buckhaven: comprising the Sayings of Wise Willie and Witty Eppie, and an Account of the College," must have been snubbed by a "Bucker" fishwife while higgling over the purchase of some fresh herrings. Dr Robert Chambers, who lived in the days when the so-called History was being circulated among the chap-books of the country, was at special pains to get facts bearing on the people who had been lampooned and maligned, and writing in 1828 he says:—

"To do them justice, it must be declared that the people on inspection appear precisely the same industrious, simple, primitive race with the rest of the piscatory inhabitants of Fife."

The minister of the parish of 1821 is as emphatic in his contradiction of Defoe as the minister of the eighteenth century and Dr Chambers were. Mr M'Lachlan says:—

"There are 170 men connected with the fishing station at Buckhaven. They have no fewer than 144 boats of various dimensions. . . . It may well be said that they are a most industrious class of men, and are truly entitled, not only to protection, but to every countenance and encouragement."

In an old song we have yet another view of the people of Buckhaven which is very different from that of Defoe :—

“ The canty carls of Dysart,
The merry lads of Buckhaven,
The saucy limmers of Largo,
The bonny lasses of Leven.”

The “ College ” referred to in the “ History ” is a building which to this day stands at the foot of the brae at the east end of the town. A whale’s jawbones grace the entrance to the historic building. It may be interesting to state that it is more than a century since the building was occupied as a school. About the year 1800 it fell into the hands of a sailor, who, says Taylor, engaged in smuggling. The smuggled goods were concealed on the premises, and drunken brawls often took place. In a brawl the sailor’s wife met her death, and her ghost haunted the place.

The vulgar “ Sayings ” of Willie and Eppie have long since ceased to linger about the “ Hyne,” and it is more than fifty years since the people ceased to persuade themselves into the idea that the ghost of the wife of the smuggling sailor lingered nightly about the whale’s jawbones.

The Fishing Industry from 1750 to 1905.

It appears that before 1750, long before the steam trawler was thought of, haddocks began to get scarce in Largo Bay, and Mr Gibb, the minister of the parish, tells us that the fishermen had in consequence been reduced. “ Formerly,” he says, “ there were in Easter Wemyss, five boats, with five men each, and one in Wester Wemyss, with five men, and now there is only one boat in Easter Wemyss, and the crew consists of old men.” Despite the scarcity of haddocks and the decay of the industry at East

Wemyss, the fishermen of Buckhaven stuck to their boats and their lines, and Mr Gibb says that in the village "there is little alteration in the number of fishermen, and though fish are much scarcer than formerly, yet the fishermen are in some measure compensated by the high prices." Away back in 1750 as many as 25,000 haddocks were sometimes caught in one day by the "merry lads" of Buckhaven. At that time the East Neuk burghs had a complete monopoly of the Edinburgh market, and big as the catches were by the Buckhaven crews, the bulk of the fish were sold in the "Kingdom" of Fife.

As the boats arrived, the pier was crowded with men and horses. The fish were transferred from the boats to the creels, a couple of creels were slung over the horses' backs, and far and near the fish were hawked. The creels, Mr Gibb tells us, ultimately gave place to "neat carts," and this was the beginning of the "cadger" as he is known to-day. In the closing decade of the eighteenth century, when the fish seemed annually to be getting scarcer in Largo Bay, the hopes of the Buckhaven fishermen were raised by the appearance of herring in Inverkeithing Bay. The harvest gotten under the shadow of the Ferry hills and Inch Garvie was disappointing in the extreme, and the fishermen of Buckhaven had very soon to begin to look further afield for fish. By the close of the eighteenth century it became apparent to the fishermen that if they meant to exist as a community they must journey outwith the May Island. They began to make journeys to Helmsdale, Fraserburgh, and Wick, and so successful were they in the departure that Mr M'Lauchlan, the minister of the parish, writing in 1837, tells us that the fishing station of Buckhaven had greatly increased in

recent years. At that time there were 170 men employed in the trade, and they owned as many as 144 boats of various dimensions. They set out then in the month of July for the great herring fishing stations in the north, and there they generally stayed for two months. Mr M'Lauchlan gives the values of boats and nets belonging to Buckhaven as follows :—

	Boats.	Each Boat.	Nets for each Boat.	Total.
First Class -	60	£75	£110	£11,100 0 0
Second „ -	44	40	120	7,040 0 0
Third „ -	40	14	20	1,360 0 0
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	144			£19,500 0 0

It will be noticed that the value of nets is greater for the second class boats than the first. This is accounted for by the fact that three sets of nets were required for the second class boats, while only two sets were employed in connection with the first and the third.

Previous to 1785, twelve boats, with six men in each, went in the month of August to the herring fishing off Dunbar ; but the encouragement by 1790 had become so poor that the Dunbar visits had been completely abandoned. Early in the nineteenth century the Dunbar fishings were resumed, however, and in 1835 as many as 100 boats crossed the Forth during July, August, and September, and engaged in the herring fishing with considerable profit. In the fifties and the early sixties the herring again fought shy of the Dunbar coast. Once more the Dunbar waters were abandoned, and in 1866 the fishermen hied themselves as far north as Stornoway. North Shields afterwards became a favourite station, and for some years as many as 100 Buckhaven boats unfurled their sails and set out for the south. In very successful

years some boats "grossed" as much as £800 for the season; but in recent years the virtue has gone out of even the waters of South Shields, and the 35 boats which went south in 1904 returned to the Hyne to report an exceedingly lean season. Happily 1905 showed considerable improvement. Mr Gibb tells us that "the fish usually caught in the Forth are haddocks, cod, turbot, skate, whittings, soles, flounders, mackerel, and herring." Some crews are still engaged all the year round at what is now spoken of under the expressive term of "the white fishing," but the catches of white fish are not a patch on the takings of Mr Gibb's day. Less than half a century ago the winter herring fishing commenced in November and continued until the month of March, and as many as 50 boats daily left Buckhaven harbour during the season. Now it is the first month of the year before the fishing commences, and it generally closes by the first week in March. At the time herring appeared in Inverkeithing Bay the boats commenced operations for the season further up the river than they do at present, and Burntisland was a considerable market for the fleet of boats. Cod and ling formed quite a harvest sixty years ago, and the fish were disposed of freely at 5s per score. To day, cod and ling bring as much as £3 or £4 per score; but big as the price is, it does not compensate for the terrible scarcity of fish. The other fishermen of the East Coast have the same story to tell of scarcity of fish as the Buckhaven men. Along the whole line the change is set down to the action of the trawlers in dragging over spawning grounds. Twenty years ago the opposition to trawling became so strong that the Government were compelled to interfere, and fixed the well-known

three mile limit, the demarkation line being fixed from Tantallon Castle to Fife Ness. In 1860 an impetus was given to the trade by the arrival of English buyers. The English buyers did not linger long in the district, and of the old fishcurers, whose names are to this day spoken of with reverence in many a household, Bailie Kinnear may be said to be the only one who is still in the flesh.

The Harbour.

In the eighteenth century Buckhaven harbour was such a wretched apology for a haven for boats that the Rev. George Gibb, writing in 1790, does not think it worthy of mention. He says:—"There are two good harbours in the parish, one at Methil and one at Wester Wemyss." In 1835 a strong agitation arose for improvement at Buckhaven. The Fishery Board was approached, and ultimately a scheme was launched which was estimated to cost £4200. Of this sum the Fishery Board agreed to contribute £3000, and the balance was to be made up by the fishermen. The scheme was carried through in 1837-8. A further extension scheme was entered on in 1850, and two years later it was completed at a cost of £18,000, £6000 of which was subscribed by the fishermen, and the Fishery Board made up the deficiency. In July 1905 a Bill, which was promoted by Mr Wemyss of Wemyss Castle and others, was heard by a Committee of the House of Lords in London, praying for powers for the construction of a dock at Buckhaven at a cost of £260,000. After hearing the evidence of the promoters, the Chairman, the Duke of Northumberland, said the Committee found that the preamble of the Bill had not been proved, but they had been much impressed by the evidence with regard to the congestion of the district. They did not consider it had

been proved that no other party could relieve the congestion except Mr Wemyss, the promoter, and therefore they did not at present see sufficient reasons for relieving him from the agreements he had entered into with the North British Railway Company, while there were still hopes of the necessary accommodation being provided from some other source. The Bill was accordingly thrown out. In the month of August a meeting of coalmasters and shipping agents was held in Glasgow, at which a deputation was appointed to wait on the Directors of the North British Railway Company and press them to provide additional accommodation at Methil. The Committee met the Directors on September 21st. The Directors intimated that they would consider the representations made to them, and there is a prospect of a Bill providing for an extension at Methil being promoted in November 1905.

Muiredge and Rosie Collieries.

In 1864, at the very time the fishing industry showed signs of decay, three men arrived at Dysart railway station from the little mining village of Crossgates. The young men caught up a young brewer who was driving a horse and spring cart and who had disposed of his load. "Is this the road to Wemyss Castle?" asked one of the men. "Yes," was the frank reply, "I pass the entrance to the avenue. Jump on, if you care." The strangers did not require a second invitation. They leapt on to the van and were driven to the avenue leading to Wemyss Castle. The three men were Archibald Bowman, and James and David Cairns. They were on their way to Wemyss Castle to make inquiries about Muiredge Colliery, and before they had left the Castle they had agreed to take a lease of the colliery.

At Muiredge Colliery a shaft had been sunk by the Wemyss family to the chemiss splint, a depth of 80 fathoms. It stood, however, in the centre of a coal which was so much calcined that it was practically useless, and the subject, with its continual rush of water down the



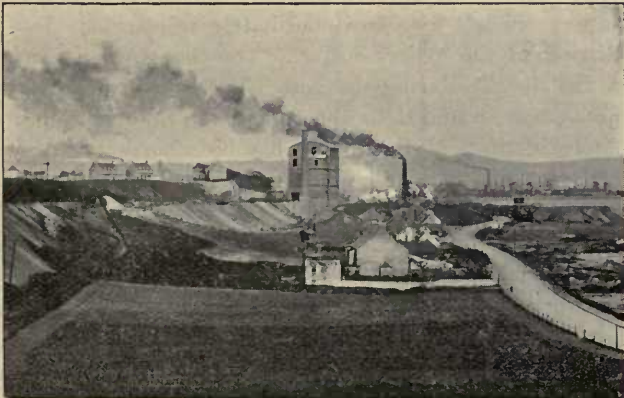
Mr Archibald Bowman.

shaft, cannot be said to have been particularly inviting. Turn how the men liked, they were face to face with burnt coal, and an old friend who had had some experience of mining did not hesitate to affirm that the Company

would woo "fickle fortune" in vain, "and would only lose what little they had." The partners had a strong scent for coal. They discovered the site of Earl David's "Happy Mine," to the east, and saw puffing pits and heard the rattle of coals to the west, and from this they argued that they were bound ultimately to succeed at Muiredge. And succeed they did. They got through the burnt coal and pierced the dyke to the west, and struck a large stretch of fine coal at a point where an authority, who was alleged to read the metals "like a book," said the coal had been in the air and in the glacial period had gone down the Forth. "Down the Forth," forsooth! It was more than 100 fathoms under the surface. It has gone down the Forth during the past 30 years—not on glaciers, but in boats. The little bits of luck put the Company on their feet and gave them heart, and from a fortnightly wage bill of £60 they soon rose to £100, and, according to an official statement made in 1891, the wages paid every fortnight amounted to £4000. Early in the seventies the Company appointed Mr A. Bowman to the post of general manager, and from the date of his appointment the progress began to be even more marked than it had previously been. In the golden days of 1872-3, the Company reaped a rich harvest from the two Muiredge pits. Mr Bowman turned the surplus cash to good account by sinking the Denbeath, the Isabella, and the Rosie pits, and raised the output of the Company from some 300 tons to 2000 tons a day.

A break was experienced in 1879, when Mr James Cairns died, and just before the fall of the leaf in 1882, another loss was sustained by the decease of Mr Lawrence Bowman. Mr David Cairns left Methil and took up his abode at Crail, where he was beyond the sound of whistling

steam pipes and rattling jiggers. He died in the spring of 1905. The remains of the three men who founded the Company now lie side by side in the God's acre of the parish of Wemyss. The three worked cordially together. It is fitting that they should find a last resting-place in the same sunny spot, and within a short distance of the old corbie-stepped and red-roofed houses where they first saw the light of day. When they went first to live inland they used often to say that they could not sleep for want

*J. Patrick]***Denbeath Washer.***[Edinburgh]*

of the noise of the waters of the Forth. They have been laid to rest within the shadow of Macduff's Castle, and within the sound of the rippling waves which in youth brought balmy sleep. Peace to their ashes!

The Denbeath, Isabella, and Rosie pits of to-day present a striking contrast to the Muiredge pit, where the Company first commenced operations. But great as the contrast is, it is not more striking than that which is

presented to the minds of those who are able to compare the facilities for the disposal of the coals with those of to-day. For some time after Muiredge was started, the coals were conveyed to Methil harbour in carts ; the carts in time gave place to a horse waggon way by Denbeath Glen, and ultimately the horses gave place to a locomotive. In the early days of the Company all was excitement at the pits when a boat of 200 tons came into Methil ; now it takes a steamer of from 3000 to 5000 tons to arouse just a little excitement, and the little excitement is confined to colliery officials who are immediately responsible for the dispatch of the colliery output. The changes experienced in the district during the past 40 years have not by any means been confined to the collieries. Like Methil, the old-world town of Buckhaven has been surrounded by a modern town, and while in 1861 the population was 1965, the population to-day is 5000. Messrs Bowman & Co.'s lease expired in August 1905, and the works were then acquired by the Wemyss Coal Coy., Ltd.

Mr Archibald Bowman, the general manager of Bowman & Company, is a man of restless energy. He is Chairman of the Bowhill Coal Company, and takes a great interest in all that concerns the welfare of that most successful Company. He has been appointed a Director in the Wemyss Coal Company, Limited.

Net Manufacturing and other Works.

Sixty years ago the click of the hand-loom was heard in most of the narrow streets in Buckhaven, and Mr Thomas Ireland carried on an extensive business as reed maker, making reeds for not only the workers of linen in the parish of Wemyss, but for toilers at the loom in the entire county. In the sixties the hand-loom was gradually

silenced by the power-loom, and the reed industry of Buckhaven declined with the hand-loom trade. Mr Ireland died in 1903. Another trade which has left the burgh is that of boatbuilding. Time was when Mr J. Ireland, Mr J. Kinnear, Mr D. Brown, and Mr M. Baird each had a considerable number of hands engaged in building boats for the fishermen of the Forth. A launch has not taken place in the "Hyne" for many years, and the only links that remain of the industry are some old repairing works. Net manufacturing has been carried on at Buckhaven for many years. As far back as 1858 Mr John Ireland, who was a man of great enterprise, and his sons, took up net manufacturing under the firm name of John Ireland & Sons. When they first commenced operations, nets were made of hemp twine, but when cotton took the place of hemp, the Messrs Ireland were not slow in adapting themselves to the change, and made an important addition to their works in the shape of a spinning work. For some time they employed as many as 300 hands. When the fishing industry began to decline in the neighbourhood, however, the hands were gradually reduced, and the firm gave up manufacturing in 1870. A destructive fire played sad havoc among the spinning plant in 1880, and operations were not again commenced. Messrs J. & W. Stuart, patent net and twine manufacturers, Musselburgh, took over Messrs Ireland's net manufacturing plant in 1870 and commenced operations in the old works. In 1878 they built their present commodious premises and had them fitted up with machinery of the latest type. There are seventy looms in operation, and employment is generally given to about seventy hands. Mr W. D. Matthew is in charge of Messrs Stuart's Buckhaven branch. Mr William Thomson opened his works in

Randolph Street in 1870. Since the opening, important additions have been made to the works, and the machinery is thoroughly up-to-date. There are forty looms in operation, and these give employment to about forty hands. Mr Thomson has his son associated with him in business. Time was when all the wood used for house building, &c., in the parish of Wemyss was cut at the sawmills of Kirkland or Leven. For many years Mr David Brown and his sons have had a well-appointed sawmill in operation at Buckhaven. Messrs Brown deal largely in our home-grown timber. They buy up whole plantations of the best of Scotch wood and have the trees converted at Buckhaven into the heavy beams and other timbers which have now become so popular at many of the Fife pits for above and below ground.

The Ecclesiastical History.

The Rev. John M'Lachlan, the minister of the parish of Wemyss in the thirties, looked with a kindly eye on the Dissenters of Buckhaven, and gave them a certificate of "respectability." Writing in 1836, Mr M'Lauchlan says:—

"There is a Dissenting meeting-house in connection with the United Association Synod, situated on the Links of Buckhaven, about two miles from the parish church. The clergyman's stipend is £110 per annum, with manse and garden. The present minister is the Rev. Robert Pollock. The congregation is respectable, and divine service is well attended."

The stipend paid to Mr Pollock shows that the Dissenting congregation of Buckhaven were "respectable" in more ways than that suggested by Mr M'Lauchlan. They were Dissenters, and they were willing to pay for their Dissent. The history of Dissent in Buckhaven goes back to a more remote period than 1836. As far back as

October 1739, Mr John Thomson, an elder in the Established Church of Wemyss parish, and several friends met and resolved to cast in their lot with the Associate Presbytery. At first they attended the Associate Church of Abbotshall, Kirkcaldy, but on a church being opened at Kennoway they "lifted their lines" at Abbotshall, and joined the Dissenters in Kennoway. Some difference of opinion arose in 1791 in Kennoway over a call to a successor to the Rev. Wm. Kidston. The members resident in Buckhaven and other places in the parish of Wemyss took advantage of the division to plead for the formation of a separate congregation at Buckhaven. The Presbytery gave ear to the appeal from Wemyss parish, and in 1792 a congregation was formed. A delightful site on the links, near the Denbeath of to-day, was granted by General Wemyss for a church, and the building was completed and ready for public worship in January 1795. The church was built from boulders gathered from the beach, and from blocks quarried from the Braid Hills close by.

