

the north and south end of the Bridge, and the travelling public appear to have confidence in the stability of the structure. The opening of the new Bridge has given an impetus to building operations on the Fife side of the Tay, and a village is rapidly springing into existence on Wormit Bay. In the "Rambles" the writer has combined historical notes with descriptions of the places visited, with the view of rendering the work valuable as a historical guide to Newport and district.





HISTORY OF NEWPORT

AND THE

PARISH OF FORGAN.



PART I.

ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE PARISH.

THE beautiful village of Newport, situated on the Fife shore of the Firth of Tay, may fitly be termed the southern suburb of the busy town of Dundee. The village is pleasantly situated on a series of gentle slopes and terraced ridges rising from the shores of the Firth, and, when viewed from the river or the opposite shore, presents a charming and picturesque appearance. From the beach the slopes are dotted with elegant villas and stately mansions, handsome churches and other public buildings, and terraces of tastefully-built houses rising upwards to the crest of the hill, which is crowned by a fringe of

green shady woods. The whole village has an air of wealth and refinement about it, and, from its situation and surroundings, it offers a quiet rural residence to the merchants and well-to-do middle classes of Dundee, where they can breathe the pure, fresh air, and enjoy the calm and peace of a rural or seaside retreat after the harassing cares of the day in the factory or counting-house.

The modern village is not yet fifty years old, and may be said to have scarcely a history of its own worthy of being recorded, as its origin and growth are so intimately connected with the progress and prosperity of Dundee. Of course, Newport is so closely associated with Dundee that it is impossible to disconnect the history of the one from the other ; yet, at the same time, the village forms a distinct community, and, being situated in another county, and separated from Dundee by an arm of the sea, it can, to a certain extent, claim an independent existence and a history of its own.

The parish of Forgan, in which Newport is situated, is little known except in ecclesiastical lore. Within its bounds no event of national importance can be said to have taken place—at least none has been recorded—though, from the existence of several cairns in certain parts of the parish, antiquarians have come to the conclusion that some of the fierce battles between the Danes and Scots must have been fought in this neighbourhood. The lines of a fortified hill are still

seen in St. Fort woods, and a stone coffin was, a few years ago, discovered in a field on the neighbouring farm of Newton. On this farm there was a knoll, called the "Castle Hill," but it has been nearly all cut away by the making of the railway. Some urns were dug up in the field where the villa of Westwood is now built, and under the hearth-stone of an old cottage a human skull was found, but how long it had been buried there was simply a matter of conjecture. There is a great probability that these cairns or tumuli were the burying-places of the slain in some ancient battle, but, beyond the discovery of a few bones, the mounds have never been fully explored.

The principal estates in the parish are Naughton, St. Fort, Inverdovat, Wormit, and Newton. Anciently Naughton was owned by the family of Lascelles, or Lassels, whose lands at one time extended from the old castle of Balmerino to Kirkton of Forgan. The Lascelles were succeeded by a branch of the ancient family of Hay, descendants of the gallant peasant who, with his sons, turned the fortunes of the battle of Luncarty in favour of the Scots, and repulsed the Danes, their only weapons being the oxen yokes with which they had been ploughing their field. The Hays of Morton, in the eastern part of the parish, are descended from this ancient family. They still retain possession of their family inheritance, and over the door of their house is seen the family coat of arms, the oxen yokes conjoined with other

heraldic emblems. One of the Hays of Naughton was a notorious persecutor in the Covenanting times. The Hays were succeeded by the family of Gillespie, who, in the beginning of the present century, removed from their old mansion house of Kirkton to their modern residence of Mount-quhannie.

The estates on which Newport is built are Scots-craig, Tayfield (formerly Inverdovat), and St. Fort. By far the largest portion of the lands of Scots-craig are contained within the parish of Ferry-Port-on-Craig, now known by the modern name of Tayport. A portion of the lands of Scots-craig was once within the boundaries of Forgan, and included part of East Newport, but by far the largest portion of the village has been built on the estate of Tayfield. East Newport was at first called Maryton, while Newport proper was that part to the west of the pier, built chiefly on the estate of St. Fort, and presently known as West Newport.