From the date of formation in 1792 to 1796 the congregation had no regular minister, and for nearly two years services were conducted in the open air and in a barn in the village. David Telford, from Stirling, was the first minister. He was ordained on 12th July 1796. He began with a stipend of £70 a year, and the modest sum of £4 annually for house rent. Mr Telford was paid a half year's stipend in advance on the day of his ordination, and according to the custom of the times, the cheque included £6 8s 10d for a suit of clothes and certain furnishings. A manse was built near the church in 1801, and then followed a wall round the manse. The Rev.

Wm. Dunlop, the present pastor of the congregation, who some years ago made a study of the minutes of the church, tells us that in 1807 as many as 227 sittings were let in the body of the church and 59 in the "pens." In 1810, the stipend was raised to £85 a year. The congregation seems to have been alive to the necessity of educating the young, and about 1810 a school was opened near the church. Henry Davidson was the first "bedel," and he was followed by John Anderson and James Martin (John). Stories of the good work done by these functionaries are told in Buckhaven to this day.

On the 4th May 1824 Mr Telford died. John Landale, a member of the congregation, wrote the following inscription, which appears on a memorial stone in Wemyss Churchyard:—

"To wean mankind from sin and vice
And lead them to a Saviour's grace;
To visit, cherish, and console
The sick, the poor, the afflicted soul,
Thus Telford spent his useful life,
A friend to peace, aloof from strife;
As parent, husband, neighbour, friend,
Indulgent, loving, good and kind:
With love to God and man inspired,
The friend of both lies here interred."

On the 29th August 1825 it was agreed to call Mr Peter M'Dowall, from Ivy Place, Stranraer. Mr M'Dowall was at the same time under call to Alloa, and he chose Alloa. It was May 1826 before the congregation found themselves in a position to make another call. This time the choice fell on the Rev. Robert Pollock, from Mauchline. Mr Pollock became the second minister of the Secession Church of Buckhaven in December 1826. He was certainly a man of considerable ability, and under the

title of "Apocalyptic Regeneration" he published a study of the Book of Revelation. He had the honorary degree of LL.D. conferred upon him. With all his ability, he does not appear to have been particularly steadfast in the Dissenting faith. Mr Dunlop reminds us that one of his famous sayings was, "My sword is now unsheathed, never to return to the scabbard until the triumphant flag of Voluntaryism is flying from the last rampart of the Establishment." In 1845 he hauled down the flag of Voluntaryism, bade adieu to Buckhaven, and became minister of Kingston *quoad sacra* Church, Glasgow. Mr Pollock was a medal holder on Dubbieside golf links in 1837, and according to tradition could use his fists as well as he could handle a golf cleek. "Purse or life!" was the demand which a local Dick Turpin made while Pollock passed the "Double Dykes" one night. "Do you know who I am?" asked the minister. "Yes; you're Pollock the minister o' Buckhyne," was the reply. Pollock cast his coat, ejaculating—"There lies the minister, and here stands Pollock." And Pollock set to work and gave the "would-be-robber" a severe thrashing. Mr Pollock was succeeded by the Rev. Wm. Cowan, from Selkirk. Mr Cowan was ordained on 6th July 1846. The stipend at that time was £100 a year and £10 for expenses. Within a year of Mr Cowan's settlement in Buckhaven, the union of the Secession and Relief Churches had taken place. Mr Cowan resigned the charge in May 1855, and took up missionary work in Glasgow. Mr Alexander C. Rutherford, Falkirk, was inducted as the fourth minister of the congregation on 13th November 1855. Mr Rutherford was translated to North Richmond Street Church, Edinburgh, on 27th March 1860. He died in

1878. The Rev. Robert Alexander, a native of Fenwick, came next. He was ordained on 25th March 1862. Mr Alexander accepted a call to Queen Anne Street Church, Dunfermline, on 12th August 1873. Mr John G. Train succeeded Mr Alexander. He was ordained on 7th June 1874. Mr Train had not been long in Buckhaven when he had call after call presented by congregations. In 1886 he accepted a call to Hull, and is now in London. Mr William Shaw Stewart, a native of Ireland, was ordained to the pastorate of the Church on 27th September 1887. He went to Glasgow in December 1890, and on 28th April 1891 Mr Wm. Dunlop was ordained to the charge. Mr Dunlop is a native of Ayrshire, and is an M.A. of Glasgow University. He took his Divinity course in the United Presbyterian Hall of Edinburgh. He takes a great interest in every institution established for good in the Burgh. So far as golf is concerned, history repeats itself in the manse of Buckhaven. Mr Dunlop is as skilful an exponent of the game of to-day as Mr Pollock was, in the game of the thirties. He plays scratch in the Innerleven Club. The present church was opened during the ministry of Mr Alexander. The opening services took place on 12th April 1869. At the Union the congregation adopted the name of St David's United Free Church.

Muiredge United Free Church.

Muiredge Church is spoken of as a "daughter" of St David's. It was originated by Mr Train, and was opened on 2nd July 1885. The Presbytery intended to place the church to the north of the Ness Braes, near the burn, but ultimately fixed the site at the corner of Church Street, a spot which for years had been a scene of animation at fairs

and holiday times. Being situated on ground on Muir-edge Farm, the church was, at the suggestion of one of the elders who is still with us, named Muiredge Church. The building was begun in 1884. The work proceeded somewhat slowly at first, and during a violent westerly gale a squall of hurricane force blew down the front gable. This retarded the work still more. With but little help from without, the congregation went on year by year gradually but surely paying off debt until, before the ministry of the first minister was closed in 1894, the church was free from all financial difficulty. The congregation carried through a painting and cleaning scheme at a cost of £100 before its second minister was inducted. After a year this new debt was cleared off. Mr John Bissett (of Lathones) was ordained as the first minister in July 1886. On his acceptance of a call to Lochee Road Church, Dundee, in February 1894, a short vacancy ensued. In July of the same year Mr David Hume, M.A., London, was ordained to the second charge. The want of a manse was soon raised as a question of increasing urgency, and in 1902 the minister was comfortably housed in a new manse.

St Andrew's United Free Church.

A mission station under the auspices of the Free Church was formed in Buckhaven in 1866. The members were drawn chiefly from East Wemyss and Leven congregations. For several years the station was under the charge of successive probationers. The services were at first conducted in the school, but a church was erected and opened in 1872. The building has a rather interesting history. It was originally the place of worship of the Episcopal congregation in the city of St Andrews; but, having become too small, the building as it stood was

purchased by the Free Church Committee, the materials brought by sea to Buckhaven, and re-erected on the present site, the total cost being about £1300. In 1875 the station was raised by the General Assembly to the position of a sanctioned charge. On the 29th October 1875 the Rev. William M'Ghie, the present pastor, was ordained to the charge. Mr M'Ghie is a native of Chapelton, in the parish of Glassford, Lanarkshire. He studied at Glasgow University and Free Church College. During his ministry the congregation has largely increased. At a cost of nearly £1900, the church has been extended, a large and commodious manse erected, and a hall added to the congregational property. Mr M'Ghie has been a member of Wemyss School Board for 21 years, and for a term fulfilled the duties of chairman.

The Established Church.

The Established Church at Buckhaven had its origin in missionary work, commenced in October 1894 by the Rev. John Kennedy, of East Wemyss. The Rev. William Dunlop was the first missionary. The church was opened in 1900. The building cost £1500, and provides accommodation for 320 sitters. There is no debt on the building. Mr Dunlop was succeeded by the Rev. G. Borrowman, who in 1904 was called to the Scots Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The Rev. J. Mackechnie was ordained to the pastorate of the church in February 1905, when he had a hearty welcome from the congregation, and was presented with a gold albert and appendage. Mr Mackechnie is a graduate of Edinburgh University, and was the pastor of the Beach Church, Broughty Ferry, previous to his coming to Buckhaven.

A Church of Christ.

A branch of a body which takes the name of the Church of Christ meets in the Iron Church in Chapel Street. The body met for some time in a hall, but about five years ago built the little iron church in which they now assemble every first day of the week. The members adhere firmly to the old faith of "putting on Christ" by immersion.



THE CAVES OF WEMYSS.

The "Kingdom" of Fife abounds in caves or "weems"—a derivative from the Gaelic name for a cave. In St Andrews we have the cave of St Rule, at Pittenweem the cave of St Fillan, and St Adrian's at Caiplic; in Dunfermline, the cave of St Margaret, and in Culross, St Serf's. The patron saint of Culross is described as having usually spent the forty days of Lent in a cave named the *Desertum*. This cave at *Desertum*, or Dysart, was utilised as a church up to a date near the Reformation. The rocky coast-line of the Firth of Forth from West Wemyss to a point near Buckhaven is, to use a suggestive word of Sir William Fraser, "honey-combed" by caves. Nine caves were for years accessible, but there is little doubt that others existed. As time went on, the openings of the unseen caves had been covered over with fallen and accumulated *debris*. Only one of the nine caves was situated to the west of the village of East Wemyss. It was called the Glass Cave, because in 1610 Sir George Hay, Lord Clerk Register, afterwards Lord Kinnoul, established a manufactory for glass in the pre-historic dwelling, and in 1698, David third Earl of Wemyss followed the example of the Earl of Kinnoul. Seven years ago, the Michael pits were sunk on the shore a little to the east of the historic cave. In the course of time one of the upper seams of coal was worked under the cave. The operations affected the surface, and one evening four years ago a crash was heard

in the valley between Wemyss Castle and East Wemyss. The cave had fallen in, and to-day the Glass Cave presents all the appearance of a huge wrecked lime kiln.

The Earl of Kinnoul seems to have carried on his glass-work at considerable loss. Although the work was one of the earliest of the kind in Scotland, the demand for glass does not seem to have been particularly heavy. Reporting on the trade to James VI., in 1619, the Privy Council state that the proprietor had discovered that the income from glass for a year would not meet a month's bill at the works. Despite the discouraging circumstances, Sir William Fraser found from the Wemyss papers that the works were active in 1691. In 1698, David third Earl of Wemyss obtained an Act of Parliament giving him and others a monopoly of the making of certain kinds of glass. Perhaps the monopoly secured to Earl David by Act of Parliament enabled him to make two ends meet; but it is apparent that the glass-blowers who followed him found it a difficult task to work to profit. Mr Gibb, the minister of the parish, writing in 1790, says:—

“This cave, which is about 200 feet in length, 100 feet in breadth, and 30 feet in height, was fitted up about 60 years ago by a tacksman for a glass-work; but soon after the work commenced the man became bankrupt, and the buildings were allowed to go to ruin.”

Turning eastwards, beyond the village of East Wemyss, the first cave the visitor comes to is the Court Cave, through the two doorways of which the charming shore-walk is threaded. Two explanations of the name of this cave are given. One is that when the lands of Easter Wemyss were the property of the Livingstones or Colvilles, their baronial courts were held in the cave; the second is that James IV. in a frolic one evening joined a company

of gipsies, who were drinking and making merry. As the "flowing bowl" went round, the gipsies began to quarrel among themselves. The Guidman of Ballangeich tried to mediate between the brawlers. When about to get the "reddin' stroke" for his pains, he made himself known. Tradition fails to tell us what happened; but the gipsies doubtless became as harmless in the presence of Royalty as the doves which "cood" in the dovecot close by.



J. Patrick]

The Court Cave, East Wemyss.

[Edinburgh]

The Castle or Well Cave is near the Court Cave. The first name is given to the cave because of a tradition that it was connected with the Castle by an underground passage, while it took the second name from a well (the water of which was said to be a specific for jaundice, which was situated in one of the corners). In the days of Mr Gibb, the Castle Cave was annually visited by the young people

of East Wemyss on the first Monday of January, old style. The young people carried burning torches. Mr Gibb tried to trace the origin of the New-Year processions, but even in his day the meaning of the old customs had been as much forgotten as were the early dwellers in the Wemyss caves.

The East and the West Dovecot Caves take their names because they had been utilised as pigeon houses, and the name Jonathan's Cave had its origin in the fact that a poor man of the name of Jonathan, and his family, found a shelter for years in the long, narrow, rugged aperture. An accidental slip of the land above gave rise to the name "Sloping Cave," and just beyond the slip there are the "White Cave" and the "Gas Works Cave." Wyntoun tells us that the caves were the habitations or retreats of the monks of early times. Wyntoun was no doubt right, but the caves take us back to a date long before the days of the monks the author of the "Originale Cronykle" had in view.

Professor Sir J. Y. Simpson, when on a visit to Wemyss in 1865, discovered rude sculpturings on the sides of some of the caves. The sculpturings resembled exactly the carvings on certain of the Sculptured Stones of Scotland. Here there were figures of animals, there of men, some of them of peculiar shape, and in other places crosses of various forms. At two or three points Professor Simpson and Dr Joseph Robertson discovered letterings and symbolic arrangements of figures or hieroglyphics. As long as the mysterious symbols were found only on sepulchral monoliths, so long were they supposed to be hieroglyphic or heraldic funeral inscriptions or emblems; but this theory was blown to the winds by the discovery of the markings

in Wemyss and other caves. And so the symbols of the Sculptured Stones of Scotland and the caves remain archæological enigma. That the Wemyss caves were inhabited has been demonstrated by the fact that bones of sheep, deer, oxen, etc., and shells and remains of cereals, have often been found by searchers after truth. But when the caves echoed and re-echoed to the feet of men and women and to the merry voices of children is a matter which remains in the region of conjecture.

Macduff's Castle.

On a bold commanding height above the group of caves is the fine old ruin which takes the name of Macduff's Castle. Tradition connects the castle with the noble Thane, the daring discomfitter of the wicked Macbeth. The two square towers, which are practically the only remnants left of the old keep, may not as some authorities assert belong to eleventh century architecture, but they at least take us back five centuries. The Earls of Fife undoubtedly had a fortress in the district, and the ruins which stand on the steep and rocky eminence, and which to-day take the name of Macduff's Castle, may be the remains of that building or its successor. Prior to the division of the estates in the middle of the fourteenth century the Castle was occupied by the successive Lairds of Wemyss.

In March 1304 King Edward made a progress through Fife, and he was the guest for a night and a day of Sir Michael Wemyss of Wemyss. Two years after, when King Robert the Bruce came forward in defence of the Scottish people, Sir Michael joined the patriots. The actions of Sir Michael gave great offence to Edward, and he issued orders to the effect that the "manor" where Sir

Michael "lay" and "all his other manors should be burned and his gardens stripped bare." According to Wyntoun, it was at Wemyss where Randolph Earl of Moray, the Regent of Scotland, first showed symptoms of the illness which cut him down in July 1332.

In 1615 the Castle was said to consist of a "laich cellar," a chamber called the "woman hous," two chambers



J. Patrick

Macduff Castle, East Wemyss.

[Edinburgh]

called the "laird's chalmers," the "great chalmer," and the "keep hous," with houses lying to the "Wester Tower of East Wemyss, called the bake hous and brew hous." Sir William Fraser says:—

"With the partition of the Wemyss Estates the old Castle passed into the possession of the Livingstones of Drumry, who married one of the three co-heiresses of Sir Michael Wemyss of Wemyss. They obtained the eastern portion of the estate of

Wemyss, on which the Castle stood, and it remained with them until 1530, when it became the property of the Colvilles, who sold it in 1630, with the estate, to John first Earl of Wemyss. This Earl, as if rejoicing in the re acquisition of the ancient stronghold of the family, made it his residence for some time during the remaining period of his life. But his son, David second Earl of Wemyss, preferred the Castle of West Wemyss."

The Countess of Wemyss, wife of John first Earl of Wemyss, died at East Wemyss on 17th August 1639. The Countess of Sutherland, the daughter of the second Earl, wrote in 1666 from Dunrobin Castle asking her father to allow her children to reside in the Castle of East Wemyss because it was feared that a plague would break out in Edinburgh. This request on the part of Lady Jean Wemyss proves that the Castle was at least habitable up to 1666. It must have been after this that the historic building was allowed to go to decay. At the base of the cliffs on the beach there is a magnificent dovecot, which reminds one of the saying common to the Fife laird of old:—"A wee pickle rent, a gey pickle debt, and a doocot."

Wemyss Castle.

Wemyss Castle is an imposing and stately building, which is charmingly situated, commanding a magnificent view of the Forth and the shores on the south side of the river. Looking from a point within the shadow of the ancient keep associated with the name of Macduff, Wemyss Castle is seen peeping through the trees and "flaunting its flag," as Mr Geddie says, against the blue sky. How long a flag has floated in the breeze on the castle it is difficult to say. The building has undergone a great many changes, and the older part bears such marks of antiquity that it carries one's thoughts back to the distant past when the immediate successors of the Thane of Fife were the

superiors of old Wemyss-shire and other lands in the ancient "Kingdom." The eastern wing is undoubtedly part of the original stronghold. When it was erected it is impossible to say, but it is abundantly proved that there was a castle at Wemyss in the days of Sir John Wemyss of Reres and Wemyss (1372-1428). On the death of Sir Michael, the fifth known laird of Wemyss, the estates were divided between his three daughters as his co-heiresses. They married into the families of Inchmartin of Inchmartin, Boswell of Balmuto, and Livingstone of Drumry. Wemyss-shire, as Sir William Fraser tells us, ultimately fell to be divided between two of the families, and the one family took up residence in Macduff's Castle, while the other was resident in the manor house.

That Sir John Wemyss of Reres and Wemyss had a residence at Wemyss is apparent from the fact that his eldest son, David Wemyss, dates a document from Wemyss in 1423, and Sir William Fraser found documents which showed that the Wemyss and the Livingstone families had their respective manor houses at Wester and Easter Wemyss in 1428. On the archway leading into the court of the old portion of the Castle there is an unique armorial stone. The stone on one side bears two letters D, and on the sinister side two letters V. The initial letters are supposed to represent David of Wemyss and his son David. In a broad margin surrounding the armorial stone we have the date 1421. In the days of Sir John Wemyss, in 1430, the Castle is spoken of as "The Manor of Wemyss." Coming to the days of Sir David Wemyss of Wemyss (1508-1513), we find the ancient keep referred to as the "Manor of Wester Wemyss," and in 1570, when King James the Fourth erected the whole of the estates of

Sir David into the Barony of Wemyss, the Castle of Wemyss was assigned as the principal messuage of the new barony.

In the troublous times which existed between 1544 and 1550, Sir John Wemyss of that ilk was a conspicuous figure among the nobles of the time. He was on the side of the Governor Arran, and in 1547 we find him and his followers called to the Borders to repel an English invasion ; but Sir John and his retainers soon returned to Wemyss for the defence of the castle and homestead in case of attack. On the 3rd August 1548, the Queen-Dowager, Mary of Guise, visited the Castle while on her way from Edinburgh to St Andrews. The Queen-Regent died in June 1560, and on 19th August 1561, the young widowed Queen Mary returned to her kingdom from France. Between the date of Mary's arrival at Leith and the beginning of 1565 a good deal of speculation was indulged in over her probable marriage, and in February of that year an incident happened at the Castle of Wemyss which soon set speculation at rest. In January 1565 Mary journeyed to Fife from Edinburgh, and she spent most of the first month of the year at Falkland and St Andrews. The Queen's sojourn in the "Kingdom," says John Knox, "caused wild fowl to be so dear that part-ridges sold at a crown a piece."

Mary left St Andrews on 11th February, and next day came to Lundie. On the 13th she rode to Wemyss by the coast, and among those who welcomed the royal party at the Castle of the "Weems" was the ill-fated Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley. The first impressions, says a certain writer, were "favourable and abiding." The impressions made during the week's sojourn at Wemyss were at least favourable, but one can hardly say they were

abiding. On Mary's return to Edinburgh, Darnley "haunted the Court." The Queen at first pretended to "disrelish" a proposal of marriage, and even refused a ring; but by the 20th of July she had created Darnley Duke of Albany, and on the 29th of the same month the marriage bells were ringing in Holyrood Palace. On 9th March 1566, Riccio, the Queen's secretary, was at the instigation of Darnley done to death in the Queen's chamber.

On 9th February 1567 the town of Edinburgh was early in the morning alarmed by a loud explosion, the mansion in which the King lodged had been blown up, and the remains of the gay young Darnley, who just two years before had spent a week in Wemyss, were found in a field. Towards the close of 1586, Christendom in Scotland was stirred by the Queen being placed upon trial on the ground of her alleged complicity in Babington's plot for the assassination of Elizabeth. Events crowded in upon each other, and in 1587 Mary was executed. Wemyss Castle is not allowed to forget Mary. A memorial of her visit remains at the Castle in the form of a sculptured medallion which was inserted in the front wall. The picture gallery in the Castle includes a beautiful portrait of the Queen. Close by the oil-painting of Mary hangs a portrait of Darnley. Both paintings bear the date 1566.

James VI. was particularly anxious that he and his Queen, Anne of Denmark, should be well received by the people of Scotland on the occasion of their marriage. James wrote to the laird of Wemyss, David Wemyss of Wemyss, instructing him to receive and entertain them for one night, Monday, 11th May 1590. The reception and the entertainment seems to have come up to the expectations of the "Scottish Solomon," for in June of the following year

his majesty was in Wemyss Castle when the Earl Marischal, who was in disgrace, came to the "Kingdom" to try to make peace with the king. David the second Earl of Wemyss had the honour of being one of the Parliamentary Commissioners who, in 1650, welcomed Charles II. at Falkland. Charles reached Falkland on 6th July, and on the 12th he dined with the Earl of Wemyss at Wemyss Castle. Lamont chronicles the event in these words:—"The tyme that he abode at Falklande he went downe one day and dyled at the E. of Wemyss' house." Charles was crowned king at Scone on 1st January 1651, and shortly afterwards he made a progress through Fife to visit the fortifications of the Forth. From Stirling he reached Burntisland on 12th February, and on the following day rode to Wemyss Castle, where he passed the night.

David the second Earl of Wemyss made enormous extensions to the Castle in 1669-70. The additions included a dining-room, a drawing-room, two bed-chambers, and two closets. On the 22nd October 1670 the armorial bearings of the Earl and Countess, their names, and the year 1670, were cut on a stone, which was built in the addition to the Castle. "Ther's nothing mor requisitte about any family than good watter," says Earl David, and he proceeds to narrate the steps he took to ensure good supplies of water in the "tu walles (wells) in the outter close of the Castle." David third Earl of Wemyss added to the amenities of the Castle, and in 1756 his son James, the fourth Earl, worked out many improvements. General Wemyss of Wemyss, grandson of the fourth Earl, made additions and built the stables, which are of a classic style of architecture, and which stand on a site on the face of the hill to the north of the Castle.

Admiral Wemyss and Mr Hay Erskine Wemyss carried out extensions and improvements. After the death of Mr Hay Erskine Wemyss, his widow, in conjunction with her son, Mr R. G. E. Wemyss, the present laird, had a good many changes made. A new saloon and entrance hall were built. The great hall of the Castle has recently been restored by Mr Wemyss, and much has been

*Milliken*][*Kirkcaldy***Wemyss Castle.**

done for the gardens and grounds. A barrel-vaulted room on the ground floor has been converted into a chapel which takes the name of the Saint Mary, Star of the Sea Chapel. Services are conducted regularly by the Rev. A. T. Grant, the chaplain (who has done invaluable work in historical research bearing on Fife and other counties), and

the public are admitted by the lower doorway. A silver plate on the splay of the first window bears the following inscription :—

“ Saint Mary, Star of the Sea, at the Wemyss. To the Glory of God. In memory of Milicent Mary Kennedy Erskine, wife of James Hay Wemyss of Wemyss. Born xi. May 1831; dying at home, xi. Feby. 1895, near midnight. This chapel for her dear sake is dedicated to the service of God by her surviving children, Mary, Randolph, Hvg, Rosslyn. ‘For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’ Dedicated 18 September 1897, by George Howard, Lord Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld, and Dunblane.”

In the chapel, which is lit throughout by candles, there are many architectural and other features which are interesting. One of the most noteworthy features is the recumbent marble statue of the late Mrs Wemyss, to whose memory the chapel is dedicated. The statue is the work of Princess Louise, the Duchess of Argyle. Above the statue are the following :—

“ Sleepe after toyle ;
 Port after stormie seas ;
 Ease after warre ;
 Death after life, does greatly please.”



THE VILLAGE OF EAST WEMYSS.

The old village of East Wemyss lies snugly in a creek between Macduff and Wemyss Castles. The new East Wemyss, which has sprung into existence in recent years, lies on the higher slopes by the Lappy and the Den burns, and which afford shelter from the north to the white-washed houses which form the "auld toon." In the olden time the roar of the sea—just over the big wall—had accompaniments in the shape of the click of the weaver's shuttle and the rattle of the hand loom. To-day there is not a hand loom at work in the parish, and if the curious want to peep at a spinning wheel or a reel, they must go to a drawing-room, where the furniture of a decayed art looks much out of place, or to the shop of a collector of that which is antique. Although the hand loom is as silent as the blowers in the "Glass Cove," it is pleasant to be able to state that through the enterprise of Messrs Johnston, whose steam factory is well employed, the village is what the artist would speak of as "A study in black and white"—coals and linen. An old miner used to speak of the chemiss splint coal as a "jet black coal," and time was when linen, after it came from the bleach works which from time immemorial have flourished on the banks of the Leven, was spoken of in East Wemyss as being "as white as the driven snaw."

The Barony of Easter Wemyss.

Sir Michael Wemyss of Wemyss, who died between 1342 and 1346, left no surviving male issue, and his pos-

sessions were divided among his daughters, three in number. The dividing of the estates among the daughters led to the distinction between East and West Wemyss. One of the daughters married a Livingstone of Drumry. It was in 1508 that King James IV. created the lands of East Wemyss and part of Lochoreshire into the barony of East Wemyss, with the manor of East Wemyss as the principal messuage, in favour of Sir Robert Livingstone of Drumry. Sir Robert's daughter, Margaret Livingstone, who is lovingly spoken of as the "Lady of East Wemyss," married Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, the architect of Falkland Palace. After Hamilton had obtained Easter Wemyss he exchanged it in 1530 with Sir James Colville of Ochiltree for his barony and Castle of Ochiltree in Ayrshire. Sir James thus became Colville of Easter Wemyss. The new owner of Easter Wemyss was attainted of treason, and in 1540, after his death, his lands were forfeited. Three years afterwards, however, they were restored to his son, who attained distinction in the French wars, and in 1598 was created Lord Colville of Culross. He was succeeded by his grandson, James, second Lord Colville, at whose death in 1640 the lands of Easter Wemyss were purchased by Sir John, the first Earl of Wemyss, and reunited to the barony of Wemyss. The lands of Easter Wemyss were therefore exactly a century in the hands of the Colville family. David the second Earl of Wemyss received a Crown charter of the lands consolidating them into the single Barony of Wemyss.

The Established Church.

The Established Church of East Wemyss has a long history. Sir John of Methil and Wemyss, son of Michael, who makes his first appearance historically as a witness to

a charter in 1202, conveys certain lands to the monks of May on behalf of the souls of himself, his father, mother, wife, son, and others. Sir John also, according to the custom of the times, enriched the Hospital of Soltre or Soutra, a small religious house on a ridge of the Lammermoors, by conveying to the master and brethren there, on behalf of his own soul and the souls of Earl Duncan and others, all his rights in the Church of St Mary of Wemyss,

*J. Patrick]***Established Church, East Wemyss.***[Edinburgh]*

to be held as alms for the benefit of the poor in the Hospital of Soutra. Sir William Fraser states that the charter was not dated, but he argues from other evidence that it must have been granted about 1239. In 1261 the Bishop of St Andrews confirms the charter, and provides for an honourable sustenance to the vicar who served the church of Wemyss on behalf of the brethren of Soutra, and for the payment of a pension due annually by the church

of Wemyss to the Dysart church. In 1321 Sir David Wemyss confirmed the charter, and granted the brethren or their men power to make malt and to sell it.

Sir William Fraser records an appearance of Sir John Wemyss, in the Parish Church of Wemyss, in connection with certain lands. A Church dispute of considerable interest is recorded as having occurred in the days of the first David of Wemyss, in 1527. It appears that a dispute had arisen between Sir David and Sir John Dingwall, who held the double office of Provost of Trinity College, Edinburgh, and vicar of the Parish Church of Wemyss. The fishermen of East Wemyss and Buckhaven joined the Laird and were parties to the action. Contrary to the practice of the times, Sir John Dingwall made an appeal to the Court of Rome. For this "contumacy" the judges gave judgment in favour of Sir David Wemyss and his fishermen friends, and under pain of excommunication the Provost-Vicar was called upon to pay the costs of the plea, £99 8s 8d Scots. The sentence was announced during High Mass in the church of Wemyss, in presence of the parishioners. Among the parishioners the sentence was received with joy; but Sir John Dingwall did not repent of "contumacy," and he was excommunicated for his pains. A settlement of the dispute was ultimately effected, however, by arbitration. And in connection with the finding of the arbiters it is interesting to note that the vicar was advised to yield up the offerings due to him from St Mary's Chapel, because the Parish Church of Wemyss was being "built or repaired by Sir Patrick Jackson, the chaplain." Here in 1528 we have a specific statement showing that the church, which probably dated back to the days of David I., was being practically re-built.

It may be interesting to state that the Hospital of Soutra was in 1462 annexed by the Queen of James II. to Trinity College Church, Edinburgh, which thus acquired the kirk and kirk-lands of Wemyss. After the Reformation of 1560, Trinity College Church was bestowed on the city of Edinburgh, and the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and other representatives became the patrons and titulars of the teinds. The sub-Committee of the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy commuted the payment in victual into money—West Wemyss paying £748 10s 8d Scots, and East Wemyss, £607 18s 8d of the total, which was to be collected by the Laird of Wemyss. 800 merks went to the minister and 800 to the Town Council of Edinburgh. In 1650 the stipend was raised to 1200 merks. Sir John, Earl of Wemyss, was at this time an uncompromising Presbyterian, and united with his fellow-countrymen in opposing King Charles' attempt to force Episcopacy on the country.

The church at East Wemyss was much improved in 1792. Writing in 1794, the Rev. George Gibb gives us the following glimpse at Church affairs in the parish :—

“The stipend, as settled by the Court of Session in February 1794, is £50 of money, 64 bolls of meal, 32 bolls of bear, and £5 11s 1½d for furnishing communion elements. The manse was built in 1791, and to the honour of the heritor is one of the best in the country. . . . The glebe contains between eight and nine acres. There are some rocks and seaweed which belong to the minister, and as this property is near the glebe, it is of great advantage for manure. For the kelp from the rocks the present incumbent has received about £5 5s every three years.”

Writing in 1838, the Rev. John M'Lachlan says :—

“The church has sittings for about 1000 persons. It is far too small for the parish. From 900 to 1000 communicate annually. The people are very attentive to the ordinances of religion. The

stipend is 17 chalders, half meal and half barley, converted at the rate of the highest fiars of the county, with £10 for communion elements. There are some rocks and seaweed or ware that belong to the cure."

Recently the church was re-seated. A handsome pipe-organ has been introduced, and the baptismal font, the communion table, and other furnishings, are extremely handsome. There are as many as 620 names on the communion roll.

The present manse was built in 1791. The manse of the olden time stands immediately behind the dwelling of today, the date stone showing that it was built in 1673. The Kirk Session records date without a break back to 1645. The communion vessels are as interesting as the records. There are two silver mazers and four communion cups. The mazers are 9 inches in height and $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter at the mouth, and the cups are 10 inches by $4\frac{3}{4}$. The following is a copy of the inscriptions:—

MAZERS—(1.) Given by The Countes of Leven to the Kirk of Weyms, Anno 1673. (2.) Given by My Lord Bruntisland to the Kirk of Weyms, Anno 1673.

CUPS—(1.) Given by the Countess of Wemyss to the Kirk of Wemyss, 1673. (2.) Given by the Countess of Wemyss to the Kirk of Wemyss, 1673. (3.) Given by My Lady Bruntiland to the Kirk of The Wemyss, 1673. (4.) Given by Master James Nairn, to the Kirk of Wemyss, 1673.

There are four flagons, which bear the date 1794, and two pewter salvers dated 1799.

The Ministers of the Parish.

After the Reformation, the parish was first supplied by John Bousie, reader. He was in the parish from 1576 to 1680. John Tullus, the natural nephew of Mr Andrew Binnet, minister of Monimail, and reader at Foules-Wester, took

up duty in the parish about 1585. Mr Tullus was granted a certain sum out of the rent of Trinity College, on condition that Mr Robert Pont, who was stated to have the "hail rent of the Provostry," paid the other half of the stipend. As a minister Mr Tullus is stated to have been "weak," but he held the post despite his weakness until he died in June 1636. Patrick Mearns, a graduate of St Andrews University, took up duty for Mr Tullus. He was presented by the Town Council of Edinburgh. He was admitted on 8th September 1636, but had only been in the parish fifteen months when he died "ane young man unmairrit."

The godly George Gillespie followed. Gillespie, who was the son of the Rev. John Gillespie, the minister of Kirkcaldy, was born in 1613. He was presented to Wemyss on 5th January 1638, and on the 11th of the same month the Archbishop of St Andrews wrote asking the Moderator to try the new minister. The Moderator was not prepared to usurp the functions of the Presbytery at the dictation of the Archbishop, and he advised the brethren to "prescrybe ane text" to Gillespie "to teach" in Kirkcaldy. On the 18th January he preached, and, says Scott in his "Fasti," "got the usual testimonial." Instead of being admitted by the Archbishop he was ordained by the Presbytery, and the Covenant was signed by all the ministers present. Through Gillespie's ordination Wemyss had the honour conferred upon it of having the second minister in Scotland who was ordained, after Episcopacy was established, without the countenance of the Archbishop. Six months after his ordination to Wemyss he was also presented to Methil by David Lord Elcho.

At the age of 24, while a tutor to James Lord Kennedy, Mr Gillespie wrote a book which bore the title, "A Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies obtruded on the Church of Scotland." The ordination at Wemyss of the author of the book was noised abroad, and in November 1838, the very month he combined the duties of the minister of Methil with those of Wemyss, he was chosen to preach before the memorable Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Glasgow. Baillie says:—"In his sermon the youth very learnedly and judiciously, as they say, handled the words—'The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord.'" Gillespie thereafter became chaplain to the army of Covenanters, and was a Commissioner from the Church of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly of Divines, who were appointed to draw up the Shorter Catechism. At Westminster he acquitted himself as well as he did at Glasgow. Apparently overlooking the fact that a definition of God had hundred of years before been given by Christ in the words, "God is a spirit," the divines were completely nonplussed when they came to give their minds to the question, "What is God?" Gillespie was asked to pray for guidance, and he began his prayer by addressing God "as a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." The Westminster divines were struck with the terms of the prayer, and at once accepted them as a definition of the question, "What is God?"

In 1641 the minister of Wemyss was called to Aberdeen, but his removal to the Granite City was prevented by a majority in the Assembly. At the same time, it was thought that he would be a good man for St Andrews, but the prosecution of a call to the "City by the Sea" was

discouraged. In 1642 he had a pension bestowed upon him by His Majesty, and then came his translation to Old Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh. In 1647 he was selected to succeed Alexander Henderson in the High Church, but here his labours were soon ended. On 17th December 1648 he died in the 36th year of his age and the eleventh year of his ministry. So ended the life of one of the most brilliant stars associated with the Church of Scotland in far off days. The Apostle James compares life to a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanishes away. Gillespie's life was a very short one, but before he vanished from the courts of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland he left on record something which was more enduring than a vapour :—

“ One crowded hour of glorions life
Is worth an age without a name.”