Originally Scots-craig belonged to the Archbishops of St. Andrews. In the reign of Alexander II. it was feued to Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie, the father of the famous Michael Scott, the Wizard. From the Scotts it derived its present name, which seemed to have been given to distinguish it from other "craigs," a name very common in the district and throughout Scotland generally. It passed from the Scotts into the possession of the Duries, an old Fifeshire family that figured prominently during

the Reformation times. It was afterwards purchased by the Ramsays, the ancestors of the Earls of Dalhousie. In the seventeenth century it became the property of Archbishop Sharpe, and from his representatives it was purchased by Alexander Colville, a relative of the Lords Colville of Culross. Since then it has been owned by families of lesser note. Mr. Dalgleish was proprietor in the beginning of this century, and it was purchased from him by Mr. Dougal. Through marriage with Mr. Dougal's heiress it is now the property of Admiral Maitland-Dougal, a gentleman highly esteemed for his public spirit and large-hearted benevolence.

Tayfield was formerly part of the barony of Inverdovat, which was held by a branch of the Leightons of Usan, in Forfarshire, from whom sprung the famous Bishop Leighton of Dunblane. Inverdovat afterwards came into possession of John Lindsay, second son of Sir David Lindsay of Edzel, and ninth Earl of Crawford. This John Lindsay was the founder of the family of Lindsay of Balcarres. In the last century Inverdovat was owned by a Mr. John Lyon. The estate, or at least the largest part of it, was, about the close of the century, purchased by Mr. John Berry, descended from the Nairnes of St. Fort, who erected a fine mansion-house on the high ground overlooking the Tay. The mansion-house was named Tayfield, and the estate now bears the same name. Mr. Berry was born on 17th January, 1725, and died on 14th October, 1817 at the age of 92. He was succeeded by his son, Mr.

William Berry, who was born in 1754, and died on 9th December, 1852. His son, Mr. John Berry, the third proprietor of Tayfield, was born on 7th November, 1824, died at Nice, 17th December, 1877, and was interred in Forgan Churchyard on 7th January, 1878. He left a widow and family, who still reside in the beautiful mansion of Tayfield, and are highly respected in the village and neighbourhood.

The Estate of St. Fort, the largest in the parish, has been made up of small properties successively added one to another under the present family of Stewart. There were formerly three St. Fords or Sanfords—St. Ford Nairne, St. Ford Walker, and St. Ford Hay. Of these the first is the most noted, both in national and parochial records. The Nairnes figure prominently in the annals of Scottish History, and the title of Lord Nairne was conferred on a younger member of the family in the reign of Charles II. Lord Nairne was a staunch Jacobite, and took part in the Rebellion of 1745, for which he was proscribed, and had his title and inheritance forfeited. In the reign of George IV. the title was restored. About the beginning of the last century St. Fort was sold, and passed from the Nairnes to a gentleman named Duncan. About the close of the century the estate came into the possession of Mr. Robert Stewart, and is still owned by his descendants, his daughter being the present owner. In the early part of the present century the old house was demolished, and

a more modern and commodious mansion erected.

There is to be seen on the borders of the estate an old tomb, overgrown with flourishing "gean" trees, said to be the burying-place of the Nairnes, the ancient possessors of St. Fort. Over the entrance of this ancient sepulchre the following quaint lines are inscribed :—

"Stuip low, Poor Soule, and mourn for sinne,
Cry unto Christ to bring thee in,
That when the bodie is lodged heir
Thou may injoy His presence deir
Until the day of the gryte call,
When we must ryse to judgment all ;
Then all united we shall be
To praise the glorious Trinitie."

There is a shield with pellets, and the initials "A. N." above the inscription. That the Nairnes were not all buried here is known from a record in "Lamont's Diary," under "date 1664, July 15. Samford Nairne, in Fyffe, depairted out of this life att his dwelling-house, and was interred the 17th of Jul. after, att his parish church, in the night season."

The farm of Newton is the property of the Earl of Zetland, but nothing worthy of record is known concerning it. Wormit also is a small property owned by the Wedderburns of Birkhill. This part of the parish has been rendered famous in modern times by the Tay Bridge, of which we will have more to say in a future chapter.