Some other Ministers.

Gillespie was succeeded by Harie Wilkie, who was translated from the little parish of Portmoak, on the banks of Loch Leven, at the earnest desire of John Earl of Wemyss, on 19th October 1642. Scott tells us that Wilkie was a “little, knackity (self-conceited) body.” He was challenged before the Synod on September 1657 for certain speeches he had made which were not seemly, and for things done at a daughter's marriage, but the “knackity body” was acquitted. He died on 7th October 1664.

James Nairne, an A.M. from Bolton, was admitted on 31st May 1665. He was a learned man, and was offered a bishopric in 1671, but refused it. He demitted his charge in 1678, and died in July following. He is written of as “the most eloquent of all our preachers, and a person of very considerable learning”; but with all his

learning he does not seem to have been very sound in the faith, for he was "inclinable to Pelagian tenets." The school of Pelagius denied the doctrine of original sin. Nairne bequeathed his library to the University of Edinburgh. Alexander Monro came next, from the parish of Kinglassie. He was admitted in June 1678. Like his predecessor, he was a man of considerable learning. In 1682 he was appointed Professor of Divinity in the University of St Andrews, and accordingly demitted his charge in Wemyss. Alexander Lundie, A.M., who came from Carnbee, was admitted on 14th May 1683. Within three years he was translated to Cupar, and made way for Alexander Ker, an A.M. of St Andrews, who took up duty in Wemyss on 8th September 1686. He was deprived of the living by Privy Council on 29th August 1689. He was succeeded by William Tullidaff, A.M., formerly of Kilbirnie, and then came the following ministers:—Archibald Riddell, A.M., from Kippen, 26th September 1691, translated to Kirkcaldy, January 1697; Thomas Black, from Strathmiglo, 1697 to 1698; James Grierson, September 1698 to May 1710; John Cleghorn, A.M., from Burntisland, February 1711 to July 1744, when he died, aged 65 years.

Harry Spens, an A.M. of King's College, Aberdeen, succeeded Cleghorn. He was ordained in November 1744, had the degree of D.D. conferred upon him by his *Alma Mater* in October 1761, and was elected Moderator of the General Assembly on 25th May 1780 by a majority of 112 votes against 106 cast for Sir Henry Moncrieff of Wellwood, Bart. In October of the same year he was admitted Professor of Divinity in St Mary's College, St Andrews, and forthwith demitted his charge in Wemyss. Spens

died in 1787, aged 73 years. It is 125 years since Spens preached his farewell sermon in Wemyss, and yet his memory is held in loving remembrance in the parish, because of the attitude he adopted towards a slave who had come with his master to Methil. [This incident was referred to at length under the Methil notes.] William Greenfield, who came to the parish in September 1781, had only been three years in the district when he was called to his native city, Edinburgh. George Gibb, the writer of the article on Wemyss in the "Old Statistical Account of Scotland," was the next minister. He was ordained on 31st March 1785, and remained in Wemyss until he died, 11th April 1818. The Rev. John M'Lauchlan, who writes on Wemyss in the "New Statistical Account," was presented by the Town Council of Edinburgh on July 1818 and admitted in February of the following year. He died on 13th February 1850 in the 65th year of his age, and 37th of his ministry. Mr M'Lauchlan was succeeded by Mr Wm. Polson, M.A., who laboured in the parish for 43 years—from 1850 to 1893. Mr Polson's remains were interred in the cemetery under the shadow of the ruins of the old castle of the parish in which he had toiled so long.

The Rev. John Kennedy, the present pastor, was a student of Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities, and is an M.A., B.D. He was licensed as a preacher by the Presbytery of St Andrews, and in 1892 took up duty as an assistant in Kirkcaldy. Mr Kennedy was ordained to the parish of Wemyss in 1894.

The United Free Church.

The United Free Church congregation of the village of East Wemyss sprang into existence in connection with the Disruption of 1843. The church and the manse stand on

the ground of the "Haugh," with a magnificent view of the Forth and the southern shores. The "Haugh" is historic ground. In the days of the godly Geo. Gillespie it formed the glebe of the Parish Church. In the Disruption wave of 1843, when difficulties were being experienced in many parishes over the procuring of sites for churches, Mrs Swan, the mother of the late ex-Provost Swan of Kirkcaldy, proved a friend to the newly-formed congregation of East Wemyss, who first met in a hay loft above a stable. She owned the "Haugh," and at once placed a site for the church and manse at the disposal of the Dissenters. Adherents of the cause led by Dr Chalmers joined the congregation, from Methil on the east to West Wemyss on the west, and when the new church was opened in the summer of 1844, the members and adherents numbered as many as 600. The Rev. John M'Lauchlan, the minister of the parish, chose to remain in the Establishment, and the congregation called the Rev. George F. Knight, who had for twelve years been a parish minister in Berwickshire. The choice was an exceedingly happy one. Mr Knight was a man of scholarly attainments, and being blessed with a store of excellent health, he did splendid work in the parish for well nigh half a century. The increasing burden of years led him to ask a colleague and successor in the summer of 1881, and in August of that year a colleague in the person of the Rev. L. A. Muirhead, M.A., B.D., took up duty. Mr Knight died in 1891, and his remains found a fitting resting place in the cemetery of the parish in which he had toiled so long and so faithfully. The stone which marks his grave bears the following inscription:—

"In memory of George Fulton Knight, for 12 years minister of the parish of Modington, Berwickshire, and for 47 years minister

of the Free Church of Wemyss, Fifeshire. Born at Edinburgh, April 1808; died at Manchester, February 1891."

Mr Knight has a gifted family. Mr W. Knight, St Andrews, professor and author, is one of his sons; Rev. George Knight, of Glasgow, is another, while a third son has attained distinction in medicine. Mr Muirhead was called to St Luke's, Broughty Ferry, in 1893. He is the author of "The Times of Christ," "Eschatology of Jesus," and other works, and in March 1905 he had the honorary degree of D.D. conferred upon him by the University of St Andrews. Mr J. C. B. Geddes, who was an assistant in Free St George's, Edinburgh, succeeded Dr Muirhead. Mr Geddes was ordained in May 1893. He accepted a call to Largs in 1901. The Rev. R. H. Strachan, M.A., was ordained in June 1901, and after a ministry of three years he accepted a call to the United Free Church, Elie, which is one of the prizes in the "Kingdom." The Rev. G. D. Low, the present minister, was ordained to the charge in August 1904. Mr Low is a graduate of Edinburgh University. On leaving the Hall he went to St Petersburg and laboured as an assistant in the British-American Church there. On his return to Scotland, he accepted an assistantship at Moffat, and was fulfilling the duties of assistant at Gullane when he was called to East Wemyss.

A Famous Schoolmaster.

In 1748, in the days of James fourth Earl of Wemyss, and the stirring times which followed the Rebellion of 1745, John Grub was appointed schoolmaster of the parish school of East Wemyss. Just after his appointment Mr Grub had the misfortune to be struck on one of his knees by a golf ball. A white swelling supervened, and the schoolmaster of Wemyss was compelled to submit to the

loss of his leg. Upon his recovery he proposed to the young lady who had nursed him through his illness, was accepted, and she proved a dutiful and loving wife. The loss of a limb did not impair Mr Grub's usefulness as a teacher. Within a few years his fame as a teacher had gone beyond the bounds of the parish, and in addition to a large attendance at the school, he had many young men boarders from, says his biographer, "many respectable families in different parts of the country." In seven short years the school "had risen to a very great character" and was spoken of as a "Grammar School." In 1755, when Mr Grub was in the height of his fame, he was smitten down by a fever and died. He had only seen thirty summers. His biographer says:—

"Mr Grub's character made his death very much to be regretted by all the people of the parish of Wemyss, by all his scholars, and by all that knew him. He left behind him a disconsolate widow to lament his death, and a young son. His widow afterwards went to the village of Leven, and survived her husband it is not certain how many years; and Robert Grub, their son, on recommendation, having gone to settle in the West Indies, died at St Kitts under or about twenty years of age."

Mr Grub had many merits as a teacher. He made elocution a special feature, and his exhibitions on Shrove Tuesday and at the closing examinations for the harvest holidays became so famous in the "Kingdom" that educationists from all parts of the district flocked to East Wemyss to be present at the "literary entertainments." In addition to teaching the pupils the "Three R's," Mr Grub prepared "orations" for the higher classes on various themes. The pupils got the "orations" by heart, and at the harvest vacation they mounted the teacher's desk, and delivered the speeches. Mr Grub's custom was to prepare three "orations" upon any specified subject. The first

speaker presented the case for reform, or in support of any good principle, the second presented a different view, and the third supported the first speaker. In the three "orations" on "cock-fighting" delivered on 6th February 1753, we have interesting glimpses at the school customs of the eighteenth century in the parish of Wemyss. In the first "oration" we are told that from time immemorial it had been the custom in Wemyss to make one day in the year remarkable for the inhuman practice of "bringing many of the noblest of the feathered creation to a lingering and cruel death." The young orator in Wemyss School accordingly moves a motion to the effect that although cock-fighting was not so "savage and barbarous as throwing cocks," yet it should be discouraged at our schools. The pupil who replies argues strongly in favour of the schoolboys' "diversion on Fasterns E'en." When a cock fought well it, "raised the noble ambition in youth." It was, he further said, an "old custom of the school," and should be kept up. The pupil who wound up the debate argued for a more noble diversion than that of cock-fighting, and under Mr Grub the abominable practice was abolished, and in the school of East Wemyss Shrove Tuesday became as notable for its "literary contests" as it had been for cock-fighting.

Shrove Tuesday, it may be interesting to state, was so called from being anciently associated with priestly absolution. The day immediately precedes the commencement of Lent, and in Scotland it was known as Fasterns E'en, that is, Fasting Eve. The mode of observing the day differed very much throughout Scotland. At Stirling the young people procured eggs, which in the morning they coloured with devices, and in the evening they met in the

fields and there boiled and consumed the eggs. In the Border towns the day is to this day set aside for hand-ball, and time was when the married women challenged the spinsters in a game at football. In many places cock-fighting was the sport indulged in. According to Dr Rogers, we have the Duke of York to thank for having in 1681 introduced cock-fighting into Scotland. To the village schoolroom every youth, from an early period of the eighteenth century to its close, bore a cock which had been reared for the Fastern E'en struggle. The school-masters presided. The birds which fell in the conflicts were assigned to the teacher as a perquisite, and the poor "fugies" which refused to fight, and displayed more sense than the people who cast them into the cockpits, were also claimed as the master's property. Although Mr Grub succeeded in abolishing cock-fighting at East Wemyss school, the barbarous sport was continued by adults in the parish, and indeed throughout Fife, until about the middle of the nineteenth century.

History of the Linen Industry.

Away back about 250 years ago, almost every substantial family in the parish made a few pieces of good linen annually from yarn of their own spinning. Some of the goods were appropriated for the use of the families, and the surplus goods were sent to the fairs in the parishes of Wemyss and Scoonie, and there found a ready market. About 1740 there were five fishing boats with five men in each at East Wemyss. By 1790 four of the boats had vanished, and only one was at work. This was due to the fact that in 1750 fishing was practically dropped in the village, and the manufacture of linen became the staple industry. That the people of East Wemyss plied the

shuttle to some purpose will be apparent when it is stated that in 1807, when the Board of Trustees offered prizes for the best and second best raven-duck, harn-shirting, huckaback, diaper, and plain linen, quite an army of weavers entered the competition from the village of East Wemyss, and as many as five of them carried off prizes. Noted as it was for linen, only three prizes went to Dunfermline, and two to the great city of Edinburgh, whose Drumsheugh works were then known throughout Scotland. The decision of the Board of Trustees corroborated the claim made in 1790 for East Wemyss linen by the minister of the parish. The Rev. George Gibb says :—

“The linen now made is generally well known for its quality and fineness. Most of it is made from Scotch flax, the greatest part of which is spun in the parish. It is thought by manufacturers to be superior to any in the country. . . . There are about 120 looms employed.”

Messrs James & George Johnston commenced business in the village of East Wemyss in 1828, and for many years they had looms at work in the parish of Wemyss and adjoining parishes. Carts were sent round the shops daily and collected the goods as they were cut from the looms. The Messrs Johnston soon built up a splendid business, but by 1850 “changing shadows” had begun to hang like a funeral pall over the handloom industry. At Dunfermline, at Dundee, and Kirkland large handloom factories had been built, and this was doing away with the system of the toiler sitting at his own loom, under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and this system was followed by the introduction of the power-loom. As the power-loom became perfected, loom after loom in the little red-roofed shops was stopped, and by 1858 many of the old

weavers in Fife had begun to look upon the fittings of their shops as the "four stoops of misery." In 1859 the Messrs Johnston had something like 200 handlooms at work in East Wemyss and elsewhere ; but they were men who were fully alive to the necessity for a change, and in 1860 they opened the power-loom linen works which are situated on the Haugh. At first 100 looms were set in motion ; but as time wore on an additional 100 looms were fitted up. The success of the power-loom gradually brought about the annihilation of the hand-loom, and the loom-shops of other days have all been turned into dwelling-houses. Mr George Johnston died in 1874, and Mr James Johnston in 1876. The founders were succeeded by the two sons of the latter, Mr James W. Johnston and Mr W. Russell Johnston, and the partnership of the brothers of to-day has in every respect been as happy as that of the founders. Mr James W. Johnston is chairman of the School Board of the parish. He joined the Volunteers in 1860, and as Lieutenant, Captain, Major, and Lieutenant-Colonel, he has done as much for the citizen army movement in the district as he has done for education. In connection with the Volunteer Review of September 1905 Colonel Johnston had the honour of having the Royal Victorian Order conferred upon him by the King. Mr W. Russell Johnston has represented the Eastern Division of Wemyss in the County Council since 1898, and a splendid representative he makes.

Mining in the District.

In the olden time, when the successive lords of the manor carried on mining and salt-manufacturing at West Wemyss and Methil, East Wemyss, like Buckhaven,

stood a village apart. Comparatively few of the residents of East Wemyss took up mining. With the opening of the Rosie pit of Muiredge Colliery, nearly twenty years ago, and latterly the sinking of the Michael shafts by the Wemyss Coal Company, the whole aspect of things changed. Miners began to take up residence in East Wemyss, and during the past decade the old-world village has been completely surrounded by new houses. The population of the village had risen from 1010 in 1891 to 2522 in 1901, and a census to-day would show a population of at least 3000 souls.

The Brewery.

Time was when ale was the general drink of the people of Scotland, and in the royal burghs and burghs of barony there were no more prosperous class than the brewers. From time immemorial there has been a brewery at East Wemyss. Mr Gibb, writing in 1794, says:—

“A gentleman in East Wemyss, who carries on a considerable brewery, lately began to import wood from the Baltic, which has been a great advantage to the neighbourhood.”

Like the fishing and the handloom industries, the importation of wood at East Wemyss has ceased, but the brewery still remains. Nearly 100 years ago it fell into the hands of the Eddington family, and 70 years ago the brewery was acquired by two brothers, James and George Brown, the one taking up duty at East Wemyss and the other at Leven. In the hands of the two brothers the businesses increased, and the sparkling Wemyss ales became famous in and outside the county of Fife. The remains of the founders of the firm of 70 years ago lie in the cemetery which overlooks the brewery, but as a firm

J. & G. Brown still exists, the business being carried on at Wemyss and Leven by Mr George Brown, sen., and Mr George Brown, jun., a son and grandson of one of the founders. The brewers of to-day have recently made considerable extensions to the buildings, and despite the keen competition of the times the Wemyss ale still holds its own in the market.

The Hall and the Reading-Room.

Undoubtedly one of the most interesting modern buildings in the village is the hall and reading-room. One of the young orators of Mr John Grub, the famous eighteenth century teacher, speaking in East Wemyss school at the Shrove Tuesday demonstration of February 1753 to the parents of the village, says :—

“I lay hold of this opportunity, in the name of all my school-fellows, to return you our most hearty thanks for your generosity in contributing last year in so handsome a manner for a public library to our school.”

The library established in 1752 in the village was appreciated by the parents as well as the children, and the demand for books among the handloom weavers was such that in 1817 a subscription library was founded. A tradesmen's library was opened in 1830. In 1859 a reading room was opened, and in this room the books of the other libraries were ultimately brought together. The old reading-room had completely burst its bounds in the early nineties, and the late Dr Edward A. Watson commenced an agitation for the erection of a public hall, library, and recreation rooms. The old reading-room was deserted in November 1900, and the new building taken possession of. The following is a copy of an inscription on a marble tablet in the hall :—

“Erected by public subscription, in grateful recognition of the professional ability and public services of Edward A. Watson, M.D., for 28 years physician in Wemyss Parish. Born 8th May 1837; died 5th March 1897.”

It was chiefly by his efforts that funds were attained for the erection of the hall.



THE BURGH OF BARONY OF WEST WEMYSS.

Writing in 1859, Farnie says:—"West Wemyss is a burgh of barony, and is governed by two bailies, a treasurer, and a council." The town still prides itself on being a burgh of barony, and in possessing magistrates; but in recent years the old Council has been gradually stripped of its powers, and the bodies responsible for the government of West Wemyss are the Fife County Council, Wemyss School Board, and Wemyss Parish Council.

As time passes, the tendency is to move the coal works eastwards, and while East Wemyss, Buckhaven, and the Methil of other days are being surrounded by new towns, the streets of "Barnraig" remain much as they were a century ago. The Windy Wynd, the Haw Head, the Cox'el, and the Poun's are still with us, and at one or other of the respective rendezvous groups of residents gather as in days of yore and discuss the local and imperial problems of the day. As in the days when Gabriel Setoun wrote "Barnraig," women emerge from their doorways and "sind" their teapots, and on the Saturdays the outside stairs and the doorsteps are as much scrubbed and "sanded" for the Sunday as they were a century ago.

In 1791 the population of West Wemyss was 769—209 more than East Wemyss, 169 more than Buckhaven,

and more than the double of Methil. The following table shows the census of the old burgh from 1821 :—

1821	-	-	502	1871	-	-	1231
1831	-	-	858	1881	-	-	1206
1841	-	-	947	1891	-	-	1300
1851	-	-	1013	1901	-	-	1253
1861	-	-	1128				

When created a Barony Burgh.

David of Wemyss received the honour of knighthood in 1510, and the following year King James IV. erected the lands of West Wemyss into the barony of Wemyss. The charter gave power to constitute the haven town of Wemyss as a burgh under the lords of the manor. In 1515, Sir David granted the burgesses the usual privileges of a burgh of the olden time, and among the privileges enumerated were two fairs a year, one on 2nd July and the other on 20th October. The Castle of Wemyss was ordained to be the principal messuage of the barony of Wemyss.

In 1589, James VI. confirmed the barony of Wemyss in favour of John Wemyss, eldest son of David Wemyss of that ilk, enlarging the barony so as to include the other lands which had been acquired in 1511. In 1630 Sir John Wemyss acquired the barony of East Wemyss, and in 1651, in the days of Charles II., David second Earl of Wemyss obtained a charter erecting the baronies of East Wemyss, West Wemyss, and Methil into the barony of Wemyss, with the tower, fortalice, and manor-place of Wemyss as the principal messuage of the whole. This charter was ratified by the King and Parliament in 1661. The reinstatement of the bishops brought changes, however, and for some time Methil was separated from

the barony of Wemyss, and under a charter granted by Archbishop Sharpe enjoyed a species of home rule. After the Revolution another Act affecting Wemyss was passed, and in 1711, in the days of David third Earl of Wemyss the three baronies were included in one holding to such an extent that one sasine taken at the manor-place of West Wemyss or upon any part of the Wemyss lands sufficed for the whole.

The Tolbooth.

In 1592 West Wemyss ranked among the burghs along the shores of the Forth as a place where proclamation might be made at its market cross of an Act warning seamen and others against the killing of solan geese upon the Bass Rock. The burgh had its tolbooth where the lord of the manor held his baronial courts and meted out justice to offenders. Sir William Fraser points out, however, that serious cases were sometimes disposed of by friendly arbitration outside the walls of the tolbooth, and he gives an illustration by giving the details connected with the "hushing up" of one offence. In March 1586-7 the burgh was thrown into a terrible state of consternation and excitement. A burgess named James Skadowie had in the course of a quarrel struck a resident named William Ferrar. Ferrar died from the blow. Skadowie had only acted in self-defence, and on his agreeing to pay compensation to the relatives of the dead man the "mother and rest of kin" agreed to forgive and "remit the slaughter." A document embodying the agreement was drawn up, and was attested by a bailie of the burgh and others.

In 1666 West Wemyss was a burgh which was allowed to hold six annual fairs a year and a weekly market on

the Fridays. About 1590 the burgh attained to an unfortunate notoriety among the seaport towns of Scotland. It was the doorway by which the country experienced a new visit of the plague. The plague had been raging in England. An infected English barque entered the harbour of West Wemyss, and in a short time the plague was



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The Tolbooth, Wemyss.

[*Kirkcaldy*

ravaging the residents of the burghs and villages along the whole coast of the "Kingdom."

The Remains of St Mary's Chapel.

The history of the ivy-clad ruins of the Lady Chapel in the Chapel Gardens, which have now become the last resting-place of the Wemyss family, goes back to the days when the monks of Dunfermline were getting coals in the "heughs" of Pittencrieff and distributing the "black stanes" among the poor at the church doors. In 1536 Sir Patrick Jackson was chaplain of St Mary's Chapel at Wester Wemyss. Sir Patrick spent £1000 on the chapel and manse, and the laird of Wemyss in consequence bestowed on the chapel certain lands. The chapel had a saltpan and a dovecot attached to it, and the laird granted free coals to the chapel pan. After the Reformation the old chapel was deserted as a place of worship, and when David Lord Elcho was married to the Hon. Anna Balfour (Burley), on February 1627, the Master and his young wife took up residence at the chapel. They lived in the chapel for twelve years. The Master spent £200 in laying out the gardens, which are prettily situated. The house to the west of the chapel was built by Admiral Wemyss, and was for many years the residence of the late Mr Thomas Byewater, manager of Wemyss colliery.

A Glimpse at the Town of To-day.

The tolbooth, with its Dutch-looking steeple, is the most striking building in Barneraig. The old school has been transformed into dwelling-houses, and the teachers now labour in the Dorothy School, of modern date, which stands on the crest of the hill beyond Church Street. The church, built nearly seventy years ago by Lady Emma Hay, the wife of Admiral Wemyss, is now a gymnasium. The Rev. John Thomson, who died in September 1905, aged 71

years, preached the last sermon in the old church on Sunday, 2nd November 1895, and on the following Sunday pastor and congregation took possession of the new church, which stands on a site in what was once known as West Wemyss Cemetery, and which takes the name of St Adrian's Church. The cemetery was the gift of the Wemyss family, and Mr Wemyss, the present laird, defrayed the cost of the church—£2200. The church is seated for 600 people, and is comfortably filled every Sunday.

The late Rev. J. Thomson was a native of the little parish of Muckhart. He laid the foundation of his education at the village school of Muckhart, and afterwards studied at Dollar Academy. At Dollar Mr Thomson was a distinguished student, and maintained the high level at the University of Edinburgh, where he graduated with honours. In 1867, just three years after the lamented death of Mr James Hay Erskine Wemyss, Mr Thomson took up residence in West Wemyss as the catechist under the deed of mortification (1705) by the Earl of Cromarty, who was married to the Countess of Wemyss. Mr Thomson's qualifications as a scholar commended themselves to the Wemyss family, and he became tutor in the family, forming a friendship which was maintained to the day of his death. In 1874 Mr Thomson was ordained as the pastor of West Wemyss Established Church, and a year afterwards the church was endowed and was raised from the position of a mission station to that of a *quoad sacra*.

During the past year some of the red-roofed buildings, which were occupied at one time by salters, at the east end of Church Street, have disappeared, and have given place to a handsome gateway which forms the western

entrance to Wemyss Castle. On the shore one seeks in vain for the site of the Old Engine pit, or the sites of the seven saltpans which were in operation in 1790. The complete effacement of the old hives of industry is due to the fact that the shore has been undermined by the coal workings of comparatively recent times, and has fallen to such a level that the sea now claims considerable stretches of the sandy beach on which the children of fifty years ago spent many pleasant hours. The Victoria pit is still in operation, but the Lady Emma, which adjoins it, is deserted and dismantled. The old fittings are depressing to look at, and the stranger seeks in vain for the salt girdel which at one time formed the distributing house for salt, and latterly for an abounding charity.

The Harbour, Past and Present.

In 1510, when West Wemyss was erected into a burgh of barony, it was written of as the "Haven town of Wemyss." In 1565, when Queen Mary married Darnley, the laird of Wemyss was appointed keeper of the havens of West Wemyss and East Wemyss for the intercepting of enemies to the King and Queen. The Rev. George Gibb, writing about 1790, states that the harbour was a good one, and tells us that some years previously it had been greatly improved by a basin for cleaning it having been constructed. Much as it was improved in Mr Gibb's time, it was found to be inadequate for the Wemyss coal trade in the late Mrs Wemyss' time, and in 1870 she had a wet dock constructed. The dock completely changed the whole aspect of things in the vicinity of the Victoria and the Lady Emma pits.

Farnie thus writes of East and West Wemyss:—
 'Although in closer contiguity to the Castle than East

Wemyss, the grimy burgh of barony is not the holiday pride of the people of the parish. No; West Wemyss is useful, East Wemyss is ornamental." Before many years have elapsed, Barncraig will have become the ornamental town. Coals have been gotten along the "golden fringe" from the Chapel Gardens to the site of the old salt works for 500 years. The workable seams are now getting exhausted. In 1904 operations were suspended at the



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West Wemyss Harbour.

[Kirkcaldy

Lady Emma pit, and the area of coal still to work from the Victoria is so much restricted that the steam will be permanently blown off in a comparatively few years.

In the days when Sir John Wemyss of Reres and Wemyss and the lairds who immediately succeeded him tabernacled in the district, the seagulls and wild ducks had undisputed possession of the bay between the bold red

rocks on which the Castle stands and the ancient chapel which was the residence of the vicar of Wemyss. When the last cage has been drawn in the Victoria pit, and we are left with only the echoes of the old cries, "Bend up" and "Chap two and hang the hammer," the sea birds which haunt the shores of the old haven town and the town of Dysart will again take possession of the bay. And so at every turn in this age of change and decay we have history repeating itself.

Shipbuilding.

In 1784, when the coals raised in Fife were carried to the Baltic ports and the Mediterranean in small ships, the people of West Wemyss came to the conclusion that what could be done at Dysart could also be done at Barn-craig, and a shipbuilding yard was opened. In 1790 a good many journeymen and eighteen apprentices were at work, and Mr Gibb says that some of "the best vessels which have sailed from the Firth of Forth for the West Indies have been built, as well as some for the Baltic trade." Despite this testimonial given to the shipbuilders of West Wemyss, the industry did not linger long, and the buildings which formed the offices of the shipbuilders were appropriated for workshops connected with the colliery and salt industries.

The Salt Works.

Salt was manufactured at West Wemyss in the fourteenth century. In 1790 there were as many as seven saltpans in operation; but in 1836 there was only one pan in use. In 1836, 1837, and 1838 the annual average of salt made was 6208 bushels, representing a value of £470. In 1818, 1819, and 1820 the annual average

quantity of salt made at West Wemyss and Methil was 50,400 bushels. In 1814 the customs dues on salt exported from Methil harbour alone amounted to nearly £10,000. Mr M'Lauchlan says:—"The salt made at Wemyss is excellent, and finds a ready market." The salt was all that Mr M'Lauchlan claimed for it; but the abolition of the tax and changes in the mode of manufacture of salt brought about a competition which ended in the closing of the works at West Wemyss, and for many years the bucket pat has been an institution known only to the older residents.

Coaltown of Wemyss.

The old red-roofed village of the Coaltown of Wemyss, which lies about a mile to the north of West Wemyss, has recently been surrounded by modern houses, and the population has been added to considerably. In 1891 the population was 381; in 1901 it was 731. The old school-room has been converted into a reading room, and through the kindness of Mr Wemyss and Lady Eva Wemyss a bowling green was opened upwards of a year ago. During the summer and autumn months the miners spend a good deal of time on the bowling green, and in the long winter months the reading room is an attraction for old and young in the village.

A Peep at the Parish in 1790 and 1838.

Writing in 1790 and 1838 the ministers of the parish give us some interesting glimpses at the institutions and customs of other days. Mr Gibb tells us, for instance, that, with the exception of a brewer and a wood merchant, there were no merchants in the parish. Some persons, he says, sold a small quantity of necessary articles. Hawkers came from Kirkcaldy and sold at a cheaper rate, however,

and the poor vendors of the "necessary articles" in Wemyss met with little or no encouragement. Beef was then 4d to 5½d per lb., and eggs sold at from 3d to 5d per dozen. But really things required to be cheap. Day labourers only earned 1s 2d per day from March to October, and 1s for the rest of the year, while masons were paid 1s 8d and wrights 1s 6d. Yet Mr Gibb concludes his report with these words:—"The people in general are regular in their attendance upon public worship, and apparently contented with their situations." He also gives us a peep at how the poor in these days were maintained. He tells us that 39 poor people received from 1s to 2s 6d per month, while others were made the recipients of an occasional gift of 5s. The total raised for the poor was from £50 to £60. The money came from weekly collections at the church, the interest of £100, and the dues of the mort-cloth. In 1833 General Wemyss contributed £60 towards the poor fund, and with church and other collections the total was raised to £120 14s 3½d. Of this total £101 9s was spent.

Mr Gibb complains bitterly of the want of a post-office in 1790. In 1838 there was still no post-office in the parish, but Mr M'Lachlan seems to think that the want was not then felt, because there "was a runner or post-boy from Kirkcaldy to Leven every morning and again from Leven to Kirkcaldy in the afternoon." In a chapter on the "Habits and Character of the People," Mr M'Lachlan concludes thus:—"The people as a body have long been distinguished for their quietness and general good conduct, and may justly be said to be an industrious, contented, decent, and church-going population."

The Catechist of Wemyss Parish.

In 1705 the Earl of Cromartie made arrangements with sculptors to erect life-sized effigies of the late Countess of Wemyss. It was found, however, that the burial ground at Wemyss did not admit of a tomb being erected, and in place of the proposed monument the Earl, as a token of affection and honour to her memory, mortified to the church of Wemyss the annual sum of one hundred merks Scots to found a salary for a catechist to instruct the miners and salters of Wemyss in the method of catechising in their families. There was no catechising for a period of years in the eighteenth century, and the capital increased to such an extent that the annual payment is now £64 14s. By the death of Mr Thomson, the minister of the church of West Wemyss, the post of catechist is at present vacant.



EDUCATIONAL HISTORY.

In the parish of Wemyss educational progress in the past quarter of a century has kept pace with the industrial changes. Writing on the "Educational State of the Parish" in 1790, the Rev. G. Gibb says:—

"The schoolmaster's salary in the Parish School at East Wemyss is £6 13s 4d. The number of scholars in winter is about 60 and in summer 40. The fees per quarter are, for English, 1s 2d; English and writing, 1s 6d; arithmetic, 2s; Latin, 2s 6d; book-keeping and navigation, a guinea each. As precentor and session clerk he has yearly £2 10s, and 12s 6d every time the Lord's Supper is dispensed; for each marriage 2s 3d, and each baptism 10d, for parochial certificates a guinea a year."

The statistics anent the attendance cast some light on the customs of the times. The attendance in the winter was 60 and in summer it was 40, and from this it may be inferred that a considerable number of the children were taken from the school in the summer months.

The next authentic report on education in Wemyss is from the pen of the Rev. John M'Lauchlan, in 1838. The parish made enormous strides between 1790 and 1838. The population had increased from 3050 to 5215, and Mr M'Lauchlan tells us that in addition to the parish school at East Wemyss there were six other schools. The teacher, who was a licentiate of the church, had a maximum salary of £34 4s 4½d a year, and £1 15s 7½d "for the want of the legal quantity of garden ground." He was also session clerk, the perquisites of which averaged £20 a year. The school fees amounted to £25. Mr M'Lauchlan proceeds:—

“All the common branches are taught here, as also Latin, French, and mathematics. There are six other schools in the parish, all endowed except the school at Kirkland, which is partially endowed, as the company, besides the school fees, gives £30 a year by way of salary. Nearly 800 young persons are receiving instruction in various branches of education; and if there are any in the parish under 15 years of age or above 10 who cannot read, the fault lies with the parents. There is an educational machinery in motion which is not surpassed in any parish; and all the teachers, seven in number, are distinguished for their zeal and efficiency, and diligence and success.”

The zeal and diligence of the teachers were not appreciated to the extent which they might have been, and in 1840 we find Mr Andrew Hutton, the teacher of East Wemyss, giving evidence as follows before the Parliamentary Commission appointed to enquire into child labour in mines:—

“The fee is 4d a week for reading, writing, and arithmetic; but very few go the length of the arithmetic, and many not more than reading. . . . They are taken down the pit early and don't return to school.”