A close connection has, from the earliest times in Scottish history, existed between Dundee and the parish of Forgan by means of the Ferries across the River Tay. Naturally, the direct access to Dundee from the south is by crossing the Tay, which, after its junction with the Earn, opens out into a broad navigable Firth, separating the county of Fife from the counties of Perth and Forfar. It is a beautiful expanse of water, bounded by the Fife hills on the south and the Sidlaws on the north, and has the appearance of a great lake when seen at full tide under the golden rays of the setting sun or the pale glimpses of the moon. The most important place on its shores is the ancient and bustling town of Dundee. In olden times the north side of the Firth was termed the "Dundee Water," while the Fife side was known as the "Dundee Waterside," which shows the importance of Dundee in former days.

Along the north side of Fife there was the passage between Ferry-Port-on-Craig and Broughty Castle, and, proceeding upwards, the old ferries of Newport, Woodhaven, and Balmerino, in connection with Dundee.

Balmerino, with its harbour and Ferry road, carried on a considerable traffic from the rural districts with the further side of the river, especially in the days of its abbots and their royal visitors. The Woodhaven and Newport passage to Dundee was early recognised as a "public ferry" in the great line of communication between the southern and

north-eastern parts of Scotland. This ferry, along with "the highways and bridges," was placed by Act of the Scottish Parliament, of the year 1669, under the regulation of the Justices of the Peace of the respective counties, their powers being "to visit the ferries in their shire, and appoint fit and sufficient boats and convenient landing places." This old ferry was, in ancient times, often the scene of great bustle and excitement, the boats and horses there being at the call of some hasty traveller from Dundee, or grave ecclesiastic returning to St. Andrews, or a merry monarch and his retinue from the Palace of Falkland on a hunting expedition to Monrummon Muir. There are records of some strange scandals about a Sir David Arnot and the Justices, in the year 1698, regarding a woman and a child who had come, no one knew from whence, to the Waterside, and were visited there by the said Sir David. The same year a man named Alexander Garvie, having come to reside without his wife, and being ordered by the Kirk Session of Forgan to bring her home from Angus, where he had left her, submissively states—taking excuse we may suppose, from the difficulties of the passage—"that he could not get his wife brought here till the day was longer."

Rob Roy Macgregor, after his cruel raid in Fife, in 1715, retreating before the Royal army approaching from Perth, led off his whole Highland host by this route to Dundee.

There was an inn and hiring establishment at

the "Waterside" known, in the year 1699, as "Alexander Cupar's House," where, to the scandal of all good people of the parish, it was alleged "that manie go and drinks in the tyme of afternoon sermon."

Though a ferry had existed from "time immemorial" between Dundee and that part of the "Waterside" now known as Newport, it was not till the beginning of the eighteenth century that it began to assume anything like the importance which was attached to its rival, Woodhaven. In the sixteenth century the old mills at Seamylnes were leased or purchased by the Magistrates of Dundee, as the town's mills at the "Burn head" were unable to supply the town with meal. A pier was then built, about the place where the old harbour of Newport is situated, for the accommodation of the boats and small vessels that carried the corn and meal to and from the mills. The "Sea Mills," as they were called, were built on the ground between the old and new piers, and extended from the present farm steading over the grounds now occupied by the north lodge and gateway of Tayfield. The Meal Mill was, about the beginning of this century, possessed by Mr. Russell, father of Oliver Russell, lately of Haystone, who used to act as his father's "lade-man," carrying the corn into the mill. This place gave its name to an ancient Chapel of "St. Thomas of the Seamylnes," which, in proprietorship at least, had a connection with the ferry, as appears from

the record given in Mr. Campbell's "History of the Abbey of Balmerino"—how "the patronage of the Chapel of St. Thomas of Seamylnes, the ferry from Seamylnes to Dundee, and the Mill of Seamylnes," belonged in the year 1616 to Kinnaird of Kinnaird.



*PART II.*ORIGIN OF NEWPORT—THE OLD BOATMEN
OF THE TAY.