Mr Thomas Byewater, the manager of Wemyss colliery, explained what going down the pit “early” meant. Mr Byewater says:—“By a rule of this colliery no boy should be taken below until he is ten years old. On special occasions this rule is relaxed by the men themselves.” Mr Byewater explained that the education of boys who were dragged down the mines at a very early date was often neglected. By the Act of 1842 boys were prevented from entering the mines before they had reached ten years of age, and from the date of the passing of the Act attendance began to improve. Mr Byewater's evidence in 1844 before the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the working of the statute showed progress. He then

stated that the school fees exacted at the pay table were compulsory on all who worked, with the exception of the men who resided in West Wemyss, where the authority of the school was divided. Captain Wemyss provided all books, &c., for the use of the schools. "We have," he said, "well-trained masters and a sewing school for girls." The improvement here indicated was fully maintained during the fifties and the sixties, and in 1873, when the School Board came into existence, Wemyss parish was well off for schools, and what is more, the schools were being taken advantage of to a really gratifying extent. Here is a notice showing the names of the respective schools, the teaching staff and the attendance :—

SCHOOLS.	TEACHERS.	PUPILS ON ROLL.
Parish School, East Wemyss, - -	1 male, 1 female,	142
F.C. School, " " - -	1 male, 1 female,	110
Madras School, Buckhaven, - -	1 male, 1 female,	250
Links School, " " - -	1 male, 1 female,	174
West Wemyss Colliery School, - -	1 male,	130
Coaltown Colliery School, - -	1 male,	94
Buckhaven (Miss Mitchell's Private School), - - - - -	1 female	80
Crossroads, Kirkland Public School,	1 male, 1 female,	250
	Totals, 13	1230

Table showing the scholars, the teaching staff, and the number of pupils in attendance to-day :—

SCHOOLS.	TEACHERS.	PUPILS ON ROLL.
Buckhaven Higher Grade School, -	27	1069
Methil Public School, - - -	21	876
Wemyss Public School, - - -	14	618
Crossroads Public School, - - -	10	511
Coaltown Public School, - - -	5	255
Dorothy Public School, - - -	6	231
	—	—
Totals, - - - - -	83	3560

The present Buckhaven Higher Grade School is now what was formerly known as the Madras School, and was extended first in 1875 at a cost of £840, in 1882 at a cost of £350, in 1885 at a cost of £700, and again in 1892 at a cost of £2400. The school was the first in Scotland to be recognised as a Higher Grade Public School. The school originally took the name "Madras" because it participated in the Madras scholarships founded by the late Dr Andrew Bell, of St Andrews and Madras. Mr Ross, the headmaster of the school, began life as a pupil teacher at Dysart. He studied in Edinburgh, and in 1886 was doing duty as classical master in one of the academies of the "Second City" when appointed to Buckhaven. The Links School of Buckhaven was opened in 1810 as an adventure school by the Associate congregation. The Kirkland Crossroads School was built in 1875. The sum expended on the original building was £840. An extension was made in 1887 at a cost of £1200. Mr George Masterton has occupied the position of headmaster since the school was opened. East Wemyss Public School, the infant department of which is the old parish school, was extended in 1890 at a cost of £800. The present senior department was erected in 1901, £2600 being expended. Mr James Cassells, the headmaster, is a Wemyss man. He received his early education at West Wemyss and Dysart, and was appointed headmaster at Coaltown in 1878. He was transferred to East Wemyss in 1903. Methil Public School was erected in 1893, at a cost of £2700. The building was extended in 1902, when nearly £5000 was spent. Mr William Ness, who has been headmaster since the school was opened, fulfilled the duties of an assistant in Buckhaven Higher Grade School before his appointment to Methil. The school at Coaltown of Wemyss and the

Dorothy School at West Wemyss were erected in 1896, and cost together £7600. Mr David Wallace has occupied the post of headmaster since 1897, when he was transferred from West Wemyss. He was succeeded at West Wemyss by Mr David H. Lindsay, who had held an assistantship in Buckhaven Higher Grade School for several years. The building of new schools in every part of the parish has thrown a great amount of work on the respective School Boards. The Boards have been made up of men who have been fired with zeal for the cause, however, and the schools of Wemyss parish to-day will compare favourably with the schools of any parish in Scotland. The following is a list of the gentlemen who have occupied the chair since the passing of the Education Act :—

Joseph Budge, 1873 to 1879 ; James W. Johnston, 1879 to 1882 ; R. G. E. Wemyss, 1882 to 1891 ; Rev. William M'Ghie, 1891 to 1894 ; James W. Johnston, 1894 to 1905.

Mr A. Watson Taylor, who was trained in Dundee, was appointed clerk in 1899. Mr Taylor is also clerk to the Parish Council.

Golf in the Parish.

Puffing pits, large redd bings, and railway sidings operated sadly against the amenities of the historic golf links by the "Glass Cove" and "Lady Rock," at Wemyss, and for some years after the opening of the Michael pits golf ceased to be one of the popular games of either East or West Wemyss. The first competition held under the auspices of the Wemyss Golf Club took place in March 1858, when the secretary records that "splendid shots were made from the tee over the Glass Cove." It would be a mistake for people to run away with the idea that

golf only began to be played at Wemyss when the club was formed in the fifties. Queen Mary could wield a golf club as well as fly a hawk, and it is quite within the bounds of possibility that she and Darnley, who, as Melville tells us, was "even and brent up, weill instructed in his youth in all honest and comely exercises," may have tried their skill in driving over the red rocks which made the Wemyss course one of the most sporting of courses. Whether Mary and Darnley played golf by the Glass Cove and Wemyss Castle or not, certain it is that golf was played at Wemyss at an early period. John Grub, the author of "Orations on Various Select Subjects," was appointed schoolmaster of the parish of Wemyss in 1748. On the year of his appointment he was struck on the knee by a golf ball. The injury brought on a white swelling. The schoolmaster was confined to the house for two years, and he ultimately lost the injured limb.

The first captain of the club of the fifties was Mr Wemyss of Wemyss Castle, and his lady was the first patroness. Mr Wemyss was succeeded by, among others, Mr R. G. E. Wemyss, Mr Oswald of Dunnikier, Mr Cathcart of Pitcairnie, Rev. A. B. Campbell of Markinch, Colonel Maitland Dougall, Allan Stewart of Balgonie, Colonel Johnston, and old Tom Morris. The following extract from the minutes is particularly interesting:—

"11 Nov. 1863.—After the day's play, Mr Wemyss, captain of the club, entertained the members to dinner, after which Mr Wemyss proposed that Mr Thomas Morris, champion, be made an honorary member of the club, which was carried by acclamation."

The club played a great many matches in the sixties, seventies, and eighties, and pulled off such a number of successes that it held a place of honour among the clubs of the "Kingdom."

In the summer of 1905 a meeting was held and it was agreed to resuscitate the club and to re-open the old course. The following office-bearers were appointed:—President, Mr Michael Wemyss; vice-president, Mr G. F. Underwood; secretary, Mr J. C. Davis; treasurer, Mr J. A. Black.



THE WEMYSS COLLIERY.

The monks of Dunfermline commenced to work coal under the shadow of the ancient abbey, on the lands of Pittencrieff, in 1291. Twenty years before this, Sir John of Methil and Wemyss was taking a practical interest in ecclesiastical affairs in Dunfermline. Sir John's successors kept up friendly relations with the abbot and the monks of Dunfermline, and at Pittencrieff they doubtless learned enough of the art of coal-getting and the value of coals to induce them to open up "heughs" in the seams which cropped out on the banks of the Forth at West Wemyss, and ultimately at Methil. Coal heughs certainly existed at Wemyss early

In the Fifteenth Century.

In an agreement entered into between David Wemyss of Wemyss and Robert Livingston of Drumry in 1429, in connection with the estates of East Wemyss and West Wemyss, it was specifically set forth that they mutually granted to each other the freedom of working coal. A clause was also inserted anent the manufacture of salt. In 1475 a dispute arose between Sir John of Wemyss and Sir Michael Livingston, the vicar of Wemyss, anent the teinds. The questions raised were fought out in the ecclesiastical courts of St Andrews, and ultimately the Assessor pronounced decree setting forth that the teind coals of the coal-heughs of the Laird of Wemyss shall be levied upon the multure of the coal-heughs from which they were led to the sea, and as for the teind of salt, the vicar was to have the true tenth of each pan in the week

paid wholly to him at the pan. At this time there were as many as six salt pans in operation, and one coal-heugh at work at West Wemyss, so that the vicar's income from salt and coal must have been very considerable.

Old Coal Taxes.

David Wemyss of that ilk (1572-1597), had the distinction of being called before the Privy Council in 1573 in connection with his salt pans at West Wemyss. The Laird of Wemyss had five pans at work and did a considerable export trade. Salt was scarce in this country, and the Council decreed that the export trade should be restricted until our own country was supplied. To make sure that the Laird of Wemyss would observe the restrictive conditions, he was called before the Council at Holyrood. In the closing days of the sixteenth century it appears to have been the custom of the Privy Council to close all seaports for general merchandise where no custom officer was located. There was no officer at West Wemyss, and the port in Sir John Wemyss' time, because of ship-owners defrauding the Customs, was closed as a seaport for general merchandise, coal and salt excepted.

John first Earl of Wemyss (1622-1649) did a great deal for the development of the minerals and the salt industry at West Wemyss. It was in his time that the Privy Council decreed that home vessels should be served with coal at the ports on the Forth before foreign craft. This condition was enforced because of an alleged scarcity of fuel in this country. The Earl fought the Privy Council for freedom to trade in such a way as would enable him to develop the trade and keep his workpeople fully employed. He brought a mining engineer from England to test the value of his coalfields, and he was the

first to discover coal at Lochgelly. He claimed to have as many as twelve seams of coals in the lands of West Wemyss, and a glimpse at life in the olden time is given by the words in which the discovery of the Bowhouse coal is recorded. A coal called the "Bowhouse" was found "be-east the Daubbue Creeaydge att the play field quher the witches is burnt." David the second Earl of Wemyss did much for the development of the coal works at Wemyss, and, indeed, of Scotland. Parliament in 1656 imposed a tax of 4s per ton on coals exported in home vessels and 8s per ton on coals sent abroad in foreign ships. The tax proved more than the coalowners in Scotland could bear, and Lord Wemyss went to London and presented a petition to the Protector, pointing out that the impost was ruining the coalmasters and preventing the 20,000 people employed at the coal works on the banks of the Forth from earning an adequate living. The Government of the Commonwealth reduced the tax on home boats from 4s to 2s 6d per ton and on foreign from 8s to 4s.

Earl David opened up the coal works at Methil. In the document which the Earl left bearing on the coal-workings he states, "It is well known that I leave many good colles at West Wemyss." David the third Earl of Wemyss was in 1689 a representative of the coalowners who appealed for a remission of the tax on coals, and James the fourth Earl had a good deal to do with the same subject. The Hon. James Wemyss (1756-1786), like his predecessors, did much to improve his coal and salt works. A very extensive hold of the coal which cropped out on the shore between the Chapel Gardens and Wemyss harbour was secured by the running of a day level from

high-water mark. The breast of coal in the mine measured three hundred yards at some places, and the workings extended to East Newton, where the coal "nipped out." This mine was followed by a shaft, the workings being drained by a windmill and a horse gin. Operations did not proceed far, however, when the sea burst in and work had to be abandoned.

A Great Fitting.

Nos. 2 and 3 shafts followed, and then came one of the greatest fittings of the times, No. 4 pit. It was sunk on the shore a little to the east of the present gas works. The pit was 84 fathoms in depth, and was drained by an engine of 30 horse power, but ultimately this was increased to 90 horse power, the volume of water having been largely added to through a flow from a dam in the old workings.

Writing in 1790, Mr Gibb, the minister of the parish, states that there is shipped at West Wemyss annually about 6000 tons of coal, mostly for Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Middlesburg. The light on the Island of May was at this time supplied with coal from West Wemyss. Floods and fires were among the difficulties experienced in connection with the Engine pit, and in 1824 No. 7 pit, which was afterwards known as the Victoria, was sunk. As the dock workings of the Victoria began to spread under the sea, the water increased enormously, and Mr David Landale, the mining engineer at the colliery, writing in 1835, tells us that there were as many as four steam engines on the fitting, of the united power of 172 horses, which was nearly a horse-power to every ton of coals raised. At this time the workings under the sea gave out large quantities of hydrogen gas, and Mr Landale found

that the only remedy was to put a bore at repeated intervals through the roof coal, and ignite the gas at the mouth of the hole. Mr Landale gives us the following glimpse at the workings in the early days of the Victoria:—

“There is a level tramway every third room or drift, upon which the trains are drawn from the inclined plane to the colliers. The colliers for two rooms above these roads slide their coals down the steep downsets, and those one room down hand them up. Every three men have a boy or a girl for this purpose.”

In 1841.

In his evidence given in 1841 before the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the employment of women and children in mines, Mr Thomas Byewater, the manager of the colliery, stated that there were employed above and below ground at Wemyss colliery 370 persons. Of the 269 people working below ground 25 were females, and of the boys 25 were under 13 years of age. Mr Byewater continues:—

“Our hours of employment are nominally 12, but two hours being allowed for breakfast and dinner, 10 hours are the time the men and others actually work. Children remain below as long as the adults; but as respects young colliers they work just according to their ability. By the practice of the colliery each adult collier is entitled to send to bank a specified quantity as his day's work, and whatever a man's strength might be, his fellow-workmen would object to his increasing it. But then, as a man is allowed to add a quarter to his quantity from the first day he takes a boy down to learn him his trade as a collier, he does, in fact, work this additional quantity himself often for months, the boy being incapable for a considerable time.

“A boy under 13 years of age ranks as ‘quarter man;’ on reaching the age of 13 he is reckoned as ‘half man;’ at 16 rises to a ‘three-quarter man;’ and at 17 takes his place as a ‘full man.’ These regulations were formed by the colliers themselves, and acquiesced in by the proprietor. By a rule of this colliery, no boy

should be taken below until he is 10 years old ; on special occasions this rule is relaxed, by the men themselves, to meet the wishes of men with large families, or to assist the widow of a collier.

“The colliers’ present wage averages from 2s 6d to 3s per day ; they have fallen 25 per cent. within the last 12 months, owing to reduction in the sale prices of coals, arising from a diminished demand. In addition to money wages, a collier (if married) gets a free house and garden. He is further permitted to work 5 cwt. of coal weekly for his family use, which is sent to the bank without charge ; but he loses this advantage if he has less than 10 days’ work in the fortnight, unless he proves by a certificate from the surgeon of the works that sickness or injury sustained at the work occasioned his absence. Unmarried colliers receive money in lieu of coals. The present rates of wages for smiths are 2s 8d ; masons, 2s 6d ; carpenters, 2s 8d ; and labourers, 1s 8d to 2s per day.

“The coals are putted by females, and the practice here is to contract with a certain number of responsible hands for periods of three and six months, leaving these contractors to engage their assistants.”

Among the further evidence led at Wemyss was the following :—

“Robert Welch, 11 years old, hewer—Works with father ; has done so one month ; learning to hew coal ; has no dislike to the work, only finds it very inconvenient to get porridge down ; has been five years at school, and learned to read and write. [Reads and writes very well.] Two brothers work below with me—Alexander, 13, has been two years down, and George, 15, has been four years down ; both read and write well.

“Janet Welch, about 20 years old, putter—Wrought below nine years ; did bear the coal on back ; ceased to do so six months ago. Women who worked in the high seam carried coal till masters forbid it two years since ; small hutches could have been used, but it was cheaper to carry. I work on the master’s account, and receive 1s a day ; do not like contract work, as the work is made o’ersair. [Reads ; ill-informed.]

“Isabel Hugh, 19 years old, putter—Began to work when 13 years old, below ground ; has wrought in the fields ; likes the work well enough ; it is guie sair sweating work. Janet Adamson

and I contract for putting on our own account ; the road is 100 fathoms in length, and we run the races singly ; we frequently run 50 races between us ; we get 14d per score, and 1s per week each extra for clearing pit bottom and working the pump ; seldom work less than 12 to 14 hours. [Reads and writes.]

“Elizabeth Lister, 15 years old, putter—Has wrought three years below ; works from six in the morning to six at night ; works for contractors ; has to make 14 races before porridge-time ; the distance is 300 fathoms from incline to pit bottom ; and 14 to 15 races between porridge and the time we take our pieces of bread ; 14, 15, and 16 races afterwards ; we get 15d a day, but only employed nine, sometimes ten days in the fortnight. When I wrought on day’s wages for master, was not so hard worked ; the work is more sair, as the men drive us more, for they do the work cheap. Many girls have left, not liking to be driven, and gone into the fields. [Reads and writes very well ; clever and ready in replies.]”

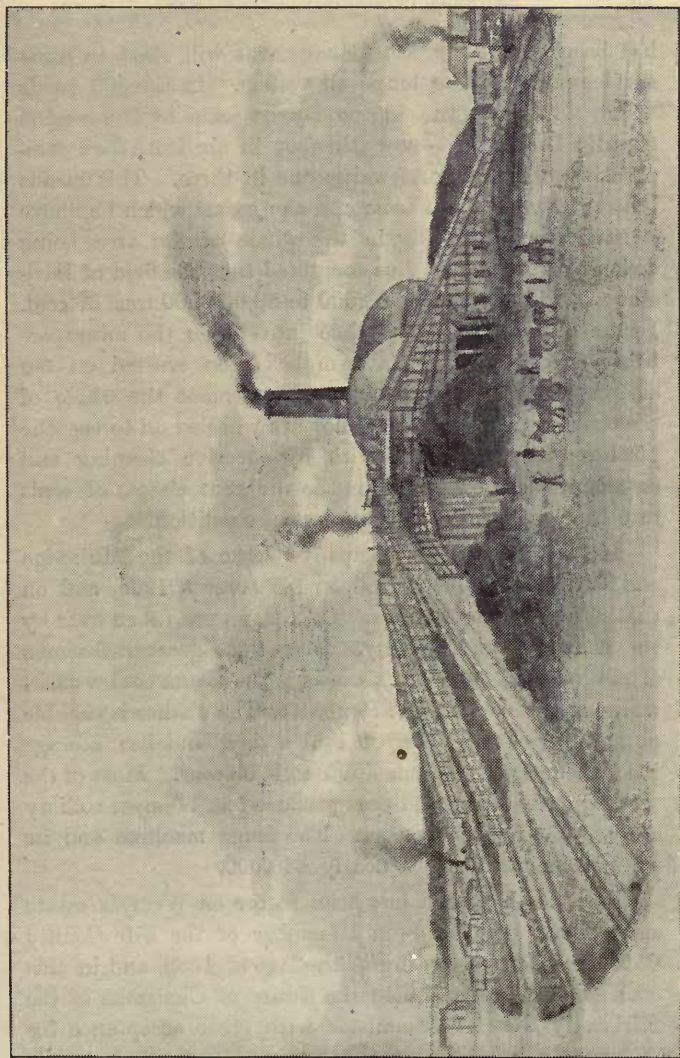
From 1870 to the Present Day.

In 1870—the year the eight hours a day system was introduced—Mrs Wemyss gave colliery development in the vicinity of Barncraig an impulse by the construction of the West Wemyss dock. The dock enabled the management of the Wemyss colliery to take full advantage of the golden days experienced in the coal trade in 1872-3. The opening of the dock was followed by the sinking of the Hugo pit, and in 1899 Lochhead pit was sunk and a day mine driven through the strata to the Bowhouse coal. In 1894 the Wemyss Coal Company, Limited, was formed. The directors of the company are :—Mr R. G. E. Wemyss (chairman), Mr Joseph Budge, Mr John Gemmel, Mr John Oswald, Mr W. Nocton, and Mr A. Bowman. Mr V. L. Gordon is general manager ; Mr G. F. Underwood, secretary ; Mr R. Anderson, cashier ; and Mr J. Davis, principal book-keeper.

In 1898 the chemiss splint coal was struck at a depth of 140 fathoms in the Michael pits, which are equi-distant

between Wemyss Castle and the village of East Wemyss. A direct-acting pumping engine capable of raising one thousand gallons of water a minute to the surface is at work on one of the shafts, and on both pits the coals are drawn by handsome coupled engines, the combined output reaching as much as 2000 tons a day. The dook in the chemiss splint seam dips one foot in three, and has reached a point something like three-quarters of a mile under the sea. The screening plant for the coals and other fittings are of the best make, and through an effective system of lighting by electricity work goes on as briskly in the dark mornings and on the long dark nights as it does in the sunshine. An interesting feature of the Michael pits is the fact that all the machinery is founded on the solid rock, and the boilers are connected with the chimney-stalk by flues driven through the red sandstone.

In the beginning of 1904 the work of opening up the northern section of Wemyss coalfield was commenced at Earlseat, near Thornton. The site makes the colliery unique in the history of mining, Earlseat is the apex of the Wemyss, Dysart, and Balgonie coalfields, and five seams of coal converge and crop out within a small area. The colliery fittings have been pitched on the apex, and as many as five day-mines or "in-going eyes" are being run into the Dysart main seam, which is from fifteen to twenty feet in thickness. The seams stretch away into the Dysart, Wemyss, and Balgonie fields for distances ranging from a mile to a mile and a half, and the mines are being run to the south, the east, and the west. The stoop-and-room system of working is being followed while the work of development goes on; but when the march has been reached on the different slopes and a great area of coal



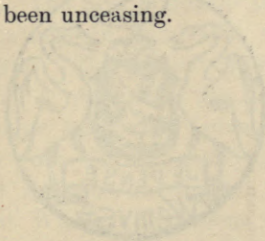
Earlseat Mines.

has been opened up, the management will start to come surfacewards on the long-wall system. In the 500 yards which have been run in the Dysart seam in No. 3 mine the dip has varied—now one foot in six feet, then comparatively flat, and afterwards one in three. This means that the Dysart main seam and the seams which lie above it have ample covering in the whole of the area being operated on, and it is thus computed that the field of Earlseat will yield from 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 tons of coal. In the centre of the horseshoe into which the mines are being driven a huge platform has been erected on the surface, and by an ingenious arrangement the whole of the coals drawn from the mines are wheeled on to the one platform, and are dealt with by effective cleaning and screening plant, which runs the different classes of coals into the waggons in the very best of condition.

Messrs Bowman & Company's lease of the Muiredge and Cameron fields expired on 1st August 1905, and on that date Messrs Bowman & Co.'s pits were taken over by the Wemyss Coal Company. One of the greatest features of the Wemyss Company's works is the Baum coal washer, which has been erected at Denbeath. The washer is capable of handling 1000 tons of coal a day, and has storage accommodation for from 4000 to 5000 tons. Most of the trebles, nuts, beans, and peas produced at Wemyss colliery are treated by the washer. The huge machine and its railway connections cost nearly £40,000.

Mr Joseph Budge has been factor on Wemyss estate since 1870. He has been a member of the Fife County Council since the passing of the Act of 1889, and in this connection he has fulfilled the duties of Chairman of the Kirkcaldy District Committee with great acceptance for

two terms. As Convener of the Technical Education Committee of the County Council he has done magnificent work, and his labours on the School Board of the parish of Wemyss have been unceasing.





THE WEMYSS FAMILY,

From the Earliest Times to the Present Day.

Michael of Methil, the founder of the Wemyss family, flourished during the reign of William the Lion, which was from the year 1165 to 1214. Between 1165 and 1905 we have many generations, extending over a period of seven centuries. To the mind of Sir William Fraser, the tradition of the Wemyss descent from the ancient Earls of Fife was not established, but he concludes a chapter on "The Origin of the Family" by telling us that the family has one of the "longest and purest of Scottish pedigrees." The writer of this little work does not accept Sir William's deductions against the Fife descent as absolute, and despite all that the learned author says, clings to the tradition that the family are descended from the Earls of Fife. Writers who do not accept the traditional descent from the Fife earls build their theories upon two grounds—(1) that in the days of Sir John Wemyss of Wemyss the Wemyss family did not bear the ensign armorial of the

Earls of Fife; and (2) that it has not been proved that the lands of Muircambus were part of the early possessions of the Wemyss's. The first argument does not count for much when it is kept in mind that the Earls of Fife changed their arms. The second contention is disposed of by a case which is reported in the *Acta Auditorium*, p. 52, and which came before the Lords Auditors on 17th July 1476. The case was one raised at the instance of David Boswell of Balmuto, and his son, David Boswell of Glasmont, against William Levingstone of Drumry, anent the lands of Muircambus. The evidence adduced shows without doubt that the lands had been in the hands of the Wemyss family when the division took place among the co-heiresses in 1342.

Macduff was created Earl of Fife by Malcolm Canmore in 1057, twelve years before Queen Margaret arrived at Queensferry, and was distinguished by many great and noble privileges for his valour against the usurper Macbeth, and through which Malcolm was restored to the throne of his ancestors. Gilimichael Macduff was the fourth in descent from the great Macduff. He was a witness to several charters by King David I., "The Sair Saint," to the monastery of Dunfermline. He was succeeded in the earldom by Duncan, his eldest son. Gilimichael's second son was Hugo, and to Hugo he gave the lands of Markinch, and other lands now the estate of Wemyss. Hugo died in 1163. A son of Hugo, who also took the name of Hugo, conferred on the canons of St Andrews the church of Markinch, with a toft and the teinds. The charter was witnessed by Richard, the bishop, who died in 1173. Hugo had a son whose name was Michael, and Michael was succeeded by his son John, who afterwards became Sir John

of Methil and Wemyss. Sir John lavished many gifts on the Church. He granted in 1239 his right to the Church of St Mary of Wemyss to the Hospital of Soutra, a small religious house on the ridge of the Lammermoors. Sir John, who is described by Bower the historian as a brave knight, was stricken in years, and was suffering from an aguish fever when the Norwegians tried to conquer Scotland. While under the effects of the malady he fell into a slumber and had a vivid dream. He thought he stood in the north porch of the church at Dunfermline, and there a lady of great beauty and royal robes appeared on the scene. Sir John begged of the lady to reveal who she was, and the visitor from the other world replied:—"I am Margaret, formerly Queen of Scotland; this is Malcolm, my husband, and these are our three sons, kings of this realm while in the flesh, with whom I hasten to Largs to defend the country and gain a victory over the tyrant who strives unjustly to subdue our realm." In response to what he considered to be an invitation from the unearthly visitants, Sir John, despite his weakly condition, journeyed from Wemyss to Dunfermline. He related his dream to the prior, showed his devotion by kissing the relics in the church of the saintly Queen, and while thus engaged his malady vanished. It was with difficulty he could tear himself away from the sacred spot, and while he lingered and thought of the days when Queen Margaret worshipped in the sacred edifice, a messenger arrived with news of the victory gained over the Norwegians at Largs.

Sir John was on most intimate terms with Malcolm Earl of Fife. He was succeeded by Sir Michael Wemyss of Wemyss. Sir Michael was in possession of the Wemyss estates from 1265 to 1319. He was among the Scottish

barons who swore fealty to Edward I., and in March 1304, when the King made a progress through Fife, he spent a night and a day at Wemyss. On King Robert the Bruce coming forward in defence of the rights of the people of Scotland, Sir Michael joined his standard, with the result that Edward issued a mandate commanding that the "manor" where the Laird of Wemyss "lay" and his other "manors" should be burned and his lands destroyed. Sir Michael was succeeded by his son, Sir David Wemyss of Wemyss, who was one of the ambassadors sent, after the death of Alexander III., to bring home the Maid of Norway. The King of Norway presented Sir David with a massive silver basin, which is preserved in the Castle of Wemyss to this day. In 1297 he was summoned to attend on King Edward in Flanders; but he does not seem to have been happy with the English King, for at a later date he and his wife are referred to as rebels. Sir David in certain writs is designated as lord of half of the lands of Lochore, and the mill of Lochoreshire was the common property of Sir David and Adam de Vallonius. He died about 1330. It was under Sir Michael's roof that the Regent Moray was seized with the illness which proved fatal, and in the stirring times which followed Randolph's death, the Laird of Wemyss was among the nobles who were made prisoners by the English. Sir Michael died somewhere about 1342, leaving, says Sir William Fraser, no surviving male issue, and his large possessions were divided among his three daughters, who carried their separate portions of their father's estate into the families of their respective husbands. The partition of Wemyssshire continued until 1630, when the whole of the lands returned to the family by purchase. Sir John Wemyss of

Reres and Wemyss succeeded in 1372. Sir John is known as the patron of Andrew Wyntoun, the well-known author of the "Rhyiming Chronicle." Wyntoun became prior of St Serf's in 1395, and it was at the suggestion of Sir John that the author published his "Cronykil of Scotland." The Chronicle was issued about 1423 or 1424.

Sir John Wemyss was succeeded by David Wemyss of Methil and Wemyss, who was fully alive to the advantages of consolidating the Wemyss properties, and it was in his time that the distinction of Wemyss into East and West Wemyss originated. John Wemyss succeeded his father in 1430. About the year 1460—probably at the coronation of James III.—the Laird of Wemyss was raised to the rank of knight. Sir John was succeeded in 1502 by his son, who died in 1508. David Wemyss came next. He was knighted in 1510, and in 1511 he obtained the formal erection of the whole of the Wemyss estates into a barony, which was called the Barony of Wemyss. Sir David accompanied James IV. in his fatal expedition against England, and was killed at the battle of Flodden on 9th September 1513. David Wemyss, who succeeded to the estates in 1513, died in 1544. Then came Sir John Wemyss of that ilk, who was a military man. Among the many engagements in which the Laird of Wemyss took part was the battle of Pinkie, which was fought on 10th September 1547, and there he was taken prisoner on the field. He was soon liberated, and in 1548 he distinguished himself by repulsing a body of English soldiers who tried to obtain a footing in Fife by landing at St Monans. Sir John was appointed lieutenant of Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan by Queen Mary, and in 1564-5 the Queen visited Wemyss Castle. Sir John was at the

battle of Langside in May 1568, and took part in the conflict. He died in January 1571. He was succeeded by his son, David Wemyss of Wemyss (*circa* 1572-1597). In consequence of the illness of his father, the young laird had often to step into the breach and take military service. He took part in many of the Border raids in the middle of the sixteenth century. He redeemed the lands of Lochgelly from Sir William Scott of Balwearie. During his lifetime he was compelled to entertain at his castle of Wemyss a number of prominent Borderers, who were committed to the care of the well-affected barons of the realm as pledges for the good behaviour of their kinsmen. When James VI. was married to Princess Anne of Denmark, the Laird of Wemyss was among those summoned to a meeting of the Estates held in Edinburgh in April 1589. In May of the same year he was appointed convener of the county of Fife, and the duty of a convener of a county was to summon the freeholders of the shire for the election of Commissioners to represent them in a Parliament to be held on October 2nd.

In 1596 the Laird of Wemyss was a Member of Parliament. On 7th February 1592, the Earl of Huntly, accompanied by a retinue, crossed the Forth at Queensferry and arrived at Donibristle in the evening. Shortly after the arrival of Huntly, the "Bonnie Earl of Moray" lay bleeding to death on the rocks in front of Donibristle House. The friends of Moray cried to the King for justice against Huntly, and an attempt was made to get up a feud between the Earls of Athole and Huntly. Although David of Wemyss seems to have sympathised with the Atholes, Sir William Fraser found no document indicating that he had been involved in the skirmishes which

took place. Sir John Wemyss of Wemyss (1597-1622) was knighted about 1594, and in 1595 represented the barons of Fife in Parliament along with Sir John Melville of Carnbee. His loyalty to King James led to his being much trusted by the "Scottish Solomon" and Queen Anne. James was always impecunious, and in 1589 the Laird of Wemyss was summoned, in his capacity as Commissioner to Parliament, to Perth to a Convention to "devise ways and means for replenishing the royal exchequer." Sir John Wemyss was one of the nobles chosen to convoy the royal household to London on James succeeding to the English throne.

Sir John Wemyss of that ilk, the first Earl of Wemyss, succeeded in 1622. Sir John was knighted by James VI. about 1618. He was one of the Scottish lairds who were taken in by the Nova Scotia bubble. Charles I., taking special notice of Sir John, passed a signature of a Nova Scotia baronetcy in his favour, following up the new honour by the statement that it was "a next stepp to a further title." After the lands in Nova Scotia had been declared to be the property of the French Government, Charles, in 1628, "in remembrance of the good service done to his Majestie," conferred on Sir John the dignity and rank of a Lord of Parliament by the title of Lord Wemyss of Elcho. In the Palace of Dunfermline, where Charles I. was born, a patent, which had been signed at Holyrood, creating Lord Wemyss Earl of Wemyss and Lord Elcho of Methil, was presented to his lordship by his Majesty.

Lord Wemyss was one of the six Lords of Parliament who bore the "pale" of crimson velvet above Charles' head from Holyrood to the church on coronation day. When the

laird of Wemyss and Methil was created Lord Wemyss, he promised to try and approve himself worthy of the honour to the "utmost of his possibilities," and his lordship was as good as his word. Although appointed by the King a member of the Court of High Commission, which had been established by the bishops, he did not act upon the Court, and so strong a Presbyterian was he that when Charles tried to force Episcopacy on the people of Scotland he cast in his lot with the nobles who tried at any cost to counteract the measures of Charles. He and his son subscribed the Covenant with the rest of the nobility in 1638 in Greyfriars Churchyard, and Sir William Fraser says they were strong workers in the struggle which culminated in the second Reformation.

Baillie gives us a delightful peep at the character of Wemyss. In 1638 he was appointed the King's Commissioner to the General Assembly. The King intended at first to appoint the Earl of Southesk. It transpired that Southesk was distrusted by the country. Wemyss fell to be next, and, says Baillie, "the modestie and simplicities of the man made him displeasing to none." In the days when the breach between the King and the country widened, the Earl and Lord Elcho stood fast by their Presbyterian faith without wavering, and in 1644 Lord Wemyss avowed his adherence to the Solemn League and Covenant.

In 1630 Lord Wemyss purchased the lands of East Wemyss, and the whole of Wemyss-shire thus became once more the property of the Wemyss family. The Earl of Wemyss developed the minerals on the estate to an enormous extent, and also added to the saltpans of the district. The Earl was the first to discover coal at Loch-head, near Lochgelly.

On the death of the Earl of Wemyss in 1649 he was succeeded by his son, David Lord Elcho, who was born in 1610. David had inherited all the patriotism and the business capacity of his father. He took an active interest in the civil, the military, and ecclesiastical affairs of the country during the stirring days between 1649 and 1679. He carried out many improvements on his lands, and launched many extensive schemes of mineral development. Through the creation of his father as the Earl of Wemyss, David became Lord Elcho. He supported his father in his adherence to the Covenanting cause, which brought the second Reformation in its train, and the subsequent rupture with Charles I. At the General Assembly in Glasgow in 1638 he opposed the bishops and all their works, and in the following year accompanied Montrose and Leslie in the north of Scotland when they took the field against Huntly. He accompanied the Scottish army into England in 1640, and was absent from Wemyss for a whole year. He took part in many Covenanting struggles, and had the honour of being mentioned in many of Cromwell's dispatches.

He was a member of the Parliament which sat at Edinburgh in the autumn of 1641, under the presidency of Charles I., was a member of the General Assembly of 1643, and with his father protested against the translation of George Gillespie from Wemyss to Edinburgh. Lord Elcho experienced a good deal of treachery as a commander in the Highlands in 1644 and 1645, and this led to defeats. In 1648 he was appointed by the Committee of Estates to his former command of colonel of one of the regiments of infantry to be raised by the county of Fife. Lord Elcho cast in his lot with "the honest party" rather than with the "politic-Presbyterian party," and he did not

take part in the expedition which sustained a terrible check by Cromwell at Preston. Indeed, Lord Elcho was one of the deputation sent by the "honest party" to Berwick, in response to an offer from Cromwell to accept the assistance of himself and his army against their opponents. In a letter, Cromwell says:—

"I must be bold to testify for that noble lord (the Marquis of Argyll), the Lord Elcho, and the other gentlemen with him, that I have found nothing in them other than what becomes Christians and men of honour."

In the stirring times which followed in 1549, the Castle of Wemyss was more than once the scene of rejoicing and of mourning. Jean Wemyss, Lord Elcho's eldest daughter, was in April married to the Earl of Angus, and in August Elcho's sister, Lady Jean Wemyss, was married to her second husband, the Hon. Harry Maule. On the 10th November Lady Elcho died, and on the day of his wife's funeral Lord Elcho was mourning the death of his father, John first Earl of Wemyss. David Lord Elcho now succeeded as second Earl of Wemyss. He married Lady Helenor Fleming, eldest daughter of the Earl of Wigton, as his second wife, but she only lived two years.

Charles II. visited Wemyss Castle on 20th July 1650, and having afterwards found his way to Edinburgh and Leith, he proceeded to Dunfermline. In the ancient city he was met by the Earl of Wemyss and Mr George Winram, the minister of Liberton, as representatives of the Kirk Commission and the Committee of Estates. They intimated to the King that, as he had refused to sign the declaration renouncing popery and prelacy, they could neither own him nor his cause. After certain alterations had been made, the King signed the document the

following day, and the document became what is known in history as the "Dunfermline Declaration."

The King fell sadly from the faith implied in the Declaration, and was really unworthy of the fidelity shown him. Charles was crowned at Scone on 1st January 1651. The Earl of Wemyss was present, and in making a pilgrimage through Fife in February the King visited Wemyss Castle and passed a night with Earl David. When Burntisland fell into the hands of Cromwell's army, Wemyss Castle was visited and despoiled of its arms and artillery. Earl David ultimately made hearty recognition of the Government of Cromwell, and during the ascendancy of the Commonwealth he enjoyed a season of quiet and repose.