IN the year 1713 the Guildry of Dundee, at the suggestion of the Town Council, resolved to take steps to establish a regular ferry from Dundee direct to the south or Fife side of the Tay. Previous to this there was a Ferry at Woodhaven, but, as a want began to be felt for more direct communication between Dundee and Edinburgh, passage boats occasionally plied to "Seamylnes," lying between the new pier and the old harbour of Newport. From extracts of the minutes of the Guildry, published in A. J. Warden's "Burgh Laws," it would appear that the Incorporation in those days was a public-spirited body. The suggestion of the Town Council was heartily taken up, and ground purchased from the estates of St. Fort and Inverdovat (now Tayfield), on which a pier was built, and also a house for the tacksman, which was to be used as an inn and horse-hiring establishment. Previous to the purchase of these lands there was only one house there, and great delay was often experienced by strangers seeking a passage across

the river to Dundee. The property acquired by the Guildry comprised about six acres. Three and a half acres were purchased from Mr. Hamilton of Inverdovat, at £924 Scots; and two and a half acres from the estate of St. Fort, at £693 Scots. The place formerly called Seamylnes was then named New Dundee, and afterwards Newport Dundee, and latterly was changed to Newport. Piers, and a house and offices, were forthwith erected, and two years later, viz., in 1715, the accounts were laid before the Court, the works having been completed in about eighteen months. The total sum expended in this enterprise is not very clearly stated, as there are some inaccuracies in the accounts, but, as far as can be gathered, the cost was somewhere about £4,640. But the Guildry did not rest satisfied with the construction of a harbour for "boats and yals" at New Dundee. Through their exertions a public highway was made from Newport to Kirkcaldy, the cost having been defrayed by subscriptions raised in Fife and Dundee, and in the towns to the North as far as Inverness. Thus direct communication was opened up between the Metropolis and the North of Scotland, by the passage of the Ferries on the Forth between Leith and Kirkcaldy, and on the Tay between Newport and Dundee.

The Guild Merchants of Dundee, in the beginning of the last century, must have been shrewd and far-seeing men. Doubtless they had expected that by the new route opened up a stream of

traffic would flow so steadily across the Tay that in a few years a flourishing town would spring up on the Fife side of the river, and form a new outlet for the enterprise of the traders of Dundee ; but their anticipations were not realised, and we find that in the year 1777 the Guildry resolved to sell their property in Fife.

From what we can gather from the extracts taken from the minutes of the Guildry on the subject, it is abundantly clear that "New Dundee" had turned out a bad spec. The subjects were first let for a term of years at 6 per cent.—on the outlay, probably, though that is not definitely stated. In May, 1716, the house and pier were advertised to be let within the Tolbooth at the yearly rent of 400 merks Scots ; but, as the reserve price was not bid, the Guildry bought it and afterwards sublet it to a tacksman at the yearly rent of £20 sterling. In August of the following year a Mr. Gentleman, vintner, offered 8,000 merks for the Guildry's interest in New Dundee, but the Court, by their vote, refused to sell. Troubles had early begun in connection with the property. Only a few months after the property had been acquired the minister of Forgan summoned the Guildry for an augmentation of stipend on their new purchase. The piers had not been very substantially erected at first, for by the year 1717 they had broken down two or three times, and various sums were spent on repairs. In 1725 the tenant complained that he was doing very little business

in horse-hiring, though he had six good horses for the service of the public. The shore dues leviable from small vessels loading and discharging at the Harbour had not been well paid, and the tacksman had to be authorised to collect them. The rent never exceeded £20 a year, and was often not well paid; while, from the continual outlay for repairs and other charges, the Court began to consider that the place was a great burden on their stock. In 1749 the property was offered for sale, but at that time no purchaser came forward. Twelve years later, in 1761, it appears, from an entry in the Guildry minutes, that Newport had been sold to a Mr. Maxwell of Bogmiln, but, as the price had not been paid, the Dean was instructed to confer with Mr. Maxwell, with the view of getting the money out of him. The result of that conference is not stated, but it proved a failure, as we find that twenty years later (1782) a Mr. M'Nab, a writer in Edinburgh, paid £340 to Maxwell's trustees for the interest they had acquired in Newport, which sum was handed over to the Guildry in payment of part of the debt Maxwell was due to the Court. From details of this transaction it appears that, with the consent of the Guildry, the subjects were put up for sale by public roup by the trustees, and that they were bought on behalf of Mr. A. Duncan of St. Fort and Mr. John Lyon of Inverdovat, each proprietor getting back the portion of land which had been originally purchased from his respective estate. It further appeared that, after deducting

the sum realised by the sale, Maxwell was still due £189 principal and £192 interest on the lands of Newport. By the year 1787 this balance had been reduced to £21 14s. 9d., on which sum the Guildry accepted a composition of 10s. in the £1, and thus the Incorporation got rid of their "White Elephant" of Newport.

From what has been already stated it will be seen that the house and piers of Newport came into the possession of the proprietors of Inverdovat, and subsequently to Mr. Berry of Tayfield, when he became proprietor of that portion of the old barony. Although two direct ferries were maintained between Dundee and Fife, the one at Woodhaven and the other at what is now known as Newport, the former passage had always been the most popular; and, notwithstanding the exertions of the Guildry, it continued to be most resorted to by passengers down to the beginning of the present century. In 1770 a new turnpike road was constructed to Woodhaven, and that gave an impetus to the traffic by that passage. According to the Statistical Account of the parish, prepared by the Rev. Charles Nairn in 1838, through the exertions of Mr. Berry of Tayfield and his son, another turnpike road was made from Newport, communicating with the road from Woodhaven to Cupar at a point about four miles from Newport, known as Michael's Wood. From that time Newport became the principal route for passengers journeying from the South to Dundee and the North East of Scotland.

We have said that previous to the Guildry of Dundee establishing a harbour at "Seamylnes," there was only one house in the locality. The building of the inn and the improvement of the road were calculated to attract settlers, but we find that after the lapse of a century very little progress had been made in that direction. In the beginning of the present century Newport consisted of about twenty cottages, scattered here and there on the bracs and cliffs. These cottages were chiefly occupied by the boatmen employed at the ferries and their families, the whole population not exceeding one hundred souls. In addition to the boatmen and their families, there were a few tradesmen, such as shoemakers and tailors, who had been attracted to the settlement. Almost on the very spot where the present inn is built was a thatched cottage inhabited by Tibby Landsman, who carried on business as a sort of general merchant, her house and shop being combined under the same roof. The slope now occupied by the inn stables and stableyard was then a fine grassy beach, some parts of which were utilised as "kail yairds" by the villagers. Two cottages stood on Seacraig Cliff, one of which was occupied by a shoemaker; while further east, at Craighead, and on other points of the coast, salmon fishing stations had long been established. Since then the aspect of the place has been entirely changed.

Up to the year 1820, when steamboats were, for the first time, put on the passage, the communication

was maintained by a fleet of sailing boats, owned and manned by those hardy boatmen. The ferry boats were of two kinds—yawls and pinnaces. The yawls were large, strongly built, and sloop rigged, carried a good spread of canvas, and were adapted for transporting horses, cattle, carts, and carriages. They were fitted with a half deck at the stern, while the fore part was open, the keelson being covered with paving stones, which gave a strong flooring and could be easily cleaned. An inclined plane led from the bows to the bottom of the hold, where the live stock and vehicles were stowed away during the passage. It was not an easy matter to get horses and cattle shipped on board these vessels, and ludicrous scenes were often witnessed at the ferries between bipeds and quadrupeds, especially on market days. The pinnaces were a smaller class of boats, adapted only for the conveyance of passengers. They were smartly built, and were fitted with masts, and carried lug sails like fishing boats. With a good breeze and the tide in their favour, they flew through the water with great speed, and under such circumstances they made the passage in less time than the steamers take to cross. At that time the two landing places on the Fife side were known as the “West Water” and “East Water” ferries. About the year 1815 there were somewhere about twenty-five boats plying on the two ferries, giving employment to about one hundred men and boys.