On 23rd December 1652 the Earl of Wemyss was married to Lady Margaret Leslie, the second daughter of the Earl of Rothes. Lady Margaret's first husband was Lord Balgonie, and her second husband was the second Earl of Buccleuch. The Earl of Wemyss was her third husband. Earl David attended the first Parliament of Charles II. at Edinburgh, on 1st January 1661. In May 1662 Parliament assigned to Earl David and the Earl of Kellie the task of bringing in the bishops. Archbishop Sharpe was one of the bishops consecrated, and in 1664 Earl David was summoned by Sharpe to take part in the visitation of the University of St Andrews. The visit was the commencement of a friendship between the Archbishop and the Earl which resulted in the erection of Methil into a free burgh of barony, the building of a harbour at Methil, the creation of fairs, and the introduction of many changes on the Wemyss lands.

In many respects the Earl was a wonderful man. While devoting much attention to the army and to Parlia-

mentary questions, he kept a watchful eye on the salt works of Wemyss and his coal output from Methil "Happy Mine"—the Kirkland and the West Wemyss works were a credit to the times in which he lived. The close personal supervision he gave to the works is shown by the diary he wrote, of an entry from which the following is an extract :—

"I have sett doune the trew condition of all my colles, that my posteritie may know how I left them at writing of this att Candilmasse, 1677."

The Earl then proceeds to detail the coalfields of the district, including those under the Leven, and he advises his successors to acquire certain additional lands, so that they might secure the coalfields. Earl David died at Wemyss Castle in July 1679. By his first and third wives he had a numerous offspring, sixteen children, but only one daughter by each of these two wives survived him. In his diary the Earl thus notes the death of his only son :—

"The Lord giues and He taks—all is His. But we being in a sade conditione, sauing His holy pleasure, I must shew that David Wemyss, my second sone, heir aboue named, being 16 yeirs ould and 6 months and 15 days, died att Wemyss, 28th September 1671, at 5 morning, he being my only sone of 10. He was buried 10th October 1671 at Wemyss Kirk."

The Earl settled his titles and estates on his daughter, Lady Margaret, his only surviving child by Lady Margaret Leslie. Lady Margaret was born at Wemyss on 1st January 1659, and on 28th March 1672, when she was only 13 years of age, she was married to Sir James Wemyss of Burntisland, who afterwards became Lord Burntisland. On the death of Earl David in 1676, Lady Margaret became the Countess of Wemyss. A petition

was presented to Charles II. asking that Lord Burntisland should be allowed to enjoy the title of Earl of Wemyss ; but his lordship died before the King had disposed of the application. Lord Burntisland was only 23 years of age at his death, and before his remains had been long buried his widow had given birth to her fifth child. On 29th April 1700 the Countess married Lord Tarbet, who in 1703 became the Earl of Cromartie. The Countess of Wemyss and Cromartie was a lady of marked ability. She died on 11th March 1705. The Earl wrote a very pretty inscription for a tomb. He writes of himself as her spouse, and concludes thus :—

Whilst you lived there was not another more blessed than he.

Living you made him young, but by your death have made him old.

He, mourning, has raised this tomb to you as a pledge of love.

Nor will he restrain the grief due to you.

The choicest and most delightful of women was born at the Castle of Wemyss, 1st January 1659, died 11th March 1705 at the Palace of Whitehall. The happy mother of the Wemyss family, by her son David, of her first husband, James Lord Baron of Burntisland, of the Leven and Northesk families, by her daughters Anna and Margaret.

David, third Earl of Wemyss, succeeded to the estates in 1705. He had inherited all the enterprise of his grandfather, the great Earl David, and the fifteen years which stood between the date of his succession and his death were years of activity at the coal pits and the salt works of Wemyss and Methil. He tried glassmaking in the Glass Cove. In 1706 Lord Wemyss was appointed one of the Commissioners for the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland, and through the debates in Parliament supported the Union. He was one of the sixteen peers chosen to represent the nobility of Scotland in the

Parliament of Westminster. For the discharge of his Parliamentary business Earl David removed to London and took up his residence in Soho Square. Neither the Earl nor his family had much relish for the "rattle and the pleasures of London," and he tells us that he visited no more than just to "keep up mannerly with the world."

Earl David first married Lady Anna Douglas, only daughter of William first Duke of Queensberry. On the 13th February 1700, just two years after the marriage, Lady Anna's clothes took fire while at her private devotions, and she sustained such injuries that she died on the 23rd of the same month. In 1708 the Earl married Miss Mary Robinson, eldest daughter of Sir John Robinson of Formingwood. His third wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Henry Lord Sinclair. Lord Wemyss lost his eldest son, a promising young man of 17 years, by death, and he was left with only the other son of his first marriage when he wedded his third wife. A son and two daughters were born of the third marriage. Lord Wemyss died on 15th March 1720.

James the fourth Earl of Wemyss was born on 30th August 1699, and was the younger of the two sons of the third Earl and Lady Anna Douglas. James was an infant of but a few months old when his mother lost her life by her clothes taking fire. Andrew Ramsay, the tutor of James and his elder brother David, in writing to a friend, says:—"I have nothing to interrupt me but an hour or two attendance at night upon two of the most innocent, sweet, sprightly boys I ever knew." Earl James married the only daughter and heiress of Colonel Francis Charteris of Annisfield and Newmills, in the county of Haddington. The Earl devoted a great deal of attention to his own estates, and took the active oversight of the coal mining

and salt manufacturing industries of Methil and Wemyss. Colonel Charteris, the Countess' father, died in 1730. In 1729 he made a disposition of his property in favour of his daughter's second son, Francis Wemyss, who was to assume the surname of Charteris. Provision was also made for the other children, but the stipulations were such that the Earl could not assent to them, and he and his wife separated. David Lord Elcho, the Earl's eldest son, took an active part in the rebellion of 1745. He escaped to the Continent after Culloden, but his property was confiscated by the Crown. The Earl died on 21st March 1756, and his remains were interred in the Church of Wemyss on 8th April. Lord Elcho, who remained an exile in France, was attainted by Act of Parliament for the part he had played as a colonel in the first troop of Horse Guards of Prince Charlie, and therefore could neither succeed to the estates nor the titles.

In 1750 the Earl of Wemyss made a settlement by which the family estates were on his death to devolve on his second son, Francis Wemyss Charteris, if Lord Elcho predeceased the Earl. If Lord Elcho survived the Earl, the estates of Wemyss were to go to James, the third son. James could succeed to the estates but not to the titles. Through the eldest son being attainted the titles fell dormant, and so continued until the death of Lord Elcho in Paris in 1787.

In consequence of the settlement of Colonel Charteris, the Hon. Francis Wemyss assumed the name and arms of Charteris, and in 1771 he obtained an Act of Parliament authorising him to use and bear the name of Charteris. On the death of Lord Elcho he succeeded to the title of Earl of Wemyss, and since then the titles and honours

have remained with the Charteris family on the other side of the Forth.

The Hon. James Wemyss, who succeeded to the Wemyss estates on the death of the fourth Earl, was born on 23rd February 1726. He chose the navy as a profession, and attained the rank of lieutenant at a comparatively early age; but he soon cut connection with the navy and took up a Parliamentary career. At Dysart, on 29th August 1757, he married his cousin, Lady Elizabeth Sutherland, the only daughter of William sixteenth Earl of Sutherland. In 1762 Mr Wemyss succeeded General St Clair as Member of Parliament for the county of Fife. In 1768 he was defeated by Colonel Scott, but was returned for Sutherlandshire. On the death of Colonel Scott in 1775, Mr Wemyss was offered a walk over in Fife, but he preferred to sit for the county which had stood by him at a time of trial. Mr Wemyss kept a watchful eye on his collieries and salt works, and did much for the development of the minerals. He died in Edinburgh in May 1786, in the sixty-first year of his age.

He was succeeded by General William Wemyss, who had a distinguished military career. General Wemyss was returned to Parliament for the county of Sutherland in 1784. In 1787 he vacated his seat and stood for his native county. He was opposed by Sir John Henderson of Fordell, but was elected by a large majority. Sir John protested against the election of General Wemyss on account of his holding the office of Deputy-Adjutant-General of Scotland, but the protest was not effective. The General was re-elected for Fife in 1790, and again in 1808. In 1788 he married Frances Erskine, eldest daughter of Sir William Erskine of Torrie, Bart. In 1786 Colonel Wemyss was appointed Deputy-Adjutant-General

of the Forces in Scotland with the rank of major in the army. In 1798 he was promoted to the rank of major-general. He added much to the amenities of the estate of Wemyss by planting trees. General Wemyss died on 14th February 1822 at Wemyss Castle.

General William Wemyss was succeeded by his eldest son, Admiral James Erskine Wemyss, who was born in 1789. Mr Wemyss joined the *Tonnant* in 1802, under Sir Edward Pellew. Between 1802 and 1809, when he sailed in the *Culloden*, he saw much hard service. On 12th April 1812 he was advanced to the rank of commander, and assumed the command of the *Pylades*. Captain Wemyss took an active share in the naval operations against Genoa, and when it fell into the hands of the British, in April 1814, he received the public thanks of Captain Josias Rowley. In the same year he was appointed acting captain of the *Rainbow*. He retired in December 1814, continuing to hold his rank, which was advanced in 1850 to rear-admiral.

Shortly after leaving the *Rainbow*, Admiral Wemyss resolved to take up a political career, and in 1820 he was chosen as the representative of the county of Fife. He represented Fife until 1830, when a vote in favour of the Reform Bill cost him his seat. Under the extended franchise in 1832, however, Admiral Wemyss was returned unopposed. In 1835 Colonel Lindsay of Balcarres tried to oust him, but was beaten by two to one for his pains. The Hon. James Bruce, who afterwards became Lord Elgin, next championed the Tory cause; but he sustained even a more crushing defeat than Colonel Lindsay. In 1841 Mr Wemyss' seat was supposed to be so impregnable that he received no opposition, and he retained the seat until 1847, when Parliament was dis-

solved, and he announced that he would not again seek re-election.

It was in 1822 that Admiral Wemyss succeeded to the paternal inheritance of Wemyss. Fourteen years after his succession to the barony of Wemyss, he inherited the baronies of Torrie and Lundin through his maternal uncle, Sir John Drummond Erskine of Torrie. The barony of Lundin was afterwards sold by Admiral Wemyss. Admiral Wemyss died at Wemyss Castle on 3rd April 1854. James Hay Erskine Wemyss, who was born at Wemyss Castle on 27th August 1829, succeeded his father in the baronial estates of Wemyss and Torrie on 3rd April 1854. On the retirement of Mr John Fergus of Strathore in 1859, Mr Wemyss came forward as a candidate for the county of Fife. He was opposed by his cousin, Lord Loughborough, afterwards Lord Rosslyn. The contest is spoken of to this day as a keen one. Mr Wemyss polled 1087 votes and Lord Loughborough 850. Although a Whig, Mr Wemyss held advanced views on many questions. In recognition of his ancient lineage and his public services, Mr Wemyss was in the opening days of 1864 appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the county, an office which had been held by his late father. Unfortunately he did not live long to enjoy the honours which were showered upon him. In November 1863 Mr Wemyss caught a severe cold. The cold settled on his lungs during the winter, and on 29th March 1864 he died. He was only 36 years of age. Mr Wemyss' remains were brought from London, and were laid to rest in the family aisle near the Parish Church of East Wemyss. Four years before his death, Mr Wemyss had executed a trust-settlement in favour of his wife (who was a daughter of the Hon. John Kennedy Erskine of Dun), the Earl of Munster, Sir David Baird of

Newbyth, Bart., and Mr Robert Cathcart of Pitcairly. The chief burden of the trusteeship soon devolved on Mrs Wemyss, and she managed the trust in a manner which brought nothing but compliments from all who had the pleasure of her acquaintance in and outwith the county. At the opening of Methil dock in 1887, Mr Wemyss, the present laird, said :—

“In 1870 a wet dock was added to the harbour at West Wemyss by my mother, Mrs Wemyss, who has been a trustee during my minority on the Wemyss estates. Her name, gentlemen, as you who are not strangers here to-day know, will in our local records, aye, and even outside of them, be handed down to posterity as a woman who more than did her duty in that position of life which she so judicially and ably adorned.”

Mrs Wemyss died in February 1895, and her remains were buried at Wemyss.

When his father died, in March 1864, Mr Randolph Erskine Wemyss, the present laird, was in his sixth year. On Mr Wemyss attaining his majority, on 11th July 1879, a conveyance of the lands of Wemyss-shire was made by Mrs Wemyss and the remaining trustees in his favour, and by the authority of the Court of Session he disentailed the lands of Torrie, Methil, Buckhaven, and Lochhead. Mr Wemyss is a striking personality : a man of impulses, who has inherited all the enterprise and the restless energy of his ancestor the great Earl David. When in his 'teens he gave evidence of boundless activity, and as the years pass the same characteristic is exhibited in even a greater degree. Before he was of full age and legally entitled to act for himself, he had arranged for the carrying through of the Thornton-Buckhaven railway, a scheme involving an expenditure of £25,000. In 1883 he purchased the Leven dock at a cost of £12,000, and in 1886 had con-

structed Methil dock and given a much-needed impulse to the development of the coalfields of the county of Fife. On the Wemyss estate to-day Mr Wemyss is working out

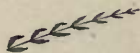
*Milliken**[Kirkcaldy]*

R. G. E. Wemyss, Esq. of Wemyss and Torrie.

a series of schemes. His plans of coal development include undertakings which are calculated to raise the annual coal output of the Wemyss Coal Company from 700,000 tons

to 2,000,000 tons a year; he contemplates a new brickwork, has built the new village of Denbeath, and was the original promoter of the Kirkcaldy and Leven tramways.

Representing as he does a family which has one of the longest and purest of Scottish pedigrees, and which for centuries rendered distinguished services to the State, no surprise need be expressed at the fact that Mr Wemyss has had ambitions to enter Parliament. He contested West Fife in 1889 and 1895, and his defeat on both occasions was entirely due to the fact that he split with the Gladstonian party on the Irish Home Rule problem. Mr Wemyss was returned to the Council Board of the burgh of Buckhaven, Methil, and Innerleven in November 1904, and on taking his seat as a councillor was elected provost. He is a Justice of the Peace for the county, and is the representative of the burgh of Buckhaven, Methil, and Innerleven at the Fife County Council.



THE WEMYSS AND DISTRICT TRAMWAYS.

IN the winter of 1904, Mr R. G. E. Wemyss of Wemyss Castle launched a scheme for connecting the towns and villages in the parishes of Wemyss and Scoonie with the burgh of Kirkcaldy by a system of electric tramways. When the scheme was first mooted, it was intended that the line should terminate at the bridge across the river Leven, at the western entrance to the burgh of Leven. By appeals from the community of Leven, however, Mr Wemyss was induced to extend the line to the burgh and make the terminus in Durie Street. A Provisional Order for the construction of the tramways was given in March 1905 by a Parliamentary Committee, sitting in Edinburgh, and in August of the same year the Wemyss Tramway Order Confirmation Act was passed by Parliament.

When Mr Wemyss was promoting the tramway scheme through its initial stages, the Board of Trade laid down as a condition of their giving sanction to proceed that a company should be formed on an early date. In terms of this condition, a company was formed in November, taking the name of "The Wemyss and District Tramways Company, Limited." The authorised capital of the Company is £55,000—9000 6 per cent. cumulative shares of £5 each, and 10,000 ordinary shares of £1 each. The Company also issued £30,000 of 4½ per cent. debentures. The first board of directors was:—Messrs John Oswald of Dunning; Joseph Budge, Wemyss Castle Office; Archibald

Bowman, Buckhaven ; William Shepherd, solicitor and bank agent, Leven ; and Stephen Sellon, M.Inst.C.E. (managing director). Mr J. Ogilvy Shepherd, Leven, was appointed secretary. It was intimated that Mr Wemyss would join the board after the line was handed over to the Company. Mr Sellon, the managing director, has had great experience of tramway work throughout the country, and a report by him on the Wemyss project showed a net revenue of £5925 per annum after meeting all working expenses and a liberal allowance for depreciation. His details were as follows :—

From the net revenue of	-	-	-	-	-	£5925
There falls to be deducted interest on £30,000 4½						
per cent. debenture stock	-	-	-	-	-	£1350
Dividend on £30,000 preference shares						
at 6 per cent.	-	-	-	-	-	1800
						<hr/> 3150
Leaving a surplus of	-	-	-	-	-	<hr/> £2775

The Order and Act authorised the construction of a line of tramways and tramroads, to be worked on the overhead electric trolley system, commencing at the eastern terminus of the Kirkcaldy Corporation Tramways at Rosslyn Street, Kirkcaldy, and connected by a physical junction with the electric tramways of Kirkcaldy Corporation, and running thence eastwards through the parish of Kirkcaldy and Dysart and the parishes of Wemyss and Scoonie, and serving the villages and towns of West Wemyss, Coaltown of Wemyss, East Wemyss, Buckhaven, Links of Buckhaven, Denbeath, Methil, Crossroads, Innerleven, and Leven, with an optional extension to the burgh of Dysart. The track length of the tramways and tramroads, excluding Dysart, is about 7½ miles, and including the extension to Dysart it will measure about 8¼ miles. Direct running

powers over the system of the Kirkcaldy Corporation tramways to the centre of the town were acquired, conform to agreement between the Provost, Magistrates, and Councillors of the burgh of Kirkcaldy and Mr Wemyss.

By an agreement entered into between the Wemyss Coal Company and the Tramway Company, the Coal Company erected and are to maintain an electric power station on a piece of ground situated near the village of Denbeath and to supply the Company with electric power.



FINIS.