The boats were generally owned by their respective crews, who shared in the profits according to the amount of capital each man had invested in the craft. Each boat was under the command of a coxswain or skipper, but beyond that they owned no authority. The crews of the various boats were all independent of each other, and like Hal o' the Wynd, "fought for their own hand." An agreement existed amongst them by which they took turns of sailing, and no boat would start from either side unless they had as many passengers as made up a fare of not less than 4s. 6d. There were no fixed hours for sailing, and as the boat would not start until the full complement was made up, the public were often put to great inconvenience. A weary traveller coming from the South, and anxious to reach Dundee by a certain hour, would perhaps arrive at the East or West Ferry expecting to get an expeditious passage across the river, but was often chagrined to find that, though a boat was at the pier, he was compelled to wait till a sufficient number of passengers was made up to make it worth the coxswain's pains to cast his moorings adrift. The stream of traffic across the Tay in those times did not flow so continuously as it does now. The boatmen lounged about the pier while waiting for passengers, much the same as cabmen loiter on the cabstanes. Time often hung heavily on their hands, and, as Dr. Watt says :—

"Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do."

It was not to be wondered at that the boatmen resorted too frequently to the inn to "wet their whistles" and kill the lazy hours. In their anxiety to get as full a complement of passengers as possible, they used to station a man on the face of the brae to watch the road, and, if the sentinel caught a glimpse of a solitary individual wending his way towards the beach, he would wave his hand and shout to the traveller to "come on, we're just gaen across i' the noo." Thus abjured, the traveller quickened his pace and reached the pier perspiring and breathless, only to find that the boat was not likely to sail for another half-hour at least.

Such detentions occurred most frequently on the Fife side, the victims being generally solitary pedestrians, who were compelled to "grin and bear." The Dundonians were more wide-awake to the tricks of the ferrymen, and knew how to manage them better than strangers did. On the Dundee Fair days, when the traffic was great, the boatmen did not scruple to take advantage of the necessities of the public to raise the fares; but on other days, when "things were slack," they were glad enough to take passengers across on their own terms. There was no regular tariff of fares, but the understood charge was 9d. a head for passengers; but in the competition between the Woodhaven and Newport boats they often accepted 6d. and sometimes 4d. a head rather than lose the chance of a hire. The competition, however, was felt to be ruinous to both parties, and ultimately an agree-

ment was made to the effect that no boat would sail for a less sum than 4s. 6d. a trip.

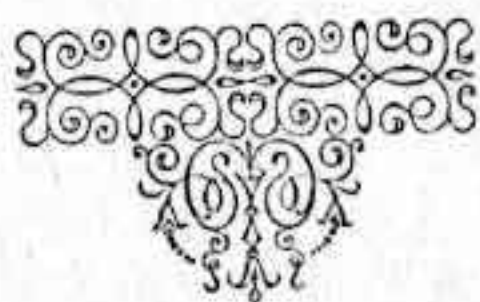
When this arrangement was adopted, the Dundonians resorted to little subterfuges to outwit the ferrymen. Parties intending to cross the river, on business or pleasure, clubbed together, and having subscribed the orthodox sum, one of the company was despatched to the pier to hire a boat. No stipulation having been made as to numbers, the boatmen discovered, when too late, that they had been "sold"; but as they were not a class to submit tamely to such impositions, a row invariably followed, in which "Billingsgate" compliments were freely bandied on both sides. Such scenes were of daily occurrence at the Craig, but they were invariably wound up by the boatmen giving in, and quietly taking their revenge in another way.

A Fifeshire farmer who had engaged a band of shearers in Dundee, hired a boat at the minimum rate, keeping his thumb on the number that he wanted ferried across. When he brought down his "hairsters" the boatmen demurred and wanted to back out of the contract, but the farmer took possession of the boat and shipped his passengers, and bullied the captain till he was glad to yield. The pinnace was loaded to the gunwale, but she was pushed off, and her sails trimmed for the passage. A stiff breeze was blowing against the tide, and the water was rather "lumpy." The captain put the light craft before the wind and

away she sped, plunging her bows into the seas and throwing the spray over the poor passengers. After tacking about for half an hour, drenching the passengers to the skin, and almost frightening them out of their wits, he landed them at Woodhaven instead of Newport, declaring that the state of the wind and tide prevented him from making the latter pier. The farmer and his "shearers" were only too glad to get ashore after their perilous voyage, even though they had an extra mile to travel.

Soubriquets or nicknames were common amongst the ferrymen, as they are still in all the fishing villages on the coast. A boatman named Johnston, better known by the title of "King," was one day invited by a brother boatman to dine with him, being promised "pot luck," a phrase which is understood as an apology for an indifferent entertainment. The "King" accepted the invitation, as his friend's cottage was nearer than his own, and they were then waiting with their boat at the harbour for passengers. When they entered the cottage they found that dinner was not quite ready, but a huge pot boiling on the fire, and sending forth a savoury odour, promised something worth waiting for. Before the gudewife thought it time to "dish up," a messenger came in haste and informed them that a lot of passengers were waiting at the pier. There was nothing for it in the circumstances but to obey the summons, and leave the dinner to a more fit-

ting season ; but the "King" was equal to the emergency. He seized a stick lying at hand, and, whipping off the pot lid, he dived the stick into the heart of the boiling mess, and fished out a huge oatmeal pudding tied by the ends in the shape of a ring. "Ha, ha !" he laughingly cried, as he swung the stick and the pudding over his shoulder and hurried off to the pier, "pot luck is gude luck, this 'll keep our teeth frae watering or we get hame again."



*PART III.*THE OLD COACHING DAYS—DISASTER ON THE
TAY—TOM HOOD AND BALLAD JOCK.

UNDER the most favourable circumstances the passage of the ferries in open boats was far from being a comfortable mode of transit, and in many instances it was fraught with danger. The frequent occurrence of storms in winter, and the exposure to rain and sudden squalls, even in the height of summer, were often a source of discomfort and alarm to passengers, while the detention by weather and the state of the tide was a constant source of annoyance to the public. The ferrymen were a brave and hardy class, ever ready to face the weather; but they were rough and rude, and withal, it was said, too much addicted to the vice of intemperance, which inspired them with a spirit of recklessness and foolhardiness in the pursuit of their calling. In the beginning of the present century steam power was applied to navigation; steamboats superseded the old-fashioned ferry boats, and the race which for centuries ferried passengers across the Tay entirely disappeared.

The first encroachment on the trade of the old boatmen was the establishment of a line of stage coaches between Edinburgh and Dundee. The first to open coach communication from Edinburgh through Fife by the ferries on the Forth at Kirkcaldy and the Tay at Dundee were Messrs. Alex. M'Nab & Co., of Edinburgh. The Royal Union coaches run by this firm took passengers across the ferry by the "Union Coach" boats. These boats were built expressly for the company. They were well manned by picked crews, who wore the coach uniform to distinguish them from the other ferrymen. As the coach boats sailed at regular hours in connection with the arrivals and departures of the coaches, and as, moreover, they were safer and more commodious than the ordinary boats on the passage, people, though they had no intention of travelling by the coach, availed themselves of these boats in preference to the ordinary ferry boats. The Union Coaches were so successful that in a few years opposition lines were started on the same route, while coach communication was extended in connection with the Fifeshire lines as far north as Inverness. In an advertisement in the *Dundee Courier*, of date September 14, 1827, M'Nab & Co. inform the public that the following coaches ran daily between Dundee and Edinburgh :—"The Royal Fife and Strathmore Union" started from Princes Street, Edinburgh, at six o'clock morning, and arrived at Dundee at twelve o'clock noon, from whence the journey was continued to Aberdeen, where it was

timed to arrive at nine o'clock in the evening. Fifteen hours were thus occupied in the journey between the Metropolis and the "Granite City." What a contrast between those good old coaching days and the state of things existing at present under the benign rule of the "Railway King!" Following the "Royal Union" came the "Commercial Traveller," which left Edinburgh at ten o'clock in the morning and reached Dundee at five o'clock in the afternoon. "The Earl of Leven" started at half-past one o'clock p.m., and reached Dundee at eight o'clock in the evening. The fares by these coaches are not stated in the advertisement. Some idea, however, of the expense of travelling in those days may be gathered from an advertisement in the same paper some years previously. In 1816, Mr. Gordon, innkeeper, Newport, advertised to run a "two-horse chaise" from Newport to St. Andrews twice a week, making the double journey in one day. The fares by this conveyance were—inside, 4s., outside, 3s.; return tickets, 6s. and 4s. 6d. respectively. The machine only ran from Newport to St. Andrews, and, consequently, passengers from Dundee had to pay the ferry charges in addition to the coach fare. The advertiser added that passengers who preferred to cross by the "coach boat" would be driven to and from Woodhaven—where the "coach boat" sailed from—without extra charge.

There was another "Royal Union" line of coaches running between Edinburgh and Dundee, owned by Mr. James Scott, of the Sun Hotel, Edinburgh,

but M'Nab claimed to be the original "Union." The two coach proprietors had, however, coalesced and run pretty smoothly together for several years, finding it, no doubt, to their mutual advantage to be on good terms with each other. For a long time loud and grievous complaints were made by the merchants and traders in Edinburgh, and all along the coach route, regarding the systematic overcharging of parcels carried by coach. Whether the coach proprietors were deaf to these complaints or not we cannot say, but for a long time the public had no redress. At length the grievance became perfectly intolerable, and an influential meeting of merchants and others was held in Edinburgh to consider the matter, with the view of effecting a remedy. Close on the back of that meeting M'Nab & Co. announced to the public that they had discovered that the overcharges complained of had been exacted in Mr. Scott's office, and exonerated themselves from all blame. They further announced that they were the first to start coaches on that route, and that their coaches ran for several years without opposition. Although Scott called his coach the "Royal Union" also, it had been running for several years on another road and the name was only changed, the painter performing the work on a Sabbath. From that time M'Nab & Co. cut all connection with Scott, and advertised their coaches as the only real and original public conveyance along the route in question.

in the 39th year of his ministry. He left a widow and eleven children. The gentleman who furnished us with the family memoranda from which we have made these extracts, has also forwarded for our perusal a pamphlet written by Mr. Burn, purporting to be an account of the proceedings of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, held in May, 1780. The pamphlet, which was published in the form of letters to a friend, is written in a clear and vigorous style. It details chiefly the part which the writer took in certain discussions in the Assembly in reference to "pluralities" of offices held by many of the ministers and professors, which Mr. Burn strongly condemned. This little work is a curiosity in its way, as it shews in a clear light the sturdy, independent spirit which animated the worthy divine, and how fearlessly and vigorously he fought against the strong "moderate" party which then ruled the Church with a high hand, to the scandal of religion and the fostering of ungodliness and immorality throughout the land.

The Rev. Dr. Alex. Maule succeeded Mr. Burn. He was inducted minister of the parish of Forgan in the latter end of the year 1800, and for thirty-five years he filled the office of Parish Minister till his death in 1835. Dr. Maule was a man and a minister of quite a different type from his predecessor. He belonged to what was known as the moderate school, was quiet and reserved in his manners, and was highly respected in society. His favourite

*PART XIII.*THE BLYTH HALL—SCHOOL BOARD—
CONCLUSION.

IT is unnecessary to enter into all the harrowing details connected with the Tay Bridge disaster. Fortunately, only two of the victims of the catastrophe were connected with Newport—two young men, named David Watson and James Peebles, the former a merchant in business in Dundee, and the latter an apprentice grocer in Newport. A fund was raised for the relief of the sufferers by the disaster, to which the residents in Newport subscribed liberally. At a lecture delivered in the Blyth Hall by Mr. Richard Miller, Dundee, on a "Tour through Norway," the proceeds amounted to upwards of £30, the whole of which was handed over to the Treasurer of the Tay Bridge Disaster Fund. The immediate consequences to the villagers, arising from the wreck of the Tay Bridge, was the loss of the water supplied from the Lintrathen Waterworks, and the stoppage of railway communication to and from Dundee. The loss of the water supply was the greatest inconvenience, the want of the Tay Bridge line